
Contents

Illustrations	vi
Acknowledgements	x
I Introduction	I
2 Official Dress in Venice	9
3 The Dress of the Young Men of Venice	33
4 The Dress of the Women of Venice	47
5 Venetian Official Dress in Times of Triumph and of Crisis	77
6 Venetian Entertainments and Festivals	95
7 The Tailors of Venice	116
8 Venice and the Dress of Foreigners	132
9 Conclusion	145
<i>Notes</i>	157
<i>Appendices</i>	
A Monarchs and Rulers, 1495 to 1525	174
B Venice and the Textile Industry	175
C Pavonazzo	178
<i>Bibliography</i>	179
<i>Index</i>	186

I Introduction

Notwithstanding the number of recent and not so recent, and usually distinguished, historians who have yielded to the temptation to write about Venice none, it seems, has examined the implications of Venetian dress in the early sixteenth century. And yet, to those who wore it, it was a subject that of necessity interested them greatly. Of necessity, because to ignore it could get the wearer into deep trouble.

In the later sixteenth century, when printing presses had long been accessible, a group of engravers published, within a very few years of each other, engravings of clothes worn by the Venetians themselves, by inhabitants of the Veneto (not at all the same thing) and by natives not only of other parts of Italy but of the major countries of Europe. Most of these collections included examples of the dress of Venetians of the past, as their artists had recognised it (always inaccurately) in earlier works of art. These engravers – Ferdinando Bertelli, Cesare Vecellio, Pietro Bertelli, Jacomo Franco – served, in their turn, as sources for the comprehensive studies of Venetian dress done soon after 1754 by a young resident in Venice, Giovanni Grevembroch, the son of a Netherlander; these have lately been published for the first time.

But in spite of Vecellio's engravings of *Habiti Antichi*, lifted from paintings by Carpaccio and the Bellinis and even from a capital of a column supporting the Ducal Palace: in spite of Pompeo Molmenti's magnificent study of Venetian social life, with its incidental references to clothing: in spite of Tassini's *Feste Spettacoli . . . degli Antichi Veneziani* and of Bistort's study of the sumptuary laws, Venetian dress before the eighteenth century has not been examined critically and in detail. Nor has its importance in the structure of the State been recognised.

The present study, which covers the thirty years from 1495 to 1525, apart from analysing the obvious works of art of the three decades, has greedily fed on the rich evidence provided by the diaries of Marin Sanudo. Or perhaps this has not been greedy but merely sensible for, in spite of the fact that no historian who has dealt with any aspect of the early sixteenth century in Venice has failed to extract every morsel relevant to his own studies from the famous *Diarii*, Sanudo's almost obsessive interest in the dress worn by his contemporaries has been virtually ignored.

'Contemporaries' in that Venice meant men: patricians or citizens by

2 *The Dress of the Venetians, 1495-1525*

ancient right. Women do not appear: artisans and others of more recent citizenship, when they are mentioned in the *Diarii*, are usually there only because they are undergoing beheading or the removal of an eye or a hand between the two columns in the Piazzetta as a punishment for murder or theft. Within that island city, in the masculine club of several chambers that composed its government, councils and committees met every day of the year except, perhaps, Good Friday.

The nature and the composition of the Venetian government have been well studied and analysed.¹ At its head was the doge, usually well advanced in years when he was elected for life (Venetian gentlemen seem to have been exceptionally long-lived). The ultimate authority rested in the doge and a small council, the *Minor Consiglio*. The next, and larger, authoritative chamber was the *Senato*, itself composed of several specialist groups. Larger still was the *Gran Consiglio*.² The often referred to *Collegio* was, in its precise meaning, another senate body, also headed, when possible, by the doge; its function was to initiate the business to be submitted later to the *Senato*, but the term *Collegio* was often used, too, for smaller committees with special functions.³

'Club' may sound too facetious a word for this august conglomeration but, in effect, that is what, in times of peace, those meetings in the most civilised of surroundings must have resembled. True, there were terms of office for individual members, but there were no terms for the sessions themselves. Business was conducted in the mornings and *da poi disnar* – in the afternoon – with apparently no closing time, a characteristic of Venice and the Venetians. Letters from Venetian ambassadors serving abroad were often headed, after the date, *a 4 da nocte*, even in quite normal times of peace.

In their confined capital, virtually afloat like a luxury liner cruising in the friendly immediate waters, what else was there to do but to meet one's peers for a mutually relevant chat, especially if it could be made to seem important, even urgent? Occasionally, of course, it was.

Already most of the patrician families had accumulated a number of palaces and already, as happens today, they were letting them, or parts of them, either directly to distinguished visitors or to ambassadors temporarily resident in Venice. Those European states which maintained a permanent envoy in Venice were few. Unless actually at war with the Republic, the Papacy, the Empire, France, Ferrara and Mantua all kept representatives in the city. Attending every ceremonial occasion, which included Sunday Mass in St Mark's and, as well, the appropriate official political meetings of the councils, these ambassadors were presented with expensive stuff for a gown on their arrival and with less-expensive but good quality material for members of their entourage. Spain and most of the Netherlands were represented for most of this period by the Empire; Hungary, poor and for much of the

time submerged in a struggle against the Turks, sent an ambassador from time to time, as did Turkey herself. For a brief spell there was a representative of the English king. Gauche and, apparently, out of his depth, he seems to have been incapable of behaving in the civilised manner demanded by international diplomacy; Richard Pace hardly ever attended a civic function in Venice for fear of encountering his French counterpart. For the rest, they formed the temporary (though virtually permanent) membership of the club, helping thereby to enhance its reputation in the world outside.

As for Marin Sanudo himself, faithful recorder of the minutiae of Venetian political and social encounters from 1495 to 1533, he was a member of one of the oldest patrician families. No decision seems yet to have been reached as to whether he should be referred to as Marin Sanudo, in Venetian style, or Marino Sanuto, as would have been usual elsewhere in Italy. In normal circumstances, Sanudo would have risen to high office, but his situation was not, in the Venetian sense, normal, for he was poor, a capital offence in the Venetian club which, pretending to exist as a democracy overlooked by the benevolent experience which ancient lineage can contribute, was, in fact, a plutocracy.

With a lifelong passion for Venice past and present, Sanudo watched the comings and goings of ambassadors, both Venetian and foreign. When they were Venetian he recorded the texts of their letters, side by side with speeches delivered in the councils and the day-to-day gossip. Tolerated, it seems, rather than appreciated as a chronicler of contemporary history, Sanudo constantly urged the Serenissima to take his journals seriously as the essential stuff of history; but he was poor. No high office came his way; he was not accorded the memorial he had hoped for on his death, nor was he buried where he had wished. And yet, no sooner was he dead than his journals were pounced on by Venetian historians such as Sansovino, who recognised them for the incomparable source material that they are. They are as precious now as they were then.

Very recently Sanudo's almost equally important *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae* has been published for the first time, under its other title, *La Città di Venetia*. This meticulously presented transcription of a collection of Sanudo's manuscripts, with its valuable and sympathetic introduction, is a most welcome addition to Venetian published sources. Sanudo was imaginative in the information he was moved to include in this study of the nature and the administration of his beloved city. An account of the functions of the various bodies which composed the government and of the terms and qualifications of the officers who served in them could have been expected. More recondite lists, such as of the holy relics of the saints to be found in each Venetian church and of the precious jewels in the Treasury of St Mark's

4 *The Dress of the Venetians, 1495-1525*

basilica, are there too, but so also is, for instance, a list of the fifty-three types of fresh fish and crustaceans on sale in Venice's fish-market in his day, and of the six varieties of fresh-water fish from nearby rivers that could be bought too.⁴ In this treatise Sanudo was not concerned to discuss the complicated character of Venetian official dress, though he does include two important references to it which must, of course, be given their appropriate place in the present study. Sanudo's *Vite dei Dogi* has appeared in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* (T.XXII, pt. IV). It, too, is invaluable for the study of the early history of Venice.

Venice's wealth came from her empire on the mainland – the *Terraferma* which included many famous cities and the countryside that surrounded them. But it came, too, from her trading posts round the Mediterranean and from her flourishing export trade. Sometimes lost to her intermittent enemies the French, the Empire and the Milanese, the cities were almost as often regained and, at times, included places as distant as Crema in Lombardy, Cividale in Friuli and Cadore in the Dolomites. Carved on stone panels, the winged lion of St Mark, called by Venetians *un san Marco*, still strolls arrogantly over gothic porticoes in nearer cities such as Verona.

Like the English, the Venetians regarded themselves as unique which, like the English, in many respects they were. Whereas the English have often cherished a deep sense of guilt over what they have regarded as reprehensible class distinctions, in Venice, whilst class distinctions could be overcome, Venetians felt no guilt in maintaining them. They were overcome only when political expedience demanded it; in England the matter has been regulated largely by sentiment. Thus when, for instance, in the eighteenth century, the novel *Pamela*, by the English novelist Samuel Richardson (whose father had been a joiner), turned out to be a best-seller in Italy, the Venetian playwright Carlo Goldoni was urged to compose a dramatised version of it. But Goldoni found himself in a dilemma for, whereas the plot of the novel, in which a young aristocrat marries a peasant girl, was acceptable in England and, evidently, in the rest of Italy, in Venice it was not: Venice was not Italy. In Venice a patrician could not marry beneath him. Eventually Goldoni overcame the difficulty by adjusting Richardson's plot.

In the sixteenth century Venice had been no less rigid. In addition, she had for long put it about that the Venetians were descendants of high-born refugees from the ancient city of Troy, a claim that was ridiculed by the rest of Italy, which, in unfriendly moments, insisted that the Venetians were, in fact, descendants of humble fishermen who colonised the islands in their search for better fish. In Venice, the inhabitants of the rest of Italy were *forestieri*, a term originally derived from the barbaric inhabitants of the primeval forests and, certainly, the

only inhabitants of the Italian peninsula to wear Venetian dress were Venetians.

In all societies dress is first and foremost a means of communication, conscious and unconscious but inescapable. Metaphorically a language, dress, like all languages, is constantly subject to change, both in detail and in meaning. Even in the 'English-speaking world' today local differences survive. In sixteenth century Venice the meaning of dress was precise; as previously mentioned, to ignore its rules could be dangerous and, in extreme cases, amount almost to blasphemy. The 'colonials' of, say, Vicenza (about as far from Venice as Brighton is from London) were not colonials but the equivalent of a subject race, though the Venetians would not, of course, have put it so crudely. There came a moment, nevertheless, when the ladies of Venice were forbidden to wear the fashions of Vicenza; why, one cannot help asking, had they ever been tempted to do so? Had the atmosphere of the club become unbearably claustrophobic?

New fashions in the dress of Venetian ladies and of young men, too young to be allowed the official *toga*, were resisted with vigour by the authorities. These fashions did, however, move through the barriers and pass unnoticed. And even the prescribed dress of officials, probably the majority of the adult male population of the city, changed in subtle respects with the passing of time. By the middle of the sixteenth century official gowns were more ample and the rigid folds of the century's beginning had relaxed a little. Could there be a social or historical explanation for the change?

The Republic of Venice was referred to as *la Serenissima* and its doge, so closely associated with the idea of the State, as *il Serenissimo*. *Serenissimo* was a useful term which could, when no other obvious one was known, be used for the king of England when he was on friendly relations with the Republic. The king of Spain was given the title *il Catholico*; the king of France, *il Christianissimo* (or, respectively, *la sua Catholica Maestà* and *la sua Christianissima Maestà*). The emperor was usually referred to as *la cesarea Maestà*.

In Sanudo's own particular brand of Venetian, a very mild one, the doge became *il doxe* or *il dose*. (His spelling, by no means consistent, has been retained here where his words have been quoted directly.) In Florence and, no doubt, in the rest of Italy, Venetian Italian must have been regarded as uncouth. Indeed, even in Venice, when Baldassare Castiglione published his famous *Cortegiano* in current Italian he was reprimanded for not writing in pure Tuscan – the proper language of the cultured man;⁵ nevertheless, just as Venetians defended themselves against the claim that they were descended from simple fishermen, so Sanudo regarded the mildly Venetian character of his prose as correct and dignified.

6 *The Dress of the Venetians, 1495-1525*

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the medieval names for the normal garments in the feminine and young masculine wardrobes were still retained, though they were often almost unrecognisable in a local distorted form, while the garments themselves changed drastically in their design almost from year to year. It was not, in fact, until well into the seventeenth century that it was realised that a new vocabulary of dress had become essential.

In the late years of the fifteenth century, having settled more or less permanently for the idea that her prime enemy was Milan, Venice, like the rest of Italy, was extremely disturbed when the French king invaded the peninsula and, in 1494, removed the duke of Milan from his seat. In the following years a League of Venice was signed by the pope, the emperor, the duke of Milan, the Spanish monarchs and, of course, Venice herself, with the aim of getting rid of the French and restoring the status quo. It was the first of a series of Leagues, in all of which, while partners were changed, Venice's chief aims were to maintain her empire and, in the process, to keep at least a few powerful friends; these could, from time to time but by no means always, include the duke of Ferrara and the marquis of Mantua.

In 1509 the situation was at its most serious; the League of Cambrai was gathered against Venice, which, for a few years, lost almost everything she possessed on the *Terraferma*. Although in the end she recovered most of what she had lost, the experience had shaken those who had lived through the period to such an extent that the renewed wars of the early 1520s, although far less serious where Venice was concerned, evidently appeared to pose more of a threat than they actually did.

And then there were the Turks to consider. For the sake of trade they must be appeased; as potential invaders of Italy they must be resisted; occasionally, as – however remotely – potential allies, they must be cherished.

Although in many instances a detailed study of a single aspect of Venetian life can adequately cover the whole of Venice's recorded history, where the study of dress is concerned this procedure could not be wise. As one of the applied arts, dress is too restless to be important, but as an aspect of social history it is unparalleled. In forecasting revolutionary movements it is as sensitive as it is in the foretelling of a return to conservatism. Observations or illustrations generated at one moment in its history can never be safely applied to clothing worn at another. Tradition, which can sometimes remain relevant in the study of folklore, is a dangerous witness where fashionable or even official dress is under consideration.

Studies of fashionable dress in any European country during the first quarter of the sixteenth century are rare; Spain provides almost the sole

exception.⁶ Where France, Germany and England are concerned they must still depend to a surprising degree on official reports in the form of letters home by Venetian ambassadors – reports which were certainly read with the greatest attention in the Councils of the always isolated city of Venice. Indeed, keeping up with events in the rest of Europe was one of the most persistent preoccupations of Venice's Councils, which could never afford to be out of touch with what went on everywhere else; this included what went on in the world of fashion.

The present attempt to extract every reference to clothing and textiles from every contemporary source has certainly been unsuccessful: new sources constantly emerge, and even some well-known ones may have been overlooked. Within the limits of human fallibility note has been taken (though not necessarily used here) of all Sanudo's comments on clothing, stuffs and jewels. On works of art in Venice the comments of Marcantonio Michiel are, of course, of great importance, but the passages he devotes to the dress of the Venetians, though interesting by their very existence, add nothing to the records of Sanudo.⁷

Visual sources – paintings, sculpture and engravings – have been examined with great caution and only those which can reasonably be supposed to illustrate the dress of actual residents in the city have been used to show what was worn in Venice. Important among these are works of art which are known to have been done for a specific church or institution in the city, because even the most superficial acquaintance with the Venetian character must show that good or noble personages (unless it was essential to show that they had belonged to another State) would be expected to wear Venetian fashions, whereas those who were ignoble or evil would certainly be portrayed as foreigners. Pompeo Molmenti's view that Herod's chief officer in Bonifacio de' Pitati's *Massacre of the Innocents* was portrayed as a Venetian gentleman who was not wearing his *toga* is almost certainly wrong. He was, in all probability, shown to be French in his dress, a reasonable characterisation at the time.⁸

In Venice in the early sixteenth century the only members of the population free to dress as they pleased were the working classes and prostitutes. All patricians and citizens put on a uniform dress at the age of twenty-five and wore it on all but specified occasions. Every effort was made to regulate the dress of middle- and upper-class women.

In equating the august city of Venice with a gentlemen's club, the importance of her international status has not been overlooked. In their purest and most prestigious form gentlemen's clubs depend on wealth and, however aristocratic, wealth ultimately derived from buying and selling, whether of products from the home farm, from what has been rather bizarrely named 'industry', or from the business of importing

8 *The Dress of the Venetians, 1495-1525*

and exporting produce from home or abroad. And it was for their expertise as traders that the Venetians of the Renaissance were famous. It was certainly as merchants and not as manufacturers that Venetians of the period grew rich.

By the end of the fifteenth century, and due to a great extent to the enterprise of the Venetians, international trade had reached almost modern proportions and the standard of living throughout upper-class European society was based on consumer goods not only from European neighbours but from Africa and Asia. Venice's merchant fleet was rivalled only by the fleet of the Genoese.

Although exotic aids to good cooking – nutmeg and cinnamon for instance – were in demand in the cooler climates of Europe, textiles formed an important bulk in the cargoes carried by Venetian ships. Cloth from Flanders and England was in demand and coveted (no doubt partly because of the prestige it acquired through its use by the Venetians), even by the Turkish gentry themselves. Conversely, in spite of the excellence of Italian woven silks, some of them Venetian, silk textiles from the Orient were still greatly prized. By the end of the sixteenth century what had, during the middle ages, been the correct dress for scholars, councillors and the law had, almost everywhere, settled into a more or less permanent and identifiable pattern.

Writing a book about dress in early sixteenth-century Venice has turned out to be far from easy. What seemed at first to have been a well-organised, strictly controlled system, which would enable the famous paintings of the time to be analysed and explained, has emerged, still as a system, but one which was subtle and complicated enough to allow of considerable deviousness and self-expression within what had at first appeared to be a successfully administered discipline. This, of course, instead of making the undertaking less interesting has made it much more so. It has, moreover, confirmed again the belief that clothing oneself, whether in what appears to be (but never is) complete freedom or, alternatively, within a required system, is always a far stranger process than most people would like to believe.

2 Official Dress in Venice

Laughing, Elisabetta Gonzaga took up Pietro Bembo's point: 'indeed you are right,' she said, 'if those fashions were the thing in Lombardy, then they were as proper to them as sleeves *a como* to the Venetians or rolled hoods to the Florentines'.¹ The duchess knew her Venetians and, indeed, it was the type of sleeve that the Venetian wore set into what he pleased, on occasion, to call his *toga* that placed him most immediately in the social hierarchy – most immediately but not necessarily finally. Romans of ancient Rome, of course, would have found the idea that sleeves of any pattern could be set into a toga a nightmare comparable, had they been familiar with it, to some practice followed in Dante's deepest Hell.

In his essay in praise of the city of Venice, Marin Sanudo explains that the male population was divided into three categories: gentlemen (often referred to as patricians), citizens, and the common people – artisans and other manual workers. He then provides what must, at first sight, seem the rather surprising news, that the gentlemen cannot be distinguished from the citizens by their dress because both wear the same style, that is to say a long black gown reaching to the ground, a (normally) black cap – *bareta*, and a black cloth or velvet stole. The only exceptions, Sanudo continues, are the Senators of the magistrature, who must, by law, wear colour.²

At the age of twenty-five, those Venetians who were permitted to wear this gown were recorded in an official register as *togati*,³ and from that time until their deaths they continued to wear a *vesta* of the approved pattern. It seems almost certain that a looser, more comfortable version was worn in the privacy of the home but it, too, was black.⁴

At the end of the fifteenth century, the Venetian *toga* was still, in its general style, the long gown already the traditional uniform of well-placed Italians when Dante himself wore one (Figure 1). As Sanudo explains, it reached the ankle, was closed up the front, and fastened at the throat with a very small and unobtrusive tie. From paintings of the end of the fifteenth century it can be seen that at that moment an extremely narrow line of (presumably) a white shirt was allowed to show above the standing neck-band of the gown itself. At a later period, from which one or two actual gowns survive, a cunning and almost invisible opening was contrived at the back of the neck, so that the front opening, which then no longer performed any function, could maintain



1. V. Carpaccio, *Figure Studies*, detail. Two young *togati*. Although their sleeves look open-ended they are, in fact, a *comeo*, though pushed up to the elbow. Both wear *bechi* over the shoulder. The style of hair-cut of these two young men is typical of the early 1490s. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.

a rigid neatness;⁵ it is not impossible that the trick was already in use much earlier but this cannot be proved. Over the succeeding years the Venetian *vesta* appears to have changed its form and amplitude only very slightly and, no doubt, as a very distant reflection of fashionable dress, but the change is perceptible only to an exceedingly sharp eye.

Under the gown the *togati* were required to wear ordinary black hose, a silk *zipon* (that closely fitted waist-length jacket better known outside Venice as a *jupon*) and, on their feet whatever the weather, *zoccoli*, sandal-like shoes with thick wooden soles, very familiar from Burgundian paintings of the middle of the fifteenth century⁶ and suitable for Venice's frequently flood-washed lanes.

There were four distinct gowns divided into four seasonal categories according to the materials of their linings: thick fur of marten, sheared lamb, *fuine* or wolf for winter, then successively squirrel-back (*dossi*), miniver, and a thin silk for summer. This meant that a *togato* would have in his wardrobe at any one time at least four suits of statutory black cloth.

Dante had not enjoyed a choice between the various types of sleeve permissible in Venice in the late fifteenth century nor, indeed, had Venetians of Dante's day. Two of the three main types of sleeve, which included Elisabetta's *a comeo* form, were survivals from a fashion that developed and then declined between 1400 and 1450. Named today the 'International Gothic' fashion, the styles of dress favoured during the two decades of its high popularity had been examples of a flamboyancy that lingered in the memory, comparable to the farthingales and ruffs of northern Europe in the late sixteenth century and the Victorian crinoline.

It was presumably because the International Gothic fashion had made an impression by its grandeur and daring originality that some of its features found their way, over the years, into the most respected dress of officials, not only in Venice but all over Europe. While the vivacious serrated edges, too *mouvementés* to be serious, disappeared, the sleeves, both those which hung like great bells with their ends open at the wrist and those which, also wide, were gathered up at the wrist so that they hung, not like bells but like bags, survived. It was these last which were likened to a bird's crop and named *a gomito*, modified regionally in Italy to *a comedo* or *a comeo*; the two terms were interchangeable in Venice. In describing the gown to be worn by those Venetians to whom it was allowed, Sanudo says that the sleeves were to be *a comedo*.⁷

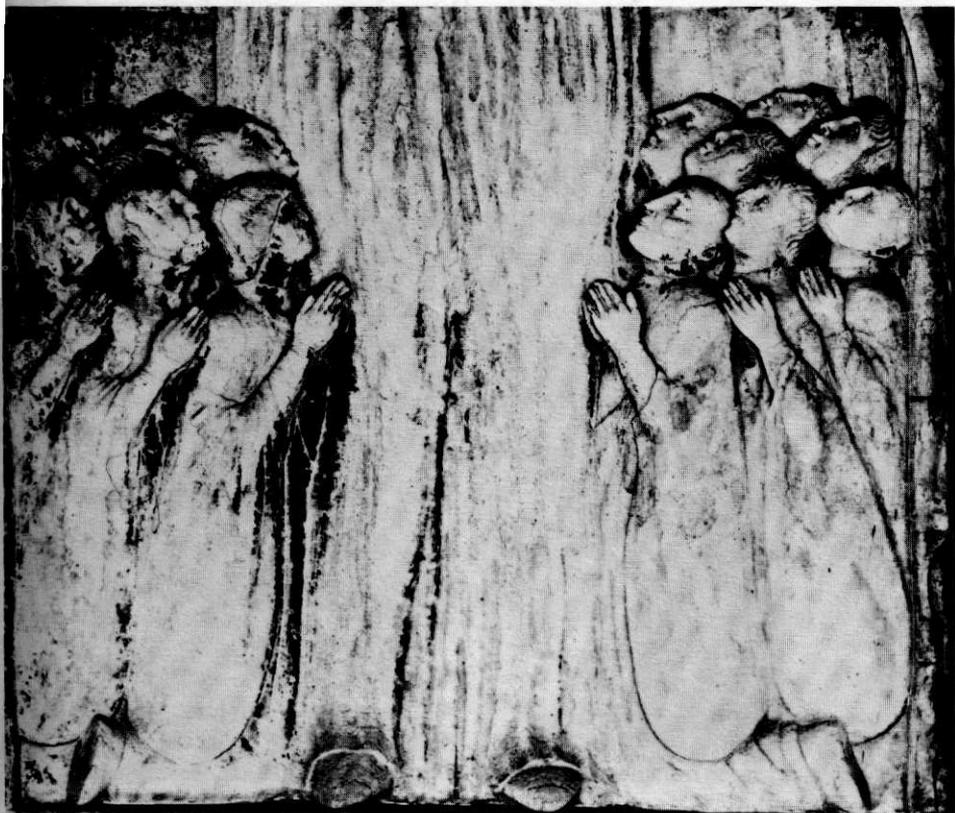
At the end of the fifteenth century, when Arnold von Harff, a knight of Cologne, recorded his extensive travels surrounding his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he stayed long enough in Venice to make careful notes of everything that interested him in the city, and that included the

appearance of the gentlemen (Figure 2). Commenting on their handsome long gowns worn to the feet, 'the sleeves of the gown,' he says, 'are narrow at the hand, but behind they hang down about an ell wide, like a sack, just as we make clothes for jesters in our country'.⁸ As traditional in their dress as the gentlemen of Venice, the Fools of northern Europe wore sleeves based on the same fashion which had become known in Italy as a *comeo*. The Fools also, of course, wore hoods of the earlier medieval pattern and the *mi-parti* of the fourteenth century. It was because sleeves a *comeo* were obligatory in the statutory black *veste* that they had become so closely associated with Venice as to be the most memorable feature to remain in the minds of those high-born gossips in Urbino.

A third type of sleeve allowed to Venetian *togati* was *stretta*, which, in the particular context of Venetian official dress, probably meant 'straight' rather than 'tight'. This type of sleeve was worn by those of very minor importance or only in very peculiar circumstances, though *maniche strette* were correct as sleeves for the clergy. In today's Italian, of course, *di maniche strette* is used to denote a strict disciplinarian.

Of the two most respected types of sleeve the more dignified were *ducale*, which, because they were wide open at the wrist, provided an opportunity for the display of expensive fur as lining (Figure 3). Originally *maniche ducali* were allowed in Venice only to the doge, Procurators and doctors of medicine but, objects of envy, they appear to have been worn after 1500 by some who, traditionally, had no right to them.⁹ It was not only in Venice that large bell-shaped sleeves were seen as a mark of high honour, but in Venice *ducale* sleeves were, as might have been expected, named in respect to the doge and called *maniche dogale* or, more often, *manege dogale*. What was presumably a smaller, modified version of these grandest of all sleeves was called, in Venice, *dogaline*.

There was a further badge of office allowed to Venetian gentlemen and citizens – the *becho* or *bechetto*, a word derived from *becco*, meaning a bird's beak. This was a long band of material, usually about 25 centimetres wide, worn, almost invariably, over the left shoulder. The *bechetto*, as its name implies, had a bizarre history. Elsewhere than in Venice a similar strip of cloth was worn and was known as a stole or *stola* and, indeed, in Venice herself when it appeared in its most exalted form as a badge of knighthood it was designated the *stola d'oro*, almost certainly to give it a universal respectability. For while insisting on commemorating their own beloved traditions in their own version of the Italian language, Venetians were sensitive to ridicule in the world outside and the world meant, primarily, the rest of Italy. The *stola* of the Venetian knight would often be worn by an ambassador who had received the Venetian accolade but who lived at a foreign court.



2. Sculptor unknown, *The Virgin adored by members of the Scuola of the Varotari*, 1501, detail. Members of the confraternity of Furriers kneel at the feet of the Virgin, wearing their livery, with its large sleeves *a comeo*. Transported from the Church of the Gesuiti. Venice, Campo Sta. Margherita.



3. Gentile Bellini, *The Procession in the Piazza S. Marco*, 1500, detail. Senators and a group of Germans or, perhaps, Englishmen. Venice, Accademia.

The *becho* was the vestige not of a scarf but of a piece of extraordinary headwear – the rolled hood, which, in itself, had had a complicated career. Originally a square of stuff; cut diagonally across and sewn up the sides to form a doubled triangle, it could cover the whole body or, if smaller, the head and shoulders only. A vertical slit allowed the face to appear, with the point of the triangle standing up above it. This had been the primitive covering worn by the northern peoples and adopted by their Roman conquerors, who felt the cold. Centuries later the hood had been, through gradual stages, refined into the elegant headpiece worn in the fourteenth century by, for instance, the gartered man in the fresco in Florence's Spanish Chapel.

But this was a concept too suave for the exuberant fashion of the early fifteenth century 'Gothic' moment. Using ingenuity, those wearers of the hood, instead of pulling it over their heads, slapped it on top of them, so that its (by then) long pendant end hung down over one shoulder and its short shoulder piece flapped onto the other (Figure 4). This 'rolled' *cappuccio* caught on everywhere. It was tilted forward, or to one side, its various parts were draped or wound about according to individual fancy or the prevailing style until, by the third quarter of the fifteenth century, it had become a wearisome toy which men of fashion had taken to wearing simply slung over the left shoulder while, on their heads, they wore a small cap, a relative of the ecclesiastical *biretta*.

It was at this point that, like many long-lived fashions, the rolled hood, where it survived, was retained as a part of the kind of traditional dress which becomes, in the end, livery, uniform, or a mark of high office or ceremony. As a miniature circular object from which emerges a tiny frill it still forms a part of the ceremonial mantle of the Order of the Garter.

It was soon after its rejection as an item of fashion that every corporation which had established a recognisable uniform dress was faced with the problem of discarding the rolled hood. In Florence it was retained for members of the government, soon afterwards discarded and then assumed by them once more,¹⁰ as Elisabetta Gonzaga was well aware. Venice behaved with more ingenuity. By pretending that the by then well-established cap – *bareta* – was actually the centrepiece of the rolled hood, and by detaching the hood's long end for wear as a hanging stole, officials of that subtle and ingrown society were able both to avoid looking archaic and out of touch and, at the same time, to regard themselves as guardians of tradition and untouched by the frivolous vagaries of ephemeral styles. Later historians, and Vecellio, the engraver, put about a rational excuse for the dismembering of the rolled hood by recording it as a fact that it had been pronounced bad for the eyesight and had hence been abandoned for the most lofty of reasons.¹¹ The excuse may even have been used at the time the fashion was

discontinued, but there seems to be no surviving contemporary record of the fact. Sanudo gives no date for the change but he does note it, saying that Venetians used to wear large rolled hoods – *capuzi molto grandi* – a fashion which they had abandoned.¹²

And so the Venetian *becho* came into being and played its part in the repertory of permutations within the strict limits of the official wardrobe, permutations which were read as a language by those who were concerned to read them. The difference between the patrician *becho* and the knightly stole, for instance, was one of colour and fabric only. Was it a coincidence that when the *becho* came into being a long band of stuff had already been a signal of knighthood elsewhere in Europe for a considerable time? The Venetian *becho* appears to have served no purpose other than to convey to the rest of the world Venice's opinion as to the standing of her citizens compared with those outside, though it is recorded that the *becho* was useful to lay over the head when it rained, in which case it would have reverted to the original purpose of the hood from which it had been detached.

A long *vesta* closed to the throat, a small *bareta*, a long *becho* and a distinctive type of sleeve – these then were the marks of the adult male Venetian, whether patrician or a citizen of ancient descent. But there was, in addition, a range of materials of which both the *vesta* and the *becho* could be made and a much smaller range of colours permissible for both. Normally the *bareta* was black; exceptions were made when special circumstances warranted them.

The regulation black cloth, correct for everyday wear in and about the city, was suitable for only the most routine official occasions; for anything even mildly exceptional it could be criticised as being inadequate. This black cloth was named in Venice *zambellotto* and imported in large quantities from the Near East. The word was a corruption of the French *camelot* and the English *camlet*, both of them originally implying a stuff made from camel-hair but lately merely a commonplace woollen cloth (see Plate 1).

The most sumptuous of all the fabrics allowed to Venetians was, of course, cloth of gold, often in Venice in the form of *restagno d'oro*, a patterned brocade woven entirely with a gold weft, though a plain, unpatterned cloth of gold was worn too. There was also, however, an even grander version of gold cloth – *riso sopra riso* – a weave in which both the raised pattern and the ground were woven into a granular surface of tiny loops which, as its name implies, looked like minute grains of rice.

Below cloth of gold came velvets and damasks. Velvets, at their most sumptuous, could also have a *riso sopra riso* weave as well as one that was called *alto e basso*, in which the velvet pattern was of a deeper pile than the velvet ground. There were, too, velvet patterns woven onto a plain



4. Giovanni Bellini, Predella panel, detail. This was painted before it had been decided to dismantle the rolled hood, which is worn here on the head of a man who wears an official gown. Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo.

silk ground, or the velvet of an official gown could be plain, with no pattern at all. There was, however, a hierarchy in the elaboration of the weave.

Damasks were, like velvets, of a uniform colour and there was another silk, not necessarily lower in rank, called *raso*, a plain silk which as its name suggests almost certainly had a satin surface. Another silk, referred to simply as *seda* in Venice, was probably a plain heavy silk with a poplin weave. All these expensive stuffs were obviously heavy enough to ensure that the gown would stay correctly in place in all normal circumstances. In winter the *vesta*, whatever its outer material, was lined with fur, in summer the lining was a plain silk referred to simply as *cedal* or, more usually in Venice, *zendado*. There seems to be no evidence that members of the Venetian government – as distinct, that is, from knights or ambassadors – wore any over-mantle to cover the *vesta* as a part of their normal dress.

The colours allowed were more limited than the permitted fabrics. White could, as in church vestments, stand as equal to gold for the robes of the doge but there is no evidence, I think, that it was ever worn by knights, who were, on the occasion of the knighting, presented with a gold mantle and sometimes a gold *vesta* as well; knights were allowed to appear also on other occasions wearing cloth of gold if the circumstances were appropriate.

Second in importance to gold (and white) and far more usual was the deep crimson tint referred to as *cremesino* and dyed with *kermes*, a dye made from minute insects imported mainly from India. *Cremsino* was never used as a dye for cloth but it was the correct dye for official gowns of velvet, damask or plain silk. For crimson official gowns in any of these stuffs dyers were, by their statutes, forbidden to use anything but pure *cremesino* in this period; later, when Venice had become poorer, the rules were modified to some extent.¹³

Following the heavy silk fabrics down the scale of materials came *scarlatto*, a term derived originally from two Netherlandish words denoting an especially fine heavy cloth. Because this had usually been dyed to a bright red it had come, by the end of the fifteenth century, to refer to the colour rather than to the type of cloth. Indeed it seems that by that time it could be used, though it only very occasionally was, to describe the colour of a silk fabric.¹⁴

Apart from gold, crimson and scarlet, black velvet or damask gowns were sometimes worn and not invariably as a sign of mourning but some important reservations existed over the use of black, however expensive the stuff. But there was also another official colour, one which has been a matter of dispute: *paonazzo* or *pavonazzo*.

A moment's thought will show that although the nineteenth century may have named a certain colour 'peacock blue' – the colour of the

breast of the male bird – an actual peacock cannot be restricted to the colour of its breast for its tail is indisputably its most striking feature and that is certainly made up of feathers of more than one simple colour. A clue to the actual colour defined in Italy as *pavonazzo* might, perhaps, be provided by the instructions to dyers, drawn up in the regulations which governed their code of practice. These are similar in both Florence and Venice and insist that one of the ingredients in dyeing *pavonazzo* must be *cremesino* or (and this seems to apply to Florentine dyers only) *grana*, a slightly inferior quality of dye which produced virtually the same colour as *cremesino*. This would suggest that *pavonazzo* had a pinkish or a brownish tinge, but it is a suggestion that would not be universally accepted and more research is needed before the colour can be indisputably identified; there is some evidence that it was not a faded brownish pink. Lodovico Dolce, better known as a playwright, devoted one of his several ‘treatises’ to a discussion on colour. His *Tratto dei Colori*, like his others, is in the form of a dialogue and wanders into discussions on clothing as well as on colours. In his *Tratto*, under the heading *Feniceo* (Phoenix), Dolce states that the colour represented is a warm violet, often called *purpura violata*, and that in his day it was known as *e chiamato Paonazzo*. Dolce was born in Venice in 1508, was granted patrician status in 1557 and died in 1568, so his definition of the colour *pavonazzo* can be regarded as roughly contemporary with the years covered by the present study.¹⁵

Pavonazzo occupied a curious position in the colour hierarchy of Venetian official dress. It could, it seems, represent sorrow rather than official mourning, though it was certainly used for half-mourning but, as can be seen from the references to the circumstances in which it was worn, it could also carry other meanings. It was, for instance, one of the two colours which the Great Chancellor (*Canzelier grande*) was required to wear; the other was scarlet. The protocol governing the clothing of this officer is very interesting and will be discussed later.

Pavonazzo also seems to have been worn in what might be called ambiguous circumstances. On the death of a doge his successor was immediately elected which was, of course, a signal for rejoicing, but a certain respect for a decent period of mourning was not entirely forgotten. The brief interregnum was always a special occasion and in one such time a holder of the exalted office of Procurator was actually present in council wearing the simple *vesta* (in *zambeloto*—cloth) common to all who were entitled to assume it at the age of twenty-five.¹⁶ But the hesitation as to whether the concept of the continuity of the state or the moment of mourning for a doge should be paramount was shown by the Venetian ambassadors who returned from Rome to Venice at such a moment, when one of them wore *paonazzo*, one scarlet and one crimson damask.¹⁷

On the death in May 1523 of the aged doge Antonio Grimani after a reign of only twenty-two months, Andrea Gritti was elected as his successor, though not without opposition. His defeated rival, Antonio Trun, had been an extremely popular candidate and on the announcement of Gritti's election cries of 'Trum, Trum' were heard in the lanes of Venice. Through the crowds in the Piazza the new doge made his way to St Mark's on the following day. He was accompanied by the heads of the leading councils and by procurators, most of them wearing crimson, some in *alto e basso*, but the defeated Procurator, Antonio Trun, wore damask in *pavonazzo*. Another to wear *pavonazzo* on the day after that was Lorenzo Loredan, son of the last doge but one. While most of the officials present wore crimson silk he was in *pavonazzo* and, moreover, his *vesta* was of cloth. The recent death of his father, less than two years previously, may have accounted for that choice of dress.

In Venice the association of the colour *pavonazzo* with mourning may have been a tenuous one and, as has been suggested, it may have been used to express sorrow or doubt rather than actual mourning but it should be noted that after the death of Pope Leo X in December 1521, about twenty cardinals wearing mantles of *pavonazzo* cloth surrounded the corpse as it lay in state and, what is perhaps a rather gruesome clue to the precise shade indicated by the term, the face of the dead pope was described as *negro come pavonazzo scuro*.¹⁸

Like many other matters in Venetian officialdom, the question of mourning was one of extreme delicacy, which is why the wearing of the enigmatic colour *pavonazzo* is so difficult to interpret today, though its implications were certainly clear to those who wore it and to those who saw it being worn. Perhaps the most enlightening example of its significance is contained in an entry in Sanudo's diary for 7 October 1524. 'In the morning,' he wrote, 'sier Polo Capello the *cavalier*, who was yesterday re-elected Procurator, was in *Collegio*.' It was usual for Procurators to make their first appearance after election in some state, wearing crimson and followed by a large entourage which included the other Procurators, where they were available, as well as members of their own families and friends, all of them formally dressed in, at least, scarlet. Sier Polo, we are told however, wore *paonazzo* and, moreover, cloth, with a *becheto* of *paonazzo* as mourning for his wife, a sister of the late queen of Cyprus, Caterina Cornaro. After the death of his wife two years previously, he had never wished to wear colour again. Here the use of the word *colour* puts *pavonazzo* into the same category as black, as non-colour. Relations of Polo Capello and other gentlemen in his train wore silk and scarlet, silk meaning here velvet or damask in crimson. Sier Polo's son Filippo attended wearing black as mourning for his mother.¹⁹ It can, I think, be assumed that it would have been impossible for sier Polo himself to have worn black on such an occasion as his

first appearance after his election, though certainly the fact that his *vesta* was of *pano* – cloth – and not silk comes as a surprise. It is difficult not to speculate as to whether his wife's close relationship to Caterina Cornaro had some bearing on sier Polo's rather unorthodox attitude to the mourning that he chose to wear.

Very many examples of the wearing of *pavonazzo* could be quoted. On St Mark's day 1522, for instance, Marco Grimani, nephew of the aged doge (who was himself correctly dressed in gold), wore *pavonazzo* with a crimson *becho*, and there seems to be some evidence that this particular combination was correct for the 'companion' of the official sword-bearer to wear in ceremonial processions.

In June 1509, on the first feast of Corpus Christi after the formation of the League of Cambrai, the traditional procession was held but there were few patricians apart from the *Signoria* and most of those wore *pavonazzo*; about eight wore scarlet and the rest black.²⁰

Carrying out their official duties, it is quite evident that Venetian men were watched with eager curiosity by their peers for any indication that they were expressing, in their official dress, a special state of mind or an unorthodox point of view. They were also noted with no less interest by the *Consejo di X*, a council consisting of members elected from the Senate primarily to oversee the security of the state. That their terms of reference could also include the supervision of the clothing worn by officials is yet another sign of Venice's preoccupation with the question. The colours allowed to those mature Venetian men who were not *popolani* and were allowed to wear the *toga* were, as we have seen, four: crimson, *pavonazzo*, scarlet and black, although only crimson and scarlet were strictly named as 'colours'. Gold, exclusive to the doge and to those who had received the accolade of knighthood, was never, of course, everyday wear. There is also a very occasional mention of the term *beretino*, the colour of natural undyed wool associated with some religious orders, but it was not one of the official colours of the *togati* of Venice.

A minor complication had arisen over the colour *beretino* when, in 1521, Antonio Grimani was elected doge, for his son, Vincenzo Grimani, was under a vow never to wear colour; he habitually wore *pano beretin*. A compromise seems to have been reached, however, for on the first Sunday of the reign, His Serenity's son attended Mass dressed, certainly, in the greyish colour demanded by his vow, but his *vesta* was made in damask and with it he wore a *becho* of *damaschin beretin* too. They had been made, reported Sanudo, during the night.²¹ On the following day sier Vincenzo attended a meeting of the *Pregadi* dressed again in his ash-coloured damask; this time with the addition of a cap, also of *beretin* silk.²²

On 2 May 1522, the Council of Ten reminded their compatriots that

it was unlawful to attend a meeting of the *Collegio* unless wearing colour; in other words they were not to wear black. The *Collegio* has been referred to as the most authoritative body in the Venetian structure of councils and magistracies,²³ so it may have been permissible to wear black in minor committees. Furthermore, the Council of Ten declared that with their 'colour' they must wear *bechi* of scarlet or silk. They also took the opportunity to point out that the vice-doge must wear scarlet when he attended the *Gran Consejo*.²⁴

The advice at this moment was relevant, for the meeting had been held during the period when a vice-doge was often required to act as a deputy for Antonio Grimani, who, at the age of eighty-eight, often went to sleep during meetings. But a vice-doge had, in fact, frequently taken charge of official proceedings during the later years of the reign of Lunardo Loredan, Antonio Grimani's predecessor, whose health had been so bad that he had been increasingly unable to carry out his official duties. The vice-doge was usually appointed for the moment only and, as a rule, in recognition of his status as the oldest councillor present. He did not, however important the occasion, assume the insignia of the doge, but wore his own clothing, which should, of course, in any case always have been correct. It must have been significant, therefore, that only a month after the Council of Ten had called attention to the fact that the vice-doge, on pain of a fine of a hundred ducats, must wear scarlet for meetings of the *Gran Consejo*, sier Alvise Contarini, a councillor acting as vice-doge, did attend a meeting of the *Gran Consejo* dressed in black. The lawyers were quick to take up the case.²⁵

For the majority of the members of Venetian councils *veste* of scarlet cloth were correct for nearly all official occasions. Black cloth could be worn by those who were not members of special committees and was obviously tolerated for many who were, except on occasions of special importance. Exceptional in their dress, however, were the nine *procuratori*, whose houses were situated in the Piazza S. Marco and whose title was properly *Procuratori di san Marco*. From their number were normally elected the doges of Venice. Already wealthy, they received no salary, but they were nevertheless responsible for overseeing a great many areas of Venetian life, from the fabric and treasures of St Mark's basilica to the welfare of orphans. By virtue of their office the *procuratori* were permitted to wear those wide-open sleeves referred to as *dogale*, a privilege they shared, in the city itself, with doctors of medicine and one which was, apparently, allowed to ambassadors and *capitanii* serving abroad and which was clearly, on occasion, usurped by some who had no right to it.²⁶

Sometimes referred to as *manege averte*, open-ended sleeves are often mentioned as part of the dress of an officer of the Republic returning from abroad to report to the *Collegio*. In 1500 the *capitanio zeneral di*

mar, Venice's high admiral, was described as wearing crimson with open sleeves and a crimson satin cap. A cap in crimson *raso* would not have been worn as a part of the normal dress of a *togato* of Venice; he would normally have worn a black one. The *capitano* on that occasion was mentioned as one of the *provedadori*, who could be regarded as heads of departments of Venice's civil service, each in charge of running some essential aspect of Venetian life: the markets near the Rialto, the Arsenal, the customs and excise, the care and maintenance of the streets and canals. But, because they were lower in status than the *procuratori*, the *provedadori* were not, in normal circumstances, supposed to wear *manege dogal* when they wore crimson *veste*. It seems, however, that when they returned as victorious admirals or generals, the rule was relaxed. The importance of maintaining the image of secure magnificence meant that, outside the city itself, the grandest forms of *veste* were worn by those in charge of the cities on the mainland under Venetian rule. These *podeste* and *capitani*, as direct representatives of the Serenissima, are portrayed in paintings as wearing the closed *vesta* and, as a rule, the small round black cap of the Venetian *togato*; but the velvet is of the highest class, the sleeves *dogal* and the lining of the most expensive fur.

All this is a demonstration of a certain flexibility below the surface but one which it must have been dangerous to rely on. Criticisms in *Collegio* were usually directed at too little rather than too much splendour, and there are constant reminders of the importance both of keeping up appearances and of doing honour to distinguished foreign guests or visiting envoys. If the visit was a long one escorts might be needed daily for several days. These escorting parties sometimes consisted of volunteers, but when the visitor was particularly distinguished or politically important (the two were not necessarily the same), members of an appropriate council or committee were designated to go and not infrequently some reference was made to the fact that they were expected to be adequately dressed for the duty, which meant, in effect, no black. In exceptional circumstances the escorting party could consist almost entirely of knights and doctors.

While no member of the government was ever admitted to a council of any kind unless he was wearing a *toga*, these references to the adequacy of their dress show that some men were apt to be careless and to content themselves with turning up merely in the minimum black cloth when they should have put on *scarlatto*.

A unique creation on the part of the Venetian government was the office of *Cancelleria dogale*, a plebeian office held by the *Cancellier Grando*, who was elected for life by those citizens entitled to attend the *Gran Consiglio* – though he himself had no rights to vote or to speak in any council, nor was he invited to the doge's table. In the mornings the

Chancellor attended meetings of the *Collegio*, after luncheon, the Council of Ten or the *Pregadi*, the *Audentia* or, when it met, the *Gran Consiglio*. He received a good salary. The *Canzelier Grando* was the first officer of the people; he preceded the doge in ceremonial processions, walking between two members of the Council of Ten and he was obliged always to wear colour, which (to add a little further to the confusion, which to a Venetian did not, of course, exist) meant in his case scarlet or *pavonazzo*.²⁷

In August 1523 Nicolò Aurelio was elected *Canzelier Grando*; he immediately attended the *Collegio* wearing crimson damask and a *becho* of *pavonazzo* velvet, with a following of about ten of his plebeian relations, dressed in scarlet. At once a new picture is revealed, for the plebeians did not wear scarlet, nor, it would seem from the regulations, did the Grand Chancellor wear crimson damask. An exception, however, was evidently made for his *first* visit to a council as holder of his office, because other Grand Chancellors did the same – as can be seen from his immediate successor, who also wore crimson damask on his first appearance.

Nicolò Aurelio as *Canzelier* was unfortunate. In April 1524, less than a year after his election, doubts were raised as to his integrity over money matters, and on 21 June he was ordered to appear in *Collegio* before the *Signori de note*.²⁸ He came, dressed in *paonazzo a manege dogal*, and pleaded innocence. The next day he was ordered to appear again and told that he must put on something other than *manege ducal*. He obeyed, and came wearing black with sleeves a *comedo*, a black *becheto* and black hose. Finally, pronounced guilty, he was deprived of his office and banished for life to Treviso.²⁹ Nicolò Aurelio was replaced as *Canzelier Grando* by a former secretary of the Council of Ten, who, as we have seen, made his first appearance wearing crimson damask and then reverted to the scarlet with *manege dogal*, which were correct for his office unless, like Nicolò Aurelio, he was in disgrace.

Between 1495 and 1525, the period covered by this study, four doges successively occupied the chair of state in the Venetian Republic. They are the last four to be listed by Sanudo under the headline: 'Qui si far mentione de tutti i dosi sono stati in la città de Venetian. . .'³⁰ Agostin Barbarigo was elected in 1486, to be followed, in 1501, by Lunardo Loredan, who held the position until his death in 1521. Antonio Grimani, who followed him, lived to reign for only one year, ten months and two days, so that it was in 1523 that Andrea Gritti was elected; he outlived Sanudo himself.

The doge, as head of the Republic, had of necessity a large official wardrobe but also a customary type of dress for wear when he was not directly engaged in matters of state. For this dress, unless he was in



5. *Doge Andrea Dandolo*. A drawing after the initial letter in a manuscript of 1342. This hood is probably the origin of the later ducal *corno*, which, like the rolled hood, was later taken apart. Venice, Arch. di Stato, sala diplomatica.

mourning, he had always to wear crimson. Granted the courtesy title of *il Principe*, a Venetian device to set him above the mere holders of dukedoms – the rulers of Milan and Ferrara, for instance – his official cap was regarded almost as a royal crown and, in its grandest form, in which it was never worn but carried in state on a cushion, it was embellished with a crowded decoration of jewels (*piena di zoie*) so that the fabric of the cap itself became the equivalent of the royal cap of state. The doge raised his *baretta* to none save the pope, the emperor and reigning monarchs.³¹

The distinctive form of the doge's *baretta*, called the *corno*, which rose to a point at the back, was referred to with respect by Sanudo and others who interested themselves in the matter. The form itself was not ancient; manuscript paintings and some mosaics of the fourteenth century and earlier show the doge wearing either what looks like a square-topped cap turned up in front to show a fur lining or almost certainly actually a kind of hood. Indeed the *corno ducale* with its rising point was itself probably derived from the traditional hood, with a short, not a long, liripipe (Figure 5). But that would, of course, have seemed too commonplace an ancestry for the official *corno* of the Renaissance doges of Venice. Like the *becho*, the original hood had probably been surreptitiously dismembered to form what became generally known as the *baretta*.

The ducal *corno* or *baretta* was worn over a linen coif of exactly the pattern worn by, for instance, Enrico Scrovegni as painted by Giotto in the Arena Chapel – a ubiquitous head-covering of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries which, as the fifteenth century progressed, withdrew into ceremonial and official dress. The doge's white coif was known in Venice as the *veta*,³² a word originally signifying an accumulation of fine threads (see Plate 2).

Although his wardrobe was often extensive so far as the number of garments was concerned, the forms and colours allowed to the doge were even more limited than those permitted to senators and councillors. By the end of the fifteenth century the doge could wear white (and its heraldic equivalent, gold), crimson and, for mourning, scarlet. In form the dress consisted of a *vesta* similar to that of the Venetian patrician but with *manege dogal*, a mantle and (a latter addition) a fur shoulder-cape. Probably because he habitually wore a mantle, the open sleeves of the doge seem usually to have been rather smaller than those of the *procuratori* of the time – those would have hampered his movements too much.

In its most usual form the doge's mantle was fastened in front over the chest with a row of large buttons – *campanoni d'ori*.³³ Its opening could, however, be swung to one side as demanded by necessary movement and, when he appeared in armour and therefore as a knight

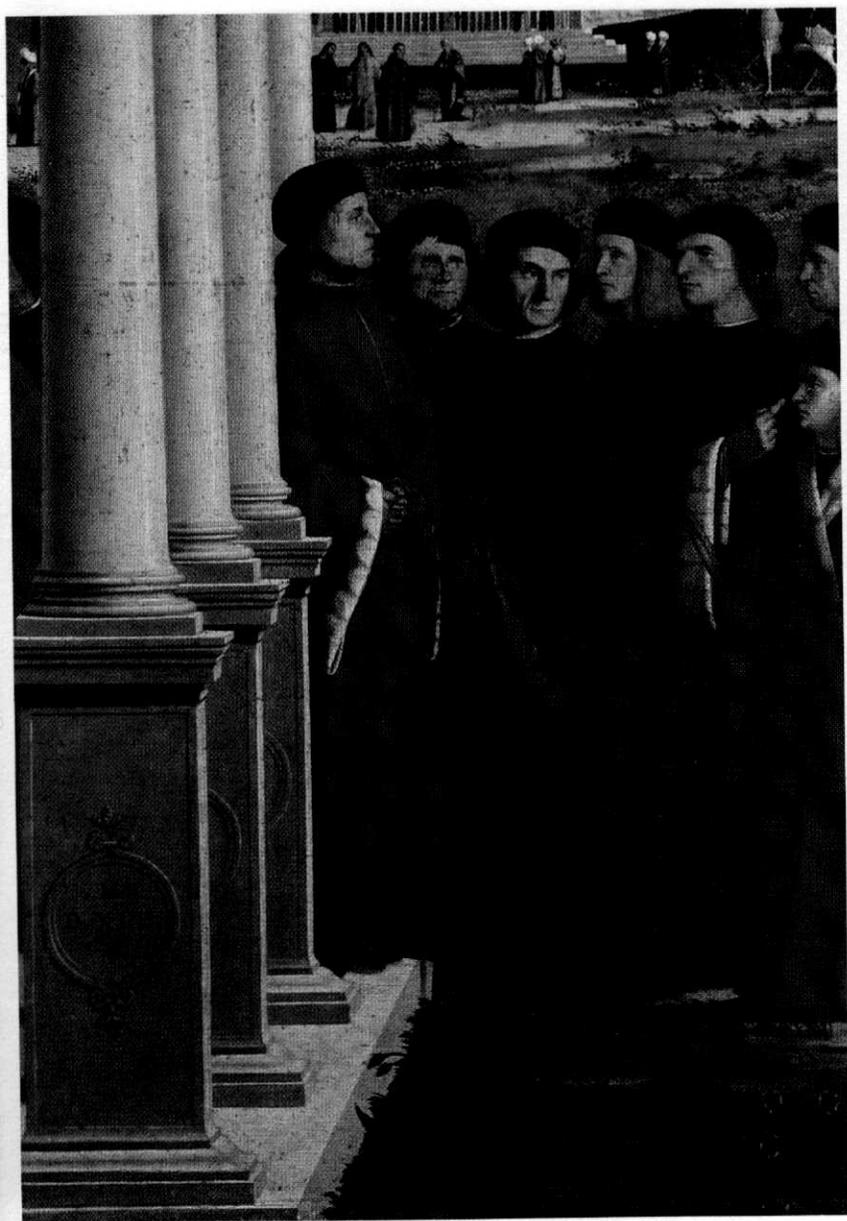


PLATE I. V. CARPACCIO, *S. Stefano Cycle: argument in the Synod*, 1514. Detail. Venetian *togati*; although evidently on duty abroad, most of the Venetians are wearing black. Milan, Brera.

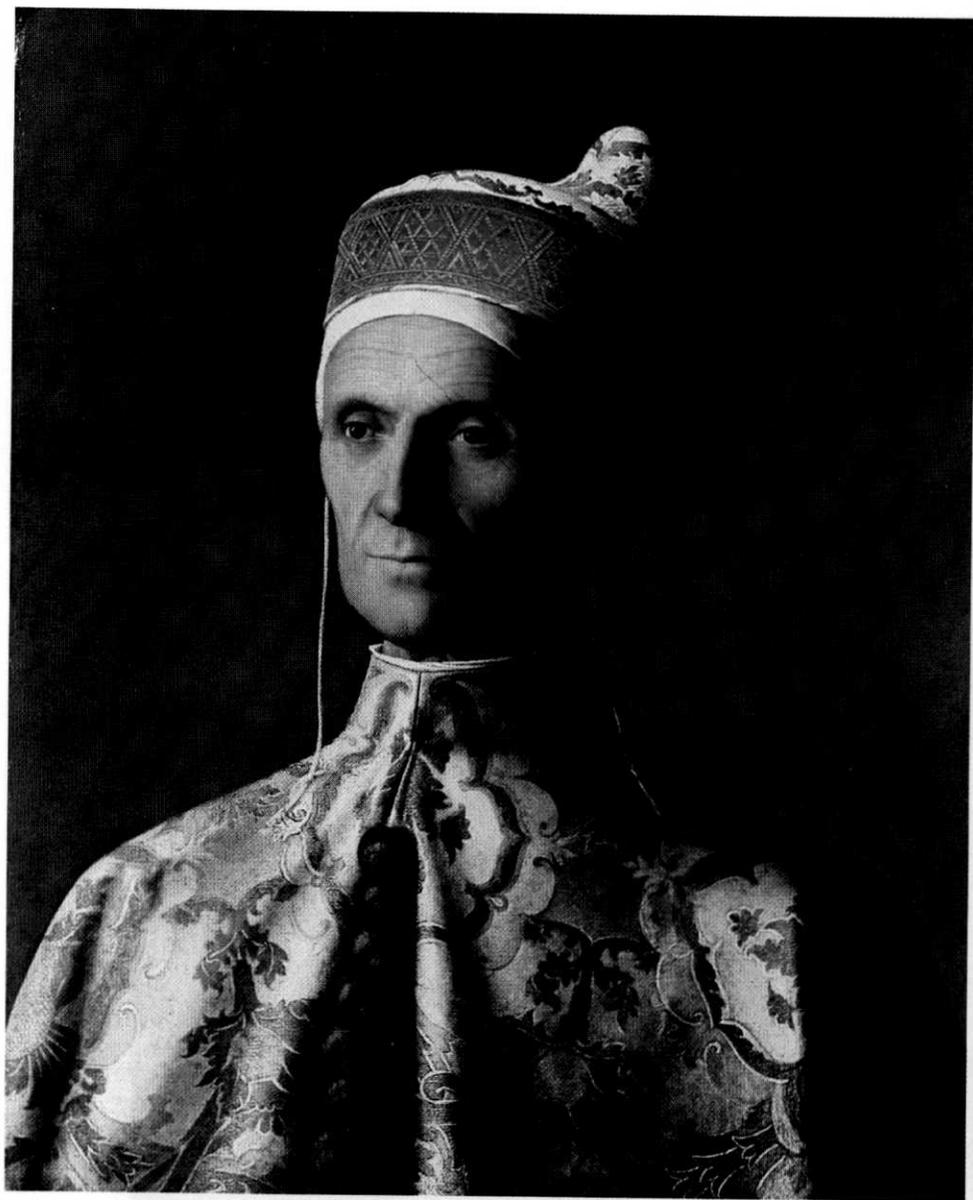


PLATE 2. Giovanni Bellini. *Doge Leonardo Loredan*. Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees, The National Gallery, London.

as well as a ruler-warrior, the ducal mantle was worn with the opening on the right shoulder in the traditional knightly style.

On Sunday, 29 November 1523, the doge Andrea Gritti had shocked the assembly in the *Gran Consejo* by appearing in a crimson satin mantle slit open at each side so that his arms could pass through it, obviously a convenience at a cold time of the year. It was a new style, said Sanudo, displeasing to everyone and a grave error on the part of the *principe*. Gritti seems, however, to have been unabashed, because he wore it again on the following Sunday and, indeed, again on Christmas Eve that year, when it was described as his *manto di raso fenestralle*, his mantle with windows. For a time the doge evidently ceased to wear it; Sanudo found it worth mentioning that *El Doxe* had crimson velvet and no longer that *raso* mantle with openings. That had been after the luncheon on the following 3 January, at a meeting of the *Gran Consejo*, but the satin mantle reappeared a year later when Andrea Gritti again on the Vigil of Christmas went to Mass at San Marco wearing the mantle of crimson *raso*, lined with *armellini* and open at the sides – *de le bande* – and accompanied by the usual ambassadors.

This mantle, which had been worth so much attention, had not, in fact, been the only one of its kind. In 1521, in his last year, the aged and infirm doge Lunardo Loredan had worn a mantle open at the sides so that his sleeves could be passed through it – more comfortable for his Serenity, Sanudo had commented. It was evidently the shock of finding that the contraption had been adopted by the dress-conscious Andrea Gritti that had been disagreeable. But even earlier, in 1514, a mantle of crimson *raso* with windows cut into it had been noted, though apparently it had been worn only once and that was, after all, when times were uneasy.³⁴ The emotions aroused in 1523 by so small a departure from the traditional pattern were typically Venetian. It was, of course, never suggested that Andrea Gritti had discovered that crimson *raso* mantle of 1514 and, courageous in matters of style, produced it as a new fashion. What the noting of the 'windowed' mantle certainly demonstrates is the intense care with which, in Venice, the clothes of the mighty were recorded.

With so limited a range of colours at his disposal, the doge's dress naturally consisted of as many different fabrics as possible, and these were also carefully noted. His *cremesino* could range from patterned velvet to plain silk. His hose and shoes were invariably red, but a certain variety could be produced by the fact that most doges seem to have had a large collection of *corni*, in a wide range of fabrics and richnesses, especially in the quality of the band by which they were bordered. An extra ceremonial grandeur was displayed by the addition of the ducal *bavaro*, the shoulder-cape, usually of ermine, which, if the occasion was

important enough, would be worn even in high summer; the *bavaro* was fastened at the throat but otherwise left open.

During his long reign, Andrea Gritti's predecessor, Lunardo Loredan, was almost always praised for the correctness of his dress, even when, at the end of his life, he had become so frail that on his increasingly rare appearances outside the palace he had to be carried in a special carriage.³⁵ To the modern student of Venetian Renaissance history 'Leonardo Loredano' represents the typical doge, not because of his long reign but because of the famous and memorable portrait of him in the National Gallery, London.³⁶ Immaculately dressed and with an expression of gracious gravity, the clothes worn by this doge show how the festive white of his mantle could be matched by the stuff of his *cornio*; how white itself could be subtly modulated by a woven pattern; and exactly what the *campanoni* which fastened the ducal mantle looked like (see Plate 2).

Because the Republic must not be left without a head of State, on the death of the reigning doge his successor was elected almost immediately, or as quickly as that elaborate process permitted. Members of the special composite committee responsible for the election were not allowed to leave the ducal palace until their duty had been accomplished.³⁷ The clothes of the new doge, always closely observed even before his election to that office, were naturally looked at very critically when he made his first appearance after his election, which could often be on the very next day. A moment's thought, therefore, will show that he must have had considerable difficulty in assembling a correct set of garments for a state procession at literally a few hours' notice.

On the day after his election, Saturday, 6 July 1521, the aged doge Antonio Grimani, for instance, attended Mass accompanied by the Senate and members of his own family and household and then returned to the palace. He was, of course, an object of interest and is reported as having worn his 'usual' crimson damask, which looked too short. His ducal cap, however, was covered in crimson silk and surrounded by a gold band which made a brave show, given that his Serenity was eighty-seven years old.³⁸

His successor, the much younger Andrea Gritti (who would not have been Sanudo's choice, for he regarded him as excessively pro-French), was also scrutinised very carefully. Grimani's death had been announced on 20 May 1523 and two days later the new doge proceeded in great triumph, accompanied by officials and by ambassadors representing the states friendly to Venice, to hear Mass at St Mark's. He wore crimson damask and a ducal *bareta* of satin, but it was too small and looked awful. Under the cap he wore his hair long and a very small coif. On the twenty-fourth, the day of Pentecost, his ducal cap was bigger and looked very much better.³⁹ Once he had had time to

consider his wardrobe, Andrea Gritti soon accumulated a collection of handsome mantles and gowns for which he was much admired. He also wore a *cornio* (perhaps he owned more than one of the kind) covered with a particularly attractive silk woven with a pattern of flowers which seems always to have caught the eye.⁴⁰

When not in Council or on outdoor official business, the doge was required, unless he was in mourning, to wear a *vesta* of crimson, which need not be full-length, and a hat of semi-official design. This was based on an order drawn up in the fourteenth century which stated that the doge, when not wearing official dress, must wear only crimson, except when in mourning. Pictorial evidence of the design of this domestic dress, or undress, during the early years of the sixteenth century seems not to exist, but later in the century a doge is shown wearing a stiff hat of crimson that, flattened, resembled a hardened version of the soft double-tiered cap familiar in masculine 'Tudor' dress. It may be, therefore, that a slight hint of the current fashion was allowed in the privacy of the ducal palace. That later type of hat was shared with generals and naval commanders, as well as with some Venetian ambassadors and consuls when abroad.⁴¹

For either official or personal mourning the doge had to wear *scarlato*, the most modest fabric allowed to him: the invisible spirit of the Republic continued whatever the situation and had to be shown to be permanently maintained. On Holy Thursday and on Good Friday the doge also wore scarlet, as a mark of humility and penitence.

Under constant scrutiny, the dress of the doge could mark the exact importance of the occasion and this could apply to not only the annual festivals but also the precise standing (in the eye of the Republic) of any foreign guest or Venetian returning from abroad. When an official welcome was given by the doge the warmth of that welcome could be noted not only from his words but from the exact quality of the crimson he had put on.

When, owing to the indisposition of the doge, a representative was required to take his place, this vice-doge, as we have seen, was usually chosen for the single event only and was usually the oldest councillor present. Although in order to preserve the traditional continuity the vice-doge might represent the doge in an annual ceremony of the *Sensa* or the procession of Corpus Christi, he did so in his capacity of a Venetian official and never as doge. He wore what would have been appropriate to the occasion in his normal standing as procurator or whatever his station in everyday life. Nor was the vice-doge allowed the ceremonial support given to the doge himself. No swordbearer walked in the procession nor was the ducal *cornio* carried before him. There had, indeed, been the one occasion when a vice-doge was reprimanded for wearing improper dress but this seems to have been quite exceptional.

Although he had been critical of the small size of the *cornio* that he wore on his first appearance after his election, Sanudo gradually became extremely interested in the doge Andrea Gritti's choice of official dress and Gritti does, indeed, seem to have introduced innovations. While the 'flowers' which decorated the silk of the *bareta* that he wore on the most important occasions always drew favourable comment, what must surely have been a daring move was Gritti's addition of 'old rose' colour to the very restricted colour-scheme allowed to the doge. Whether, when he began to wear it fairly frequently during the celebrations surrounding Christmas 1524 it was already, as a colour, a part of high fashion or whether Andrea Gritti himself introduced it, *ruosa secha* was certainly also worn by his niece at her wedding in January 1525.⁴² It seems, in fact, more likely that Gritti himself had set the fashion for, a year or two later, he appeared in 'violet', a term not included up to then either in Venetian official dress or for fashionable colours worn in Venice.

Once outside the city, it was typical of Venice's intermingling of rigidity with flexibility that Venetian ambassadors could, when they thought it appropriate, feel free to adapt their official form of dress to local requirements or even to fit in with local customs. The bestowing of garments on visiting potentates and envoys was an ancient tradition but to what extent the Venetian ambassador in, for example, Constantinople actually appeared in the *casacha* presented to him by the sultan would be impossible to determine. He would certainly have worn it on occasion out of courtesy. In this, as in many other respects, Venice showed her wisdom by giving stuffs rather than clothing to distinguished visitors: silk to the head of the delegation, scarlet to members of his train. It was quite normal for both to appear at a meeting of the Council actually wearing clothing made from the fabrics they had been given the day before.

The word *casacha* was, in its Venetian form, *caxacha*, a useful one in the Venetian vocabulary; it could be applied to any long garment that was different in cut from the official Venetian *toga*. When, for instance, he was knighted by the Serenissima, the recipient of the accolade was sometimes presented with a *caxacha* of cloth of gold, whether he was a member of the Venetian government or a 'foreigner' from the mainland or some country abroad. The *caxacha*, unlike the *toga*, was open down the front, though when it was wrapped over, the *zipon* or the *saion* worn beneath it would not, of course, be visible. A type of *casacha* was worn in Venice by military and naval commanders when not on, or preparing for, active service. This long open gown was less voluminous than the official *toga*. It often had sleeves of some kind, but these were usually short and below them were long slits through which the arms could be passed. In fact, like the mantles worn occasionally by a doge, the

military and naval *casacha* was *fenestralla*; seen from the back, or in a crowd, a commander, apart from the design of his cap would not be too conspicuous among the *togati* – in other words he would not look ‘foreign’ – so to look being for a Venetian an undesirable thing.



6. V. Carpaccio, *St Ursula Cycle, The arrival of the English ambassadors at the Court of Brittany*, detail. The youth facing the spectator's right wears a decorated stocking, suggesting that he is a member of a *Compagnia della Calza*. The cut of the hair of both boys is particularly stylish. Venice, Accademia.

3 The Dress of the Young Men of Venice

Nowhere is the innocent arrogance of the male teenager more perfectly delineated than in Venetian painting of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Expensively dressed in what is recognisably the current fashion these young men wear their clothes with a casual assurance and, while they never lounge, they stand and sit in easy postures with a leisurely grace. They are, in fact, waiting. At twenty-five they will be *togati* – indeed, in certain circumstances this could be brought about at a distinctly earlier age¹ – but in the meantime they wait, in groups of two or sometimes three or four.

In 1495 the hair of these young Venetians was worn long to the shoulders and cut across the brow with supreme professional skill. To the modern eye, less distinguishably Venetian than their female counterparts, in their own eyes and those of their tailors they were almost certainly wearing the fashions of Venice. On their smooth, thick and usually only slightly curled hair (Figure 6) they wear, for instance, caps which are small and round and which could be painlessly exchanged in due course, for the official *bareta* of more or less the same shape and size. Exchanged, that is to say, once the jewelled ornaments that embellish the caps of the young had been severely removed.

Unlike women, these young men decorate almost all the large subject paintings of the end of the fifteenth century, acting as ‘extras’ in scenes of betrothal or of official processions.

No Edwardian corset could have done more to redesign the shape of the body inside it than the *zupon* did to remodel the male torso of the 1490s (Figure 7). The strange concept of a profile vertical at the back but expanding downwards in an arc in front had become so acceptable, indeed normal, that it was adopted by Carpaccio for the torso of the angel who appears to the sleeping St Ursula.²

In Venice, by the end of the fifteenth century, the standard garments had become more difficult to name. A linen shirt – *camisa* – was still, of course, worn next to the skin and over that the solid, closely-fitted waist-length garment to which, throughout the middle ages, the hose had been attached by ties. In Venice in the 1490s this was still the practice but it was very soon to disappear. This waist-length garment, the *zupon*, was made by *zupponieri*, craftsmen who were members of the

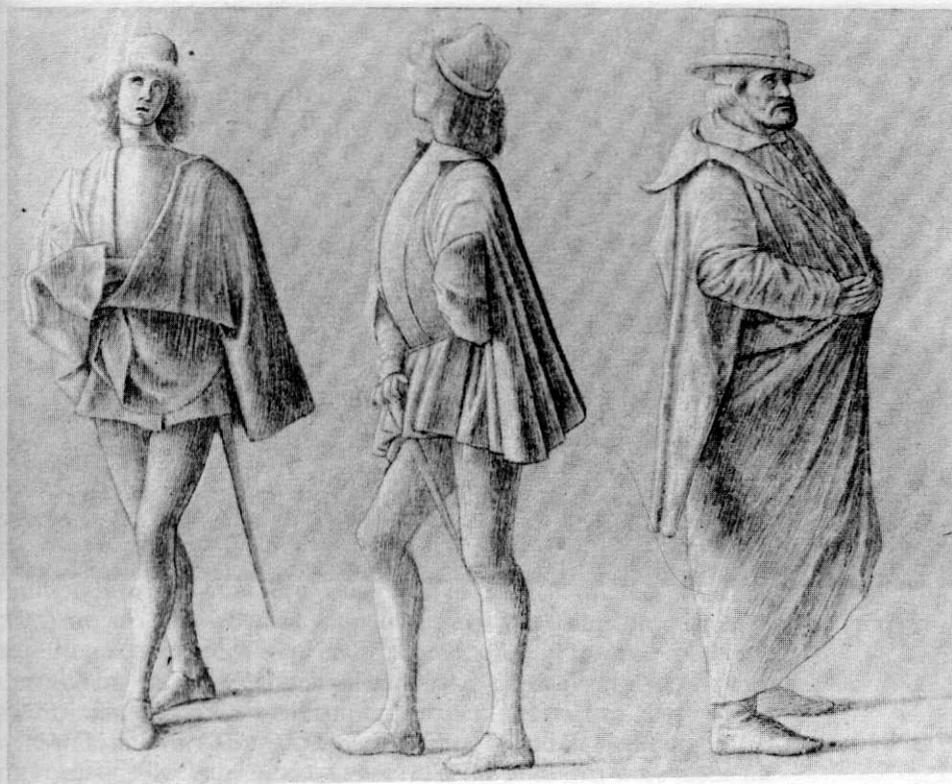
tailors' *Arte* but not true *sartori*.³ The *zupon*, which was basically sleeveless, could have matching or appropriately coloured sleeves tied into its armholes.

By the end of the fifteenth century too an almost equally carefully fitted tunic was worn by young Venetian gentlemen over the *zupon*, and it was this tunic (for which the Italian word, also used in Venice, was *saio* or *saion*⁴) that was cut and belted in such a way that it produced the fashionable profile (Figure 7). Over it could be worn a *mantello* with or without sleeves. Whether either the *zupon* or the *saion* was actually padded over the belly is impossible, now, to discover, but it would have been difficult to achieve the fashionable line without padding of some sort.

But the fashion was moving towards a totally new design, which would give young men, in due course, a new image. Fashion thereby kept in step with the changes in women's dress. Whereas, at the end of the fifteenth century, the long hose were still extended to the waist, there were soon to be 'over-hose' (breeches, in fact) which would cover the upper leg but so tightly that they could still appear, stiffened, slashed and otherwise decorated, as upper parts of the hose themselves. A glance forward shows, however, that in the long run every man of fashion would wear over-breeches. This change in the fashion would greatly alter the appearance of the ideal young patrician; legs would become less important in his general design.

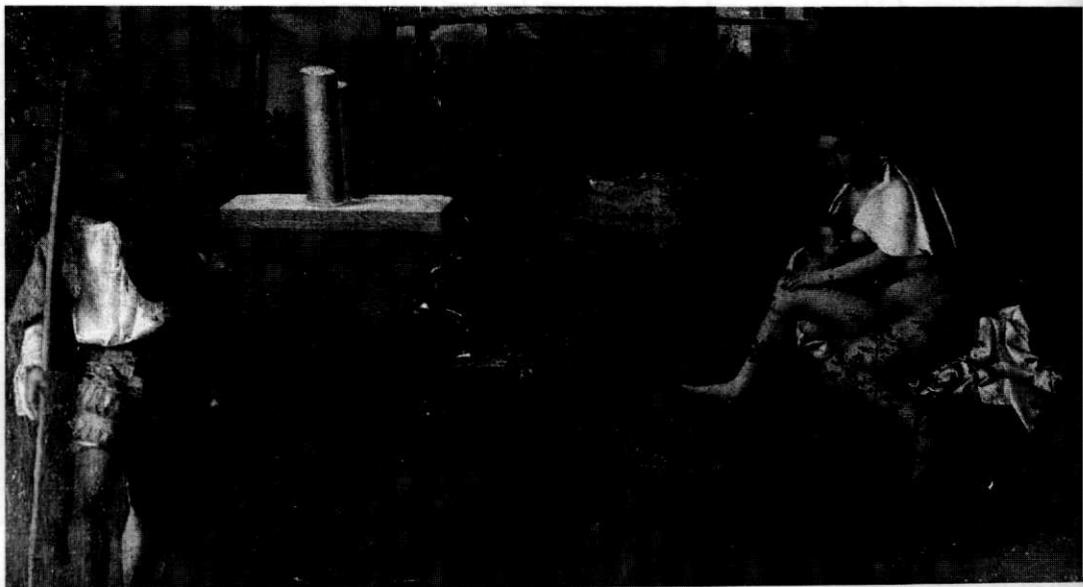
Just as the advancement of the sixteenth century was accompanied by a new phase in Renaissance painting so, naturally, the ideal of manhood, as it was expressed through clothing, altered. The lithe, slim, active youthful outline of the fifteenth century was replaced by a slower-moving, more opulent shape. At one moment in the later fifteenth century, fashion had attempted to broaden the shoulders of men but in reality all that it succeeded in doing was to puff them out. Shoulders in the sixteenth century were to become so broad and solid as to suggest actuality rather than metaphor. That was later, in the 1540s, but the way was being prepared for this fundamental alteration in the century's first years.

The escape from the medieval *zupon* is illustrated by Giorgione's *Tempesta*⁵ (Figure 8). Already it was no longer necessary to hold up the long hose by a circle of ties laced into the waist; while Giorgione's young man still wears hose which rigidly encase his thighs, his torso has been freed from the traditional corsetting.⁶ The shirt, never previously exposed in even semi-respectable circumstances, is now unashamedly visible, although this young man would not, of course, have been regarded by his contemporaries as the apotheosis of fashionable youth. He is, nevertheless, elegant by the standards of the station to which he evidently belonged. Page, household man-at-arms, junior member of a



young men, even though they were outwardly in black, they were underneath with stuff of gold or of silver, or spiver, or silk, and better cloth was cut open to reveal the material beneath. All figures of this nature were derived from fashions worn in France and other contemporary kingdoms. Lower, therefore, that these fashions came from across the mountains. They were highly decorated with jewels and were favored by the Venetian nobles, who were not disposed to see or hear talk of these fashions or French or of French fashions seen in the city of Venice. And were God grant that, just as the learning and clothing were unacceptable to them, let it be known that the type of their architecture, from every thing else, had ever been derived from the Greek and Roman, from the dress of the city, Italy the reproduction of the over Italian people, that from

7. V. Carpaccio, *Figure Studies*. The hairstyles and the bizarre silhouette in profile of the boy in the centre are typical of the dress of fashionable young men in the middle 1490s. The older man is Greek or Armenian. Fondation Custodia (coll. F. Lugt), Institut Néerlandais, Paris.



8. Giorgione, *La Tempesta*, detail. Venice, Accademia.

city guard, the young man wears the new shorter hair-cut and a jacket (still, presumably, called by the old-fashioned name, *zupon* or *zipon*) of good quality cloth of scarlet; his hose alone must have cost more than his pay-packet could have afforded. A nagging doubt remains: is he a Venetian? This is a problem which will be discussed in a later chapter.⁷ Virtuous young men in paintings commissioned for a specific Venetian church provide safer evidence.

In October 1504 the usual irritably expressed prohibitions regarding sleeves, trains and jewellery worn by women were issued but no mention was made of the clothing of men. In January 1506, however, both Sanudo and Priuli in their respective diaries reported that, following a meeting of the doge and the *Consiglio dei Rogati* in which orders restricting the design of the clothing of young men were unanimously passed, they were sent to the *Gran Consiglio* and accepted. This elaborate procedure shows that the matter was considered to be too serious to be dealt with by the *Provedadori sopra le pompe* alone, whose assignment was in any case indicated by the full title . . . *le pompe delle donne*.

On 8 January 1506, the publication by the *Maior Consiglio*, says Priuli, was to apply to every young man in the city, whether working-class⁸ or patrician, who had adopted the evil and damnable custom of acquiring *zuponi* which were embroidered, open in front or collarless; shirts taking six *braza* of linen each to make (1 *braza* = c. 1 yd), or with gold trimmings on their collars; or, further, sleeves to a *zupon* which were wide and very large, so large that a *zupon* and its sleeves required six *braza* of silk cloth. Again, says Priuli, the hose that were made for these young men, even though they were outwardly of black cloth, were lined underneath with stuff of gold or of silver, or velvet, or silk, and the outer cloth was cut open to reveal the material beneath. All *zuponi* and hose – *chalze* – of this nature were derived from fashions worn by the French and other transalpine nationals. Given, therefore, that these fashions came from across the mountains, they were highly displeasing to the senators and other Fathers of the Venetian state, who were not prepared to see or hear tell of these fashions of Spanish or of French character worn in the city of Venice. And might God grant that, just as the customs and clothing were unacceptable, so also, let it be remembered, none of those gentlemen from over the mountains had ever been *summoned* into Italy; their coming had been the cause of the ruin of Italy and the subjection of the poor Italian people. Thus Priuli.

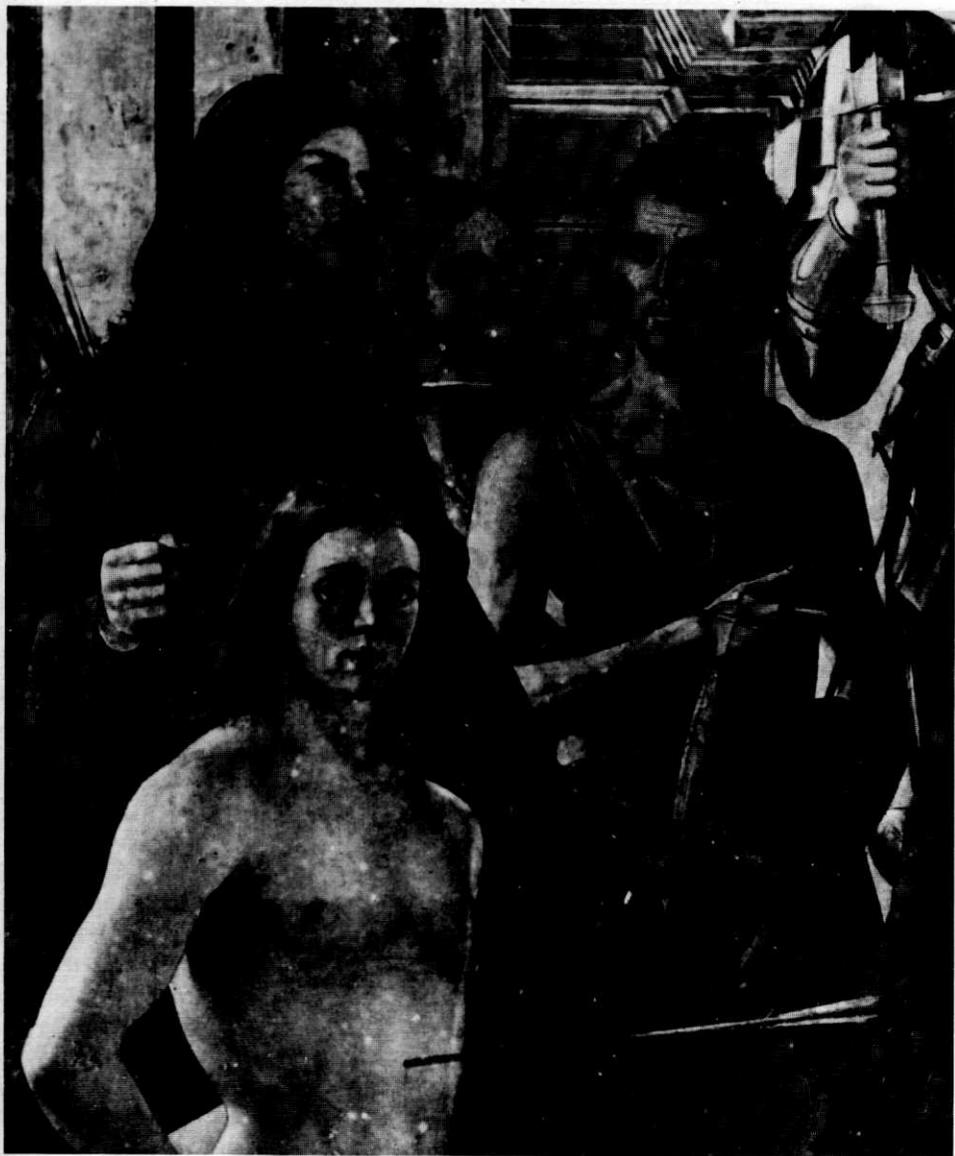
Apart from his added moral, Priuli gave an accurate account of the details of the ruling as it was set out in what is now *Senato, Terra R.* 15. c.86 in the Archivio di Stato, except that he omitted to say that the *zuponi* of the young men must no longer be embroidered with flowers or other patterns but must be of one plain colour, nor were they to be

trimmed with gold or silver. Neither were their hose to be striped, nor trimmed with cords, fringes or embellishments of any sort. The *Senato* used the word for citizen and not Priuli's *popular*. Penalties for disobedience were severe; the regulations that demanded hose of a single colour only were not to apply to members of the *Compagnie della Calza*.⁹ Priuli proceeded immediately to report the position of shipping in the Middle East. Sanudo was, for once, much briefer and merely noted that the doge and the whole *Colegio* had stipulated that no more than four *braza* were to be used in making a *zipon* and that shirts were not be decorated round the neck. Regulations concerning juvenile fashions would, he said, be published, as indeed they were. Had the regulations applied to women they would have been unremarkable; it is the sudden alarm at the adoption of what to the Venetian government seemed to be foreign fashions by their own male citizens and nobles that is important.

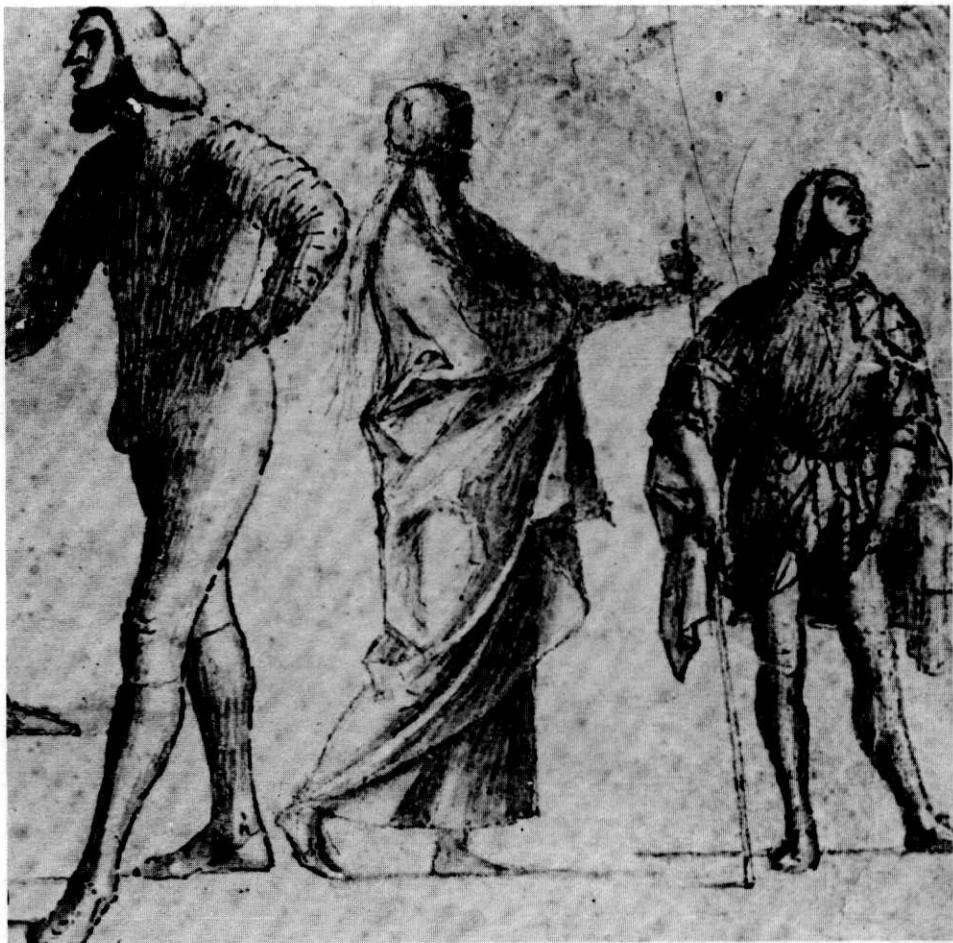
That shirts had become far more ample is clear, but the apparent enlargement of what was still the *zupon* is more interesting. In fact the medieval closely-fitted 'doublet' could not have been enlarged and still have maintained anything of its original character, so it seems that most of the extra stuff was being used in the sleeves.

The apprehension of the Venetian Fathers was certainly aroused in 1506 on the grounds that the young men were wearing French fashions; the elaboration of their clothing was a secondary matter. In April 1509 the political situation was much more serious; the members of the League of Cambrai were advancing against Venice and, from the besieged cities of the Veneto, citizens loyal to Venice were escaping in disguise. Nevertheless the Patriarch of Venice, Antonio Contarini, found time to condemn the Venetian clergy for the evident worldliness of their dress. In their vanity they had been growing their hair long and, moreover, they were wearing beards. This was to stop. With that long hair they looked like women (the beards would have offset that impression, one would have thought), but it was not to be worn longer than was necessary to cover the ears. They were to cease wearing striped hose, bright colours, fancy belts and finger rings. Nor were they to wear wide sleeves.¹⁰ Once more, therefore, the size of the sleeve was a matter for concern in Venice, the city where both the size and the character of the sleeves were of prime importance in the otherwise austere design of the gowns of officials.

A month later, these officials, harassed as they were by the war, again turned their attention to the clothes of their young men (the clergy did not, of course, come under their jurisdiction). Once more, in May 1509, there was a proclamation on the Rialto; once more the three *Provedadori sopra le pompe* threatened not just great penalties but *grandissime* penalties against those who continued to wear *ziponi a la*



9. Alvise Vivarini, *St Ambrogio altar*, 1503, detail. The two young saints wear the new hairstyle of the early years of the sixteenth century, smoothed down from the centre parting to leave the forehead bare. Venice, Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari.



10. V. Carpaccio (?), *Figure Studies*, detail. The new outline for the male torso in about 1505. Both the fringe of hair across the forehead and the curved outline of the front of the torso of the 1490s have disappeared. (Note: the black patch below the chin does *not* represent a beard.) Florence, Uffizi.

francese, or shirts in the French fashion. In fact, French styles were not to be worn. For one thing they cost a lot; more than twenty ducats for one which could serve as a model for others.¹¹

Sanudo's account of this situation was once more eclipsed by the far more elegant and dramatic eloquence of Girolamo Priuli. And, says he, the young Venetian nobles and her other citizens are making themselves fine with so much ornament – with *vestimenti* open in front to show their chests and with so much perfume that nowhere in the world are the young so luxurious and so libidinous as are our youths of Venice. Truly they are not *youths*, they should be called *women*. They are supported by their parents who instead should punish them. Now the city of Venice has become so lascivious and luxurious in every respect and in every sex that it is insupportable; and then this clothing that they call French, worn by women and by the young men, revealing their chests. Everybody acknowledges that these fashions are French; those cursed French who as everyone can see are the ruin of Venice while, at the very same moment, all her citizens are wearing foreign fashions.¹²

Very few people who have reached a mature age are pleased to observe that the fashions in dress have changed; to the mature gentlemen of Venice, interminably dressed in what they had pleased to name a *toga* and seated virtually every day of the year in some council, changes in the dress of the *campi* and *calli* outside could even seem a danger. In their meetings they looked at each other critically for black that should have been scarlet or *paonazzo* that should have been crimson; might not the dress of the leisured youth outside also be signalling its messages, but in a different code? If so, what game might they be playing?

To us, today, it is easy to see that the new fashions attacked by the Senate in 1506 and again in 1509 were not new. Neither were they French nor, except perhaps very indirectly, Spanish. The novelties which had crept belatedly into Venice were German in origin, for while Carpaccio's young fellows were standing in refined and calculated elegance on their carefully placed feet, in south Germany Albrecht Dürer was painting himself wearing those loose, negligent, low-cut shirts with their fancy edges and those *zuponi* open down the front to show his chest. Venice, in 1495, was, in fact, ten years behind Germany or, allowing that the Senate had probably taken at least two years to notice the change, perhaps eight years. Spaniards – dynastically, of course, nearer to south Germany – were more up to date.

The dress of Venice's young men of the 1490s, therefore, must be seen as having been as characteristically Venetian as the women's dress certainly was at the same period. Both were in step after the turn of the century when both were accused of being 'French', and both were,

indeed, not French at all. German influence on women's dress is not easy to detect, mainly because in Germany so much emphasis was placed on a fancifully designed headdress. As regards the dress itself, it must be admitted that there is some slight similarity, though it is not very apparent. The dress of the young men, and their hairstyles as well, was definitely transalpine in the first ten years of the sixteenth century. To assess the reasons for fundamental changes of this kind is the duty of the historian, not the historian of dress.

What is clear is that the hair-cut of the 1490s, with its straight fringe across the forehead (Figure 6), was abandoned in the early years of the sixteenth century in favour of a smooth bare forehead and hair parted invariably in the centre (Figure 9). This change of fashion seems to have been adopted by every young man, and just as the curly fringes of the women disappeared almost overnight, so did the thick straight fringes of the youths. An intermediate stage is almost certainly to be found in the portrait of a young boy – a child – by Giovanni Bellini. Now in the Barber Institute in Birmingham, this portrait has been considered an early work; it is far more likely to have been painted after the turn of the century. It was not to be long before not only the young and fashionable but the mature officials of Venice, too, were baring their foreheads so that no trace of hair showed under their caps in front.

Where the regulations were concerned the atmosphere had become more relaxed by 1512. The pope's order of excommunication had been lifted, the Holy League between the pope, Spain, England and Venice against France had been signed. The financial strain in the Serenissima had not eased, however. From the point of view of the *Provedadori sopra le pompe* nothing had changed. On 8 May 1512, on an application from Nicolò Grimani, the Senate gave its full attention once more to the subject of dress. Nicolò Grimani and Vettor Morosini, two of the *Provedadori*, had been given full powers and liberties to correct, modify and investigate the inordinate expenditure both in the city and in its dukedom (*duchado*) – expenditure by both men and women of every sort and condition. Here is proof that Venice felt she was justified in controlling not only the fashions worn within the city but also those – very different – that were worn in the Veneto.

Once more the most detailed condemnation was directed towards the clothing of women, which was reported first and in very great detail indeed. Household furnishings were scrutinised next and then, finally, the garments of young men. The description of the styles forbidden to them was remarkably similar to that of those condemned in 1506 and 1509. Shirts – *camise* – in the French style were not to be gathered up at the throat *a la francese*. *Ziponi* must not be padded (interlined?) except at the neck and crosswise,¹³ an order which was probably directed against the fashion for quilted *ziponi* made in expensive stuffs of the

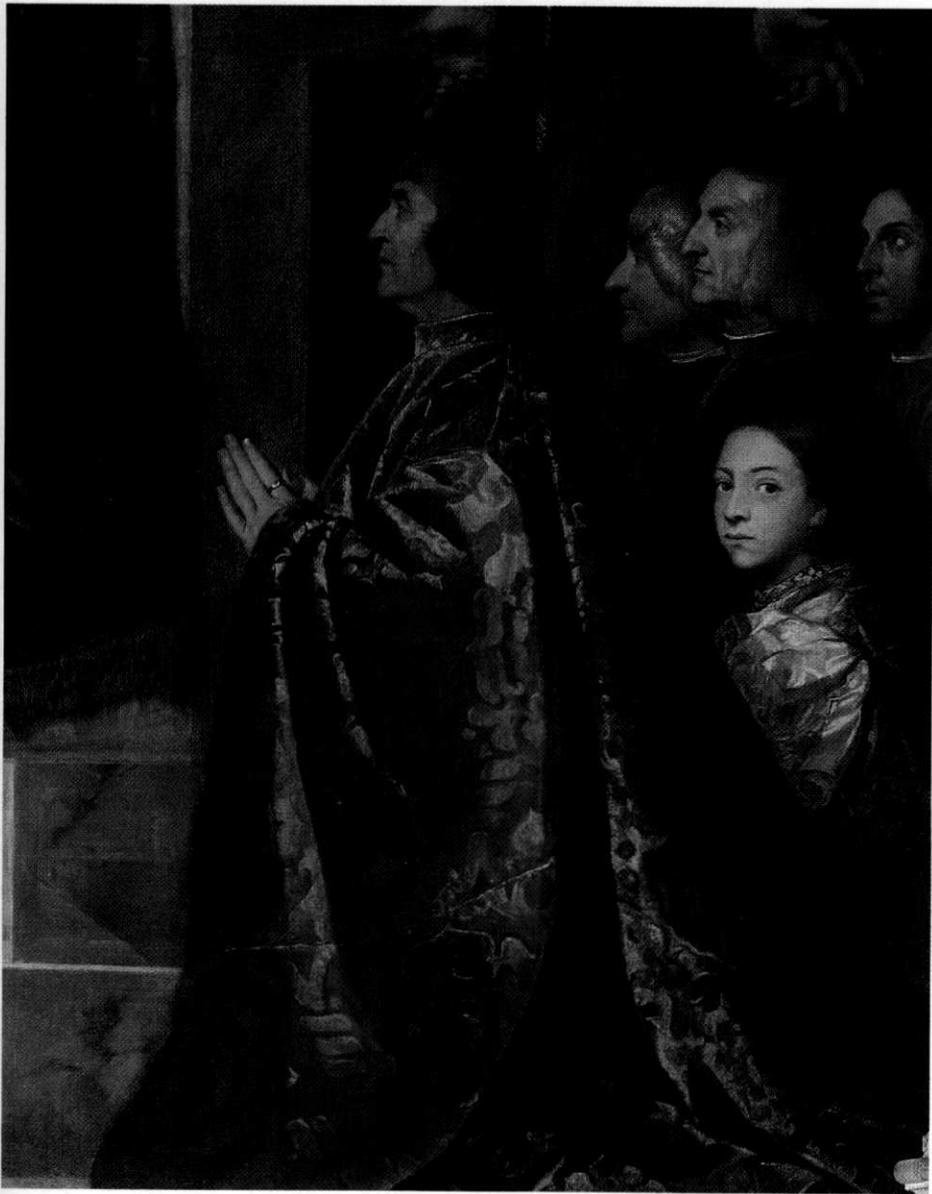


PLATE 3. Titian, *Madonna of the Pesaro Family*, 1519–26. Detail. Venice, Sta. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari.



PLATE 4. Gentile Bellini, *The Procession in the Piazza S. Marco*, 1496. Venice, Accademia.

kind familiar from the painting by Titian often thought to be of Ariosto.¹⁴ The sitter in this painting also wears a shirt gathered up in what was probably thought to be the 'French' fashion. This has also been regarded as a self portrait.¹⁵ If the painting does represent a Venetian, a problem is posed by the presence of a well-trimmed beard. From his dress the sitter is certainly not wearing mourning.

From all this it might be assumed that what Venetians regarded as French but which was in reality Germanic male fashion worn in Venice during the first decade of the sixteenth century was indistinguishable from the dress worn by young men in south Germany, but this was far from true. Italians, including Venetians, of the early sixteenth century would have found it as difficult to subside into the negligent dress of their German contemporaries as they found it impossible, in the 1960s, to relapse into the picturesque untidiness of young America. Their most positive attempts were pale reflections and no more (Figure 10).

From 1512 until 1522 the Venetian government seems to have been silent on the question of dress, male or female. The relatively low-cut shirt, gathered into a flat band surrounding the base of the throat, was to continue through the second decade of the sixteenth century. Over it was worn an even lower-cut *zupon*, completely collarless. The rulings of the *Provedadori* had had no effect whatever. Firm dates for Venetian paintings in the early sixteenth century are as scarce as undisputed attributions, but from those which can be reliably dated it is important to distinguish between paintings which represent men of Venice and those which may well represent gentlemen of the Veneto: from the point of view of male fashion a very different thing. It is tempting, for example, to see the two boys in Titian's *Fête Champêtre*¹⁶ as Venetians, but there is a careless amplitude in the clothing of the youth in profile that seems unlikely to have been acceptable as a form of dress to one who had been brought up in the regulated and conformist society of the city itself. The large, loose cap that slips backwards over the long and thickly scattered hair would surely have been difficult for one who was constantly surrounded by the wearers of the neat, Venetian *bareta* to adopt – even as a country mannerism. It seems more likely that the boys were upper-class residents of the mainland.

Although in some respects the styles of dress of the young men of Venice differed considerably from the styles worn in other Italian cities, in the general line of development there were certainly similarities. Because, as has been mentioned earlier, the only headwear allowed to the ordinary citizen was a cap that was round and plain, the craze for the sixteenth-century *scuffia* (German in origin) was almost certainly either absent or very much delayed in its appearance in Venice. In the early years of the second decade of the sixteenth century Baldassare

Castiglione wrote to his mother almost daily to ask for more of these rather turban-like caps, which were probably made by the process known as 'sprang.'¹⁷ Pictorial and other documentary evidence of their acceptance by the young men of Venice seems not to exist and, in fact, when one appears in a painting of the Venetian School the work usually turns out to have been done in Brescia or Bergamo.

Whereas the numerous paintings by Titian and Palma Vecchio of lovely young women, usually labelled *Vanity*, *Beauty* or *Flora*, can fairly safely be assumed to be portraits of Venetian prostitutes, it is difficult to be sure that the paintings of young men, such as Titian's *Man with a Glove*, do represent inhabitants of the city of Venice. No documentation seems to tie any of them securely to a specific family. The group of musicians generally called the *Concert*, which has been variously ascribed to Titian and his contemporaries, probably does portray Venetians. One of the three is a cleric and one perhaps not a monk but, from the expensive fur lining to his sleeves, more probably a *togato*.¹⁸ The third, a youth, wearing, in the main, a festive version of what would be the logical development of the Venetian fashion by about 1515, wears, however, a hat which would be difficult to accept as Venetian except, perhaps, in the theatre.

What is certainly Venetian dress is worn by a young boy in Titian's *Madonna of the Pesaro Family* of the early 1520s¹⁹ (see Plate 3). The hairstyles worn by this boy and by a man presumably his father who kneels in front of him represent an amusing example of the generation gap. The older man's hairdressing is even more conservative than respectability would demand; the boy's, shortened and drawn back behind the ears, is the latest thing. The rich embroidery which trims his shirt-collar marks another defeat for the *Provedadori*; the puffed-out sleeve of his *saion* corresponds exactly to the female fashion of the moment. A certain general correspondence between the composition of the dress of the two sexes has occurred in many periods; in the past, of course, it was confined to the area above the waist.

Since, therefore, there cannot be any doubt that this boy, a member of the Pesaro family, was wearing a style of dress which, though youthful, was acceptable in Venice, it may not be too daring to look back to another Titian painting of a considerably older but still youthful male who wears a rather similar hair-cut, perhaps at an earlier stage of the fashion because it covers the ears. This portrait, in the collection of Lord Halifax,²⁰ could reasonably be dated to the second half of the second decade of the sixteenth century, when the *camisa* had not yet risen to be gathered into a standing band round the neck and when the large puff of the upper sleeve was a development of the sleeve worn by the youths in the Titian Paduan fresco of the *Healing of the new born Child*. The sitter in the Halifax painting holds in his hand a large flat

cap, also reminiscent of the caps worn by the Paduan boys, though in a presumably later, because larger, version.

But quoting Paduan frescoes inevitably has its dangers and the provenance of the Halifax portrait is unknown. Titian is the link, and on his return from Padua he certainly remained in Venice for a year or two, but by 1516 he was working for members of the courts of Ferrara, Mantua and Urbino. Nevertheless, his famous *Assumption* was unveiled in Venice's Friary in 1518.²¹ The Halifax portrait could belong to the Venice of the moment when Titian was actually painting the *Assumption*. If it is reasonable to accept this Titian portrait as belonging to a Venetian period, the changes in the fashionable clothing of her young men since Carpaccio and Gentile Bellini painted them are no less marked than those of the women.

4 The Dress of the Women of Venice

Unlike the men in late fifteenth-century Venetian painting, women do not stand about. Nor do they even walk about without what is obviously a direct destination in view. The women who watch the proceedings in Gentile Bellini's record of a Corpus Christi procession do so from the upper windows of the houses on the north side of the Piazza, though one seemingly youngish well-dressed woman makes her way, suitably accompanied by an old servant, into St Mark's basilica at the very moment when virtually everybody else has come out¹ (Plate 4). There is, indeed, one woman accompanied by a man seated in a gondola in Carpaccio's *Miracle of a Relic of the True Cross*,² but it would be difficult if not impossible to find one among the crowds he paints in the streets round about the Rialto bridge (see Plate 6). There are, of course, painted stories in which women of necessity play a leading part – the St Ursula story, for instance, but looking again into the bustling streets and terraces, the quays and bridges that provide the backgrounds for these scenes, where are the women, young or old, rich or poor? There are men; there is an occasional male dwarf; there are dogs, but there are no women.³

Where are the Venetian equivalents of the upper-class Tournabuoni girls, or the Strozzi, conspicuously making their way, expensively dressed and well-attended, into the bedroom that has just been the scene of a sacred birth? Where is the Venetian Maddelena Doni, recorded with as much skill and understanding as her companion husband?⁴ True, one or two portraits of women by Carpaccio do exist, but no patrician name has been attached to them. Certainly two hard-faced prostitutes await their clients on a Venetian roof-top. A naked woman certainly suckles her child in a highly unsuitable situation on the only patch of grass and in terrible weather, while a young cad standing not far off doesn't even offer the jacket he has hardly more than thrown over his own shoulders. True, Giorgione (or Titian) painted a handsome well-fleshed-out young woman resting her hand on a marble slab, but it is typical that she should have been labelled (why?) *La Schiavona*.⁵ Only a few years later Titian painted an enigmatic scene that has sometimes been called *Sacred and Profane Love*, a title which has provoked the question, 'Which is which?' (Figure 12). The answer, to a Venetian, would have been plain; both are profane: one is unclothed, the other, unveiled, and seated in public for all to see. Is this

a rare portrait of a respectable woman, perhaps a bride, newly wed? If so, it is certainly unconventional.⁶

By the middle of the second decade things were beginning to improve, where women in paintings were concerned. Even then, however, women were seldom news; the few that were will be discussed later. Their clothing, nevertheless, certainly *was* news, and was remarked on at frequent intervals, when its extravagance was condemned by those men who were officially appointed to do just that. Such occasions were conscientiously recorded in detail by Sanudo. There were also, of course, companies of young married ladies, always *bellissime*, who were required to furnish a private party, held legitimately. There was, however, one occasion, on 12 November 1521, when two patrician ladies were actually mentioned by name among named men. The reason for the inclusion of Madonna Zarla, contessa, and Dona Franceschana in the *Diarii* is that they each gave money to enable a young man to attend meetings of the *Consejo di X*. In Dona Franceschana's case it was for her son, Piero. The fee was 100 ducats.

Venice produced no Elisabetta Gonzaga, no Lucretia Borgia, no Isabella d'Este. No rich Venetian beauty was despatched as a bride for a king of Hungary or a duke of Milan. When, as was almost invariably the case, the city of Venice was itself under no threat from the outside world, the Venetian ladies watched their city from their windows and their balconies.⁷ Once, when there was a fire in the Piazza, it was remarked that, naturally, they were not to be seen in those habitual spots.⁸ On occasions of exceptional festivity, however, benches were placed in the Piazza or the Campi to accommodate privileged ladies.

No less strange than the position of women in late fifteenth-century Venetian society was the style of their dress. It was a fashion exclusively theirs, whose origin and development is almost impossible to discern or to trace. The difficulty of the search is made even harder by the scarcity of Venetian paintings with known dates executed during the early and middle years of the fifteenth century. The fire that destroyed what would certainly have been valuable evidence in the Ducal Palace is partly responsible for this scarcity, but so are the sometimes later, or perhaps false, inscriptions on such works as the St Ursula group with a kneeling nun, perhaps by the young Giovanni Bellini.⁹ This painting might, with better documentation, have shown that the typical high-waisted dress of Venetian women recorded in the great *Scuole* paintings of the end of the fifteenth century was already worn much earlier.

Hardly better documented is the polyptych of St Vincent Ferrer in the Venetian church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo but there seems to be agreement now that it is by Giovanni Bellini and a date in the early 1470s seems acceptable.¹⁰ The presence in this painting of two or three



12. Titian, *Sacred and Profane Love*, detail. The fashion of the early years of the second decade of the sixteenth century shows the elongation of the fitted lower part of the under-sleeve. The *dogale* over-sleeves were soon to disappear as a fashion. The modest hairstyle is correct for about 1513-14. Rome, Borghese Gallery.



13. V. Carpaccio, *Two Venetian women on a roof-top*, detail. A famous painting. The women are usually regarded as being courtesans, who, in Venice, were forbidden to wear pearls. The outlines of the high-soled *zoccoli* can be seen under the skirt of the woman at the back; another pair stands near the peacock. Venice, Correr Museum.

men manifestly intended as Venetians wearing official dress may permit the assumption that the kneeling women in the Predella panel of St Vincent preaching are also Venetians. Among them is one upper-class woman whose dress, apart from its high-set waist, bears no resemblance at all to the dress of fashionable Venetian women of twenty-five years later. The arrangement of her heavy veil, too, is quite unlike anything worn a quarter of a century later in Venice. It is not possible then, it seems, to suggest that there was a traditional 'ethnic' character about the sort of dress painted in the *Scuole* series, which is a pity, because it is a great temptation to see some of the dress painted by Giotto in the Arena Chapel as an earlier and provincial version of the lighter and more sophisticated clothes of the 1480s and 1490s.

Certainly the unique fashions recorded in the *Scuole* paintings were confined to Venice and bear no relation at all to what was being worn in Rome, in Florence, in Naples, in Milan at the time. As strange as the dress itself is the style of dressing the hair, and this too, is peculiar to Venice. Something can be learnt from the sumptuary prohibitions issued by the *Provedadori sopra le pompe delle donne*, but not a great deal, mainly because these heavy gentlemen, though they did at one moment refer to the sort of hairdressing just mentioned, were primarily concerned with luxury in the form of gold and silver fringes and trimmings and jewellery as well, of course, as with cloth of gold. Being well-founded patricians, their background did not guarantee a discriminating eye for complexities of cut and workmanship. As seems to have been the case with most sumptuary regulations elsewhere in Europe, the Venetian rules often came to the point of condemning a fashion only at the moment when it was on the way out.

Though their lack of precision means that on the whole the official rulings do not reveal much useful information as to what the current fashion looked like, occasionally they can provide some amusing insight into the current struggle against extravagance. When for instance in 1400 the International Gothic fashion introduced enormously long and wide bell-shaped sleeves for both men and women, a very severe law was passed by the Senate, under the title *Pro manicis togarum*.¹¹ The terms of this law provide a vivid mental picture of the current fashion in that they not only prohibited women from wearing sleeves over a specified width but also forbade a high-standing collar which rose to the chin – a very distinctive feature of the fashion. Heavy fines for exceeding the regulations were imposed not only on the wearer (or her husband or father) but also on any tailor of either sex – *maestri e maestre* – who made sleeves larger than the size allowed. These regulations, obedience to which was to be assured by the *Avogadori di comun*, did not, it is clearly stated, apply to the doge or to any member of his family actually resident in the Ducal Palace.¹²

Such explicit directions as to the maximum size of a sleeve or a collar are far less usual, however, than regulations governing expenditure on the fabrics of which the clothes were made, and these certainly ruled out not only clothing of gold or silver stuffs but also embroidery in precious metal threads and expensive silk cloths. Long trains were also disapproved of because, of course, they added to the amount of materials required to make the dress. Slightly varied editions of rules on these lines were issued periodically, but between the beginning of the fifteenth century and its last two decades the sumptuary regulations of Venice provide very little information as to the actual cut of women's dress. The successive paintings in Carpaccio's story of St Ursula are, therefore, of particular importance, in spite of the fact that not all of them are dated.

During the period 1495 to 1525 the fashions worn by Venetian women can be divided into three broad but distinct phases, within each of which developments and modifications naturally occurred. The first phase can be thought of as having reached its high point with the dresses of Carpaccio's two *Cortegiane* on their roof-top (Figure 13).¹³ These two women wear not only what are manifestly expensive clothes but, in its design, clothing that has reached an extreme in several of its features. The waist, for example, could not be placed higher on the torso; the curious arrangement of the hair, too, seems to have reached the ultimate point in its particular style; before or after it would have been softer, flatter or tilted forwards or backwards. As it is, the hairdressing worn by the *cortezane* most nearly resembles – curiously – that of the sleeping St Ursula in Carpaccio's painting dated 1495, a date which would seem to be acceptable for their dresses too. The wider, softer ring of hair worn by the saint in the earlier martyrdom painting of 1493 marks a logically earlier stage in the development of that particular style of hairdressing. Dürer's drawing of a Venetian woman is also dated 1495;¹⁴ more richly jewelled than one would have thought possible in view of the prevailing sumptuary laws, her dress belongs to exactly the same moment in fashion as the dresses worn by the two courtesans (Figure 14). Its low neckline allows only a minute strip of stuff on the shoulder; its sleeves are made up of segments held together by laces; through their gaps the full sleeves of her chemise emerge in light puffs. Holding up the train of her dress, Dürer's young lady reveals, as do Carpaccio's courtesans, her high-soled *zoccoli*.

Also dated 1495 is Carpaccio's painting of the *Departure of St Ursula*, which includes an episode of her meeting with her fiancé. Her low-cut dress, with its narrow strip of stuff on the shoulder, its long train (which she holds up) and her sleeve cut about in a complicated design so that the wide sleeve of her chemise oozes through its openings, all cor-



14. A. Dürer, *Venetian lady*, 1495. This exquisite coloured drawing is a perfect record of the Venetian fashion of the date. The elaborate form of the sleeve and the extremely high-set waistline show this particular fashion at the moment of its apotheosis. The lady holds up the long train of her over-dress to reveal the expensive stuff of the dress beneath. The high soles of her *zoccoli*, though hidden, are revealed through the outline of her underskirt. Vienna, Albertina.



15. V. Carpaccio, *Sacred Conversation*, detail. Usually identified as St Elizabeth, this stylishly dressed young saint wears the slightly lowered waistline and the hairstyle of the earliest years of the sixteenth century. The shirt on her knee, although a child's, is similar in cut to the shirts that hang on poles in Plate 6. Avignon, Musée du Petit Palais.

respond to the dress drawn by Dürer. It is not often that a group of paintings with the same date so clearly show a shared fashion.

As a bride St Ursula's hair hangs loosely about her shoulders but in the scene where she lies dreaming in bed it is rolled tightly round the crown of her head, while fluffy short-cut hair decorates her temples. Dürer's lady and the two harlots have even thicker fringes of hair across their brows and down the sides of their cheeks, a style much too exaggerated for a young saint to have adopted.

In its general composition this extreme fashion of the mid-1490s lasted until the end of the century, though it certainly underwent some changes and modifications difficult to distinguish today (Figure 15). It was gradually changed into a style which included totally different emphases. The second stage in the development in the dress of Venetian ladies can best be distinguished, perhaps, in unexpectedly thorough sumptuary regulations of 1504, when the attention of the Senate was caught by what it saw as a *bruta foza de manege*, an 'ugly fashion', which, it stated, included especially sleeves known as a *comedo*. These sleeves needed four *braza* of stuff for their making and, moreover, they were seen by men as a style unsuitable for women, a necessary qualification since sleeves a *comedo* were certainly set into the gowns of the husbands of most of the same women. For women, however, the fashion was peremptorily banned in January 1504 and sleeves which involved more than six quarters of material in their making were not to be worn.¹⁵

The fact that, more than six months later, in October 1504, the prohibition was repeated with the extra comment that the *manege a commedo* had become larger and uglier than ever shows that women had paid little attention to the first order (Figure 16). In the second order sleeves were not to be more than a third of a *braza* of silk in width. The fines for disobeying the Senate's decree about sleeves were 10 ducats imposed on the tailor or whoever had made the sleeves and, for the wearer, 25 ducats and the forfeiture of the sleeves.

The October resolutions of 1504 dealt also with long trains but by that time the fashion had certainly changed. It was not merely that women had altered the cut of their sleeves but that at last a radical change in their style of dress had taken place. This must have been quickly spotted for, it was declared, in the last few days some women had taken to wearing German fashions, which involved great cost. These fashions were banned and again those 'masters' who made them were to be fined, as before. In fact, the order continues, no new fashion was to be introduced. Like most previous regulations designed to govern the dress of women, those of 1504 were severe concerning the use of gold and silver; the regulations at this date actually discuss the forms of weave which must not be used in women's clothing.¹⁶

In 1504 Venice had not yet begun to fear the formation of the alliance between France and the Empire that was to lead to the League of Cambrai. Nevertheless the Senate was certainly unusually uneasy over expenditure on clothing for, in October 1505, the previous rulings were reissued, and it seems clear from the phrasing of the additions to them that to that on sleeves *a comeo* were now added prohibitions on sleeves that resembled the *ducale* form; they were said to be wide and to fall to the ground, a statement which was manifestly untrue but which reflects the strength of feeling. There was, as usual, too much trimming of an expensive kind being used, it was said, and in addition, there was a Catalan flavour about some of it, especially in the belts.¹⁷

It was not only because they were expensive, therefore, but because they were regarded as 'foreign' that the new fashions were attacked. Girolamo Priuli reported in his diary that the new French sleeves used five *braza* of silk (in the previous year four had been thought excessive). Priuli also noticed elaborate patterned weaves, sometimes incorporating small animals in their designs. All over Venice, he says, people were complaining of the new extravagances in women's constantly changing fashions in dress. Restrictions were imposed, he continues, but they were too long to record in full.¹⁸

In January 1508 the Senate complained of fashions that were constantly changing; sleeves were again attacked. The political situation was now becoming tense, though notice of the League of Cambrai was not published until the following March. In May 1509 the three *Provedadori sora le pompe* (to use the Venetian form of their title) caused a proclamation to be read on the Rialto that no French fashions were to be worn, but this, for once, applied to the men and not to the women of Venice, who had probably had no opportunity to catch even a glimpse of a Frenchwoman for years. As the situation grew more grave the design of women's clothes passed unnoticed for a time; the most important order regarding dress was that no gold chains or neckbands were to be worn by either men or women during the current war.¹⁹

To judge from the few relevant paintings that can definitely be assigned to this period and to Venice herself, the fashions in women's dress between about 1506 and 1510 existed in two forms – the first a modest development of the styles of the beginning of the century, and the second an extravagant composition which was probably what the *Provedadori* had in mind when they labelled it French, though there was nothing French about it.

The first, modest, change can be illustrated by the dress worn by three saints painted by Sebastiano del Piombo for the church of San Giovanni Crisostomo between 1509 and 1511. The wide silk sleeves, emerging from a dress of a different stuff with a low-set shoulder-line, are very close to those worn by a girl attendant in Carpaccio's *Presenta-*



16. V. Carpaccio, *Holy Family in Adoration*, 1505, detail. Two donors. The earlier stage of the new fashion which was to reach its most extreme form five or six years later. This shows the new relaxed hairstyle (one of two alternatives) and tied-in sleeves a *comeo*. The man is not wearing the official gown of a *togato*; this may have been the 'off-duty' gown of the moment. Lisbon, National Gallery of Antique Art, Gulbenkian Collection.



17. Palma Vecchio, *Madonna and Child with Sta. Giustina and Sta. Barbara; with two adorers*. The dress of St Barbara (holding the tower) represents the officially acceptable fashion of the moment. It is of one plain colour and has moderately-sized sleeves *a comeo*. The dress of the kneeling lady, with its two colours and enormous sleeves, breaks the regulations. The *a comeo* sleeve of the Virgin is correct for a date about 1508–10. Rome, Borghese Gallery.

tion in the Temple, painted in 1510 for S. Giobbe. Although the waist is still set high, the neckline has hardened and the delicate trimmings that had edged the necklines of Dürer's full-length lady and the Carpaccio courtesans have disappeared, as has all trace of the roll of hair which once encircled the crown of the head.

The sleeves in these two paintings must have satisfied the authorities where the quantity of stuff required to make them was concerned, but they do suggest *dogale* sleeves in a very much modified form.

Totally different, though from the same period, is the flamboyant affair worn by the kneeling donatrix in Palma Vecchio's *Madonna and Child with Sta. Giustina and Sta. Barbara* (Figure 17).²⁰ The two saints, though richly dressed, might have escaped censure, but the hard-faced kneeling lady certainly would not. It is difficult not to see the expression of agonised pleading on the face of her husband as a cry to the Madonna for mercy in what must have been, for him, a highly embarrassing and potentially expensive situation. A *togato*, his own sleeves are probably an extreme version of the official *a comeo* style, although, as his wrists cannot be seen, they might conceivably be *dogale*. Can there, one cannot help wondering, be any significance in the fallen apple which separates him from his wife – almost a profane parallel to the vase of lilies which so often separates the Virgin Annunciate from the archangel?

Looking, then, at the successive fashions of the first decade of the sixteenth century purely through the evidence of paintings one can sum up the changes recorded in a small handful of works of art. First, a new fashion can be clearly identified. For a time the characteristic roll of hair on the crown of the head slipped to the back, where it was often held in a small cap or transparent net. Sleeves, no longer close-fitting and cut to allow bubbles of chemise sleeve to emerge, had become considerably larger and plainer.

The new hairstyle was recorded in what must have been its purest form by Dürer, in his bust-length portrait of a Venetian woman of 1505 (Figure 18).²¹ He used it, too, though no doubt deliberately modified, for the head of the Virgin in his painting of the *Madonna of the Rose Garlands* of a year later, painted for the church of San Bartolomeo, near the Fondaco dei Tedeschi – obviously the place of worship for the German community in Venice. Painting an altarpiece with a specific political flavour for a Venetian church, Dürer naturally gave his Madonna the appearance of a beautiful, conservatively dressed Venetian lady. His androgynous angel in the foreground, however, wears the by then out-of-date tight sleeve, its one-time condemnation by the *Provedadori* long forgotten. Dürer's *Madonna with the Siskin*,²² also of 1506, wears Venetian dress in a very slightly later style than the Rose Garland Madonna of the same year.

By this time, except in conservative circles, the well-ordered, neatly contained roll of hair that had slipped to the back of the head was on the point of softening into the next phase, of the first decade of the century: the double fashion of 1506 to 1511, when the hair was either softly looped back from the temples or, in the more extreme style, allowed to droop over the ears to the level of the chin and then gathered back very loosely into a net at the back of the head – the style worn by Palma Vecchio's large-sleeved lady with the penitent husband (see Figure 17).

The dresses of Palma's two presiding saints, Barbara and Giustina, which belong to the moderate version of the 1506 to 1511 fashion, are interesting in several respects. Sta. Giustina's hairdressing is an example of the last vestige of the neatly-contained roll of hair at the back of the head, as it melts finally away. Sta. Barbara's hair is drawn back over the ears in the manner of Sebastiano del Piombo's saints in the San Giovanni Crisostomo altarpiece. Whereas the sleeves of Palma's donatrix are aggressively *dogale* in style, the sleeves of the two saints are *a comeo*; it was this last form which was to lead to the apparently very different composition of the sleeves which were to be worn by ladies through the century's second decade.

It is only proper, at this stage, to point out that in his study of the works of Lorenzo Lotto, published in 1956, Bernard Berenson stated categorically that this painting, now in the Borghese Gallery in Rome, is a copy of a lost original by Lotto and that it must have been painted in about 1513, a view that is strongly opposed by Alessandro Ballarin, who quotes Longhi's opinion that there is sufficient documentary evidence to support an attribution to Palma Vecchio and a date round about 1508. From the evidence of the dress of the two saints and the donatrix, 1513 would be definitely too late and 1508 possibly a year too early.²³

The most precise rendering of these two contemporary but contrasting styles of dressing the hair appears in Giovanni Bellini's large painting of the *Madonna and Child enthroned with the attendant saints Peter, Jerome, Catharine and Lucia*, in S. Zaccaria. It is dated 1505. Here St Catharine, on the spectator's left, wears a roll of hair on the back of her head, an earlier version of Palma's Sta. Giustina's fashion, while Sta. Lucia's hair is drawn back from her temples in a slightly earlier version of the style worn by Palma's Sta. Barbara.

As the fashion changed in Venice, so it is tempting to see it as drawing nearer to the fashions worn in 'Italy' and the rest of Europe; to agree, in fact, with the *Provedadori*, but this is, of course, ridiculous. In the first place, from the point of view of dress the 'rest of Europe' has no meaning. Not only did the Swiss, the French, the Spaniards, the Germans and the English differ fundamentally from each other in the design of their clothing but, within those borders, differences were very marked. A woman of Nuremberg would have looked very strange



18. A. Dürer, *Portrait of a young Venetian lady*, 1505. This sensitive rendering of the new fashion of the early sixteenth century worn in this painting of an upper-class girl shows her in an expensive, decorated dress and wearing the newest hairstyle. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.



19. V. Carpaccio, *The Presentation in the Temple*, 1510, detail. The two girls attending the Virgin wear styles of hairdressing and sleeves that would have been accepted by the officials of this date. Venice, Accademia.

indeed in Lübeck. All that may have happened in Venice was that Venetian women looked a little less eccentric in their dress in the eyes of other Italians than they had done perhaps ten years earlier.

Whether or not this was so, in February 1511 the women of Venice were once more accused by their masters of being disorderly in their appearance, in that they were wearing the dress of Venice's enemies, the French and the Ferrarese – an interesting late confirmation of the fact that the Ferrarese themselves were still following the fashions of France. This was only a few months before a proclamation was published that neither were Venetian ladies to wear the fashions of Vicenza, under heavy penalties.²⁴

At the end of March 1512 the attention of the Senate was again drawn to the grandeur of the dress and furnishings of Venetian women and their houses. The three *Savii*, who were the then *Provedadoria* over questions of pomp, were directed to look into the matter.²⁵ On 17 April, Sanudo recorded the statement of Nicolò Grimani and Vettor Morosini, who had been given supreme power and freedom to correct the situation. Men and women, boys and girls, of every condition had been subject to their scrutiny. They began with the usual restrictions on jewellery worn on the head or on any other part of the person and immediately proceeded to the sleeves of women, also as usual. This time sleeves of cloth or of gold or of silver were to be allowed (see Figure 19) but not more than two *braza* were to be used for a pair of sleeves, though if the sleeves were woven of silk and not with the introduction of precious-metal thread, four or four and a half *braza* could be used, provided that the material was of one colour only. This was, of course, a victory for fashion over law. Even allowing for the narrow width of contemporary silks, over two *braza* for a sleeve was a good allowance. From this moment the actual size of the sleeves worn by the ladies of Venice ceased to be a matter that would cause anxiety.

But in reality by that time the attention of the *Provedadori* was directed not so much at the size of the sleeve as at the new threat of the current fashion for sleeves that were both wide and slashed to show a rich lining. This slashing into strips involved a great deal of extra time in the workrooms for the cutting and the decorative finishing of the edges of the strips into which the newest sleeves were cut. The order may have been effective, at least temporarily, for slashed sleeves of the kind described do not appear in Venetian painting of the period.

Then, where the dress itself was concerned, it too was to be of one single colour, simple and, it is reiterated, *schiette* – straight and not of mixed colour or stuffs. This would, of course, have ruled out patterned brocades, and these were by no means absent from the fashion; Cima da Conegliano's large altarpiece, painted for the Carmine and begun in about 1509 (Figure 20), shows Sta. Catarina wearing *dogale* sleeves (not

excessively wide) made in a very rich patterned silk. Wearing a crown stylishly tilted at a precarious angle on the back of her head, St Catharine in her Cima dress could have served as a model for any ambitious but reasonably modest young lady of the moment. It exemplifies one of the two alternative aspects of the current fashion that was to be developed and exaggerated by Titian in Padua. The angle of the crown was cunningly contrived so that the smooth style of the hairdressing was in no way interrupted. The waistline is still set higher than would be considered normal elsewhere and no extended framework beneath her skirt has given it the inflated appearance it was about to acquire.

In at least one detail the dress of Cima's St Catharine does conform to the regulations of 1512. It was, ordered the *Provedadori*, to be of one single colour, simple and, as we have seen, straight. Fringes, braids and cords were again forbidden and so were *grembuali*, which were perhaps little scarves,²⁶ that were embroidered or in any way fanciful. And, it was repeated again, a dress was to be plain, of uniform colour and untrimmed, whether it was designed to be worn at home or out of doors. But the battles of the sleeves, whether *a comeo* or *dogali*, had been won.

By 1512 Titian had almost certainly finished his contribution to the cycle of frescoes that covers the walls of the Scuola del Santo in Padua. In these, the clothes of the ladies are of a single colour and are fitted with immense sleeves while their hair droops over their ears to be held very casually in a decorative net at the back of the head. Though their sleeves are vaguely *a comeo*, their dress makes it clear that it was the extreme fashion, of which Palma Vecchio's donatrix was a pioneer, that seems to have triumphed, though the fact that their sleeves are not *dogali* was to be significant for future developments.

Looking back to the Carpaccio painting of the courtesans (see Figure 13), the tremendous transformation in the appearance of Venetian women that had taken place in the intervening seventeen years is very striking. Extravagant as the clothes of Titian's women in the frescoes may appear, with hindsight it is the strange high-waisted aspect of the Venetian women of the 1490s – the women who first caught Dürer's attention – that is the most difficult to reconcile with its period, however profound national and local differences might have been (Figure 14).

If a niggling doubt as to whether Titian, in the Scuola del Santo, was recording the actual Venetian rather than a Paduan fashion remains, it can be allayed, not only by Palma's painting already discussed but also by comparing Titian's women with Carpaccio's belated *Apotheosis of St Ursula*, of a date (and fashion) much nearer to Titian's frescoes than to the rest of the St Ursula cycle – its inscription notwithstanding.²⁷



20. Cima da Conegliano, *The Birth of Jesus*, begun c. 1509, detail. The two saints wear the version of the current fashion that would have been acceptable to the authorities. The hair is loosely gathered towards the back and the sleeve is a modified *dogale* type. Venice, Church of the Carmine.



21. Titian, *Study for Paduan fresco*, detail. The fashion of the dress of the young mother in this preliminary drawing is a year or two earlier than the style of the dress she wears in the fresco of St Anthony healing the newborn child. Her sleeve and hairstyle, like those of the two girls behind her, would have been worn in Venice in 1509–10. Institut Néerlandais, Paris, Coll. Lugt.

The development from the sharp fashions of 1495 to the soft, ample, rounded silhouette of the end of the decade had, as we have seen, been gradual and by 1512 must have worn itself out, for taste was about to take another turn. Again, it depended on the sleeve. The *Provedadori sopra le pompe delle donne* had, after all, not been wrong in seeing that this was an important area where Venetian feminine fashion, as well as male dress, was concerned. In general, women's dress, while not losing its amplitude, was stiffening a little. Of the two available types of Venetian sleeve it was not those worn by Palma's donatrix that were to prevail but those worn by his saints that developed into the sleeves that were to last, with modifications, throughout the second and third decades of the sixteenth century and far longer – almost as long as the century itself (see Figure 21).

Progressively the *a comeo* sleeves of Palma's saints were to become more stiffly sculptured so that their upper parts puffed out, in time, to an extreme size, while the band that had confined the sleeve at the wrist was gradually lengthened until it reached the elbow and even above it. At first the lower sleeve was noticeably wider than the arm; gradually it became closely fitted.

At the same time the hair, which had loosened into a soft loop covering the ears and had been drawn droopingly back into a falling, bag-like scarf or net, tightened a little as the net itself was raised to form a more recognisable cap – the *scuffia*. Borrowed from the neat little coil of the middle ages, this became the term generally used for any soft cap, worn also by men, often under a *biretta*, or by a woman as her only head-covering. This was a fashion that was again to last for decades, to shift its position on the head and, like the sleeves, to expand greatly and then, after 1530, to begin to contract. The *scuffia*, at first set so far back on the head as to be hardly visible from the front, was to rise and grow very large, before, as elsewhere in Italy, it began to contract. The hair, invariably parted in the centre, was drawn back smoothly over the temples and was not, until well after 1530, allowed to loosen a little into a faintly waving line, sometimes a little curled. During the whole of this period, when mature women are shown as wearing no cap, their heads are encircled by a plait of hair set at exactly the position that would have been occupied by a cap or turban-like *scuffia*, had they worn one.²⁸

In 1515 the authorities once more became alive to the dangers of allowing women a free choice as to what they should wear. Venice was, at the time, suffering from post-war poverty. It was pronounced a shameful thing that ladies should be wearing under-gowns of cloth of gold, and over them gowns of cloth, so cut about that the gold showed through. And two pairs of sleeves as well. Presumably the outer sleeves, too, were slashed to show the gold beneath and it was this that gave ground for complaint, for it had long been the practice to wear an

under-dress with sleeves that could be seen at the wrist and often up to the elbow.

Again in 1522, on 27 December, following the usual condemnation of evil practices introduced by many women into the city, the *Provedadori sopra le pompe* proceeded to attack the current fashions. That year, in fact only a few days earlier, the Senate had been outraged by the discovery that a daughter of sier Marco Gabriel had married doctor Andrea di Prioli wearing a dress made entirely of cloth of gold, a privilege allowed only, as we have seen, to female members of the doge's family actually resident in the Palace. Late December or early January was the usual season for sumptuary laws to be issued; this year there was no delay at all.

A Council of six Councillors, the three heads of the *Quarantia*, six *Savii* of the Council and five *Savii* of the *Terra ferma* expanded the golden wedding dress of Marco Gabriel's daughter into the 'custom' of many ladies to wear gold. They forbade cloth – *panno* – of gold or silver, the interweaving of gold or silver, stripes or quarterings of gold or silver. There was to be no embroidery or interlacing of gold or silver; the penalty would be the immediate forfeiture of the dress and the payment of a hundred ducats by the father, husband, brother or any other (presumably male) member of the household. As usual, tailors or others who worked on the dress would be fined 25 ducats, of which one third would be given, secretly, to the accuser who had provided the information.²⁹ Servants and slaves, either male or female, were encouraged to report on the clothing of their employers or owners, and any information received from them was to be rewarded. One member of the Council proposed, in addition, that no clothing made of any kind of silk material should be allowed, nor cloaks lined with expensive furs, nor were *Garzi*³⁰ to be made of any of those furs, nor of cloth of gold. The proposition was carried with enthusiasm.

That had been the position on 27 December. The *Provedadori* took the matter seriously and it was brought up repeatedly in Council. Then, in the following month, on 31 January 1523, a request came to the *Signoria* (the Senate) from the ambassador of the marquis of Mantua, who said that he was planning a party in his Venetian palace for the envoys from Germany and England. Representatives from England are rarely mentioned in Venetian reports; the party given by the Mantuan envoy may have been designed to put the Englishman at his ease, for his request to the *Signoria* was that for that one occasion the current sumptuary regulations might be set aside and that the twenty-five ladies who had been invited might be allowed to wear cloth of gold.

The Senate evidently viewed the request sympathetically, for they sent for the *Provedadori sopra le pompe* and asked them to grant the ladies, in these exceptional circumstances, a licence to break the rules.



22. G. Mansueti, *Miracle of a Relic of the Holy Cross*, 1494, detail. The ladies of Venice, all wearing the distinctive hairstyle of the date of the painting, watch the procession from their windows. Shirts hang out to dry on poles from attic windows. Venice, Accademia.



23. B. Licinio, *Portrait of a Lady*, 1524. The sleeve is puffed over the upper arm but straight to well above the elbow. The sitter wears a *scuffia* of, apparently, teased-out artificial hair. The extremely low-cut bodice, revealing the gathered front of the *camicia*, is typical of the fashion of the date of the painting. Venice, Ca' d'Oro.

The *Provedadori* were adamant. The request was impossible. The regulations had already been printed. Their attitude was, in fact, understandable. It was no doubt true that the ladies had indeed their gowns of cloth of gold stowed away in their cupboards and could well have taken them out, on licence, for one night, but what about the tailors? If they had not already been fined for making the outfits they would have been in danger once more; the *Provedadori* were probably being diplomatic as well as steadfast.

On 3 February 1523, in the Ca' Mocenigo in the parish of San Zuan Crisostomo on the Grand Canal near the Rialto (the Mantuan ambassador's residence at that time) the banquet took place. Among the twenty-five or so ladies present was a niece of the doge – the wife of the Procurator Vettor Grimani. She wore cloth of gold; the other ladies wore simple silk, just as they should. There was dancing, a comedy by 'the Sienese priest'³¹ and then a protracted dinner not, says Sanudo, well organised, in spite of the peacocks, pheasants and patridges sent especially by the marquis of Mantua himself. The ladies of Venice were, it seems, able to be ordered like the fish, the pheasants and the fruit: twenty ladies, fifty ladies. In contrast, when after his election in May of the same year, the new doge, Andrea Gritti, gave a party in the Palace, a niece attended, wearing cloth of gold. When the doge saw this he ordered her to change it as it was against the law, a diplomatic move for which he was highly praised.³²

There is very little documentary evidence which reveals any details as to what home life in Venice, whether patrician or working-class, was like but it is just possible to peep into one interior for a brief moment in April 1524, when a Venetian lawyer, sier Marco Antonio Contarini, who had eight tickets, won 12,000 ducats in the official lottery and soon a further 450 ducats. As soon as he heard the news, sier Marco Antonio ordered trumpets and fifes to play in his house and immediately arranged to give a dinner on the following day for all 'his' *Compagnii della Calza* – the *Eterni*. And for himself personally, he straightway ordered a *vesta* of crimson velvet.³³

Two days later, dressed in his crimson damask *a manege dogal* (presumably he had ordered that too), he appeared with members of his family and his *Compagni* of the *Eterni*, in *Collegio*. He was warmly congratulated by the doge, the *Signoria* and the *Collegio*. They had heard the news from a boy who had told them about it the day before. Marco Antonio promised the boy 100 ducats. All business was abandoned for the day, there was music, and the bells were rung in S. Filippo Giacomo, Marco Antonio's local church.

On 1 May, two days later again, he gave a luncheon and a dinner, accompanied by music, dancing and a number of ladies. To accommodate them he had had a platform built on the waterside below the

windows of his house. As host he appeared first in crimson damask and later in scarlet *a manege dogal*. To the boy who had carried the news to the Senate he gave the promised 100 ducats and, as well, a *zipon* of crimson *raso*, a scarlet cap, black velvet shoes and a scarlet *capa* (cloak). To the poor of the district, the *popolani*, he gave eight bottles of wine and distributed to them not only all the bread that was in his own house but also all there was in the bakery of San Marco. To every poor gentleman, a ducat – that is, a *corona*.³⁴ To other poor men, four soldi. To the doge's knight he gave 4 ducats and to his squires a ducat each.

Then, to his wife, Marco Antonio gave a *vestura* of *paonazo* velvet, a second of black velvet and another of *ormexin*.³⁵ He gave each of his five little daughters a *vesta* of black damask and to his two sons, *ziponi* of black damask; his three bastard sons were given the same. To his three sisters he gave *scufie d'oro*, each costing 10 ducats, as well as a *vestura*. To his cousins, viz, two gentlemen, one time of Faenza, each a *zipon* and a long black *saion*, for one, of damask, for the other, of velvet. To the wife of sier Lorenzo Moro, a *vestura* of *paonazo* velvet and to his sons, black damask. To each of the women who worked for him in the house he gave a *vestura* of serge.³⁶

Marco Antonio gave money to the Carmelites in his district and to other religious foundations as well. He then went again to the Council to report, wearing his scarlet with *manege dogal* and after that final visit he threw aside all his fine gowns and returned to the law; only, added Sanudo, for pure pleasure, because he would be rich all his life.

The episode is amusing. In his distribution of clothing Marco Antonio was probably experienced enough to choose the appropriate colour for each garment and each recipient. The former gentlemen of Faenza were not given clothes in the Venetian style. The ladies, no longer young of course, were dressed in *paonazo*, though his wife also received one grand outfit of *ormesino* and one of the fashionable black. His ten children were all dressed in black. That had been in 1524; was it a coincidence that in the following year the stylish young men of the *Ortolani* would all choose to wear black at a very prestigious wedding; in other words, had black become the latest fashion in 1524? If it was not a coincidence it is valuable evidence that in Venice the current fashion was followed very sharply.

Looking for pictorial evidence for the fashions worn by Venetian women during the years 1515 to 1525 is unrewarding, but from such as does exist the direction of the changes can be charted. The young and richly-clothed lady in Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love* (see Figure 12), which can be roughly dated to 1515, wears a fairly high-waisted dress with an ample skirt, a low neckline, cut square in front and *dogale* sleeves, pushed up to show what must be the sleeves of an under-dress beneath. These are an early form of the development from the *a comeo*



24. Titian, *Noli me Tangere*, detail. That it is early morning is indicated by the fact that Mary Magdalene has not yet tied her over-sleeves into the armholes of her dress. The extreme width of the sleeves of her *camisia* would have angered the authorities. The profile of her skirt below the waist indicates hoops worn beneath it. Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees, The National Gallery, London.

sleeves of, for example, Cima's Sta. Catarina, discussed above. The tight wrist-band has been extended towards the elbow but still fits fairly loosely over the lower arm; the full, puffed-out upper part droops down over the elbow. Like the sleeves, the arrangement of the hair of the young lady is a later and loosened version of one of the two styles of the second half of the first decade of the century, the style worn by Giovanni Bellini's Sta. Lucia in S. Zaccaria and Palma's Sta. Giustina. In every detail the dress, though not perhaps in itself spectacular, is a logical development of the fashions that preceded it.

The later version of the other style of dressing the hair recorded by Bellini and Palma (itself a later stage of a combination of the ring of hair that had slipped to the back of the head and the soft drooping net in which Titian, in Padua, showed it to be contained) can be found in a portrait by Bernardino Licinio in Venice, dated 1524. By this time the soft net had become a sculptural cap; the *scuffia* had hardened (Figure 23). Two years later the same artist painted a jolly young woman wearing sleeves in which the lower, fitted, part was now extended to well above the elbow and the full upper part, drooping in Titian's allegory of Love, had stiffened into disciplined spheres, set below the shoulder. The neckline is still low and square, but the waist is lowered to a more natural position for the first time in the period covered by this study. The bodice is now laced in front over an opening (Figure 23).

But more striking than the advances in the fashion of the dress were, as usual, those of the dressing and decoration of the hair. The *scuffia* had been raised to surround the crown of the head with what could only be teased-out artificial hair, bound round at intervals by a narrow ribbon. This was a fashion which, in a more exaggerated form, could be found in the northern cities of the Veneto;³⁷ the Venetian version was lighter.

In tracing the career of that ring of hair which once had sat on the tops of the heads of St Ursula, of the two courtesans and of the lady drawn by Dürer, and which had at first slipped backwards and then been held in a net or scarf, the steady determination of fashion to transform those heads into a totally new composition becomes apparent. It is also pleasing to notice in this context that the eighteenth-century engraving by Antonio Maria Zanetti, based on an earlier drawing of a nude woman, taken from what then remained of Giorgione's work on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, still records the correct style of hairdressing current when Giorgione was at work on the frescoes.³⁸

It was, perhaps, unfair to suggest that no native ladies of distinction graced the Venetian scene between 1495 and 1525 but it is difficult to discover the names of more than one or two in any field of art, religion, learning or politics. An exception, of course, was the beautiful and learned Cassandra Fedele, not only mistress of Greek and elegant Latin

but, it appears, girlish and virginal in the simplicity of her manner; she was fervently addressed by Angelo Poliziano. Cassandra, at an early age, seems to have occupied a Chair of Philosophy at the University of Padua. Fragments of her writings in prose and verse have survived, as well as a record of the fact that in 1555, in her nineties, she delivered an oration of welcome to the queen of Poland, Bona Sforza.³⁹ An engraving claiming to be a portrait of Cassandra shows her as being far from beautiful, though from the arrangement of her hair in an elaborate version of the ring on the top of the head, she was certainly fashion-conscious. From the third quarter of the sixteenth century women began to play an increasingly important part in Venice but that period is not, of course, relevant to this study.

Meanwhile, although the appearance of one or two paintings of assembled families may have signified a somewhat more liberal attitude to women in Venetian society, far more popular, no doubt, were the luscious paintings of what must have been *somtuose meretrici*, fair, plump beauties who view the spectator with a shy half-smile while making no attempt at all to prevent their luxurious clothing from slipping down from their shoulders. Although, physically, they may well have resembled them, these are no patrician wives. Who bought those tempting paintings of beautiful and obviously prosperous women and did they hang, or stand on easels, in patrician houses? It is unlikely that the *Provedadori* would have approved of the rich brocades, sometimes apparently woven with gold, that were made into the sleeves that slide away from the bosoms of these courtesans, leaving an inadequate veiling of equally condemned over-ample chemises (see Plate 8). And who was responsible for paying the fines for these lawless women? Patrician ladies were kept in order by a husband or a father, by a brother, or even by an uncle, any of whom would have dreaded the prospect of putting down the money for a fine having already, presumably, paid for the dress itself. Who was Titian's *Flora*, showing still a vestige of her brocaded dress? Presumably a woman who could defy the *Provedadori's* ruling about the size of the sleeves of her chemise.

Probably one of the earliest, though partial, versions of the second of Venice's fashions in the current three of the first decade of the century was worn by Titian's Mary Magdalene as she knelt before the risen Christ in the garden.⁴⁰ The sleeves of her dress have not yet, at dawn, been tied into their armholes; the wide sleeves of her chemise flow out, the illicit train of her dress lies on the ground behind her. The presentation of St Mary Magdalene as a *somtuosa meretrice*, able to defy the sumptuary regulations, would not have been lost on such ladies of Venice as may have seen the picture when it was first painted.

When the painting was cleaned in 1957 the original shape of the Magdalene's skirt was revealed for the first time since at least the early

eighteenth century (see Figure 24). It can now be seen that it must have been extended over stiff hoops, a temporary fashion in Milan and some parts of Venice's *Terraferma* at the moment when the painting was done. As a fashion it aroused such severe condemnation locally that the ladies of Venice may have hesitated to adopt it, otherwise the *Provedadori* would surely have abandoned their attacks on the amounts of stuffs used for sleeves and concentrated on the far more revolutionary style of the *faldia*. Or was this primitive 'farthingale' yet another demonstration of the harlots' freedom to defy the laws?⁴¹

5 Venetian Official Dress in Times of Triumph and of Crisis

Where normal statutory dress was concerned the Venetian terminology was limited to the names of the permitted garments themselves. For the long, closed gown the word *toga* was correct but very rarely used; it was usually called a *vesta*, the term also used in referring to the long outer dress of women. A *vesta* was worn by virtually every member of the Venetian Republic entitled to wear official dress – the doge, the Procurator, the patrician, the doctor and those citizens admitted to the Council.

But there were occasions when the Venetian official needed to enlarge his vocabulary. As we have seen, on the occasion of receiving the accolade of knighthood, the new knight was sometimes given a garment of cloth of gold which, because it did not entirely conform in its design to the statutory *vesta*, was referred to, in Venice, as a *caxacha*, a useful and relatively vague term which could be applied to the gown of the Turk, the Moscovite or any non-Venetian whose basic garment was long and dignified. There was, however, at least one strictly official occasion when neither *vesta* nor *caxacha* could have been adequate to describe the clothing chosen for so important and joyful an event. The occasion was a reception in the papal court of the Vatican in April 1523.

The Serenissima had not been popular with the Papacy during the first two decades of the sixteenth century. There had been amicable intervals, times when the Venetian envoys to Rome had commented, in their despatches, on the friendliness shown to them by the pontiff, but the fact that this was worth mentioning suggests that the friendliness was exceptional. It was, however, the manner of their reception by the newly elected Adrian VI that caused so lively a reaction among the Venetian ambassadors that it could reasonably be described as a flutter.

A preliminary account of the affair seems to suggest that for the papal audience itself the envoys dressed themselves in mantles. Marco Dandolo's was crimson velvet lined with miniver and *dossi*, worn over a *vesta* of cloth of gold; he wore a heavy gold chain. Missier Alvise Mocenigo wore *alto e basso* lined with ermine (complete, we are told, with tails) and *raso* beneath. Justiniano, Pesaro and Foscarini all wore mantles (*manti*) of velvet, lined with silk and *raso* beneath. All that was quite normal apart from the additional mantle, but the point is that a

few days earlier the envoys had made their formal approach to Rome in the correct order. Near the first gate stood the palace of missier Alexander Neroe, master of the papal household and here, by order of the pope himself, in a tapestry-hung chamber, they were offered a collation of fruit. This was the first mark of favour they had received from His Holiness (referred to in the despatches describing it all as *Nostro Signor*). And it was over these refreshments that, the letter continues, the Venetian envoys *deliberorono con qual sorte de vestiti che deviano entrare*.¹ To ride through Rome and to present themselves, that is to say, in the presence of the pope himself.

That any sort of joint consultation should have been felt necessary must have been a novel experience for members of the Serenissima. It was, however, agreed that all should enter wearing *roboni* and *saglioni* of velvet – or rather, all except missier Marco Dandolo, who should wear cloth of gold because *sua magnificentia* had a very beautiful *vestita* and a knightly *robon* of cloth of gold, made in a *bella foggia*.² Also, of course, it was his magnificence who was to be responsible for acting as spokesman for the group and for undertaking the duties of actually conversing with the cardinals, the rest of the distinguished company and, indeed, with the pope himself. The entry went beautifully and, the despatch continues, was regarded with favour.

The embassy had been a special one appointed by the Serenissima to carry the Republic's loyal respects and felicitations to the new pope. Three separate accounts of the visit were submitted, one after another, to the Senate. These, in themselves, are a mark of the importance of the visit felt by the envoys. The longest, the third, a full report delivered on the envoys return to Venice, explains in far greater detail the actual dilemma they had been faced with as to how they should dress once they were in Rome.³

It was on Wednesday 10 April that the envoys arrived at the first gateway, five miles from Rome, says this despatch. There they were met by Alvise Gradenigo, Venetian ambassador in residence in Rome. From there they rode to the palace where the 'most noble refreshments that could be found in Rome and the most precious wines'⁴ had been laid out by the order of the pope. Up to this point the envoys had intended to make their formal entry into Rome in official Venetian dress – *veste ducale* – that is, with wide sleeves, *dogale*. But, it seems that on discussing the matter over the refreshments, they were persuaded by Hironimo Lippomano, who was in Rome at the time, as well as by some others, that they should, rather, enter Rome in *roboni* and more or less in *zimare* – in other words, in clothing that was extremely grand but not aggressively Venetian in character, as the dress they had intended to wear might have appeared. The first brief account on this important topic was, therefore, rather misleading. The sudden use of terms such

as *roboni*, *saglioni* and *zimare* must have been strange to Venetian official ears.

The account of the episode continues with relish. Dandolo had, as it happened, a *vesta* gathered on the shoulders and up to the neck, with very wide sleeves made of cloth of gold *tirado*,⁵ one sleeve worn on the arm to hold the bridle, the other hanging loose from the armhole. The gown, which reached the ground, was of stuff woven in a design of pomegranates; it was lined with miniver. Dandolo also had a heavy gold chain and a black velvet cap to wear on his head. Alvise Gradenigo wore a *vesta* of black satin (*raso*) lined with *dossi*; Alvise Mocenigo wore black *alto e basso*, lined with *raso*, made in the style that had been worn by the English ambassador Richard Pace when he was in Venice. It, too, was pleated and had a high wide collar, and over it he wore a *sarion* of violet velvet. Domino Antonio Justiniano wore a *robon* with a shoulder-cape of flowered crimson damask. Domino Piero of the Pesaro family was in a little short *vesta*, pleated in the Genoese fashion; it was of black velvet lined with *dossi*. Marcho Foscari was dressed in a rather similar style, but his *vesta* was longer, with over-sleeves, and lined with black fur. A strange mixture of dress for six Venetian *togati*.

They descended the stairs, one after the other, accompanied by the Patriarch of Aquileia and by archbishops and bishops, protonotaries and many others and, although he had with him a fine horse and three mules excellently caparisoned, Dandolo was presented with a beautiful mule caparisoned in black velvet. Their journey into Rome is described in the greatest detail, including their first glimpse of the Swiss guard in their white, green and yellow and their banquet of fish from the Tiber, accompanied by wine of ten kinds.

The public *consistoro* was arranged for 20 April; they crossed the Sant' Angelo bridge to the sound of trumpets, kettledrums and fifes and, dismounting, finally made their way into a hall 'as large as our *Pregadi*' and into the presence of His Holiness. After a detailed description of the beauties of the surroundings and the kindness of the pope, who spoke in Latin, they said, with a strong guttural accent reminiscent of his native Flanders, we learn that ambassador Dandolo had changed into his *sopra vesta* of *restagno d'oro* with straight sleeves and crimson silk lining under a crimson mantle with ten gold buttons on the left shoulder, which had been given to him by the *Signoria*; he wore a heavy gold chain. Mocenigo had a similar mantle but *alto e basso*, with buttons but no gold chain. Justiniano's mantle also had buttons and the mantles of Pesaro and Foscari were similar but had no buttons, which, to the others, seemed rather odd.⁶ It would be difficult to find a more moving description of the splendours and curiosities of Rome than the long account of their tour of the city which follows. With Venice always in mind, among many other things the envoys noted that

the columns of the Pantheon were taller than those of St Mark's. After an apparently leisurely journey home they arrived in Venice on 11 May and delivered their report. It was a period of interregnum: Antonio Grimani had died on 7 May and Andrea Gritti was not elected until 20 May.

That any Venetian gentleman should have contemplated for a moment putting on a dress made in the English style (unless he was actually in England) is a sign of the blinding euphoria induced by the change in attitude of the Papacy towards the Republic of Venice. Once home it is extremely unlikely that any of those envoys ever appeared in their *veste* inspired by fashions worn by the English or the Genoese – those strange *robboni*.

Robboni and *saglioni* must have indicated civil suits which were not long to the ground but which, on the other hand, did not conform to the current French fashion of being short to the knee. Venice's new standing with the Papacy provided that unique glimpse behind the scenes where the official attitude to clothes was concerned. But although this was probably one of the very few occasions on which Venetian officials departed from the normal rigid terminology to describe clothing which they actually wore for a specific event of outstanding importance, there is ample evidence that moments of rejoicing were signalled by the clothes they put on. In October 1520, for instance, on learning that the sultan of Turkey had died in Adrianople, all the councillors immediately dressed themselves in scarlet for a meeting of the *Gran Consejo* because the news was so good. The importance of wearing colour was constantly stressed, which suggests that there must always have been a tendency to put on one's old black cloth.⁷

Venetian ambassadors, not only to the Vatican but also to the important secular courts of Europe, were naturally chosen for their ability and were often either doctors or knights or both. On their retirement from a particular appointment they were frequently presented with a gold chain by the ruler of the country to which they had been accredited but they were not, on their return to Venice, entitled to keep the gift which was regarded as having been presented to the Republic through her representative. It was then usually sold in aid of the finances of the state.

On the day of All Saints in 1519, sier Zuan Badoer, lately returned from France, where he had served as ambassador, attended Mass in San Marco, with the vice-doge and the *Signoria*. The doge, Leonardo Loredano, was too frail to go. Badoer wore the mantle of a knight of the Republic, of crimson velvet, open on the right side and buttoned on the shoulder with *camparioni*, a term usually reserved for the large bell-like buttons worn by the doge (see Plate 2) (at their audience with Adrian

VI, the fastenings worn by the envoys were described as *botomi*). Sier Zuan Badoer also wore round his neck a heavy gold chain, a gift from the French king; Badoer had bought it back from the *Signoria*.⁸

Fifteen years earlier, in February 1504, sier Zuan Badoer had returned to Venice after a term of office as ambassador to Hungary; Sanudo had noted then that he wore, to report to the *Colegio*, a velvet mantle fastened with *campononi*. In spite of the somewhat erratic Venetian spelling, they were probably the same ones and had been transferred from one mantle to another. On returning from Hungary Badoer had worn, with his mantle, a foreign type of cap of black velvet – French, that is to say, added Sanudo. Zuan Badoer had been knighted in Hungary and had been given a horse and a gown of cloth of gold made in the Hungarian style, lined with ermine, and he was also given two silver vases.⁹

The problem for ambassadors transferred from one foreign court to another must have been considerable. Badoer could just appear in *Collegio* wearing a French cap (though it was instantly remarked on), but a Hungarian mantle would have been impossible. He could, of course, have worn it in Hungary. Once appointed to another European court it would again have been useless. On the other hand a *vesta* of cloth of gold lined with ermine was not to be despised.

The royal courts of Europe certainly differed in character one from another. Whereas Venetian ambassadors to England often wrote home expressing admiration for the young and handsome king Henry VIII (who might well be persuaded to declare war on France), the manner in which he and his courtiers dressed themselves was puzzling to their eyes. And on at least one occasion the actual journey to England had presented problems. On 24 July 1512 Andrea Badoer, Venetian envoy to the English court, had somehow to get to England while Venice was still at war with France. Once arrived, Badoer wrote to his brother in Venice explaining that in order that his identity should not be suspected during his overland journey through France he had travelled with no luggage at all. Such clothing as he took he wore on his back: two shirts, one worn over the other, and certain outer garments of barely distinguishable style. Arrived in England he attempted to set himself up in clothes appropriate to a Venetian ambassador but there had been difficulties. In the first place he discovered to his great distress that the English, who wove no silk themselves, imported their silk fabrics not from Venice but from Genoa, Lucca and Florence, the Republic's rivals. In Venice his dress would, of course, have been of silk. Here, he explained, it was of frieze-cloth¹⁰ but in any case none of it would have been of the slightest use when he got back because it had been made to conform to the English fashion rather than to the Italian; here, for once, this Venetian used the term 'Italian' and not 'Venetian'.¹¹

In fact by 1512, in spite of the continuing war in Europe, things were beginning to improve for Venice, whereas four years earlier the situation had looked desperate. Because of her precarious position as an island capital of a large empire on the mainland, Venice was constantly threatened by those European powers who coveted the Italian cities and their countryside which were under her rule. That the tiny enclosed population of Venice itself had been able to maintain that rule over fairly long stretches of time was almost entirely due, of course, to the fact that the great powers surrounding her possessions – France, Milan, the Empire and the Papacy – were seldom in agreement with each other. But for one deadly moment, in 1508 when they drew up the League of Cambrai, they were. The months that followed were agonising for Venice. One after another her cities on the mainland fell to the attacks of one or another of those unlikely allies combined against her. Not only such northern cities as Bergamo and Brescia but Verona, Treviso and Vicenza were captured and even Padua, on Venice's doorstep, was besieged and in immediate danger of occupation.

But in 1509, taking advantage of some apparently small but fatal differences between France and the Empire, Venice launched a successful raid and regained the city. Confident, presumably, that this foreshadowed a final Venetian victory, on 7 July Marin Sanudo had been sent with a few other patricians to Mestre, where they waited for ten days and then, following a successful attack by a handful of Venetian troops (disguised, it appears, as Hungarians),¹² Sanudo and his *fratelli* arrived in Padua at eleven at night. They had gone, he says, *vestiti a la Venetiana, a la longa*. Once in Padua they were recognised immediately by both the men and the women of the city who, standing in their doorways, shouted, 'Marco, Marco! Praise be to God that we see our *Signori* of Venice!'¹³

A la longa in this context is significant. It expresses the confidence that the small and not particularly distinguished deputation of Venetian officials was determined to display almost before the troops themselves had recovered the city. Nor were the citizens of Padua in any doubt as to where those officials had come from or what they represented. The importance to Venice of the recovery of Padua, marked by that entry at eleven at night on 17 July, can be judged by the fact that, as a sign of thanksgiving, that day, which had been the feast of Sta. Marina, was celebrated in Venice from that time onwards by a formal procession, led by the doge, to hear Mass in the church of Sta. Marina, in the campo named from it.¹⁴ Fourteen years later, on 17 July 1523, when it was thought unwise to hold the procession because of an outbreak of plague, the doge Andrea Gritti did, nevertheless, dress himself in cloth of gold because he felt that on that day it was correct to do so.¹⁵

The recovery of Padua was an isolated event in the unhappy year that

followed the signing of the League of Cambrai; it was not typical. A more painful account reveals the way that Venice's distinctive dress was regarded by her enemies when, during the early days of the invasions of the Veneto by the troops of the adherents of the League, it was treated to ridicule on a grand scale. On 23 June 1509, those Venetians who had been caught in Brescia when the enemy invaded must have felt particularly humiliated by the presence of a former Venetian buffoon known as Bertto, who, in the days of peace, had been a popular entertainer at Venetian weddings and gala dinners. Foreseeing the defeat of the Republic, Bertto had made his way to the French command in Brescia and was soon earning a few ducats by dressing up as the Venetian *Comandador publice* in mantle, shoulder-cape and scarlet *bareta* and knocking at the doors of the citizens of Brescia in a cruel mimicry of the Venetian practice when calling a meeting of the *Pregadi*.¹⁶ Distressing as this must have been to the Venetians at the time, the description of the dress of this mock officer is useful to us.

On 26 October of the same year Girolamo Priuli bewailed the fact that he could not close an entry in his diary until he had described the wretched euphoria exhibited throughout Italy, France and Germany at Venice's plight. Everywhere, he says, triumphal *frottole*, sonnets, songs and eclogues were printed, together with satirical illustrations showing the doge, the councillors and the Senate of Venice, *vestiti honoratamente, a la ducale* (that is to say, he adds, *al modo veneto*), weeping over the ruin of their Republic. Some of the verses, written in an elegant and sophisticated style and in Latin, told of the pope and the members of the League advising the Venetians to return to their original occupations as fishermen – advice dramatised in comedies showing the doge and the senators speaking Venetian and dressed *a la loro modo*, being offered for sale as slaves and being stripped of their rich clothing while fishing-nets were thrust into their hands. The poor Venetians, says Priuli, have to hold their peace and pretend not to see the insulting paintings of themselves on the walls of their lost cities and in the castles and other places formerly under their rule.¹⁷

Writing of the League of Cambrai and its immediate effects on the Venetian mainland, the French historian Pierre Daru noted with some scepticism the claims of early sixteenth-century Venetian historians that at that moment of extreme peril the government had maintained all its customary composure, wisdom and authority. Pierre Daru published his history of the Venetian Republic not very long after 1797, when it had finally ceased to exist, and it is perhaps natural, therefore, that a French historian should have felt that he saw considerable sycophancy on the part of the chroniclers, who were, he insisted, paid by the state.¹⁸ Marin Sanudo, whose views Daru may well have had in mind, received singularly little pay, if any indeed, for his incomparable

Diarii. It was Sanudo who reported, in May 1509 and no doubt with absolute truth, that many years earlier the doge Foscari, learning of a disaster that had befallen Venice, deliberately dressed himself in cloth of gold to attend a meeting of the *Colegio* in order to *confortar li altri*.¹⁹ Furthermore, when, in the current war, the melancholy news reached the ears of the ancient Procurator sier Paolo Barbo, who had not attended a meeting for years, weeping, this good old man called to his wife: *Dame la vesta, che vogo andar in pregadi*²⁰ – in order, he continued, that he might say four words and then die in peace. This touching incident has been quoted, but it is worth noting that without his gown Paolo, however old he might have been, could not have contemplated attending a meeting of the *Pregadi* and that it was his wife whom he asked to bring it to him, not a servant. Aged eighty-six, he died two months later as the result, Sanudo says, of melancholy brought on by the present situation.²¹

The day after the meeting, the vigil of the feast of the Ascension, following the ancient custom, the doge, together with such foreign envoys as had remained in Venice – those of Spain and Ferrara – and with those patricians who were normally invited by the doge to luncheon on that day, proceeded with the appropriate ceremony to Mass at San Marco. The doge was, however, dressed in a mantle of crimson *ormesino*²² whereas he should, Sanudo points out, have worn cloth of gold to show that he was not cast down. On the day of the feast itself the doge followed the tradition of wedding the ocean; in the *Bucintoro* he again wore his crimson mantle of the previous morning and not the mantle of white and gold which was proper for this feast. It was admitted that there were, that year, very few participants. On the day of Pentecost, ten days later, the doge once more appeared dressed only in crimson velvet and all the senators wore scarlet, which, again according to Sanudo, was a mark of their great sorrow.²³ For senators, scarlet, a sign of pride when worn by members of a lesser council, was usually considered too humble.

Then, on 7 June, came the next important day in the Venetian calendar, the feast of Corpus Christi. This year, 1509, the doge wore the same (for him) sombre crimson velvet, while the senators expressed an even deeper sorrow by, for the most part, wearing black or *pavonazzo*, that strange intermediate colour, though eight of them did wear scarlet.²⁴

In Gentile Bellini's painting of the Corpus Domini procession (Plate 5), executed in the year 1496, the doge wears a gold brocade mantle with an ermine *bavaro* and it is the senators who wear crimson damask. In 1509 the scene must have been very different from Bellini's; there were, we are told, no women on the balconies nor in the Piazza, nor were there any pilgrims. Instead there were about a thousand men

wearing mantles which covered armour; they carried swords and shields; about twenty of them occupied each entry to the Piazza. There were no foreign ambassadors and the doge was accused of cowardice for not daring to walk through the Piazza without a guard; a good many unfavourable comments were heard in the city.²⁵

The feast of Corpus Christi is followed by the vigil of the feast of St John the Baptist, 23 June, traditionally a day for a display of fireworks in Venice, but in 1509 there were practically none. A sign of the misery that pervades our land, said Sanudo. Indeed, at the end of the usual business of the casting of votes at a meeting of the *Gran Consejo* on 8 July, the doge had felt moved to rise to his feet to remind the twelve hundred who, Sanudo says, were present that it was their duty to pay any debts they might owe the Republic – its defence called for ever more money. 'What use is money to you?' he demanded, and continued, 'it is through our love of luxury that so much force has been gathered against us. All are spending on rich gowns and linings, all are wearing gowns with *maniche all' ducale*, whereas at one time they were worn only by the doge and by doctors of medicine'.²⁶ As a subject for official reproof, official pomp was exceedingly rare in Venice, where such admonitions were usually reserved for women and young men. The doge's speech was certainly a sign of genuine alarm.

Although, because of its religious implications, the doge did in the years 1510 and 1511 wear white (or white and gold) for the feast of the Annunciation, he did not attempt any personal splendour on the other traditional annual festivals, some of which were, indeed, virtually ignored during those harassing years. His first compromise was on 1 March 1510, when the bells were rung in the Piazza and the *contrade* in thanksgiving for the news which had reached Venice of the lifting of the order of excommunication imposed on her on 27 April 1509. The Serenissima further expressed her relief in the manner which must have come most naturally to her: by holding a procession. Still the doge wore only crimson velvet, but over his mantle a *bavaro* of miniver. All patricians were ordered to wear scarlet.²⁷

It was not until October 1511 that the expression of the Republic's joy was temporarily unconfined. On 4 October a treaty between the Papacy, Spain and Venice was published in Rome, a treaty that could only be regarded as a direct move against France and the Empire. The procession which marked this Holy League was on a scale of grandeur in the best traditions of the Serenissima. Sanudo devoted an unprecedented seven pages to a description of the great train of members of the *Scuole*, clergy and councils who took part in the procession, which lasted from four in the afternoon until eight o'clock at night. The account ends with a list of every official in the Venetian government who was present and what he wore; of the hundred and twenty-eight

gentlemen whose names appear on the list, eighty-four wore gold or silk, forty-four scarlet, *paonazzo* or black. The doge himself wore a gold brocaded mantle lined with ermine and an ermine cap of state. But, most significantly, beneath his mantle, because the doge was in mourning for his cousin, Marin Zustignan, Sanudo explains, he wore not gold but *veludo cremexin*. In recording this Sanudo actually calls the *vesta* which he has just described as crimson velvet, *scarlatto*, using the terms generically for the mourning of the doge who never descended below scarlet in his dress, however poignant the occasion.

The complacency generated by the Holy League of 4 October 1511 can be estimated from the fact that it was not until six months later, after dinner on the vigil of the Ascension, that the doge at last appeared wearing the *restagno d'oro* of the days of peace, and on the day of Pentecost, eleven days later, a special procession was held to celebrate the rumour that the king of England had joined the league between the Papacy, Venice and Spain.²⁸ The occasion was evidently felt to be of rather less significance than the ancient commemoration of the *Sensa*, however, perhaps because the news of England's adherence to the League had not yet been officially published: the doge wore crimson *tabi*.²⁹ The feast of Corpus Christi that year was spoilt by an outbreak of fire in one of the houses in the Piazza but on the feast of St Vido, 15 June, the news of England's entry into the Holy League was published. The doge – who had not, Sanudo reports, worn gold on that particular feast before, nor even held a St Vido procession or luncheon for three years because of the *turbucentie* – appeared in *restagno d'oro* and a gold *bareta*.³⁰ The liberation of Genoa from the French had been another felicitous occasion which followed shortly and which also provoked a procession but because of the heat, says Sanudo, the doge wore crimson satin – *raso*. Could an additional reason for this rather muted dress have been the always somewhat ambiguous attitude of Venice to her most serious maritime rival, Genoa?

In the late autumn of 1514, following a letter from a Venetian representative in Corfu with the news that the Signor Turk had been so pleased with a recent victory over his rivals (the adherents of the Sophi) that he had dressed the Venetian bailiff in the Porte, as well as some Venetian merchants, in cloth of gold, an official envoy of the Sultan arrived in Venice. He was accompanied by fifteen attendants. Venice, which seldom lost an opportunity of registering her outward good will towards the Turkish sultan (until she could rejoice at his death), felt it correct to make an even greater effort than usual at this uncertain moment in her history. The Turkish ambassador was treated to all the pomp appropriate to the representative of a world power. Members of the Senate all wore scarlet in the *Gran Consiglio* at which the Turkish envoy was present whereas normally, says Sanudo, in these days they

only wear *paonazzo* with scarlet *bechi*.³¹ 'In these days' is of course the key phrase. The *veste* of *paonazzo* worn by the senators were no doubt as costly as those of scarlet but *paonazzo* reflected the correct attitude to the political situation.

Although the doge had been severe in addressing the *Gran Consiglio* in July 1509 on the subject of the improper use of *manege dogale*, wide sleeves were in fact perfectly acceptable if they were worn by the truly prosperous and not usurped by those who were not. They were allowed to Procurators, to doctors of medicine, to victorious generals on their return, to the chief representative of the government in the dependent cities – *Podeste* – and to other favoured employees of the Republic when they had successes to report. Stefano Contarini, *capitano* of Padua, for instance, was warmly welcomed when he attended a meeting of the *Collegio* in March 1511 dressed in *cremexin alto e basso*, a *manege dogale*: Padua had been liberated. In the generally depressing atmosphere of February 1510 two naval *capitani*, who had successfully disarmed two enemy ships, appeared to report to the *Collegio*; at least one of them was dressed in *alto e basso a manege dogale*.³²

But when the situation was not one of optimism very subtle differences could be achieved through the medium of official dress. Marin Zorzi, doctor and *Provedador* of Bergamo, had been held prisoner by the French. He, too, on his release appeared in the *Collegio* wearing *manege dogale* but set into a black gown, and he wore a beard. Beards in early sixteenth-century Venice were a mark of mourning, and were permitted, for a strictly limited period, to gentlemen in mourning for a relative. An extension of this practice was the wearing of a beard as a sign of distress and also, on occasion, of shame. Marin Zorzi's beard registered the fact that he had, however unwillingly, allowed himself to be taken prisoner; it is likely that he had debated within himself as to whether he should have shaved it off immediately on his release or should appear in *Collegio* wearing it.³³

When the Venetian 'captain general', the count Pitigliano, made his way back to Venice in August 1509, following widespread French victories in Lombardy, he wore a beard (though not, Sanudo says, *molto longo*) and very soon afterwards, on 14 August, following the triumphant capture by Venice of the Marquis of Mantua, he shaved it off. Furthermore, after this good news, Pitigliano dressed himself up in his gown of cloth of gold – an old fashioned one, Sanudo adds.³⁴ The next year, in April 1510, three Venetian gentlemen who had been released from imprisonment in Milan attended a meeting of the *Collegio* wearing beards. These three, however, unlike Marin Zorzi, wore *manege a comedo* with black gowns; they had arrived in Venice by a circuitous route and although respected members of the Republic, their standing was not as high as Zorzi's.³⁵ In October 1511, when Venetian prospects

were, at least temporarily, much brighter, sior Ulivier Contarini had appeared in the *Collegio* wearing *paonazzo* and a beard, but in his case both were as mourning after the recent death of his son, doctor Ypolitio.

The rules governing mourning in the Serenissima are clearly stated by Sanudo in his *Città di Venetia*. The bereaved, he says, wears slippers on his feet (these were in contrast to the *zoccoli* normally worn and must have been deliberately allowed as noiseless) and a long mantle with a hood on the shoulder. But this was only for the first few days, after which the normal *vesta* was worn, and a beard. The gown was presumably black as a general rule. This *vesta*, together with a beard, was to be worn for absolutely precise periods: three years for a father, two years for a mother, one year for a brother. Mourning for a wife or a child is not mentioned.³⁶

The curious practice of wearing a beard for mourning was already current in 1498 when, on 2 December, Sanudo wrote in his diary of a long and tedious report delivered in *Colegio* by a lawyer wearing black velvet and a beard as mourning for his mother. Sanudo also found it worth noting that in January 1512 a *provedador* of the navy, sior Hironimo Contarini, who had been abroad for four years, arrived in *Colegio* wearing scarlet and a *longissima barba* which he was unwilling to shave off – a beard worn, presumably, as a matter of personal taste, and not as mourning.³⁷

But probably the most subtle message of all to be conveyed at about this time purely by personal adornment was that of *il valoroso* Andrea Gritti when, on 1 July 1513, having escaped from Treviso, he reported to the doge in his private room wearing a woollen gown of *paonazzo* with *manege dogale* and a beard. Here, the colour *pavonazzo* must have suggested mourning; wool, extreme humility; *dogale* sleeves, high office; the beard, sorrow. Each item in the general effect must have been chosen as a result of very careful thought. *Dogale* sleeves, for instance, would never normally be worn with gowns made of wool, so the effect must have been deliberately planned.

In spite of an order published in October 1509 in Brescia, Ferrara and Milan that under severe penalty no beards of more than twelve days growth were to be worn except for the death of a relative, the practice of wearing beards had not decreased. In those areas at that date the Venetian order was obviously intended to ensure that Venetians in the occupied territories did not give comfort to the enemy.

Pompeo Molmenti refers to the Venetian custom of restricting the wearing of beards to periods of mourning as a survival of an ancient custom³⁸ but such a custom is not easy to discover. In works of art the gods of classical antiquity flaunted their beards, where they were appropriate to their characters, and the Jews of the Old Testament regarded any interference with the beard as reprehensible: 'Thou shalt



25. G. Mansueti, *Miracle of the curing of a daughter of Benvegnudo of S. Polo*, detail. A typical crowd of Venetian men of all ages and one Oriental. Only the Oriental with the puma and the very old men wear beards. Venice, Accademia.

not round the corners of thy head, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard' is a command repeated again and again in Leviticus and other books. It is not impossible, however, that the Old Testament may provide a clue to the Venetian ban, which was echoed by instructions to the clergy in other parts of Italy. Beards may well have been long associated with the image of Jews and, more particularly, with Muslims. In 1522, all the cardinals of Rome were required to shave their beards with the exception of one who, because he belonged to the Augustinian Order, was exempted.³⁹ Certainly, few beards are worn by Venetian officials or men of fashion in paintings of scenes with Venetian settings by Carpaccio and the Bellinis; neither do late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century portraits of young or middle-aged Venetian men show them as bearded (Figure 25). Most saints are represented in the period as clean-shaven, though John the Evangelist in Giovanni Bellini's *Pietà* is probably deliberately shown as unshaven, reflecting a sense of mourning as it was reported during, for instance, the League of Cambrai. Sitters in the few Giorgione and early Titian portraits of men wearing light beards have usually been identified as non-Venetians and it may be that the symbol of an unshaven face as an indication of mourning survived (if it had been a general practice) only in Venice.

Sanudo had thought that the news that the pope, Julius II, had grown a beard was worth reporting as an *Item* in April 1511. He commented no further. He also mentioned the fact that Giuliano de' Medici was caught, by a caller, washing his beard, but this may have been an obscure metaphor for a situation of quite a different kind, or even a piece of current slang.⁴⁰

The years of the fluctuating emotions generated by the wars of the League of Cambrai had been years of acute consciousness where dress in Venice was concerned. Morale must be maintained; the enemy must be discouraged by the steadfast continuity of the normal but, at the same time, expenditure must be strictly controlled.

Six years after the formal and final end of the Cambrai menace, new wars had broken out in northern Italy, but this time Venice did not participate. She watched, almost hypnotised by the situation, and it was during the breathtaking months that preceded the war of Pavia that, perhaps for the first time, Venetian officials lost interest in what their contemporaries were wearing. During October, November and December 1524 and the early days of January 1525, letters from her representatives in the Veneto describing the latest state of affairs from Crema to Brescia poured into the Serenissima; they occupy page after page of the diaries. With a large army camped in and around Pavia, the French king assured the world of the ultimate French victory which would give him back the dukedom of Milan and it was during those months that even Sanudo could not bring himself, apart from the

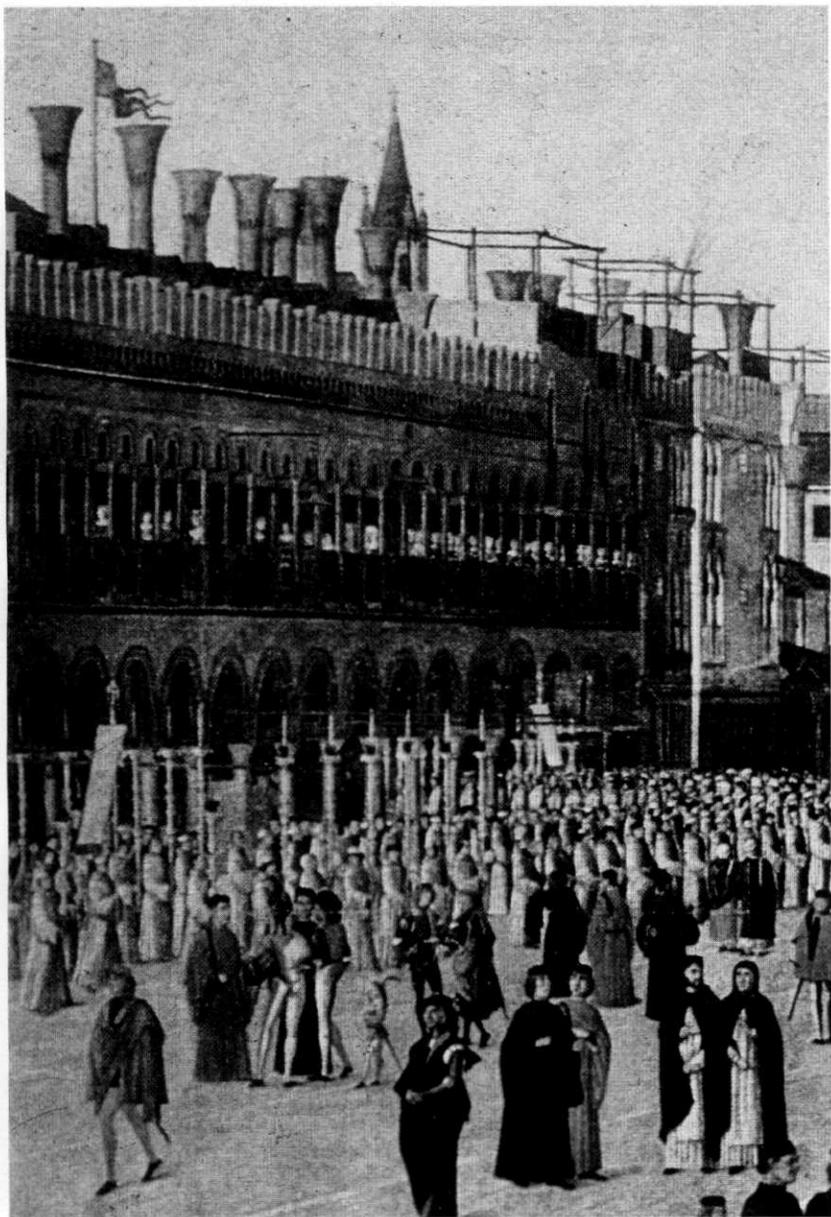


PLATE 5. Gentile Bellini, *The Procession in the Piazza S. Marco*, 1496. Detail. Venice, Accademia.



PLATE 6. V. Carpaccio. *Miracle of a Relic of the True Cross*, 1494. Venice, Accademia.

absolute necessity of recording an important wedding, to speculate as to whether *scarlatto* instead of *negro* should have been worn on any particular occasion.

Perhaps fearing to give offence if he omitted them, he did include descriptions of what the doge wore on Christmas Eve (crimson velvet with *dogaline* sleeves under a crimson satin mantle); on Christmas Day (an innovation, velvet in an 'old rose' – *ruosa secha* – shade), and the fact that he changed after lunch into *restagno d'oro* under a very beautiful mantle of *paonazzo* velvet, lined with Sanudo could not remember precisely what, and his ermine shoulder-cape and flowered golden cap. He also evidently felt bound to mention the fact that sier Vincenzo Grimani was still wearing *beretino*. By this time, because he no longer appeared as son of the reigning doge, he had probably abandoned his damask for natural wool.⁴¹

Apart from such brief asides, the diary is filled with letter after letter from areas affected by the war; letters containing phrases such as, 'we see the ultimate ruin of this our poor Italy' coming from Brescia, and an assurance by the French envoy to the *Collegio* that His Most Christian Majesty was about to take over the city of Milan. No reference is made to the beginning of carnival – a most unusual omission – apart from the report of an order prohibiting disguises, either indoors or out. The attention of Venice was really directed towards Pavia.

By about the middle of January, however, it seems that the tension had been so prolonged that it began to weaken and, for a short time, Sanudo reverted once more to brief references to *capitanii* returning to report to the *Collegio* wearing crimson velvet, and to such mild festivities as seem to have taken place during carnival that year. And then, on 24 February, when he was on his way to watch a rehearsal of a comedy to be performed by the *Valorosi* in the Ca' Dandolo, Sanudo was stopped in the Merceria by sier Lunardo Contarini, who had just come from the barber's and told him the news of the defeat of the French army and the capture of Francis I.⁴² For Venice the tension was technically at an end.

But with the end of anxiety came, of course, the fascination of that amazing victory. Once again letters poured into Venice from all the cities of the Veneto and once again the clothing of Venetian officials was almost ignored. Not quite, because on the Vigil of the Annunciation the doge had again put on that rich but sombre combination of a mantle of *pavonazzo* velvet with a ducal cap of old rose. Dark, as an effect, commented Sanudo, but what a wardrobe of garments of every sort the doge possessed!

In his introduction to volume XXXVIII of his *Diarii*, Sanudo stated that it would be devoted entirely to the Pavia victory and reactions to it, an intention that he almost but not quite fulfilled. Traditional

ceremonies at Easter and the *Sensa* were, of course, marked by the doge with a variety of golden *veste* and mantles but there was evidently less interest taken in what was worn by those who accompanied him. Such references as there are to comedies and *intermedii* are perfunctory. While Sanudo was writing this volume, the German victory over France was succeeded by other important events. As letters from Bergamo, Brescia and Friuli grew fewer, a new and almost graver topic brought further letters, from Innsbruck, with the news of violent peasant demonstrations, all over Switzerland and Austria – demonstrations on behalf of Martin Luther. Judges and church dignitaries were slaughtered; refugees began to fill the roads. As Sanudo reached the end of the volume news was arriving that bishops and even monks and nuns were getting married.⁴³ But things were beginning to return to that strange normality that was Venice's. On Whit Sunday, 4 June 1525, the escort of an envoy of the *serenissimo Signor turco* wore scarlet, and on Whit Monday the Turkish envoy appeared in *Collegio*, accompanied by ten gentlemen of the *Pregadi*; his clothes are described. It was, as it happened, an occasion on which Sanudo himself made an impassioned plea from the rostrum which, as usual, was rejected; he found this particular rejection hard to forget.⁴⁴

Corpus Christi fell on 15 June that year, and that year the procession was watched from the balcony of St Mark's by the envoy of the Signor Turk, which was taken as an evil sign, partly because only two of the three banners flown from the standards in the Piazza appeared – the third had rotted; certainly a sign of the neglect into which things had fallen during the war of Pavia. But the difference between the Venetian attitude to the outward appearance of her officials during the wars in the League of Cambrai and during the war for Pavia is striking. Venice was directly involved in the former; the League had openly declared their enmity to her and she stood in danger of losing her empire on the mainland. In the Franco-German war for Pavia, the war was fought by the Germans on her behalf (from her point of view), and the threat to her sovereignty was remote. She was able to watch the progress of the war with fascination – as though it had been, perhaps, the World Cup. During the real crisis posed by the League, clothing was supremely important: during the Pavia war its significance could be temporarily forgotten.

With the return to comparative normality after the French defeat at Pavia, Sanudo's attention was gradually drawn back to the question of what was being worn; his interest was no doubt shared by other members of the councils. On the feast of Sta. Marina, 17 July 1525, Sanudo noted that sier Piero Mocenigo, about to take up the post of *capitano* in Brescia, carried the official sword and wore crimson damask; his official *compagnon*, however, wore scarlet. Never before,

commented Sanudo, had he seen the swordbearer's companion wearing scarlet: all had dressed in silk.⁴⁵ A month later sier Antonio Surian, doctor and knight, returned from a term of office as *Podestà* of Brescia to report to the Senate. He wore cloth in *paonazo*; he made a long report and then thanked the state for offering him the post of ambassador in Milan, but excused himself, saying that he could not go. The doge pressed sier Antonio to accept the appointment but still he refused. It was the custom for officers returning from important posts in the Veneto to report to the Senate wearing crimson silk. Was that humble dress of sier Antonio's an apology for his rejection of a prestigious position, or the sign of some deep personal complication?



26. V. Carpaccio, *Miracle of a Relic of the True Cross*, 1494, detail. Two young men in the foreground, with long blond hair, are probably members of a Company of the Stocking. There are other young men, as well as members of the government, but no women to be seen in this street-scene in Venice, on the Riva near the Rialto. Venice, Accademia.

6 Venetian Entertainments and Festivals

The distinguished art historian and authority on the art of his own time Lionello Venturi published in 1908 and 1909, in two consecutive numbers of the *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, his doctoral thesis on the *Compagnie della Calza*. The thesis is so formidably lucid and complete that few if any later students have discovered anything to add to Venturi's findings. Nevertheless, because the *Nuovo Archivio Veneto* of the early years of this century is not always to hand, it is worth, once more, and in however unworthy a manner, pillaging both Venturi's own text and those of some of his sources where they are relevant to the present study.

The character of the 'Companies of the Stocking' seems to have been based originally on that of some earlier companies of a similar kind established elsewhere in Italy¹ but in Venice, of course, they developed their own particular eccentricities. Assembled primarily for the purpose of providing entertainments at social functions and on certain public holidays, some of the companies were, apparently, short-lived and, it seems, recruited on a more or less *ad hoc* basis, while others survived in their original form over a comparatively long period. Composed in the first place of young men of good family, they were later in at least some cases transformed by the membership not only of older highly-placed Venetians but also of some aristocratic foreigners.² There were also one or two examples of companies formed not of patricians but of *cittadini* of old and respectable families.³ It is clear that at least in some respects the Companies of the Stocking resembled Orders of Chivalry; they were headed by a *Signore* or *Priore*, who was supported by three or four lesser officers. All the officers were elected and usually held office for a year. By the end of the sixteenth century the *Compagnie della Calza* had ceased to exist, but they were long remembered by the older families in Venice.⁴

Operating under charmingly romantic names such as the *Modesti*, the *Sempiterni*, the *Immortali*, individual companies are constantly mentioned by Sanudo in the *Diarii* – on one or two occasions he lists the members of a company by name⁵ – and they appear to have been looked on with an indulgent eye by the Senate, which almost always deliberately excluded them from its current sumptuary restrictions.⁶

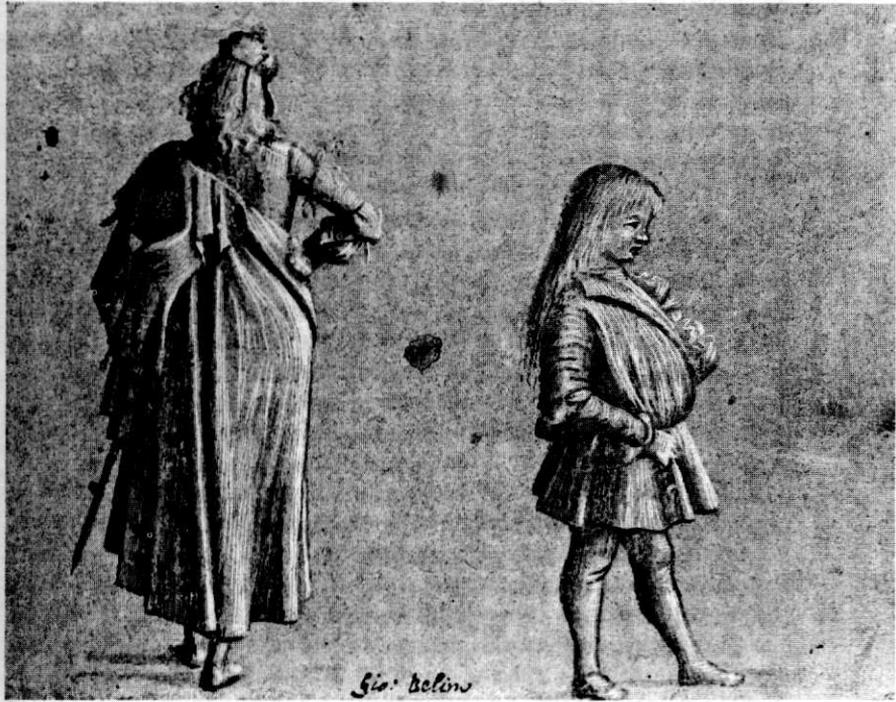
Companions have also been identified in one or two works of art of the early years of the sixteenth century, among them a drawing said to have been based on the now vanished Giorgione–Titian frescoes on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi,⁷ near the Rialto Bridge.

Presumably because there were so many autonomous companies, no recognisable corporate livery seems to have been worn, but the feature shared by all was that one stocking (*calza*) was woven or embroidered in a distinctive design which varied from Company to Company.

On the evidence of the late sixteenth-century author and engraver Cesare Vecellio, who included in his publication on dress some Venetian clothes of the past,⁸ one of the two young men on the left with their backs to the spectator in Carpaccio's *Miracle of a Relic of the True Cross* of 1494⁹ represented a member of a Company (see Plate 6 and Figures 26, 27) (I believe that the other young man also did). His long blond hair falls onto his shoulders and he wears a hooded mantle of an interesting design. He is not the only fair-haired young man wearing an exceptionally fanciful dress to be found in Venetian paintings of roughly the same date and it is not impossible that, although the Venetians were reputed to be a fair-haired people, the long golden hair of these boys was dyed, and that both it and, in some respects, their mantles had been inspired by a German fashion.¹⁰

The appearance of these young men has become memorable. They are invariably referred to, both in studies of Venice at the turn of the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries and in studies of the artists in whose works they can be found. Most authors have taken it for granted that they were intended as typical members of one or other of the *Compagnie della Calza*. Although from even the most superficial acquaintance with Sanudo's diaries of those years it is clear that the *compagnii* were a familiar sight at Venetian social functions, especially weddings, it has not been possible to equate any of his descriptions of their dress with a specific young man in a painting.

A description of a very different kind from those of the beginning of the century appears in an entry in Sanudo's diary for February 1524. On that day celebrated annually in Venice as *Zuoba di la casa – Giovedì Grasso*, the last Thursday of carnival – the usual letters were read in council and then, after luncheon (*da poi disnar*), the traditional annual celebration of a Venetian victory in 1162¹¹ began. This included the hunting and killing in the Piazza San Marco of twelve pigs and a bull and the subsequent distribution of their meat and, later, an armed mock attack on a temporary wooden castle erected in the great hall of the Ducal Palace; its assailants could include the doge himself, wearing armour. These mock battles, sometimes held during the progress of a banquet, had been a popular medieval way of commemorating a past victory.¹² Fireworks were let off from the Campanile and then the



27. V. Carpaccio, *Study for figures in The Miracle of a Relic of the True Cross*. Wrongly inscribed 'Gio. Bellini', the youth on the left is a study for one of the young men in Figure 26. The little boy wears the correct dress of the youth not yet accepted as a member of the government. The low-set belt, the curved effect of the torso and the style of the sleeve show the importance of fashion in Venice in the 1490s. Vienna, Albertina.

doge, with the foreign envoys and other deputies, was accompanied by a band of followers wearing masks. Among these, in 1524, was a *Compagnia della Calza*, the *Ortolani*. Twenty-two of their members were present, two of whom were sier Domenego Zorzi, chairman of a governmental committee, and sier Marco Grimani, a Procurator. All the members wore *veste* of crimson velvet or silk, with *dogale* sleeves. They wore *bechi* over their shoulders and on their heads caps, some of satin, some of velvet – and, Sanudo immediately adds: *Item*, masks, with noses – and each was preceded by two servants, each of whom carried a torch and was dressed as a peasant (*villano*). Among the Company was one wearing cloth of gold, who was very talented; and there were clowns; first among them the famous Zuan Polo, and there was present also Ruzante, the Paduan; then there were others again dressed as peasants, they carried rustic objects, a spade, a wooden platter or some other agricultural implement.¹³ Then there was, of course, a band which included the usual trumpets and drums.

Here, then, we find, as members of a *Compagnia della Calza*, mature officials of the Venetian state: Marco Grimani, a Procurator (a position held only by the wealthy and influential), and Domenego Zorzi, a *sopracomito*. Both, like the other members, wore gowns of crimson with the most prestigious type of sleeve, and with their gowns they wore *bechi*, the official Venetian vestige of the one-time hood. Of their stocking no mention is made but, on the other hand, they wore masks (*il viso con naxi*). At the end of this particular entry Sanudo gives a list of the names of twenty-one of the twenty-two members present; the name of the other he did not know.¹⁴

As for Zuan Polo, always given a special mention, his career had been interesting. In February 1513, after the death of the clown Domenego Taiacalze, described as *optimo bufon* whose partner was 'zampolo', Zuan Polo seems to have had the field to himself. At a wedding in the April of the same year he had led the band. A month later, in May, when a niece of the doge was married in circumstances of exceptional grandeur, Zuan Polo was introduced to the audience and delivered some pleasing quips.¹⁵ Then, for some months, we hear nothing of him. The Serenissima was undergoing a period of renewed depression after the relief temporarily provided by the signing of the Holy League. The war dragged on and the shortage of money became more acute, but a visit by an envoy of the sultan of Turkey suddenly awakened the Senate to Turkey's political importance. Everybody turned out in scarlet, a lovely repast was served, and Zuan Polo *bufon* performed in various costumes (*vari abiti*) with such success that the Turkish envoy was moved to offer him a ducat a day to go about with him in Venice and keep him amused with his buffoonery. Of course on that occasion there had been ladies at the party too: they had danced.¹⁶

But apart from this effort to please the Turks, February 1514 was a bad time. On the *Zuoba di la caza* there were few masks; the whole land was plunged in misery. As usual, though, recovery was not very long delayed and in February 1515, in the courtyard of the Ca' Pesaro, the company of the *Immortali* performed the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus with a splendid setting and, to lighten what seems to have been the inevitable tedium of classical comedy however well performed, Zuan Polo, who presented a comedy of his own, appeared in an interval. He first assumed the part of a magician and called up the fires and the devils of Hell and then, in the guise of the God of Love carried into Hell, he found there his unfortunate predecessor, Domenego Taiacalze, chasing goats. Taiacalze and the goats came out of Hell, whereupon the goats danced a ballet. In other words, Zuan Polo, assuming the character of the God of Love, condescended to rescue his former employer. The passage continues with the information that the evening's entertainment was further lightened by a triumphal car, and that there then followed a few more acts of Plautus and a Judgement of Paris.¹⁷

Two years later, in February 1517, *belissime feste* to celebrate the truce between Venice and the Empire were arranged by the German merchants from their headquarters on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi. There was jousting, a bull fight, bear-baiting and then came Zuan Polo *bufon*, who had wanted to stage a mock joust but fell and injured a leg, so that he had to withdraw. But there were still eight men who made their entrances on sea-horses and triumphal cars, wearing excellent costumes; there was again the God of Love. There were nymphs, lovers and Germans dressed as Wild Men with clubs in their hands.¹⁸ And then six Wild Women danced. Numerous ladies and gentlemen wore masks and the Germans went to great expense in giving a dinner in their hall. The whole thing, which had begun in the morning, finished at three the following morning. Even from a rather confused account of the event it seems clear that, unless they were men disguised, the Wild Ladies who danced must have been Germans; it seems most unlikely that Venetian ladies would have been permitted to perform such a role in public.

After damaging his leg, Zuan Polo seems to have disappeared for a time, though he certainly appeared in 1518 and then, in April 1524, on the feast of St Mark, in company with another clown he entertained the guests in the Ducal Palace at a traditional luncheon given by the doge on that day.¹⁹ By that time his talents must have been very highly thought of indeed, for he could hardly have looked for a greater honour in the Republic. In the same year, on his own saint's day, the feast of St Paul, and again with the *Ortolani*, he had performed at the palace, this time at the end of the luncheon party, after the marzipan and the other sweets had been served. The following February, 1525, a very elaborate

entertainment was presented in the Ca' Arian, where the *Triumphanti*, who had been described in 1516 as a new company with an average age of twenty, performed a comedy. Supper was served to an assembly of three hundred guests. One of the dishes offered bore the words: *Concordiae dedicatum*. That dish, said Sanudo, was delicious. The party, which anticipated the emperor's victory at Pavia by two weeks and which followed a pact between the new pope, Clement VII, Venice and Florence, certainly had political connotations since a very large number of members of the government attended it. There were *intermedii* and three comedies in prose by Zuan Manenti (known as Philargio), by Trebia and by Fidel. Then il Ruzante and Menato, both of Padua, presented their rustic and, on this occasion, indecent comedy. The young men were jeered at by the ladies, who shuddered; they were with their husbands. But Zuan Polo performed splendidly and the *intermedii* were beautiful. The costumes worn in them were Moorish, German, Greek and Hungarian and, as well, there were actors dressed as pilgrims. Then appeared eight acrobats with indoor fireworks, who danced to the music of bagpipes. And so the evening finally ended in shame, not to the Company, who had spent a lot of money, but to the author, who had used a lot of dirty language in his play which had made more money than could have been won in a lottery.²⁰

Two or three days later, again in the Ca' Arian, the *Triumphanti* appeared once more. There were about three hundred ladies present. The disgusting comedy was not performed on this occasion, but another rustic piece by il Ruzante was. Zuan Polo again produced an admirable effect.²¹ It is surely unusual that at so early a date the public career of a professional comic should have been traced with such persistence. It is understandable, however, that a description of his act and of the clothes in which he performed it were beyond the powers of Sanudo, who could think so lucidly in official categories. Although a poet and a dramatist himself, when it came to recording the day-to-day life in Venice imaginative prose was beyond him – if, indeed, he would have been tempted to use it to such frivolous ends. What does emerge, however, is that the recognisable stereotypes for foreigners could prove entertaining. A Hungarian, for instance, because of his clothes, must have been amusing in his own right and certainly distinguishable from a German or a Greek. Zuan Polo, always in *abiti vari*, must already have been an experienced comic when he was chosen by Domenego Taicalze as his partner. There was certainly more than a little irony in Zuan Polo's decision to present himself as the God of Love rescuing his one-time partner from the flames of Hell.

Il Ruzante of Padua, whose real name was Angelo Beolco, was not only a playwright but also an actor, who appeared in some of his own plays as a *villano*: being a Paduan, he was expert in speaking the dialect

of the Paduan countryside. Throughout the Renaissance and all over Italy the peasant in contemporary comedy was portrayed as concealing a subtle cunning beneath an extravagantly rough and seemingly naive exterior. But there must have been additional reasons for the presence of both Ruzante and the troupes of extras dressed as peasants carrying farm implements on the *Zuoba di la caza* for, as a feast, it obviously signified not only the approach of the end of Carnival and the beginning of Lent but also the season of preparing the ground and of the sowing of seed.

In recent years, in the Veneto and, indeed, elsewhere, the study of Angelo Beolco da Ruzante of Padua has become a flourishing industry, but a complete edition of his plays, which appeared in 1967, comes as a surprise to the English reader. In Paduan dialect they are virtually incomprehensible to all but specialists; but in the parallel text in 'Italian' they show a penetrating sense of character and a positively modern bitter humour that throw considerable light on the Venetian audiences which so much appreciated them.

Beolco, the exact date of whose birth is uncertain, died in 1550. He seems to have been substantially befriended by the Venetian Alvise Cornaro and has been referred to as a *familiaris* – a paid member of his household. Alvise, a patron of the arts, had inherited a mansion in Padua, which he greatly embellished. In an extremely interesting account of the individual character of the Paduan countryside and its inhabitants, which introduces the text of Beolco's plays, their editor, Lodovico Zorzi, discusses the contrast between the *popolari* of the land and the *cives* of the city and notes the loyalty to Venice displayed by the peasant population during the wars of the League of Cambrai, a loyalty which could have been an additional reason for the success of Beolco's early entertainments in Venice itself, though a reading of their texts makes it clear that the Venetians did not always show up in a very good light.

Soon if not immediately after the signing of the final peace treaties in 1518, Beolco da Ruzante, with a tiny company, took what were described as *dialoghi* to Venice as part of the prolonged entertainments in which Zuan Polo also appeared. With prologues newly composed for the Venetian (as opposed to the earlier Paduan) audience, longer and more ambitious plays followed, but to the modern reader the first, the short *Parlamento de Ruzante che vera vegnu de campo*, is the most vivid, and almost unbearably poignant. In it Ruzante plays himself, newly returned from the wars, exhausted, tattered and penniless. Still wearing the weighty helmet that scars his head, he is barely recognised by his friend Menato, who accuses him of having adopted a Florentinish accent – the speech of the 'brisighella' – which is incomprehensible. 'In fact I was with the brisighellesi of Urbino', answers Ruzante, 'and we

talked like that.²² Menato also points out that he is wearing a *gabbano* which is longer than his leather *giubotto* (that, in fact, his shirt was hanging out). 'Mah,' responds Ruzante, 'I got it from a *villano* – a peasant of those parts – because I was cold.' The editor explains that it would have made him look even less soldierly.

Making their way to Venice in search of Ruzante's wife, Gnuia (the third character in the *dialogo*), who had been evacuated to the safety of Venice along with other peasant women and old men,²³ they discover that Gnuia, when found, is interested only in the fact that Ruzante has brought her no presents from the wars, no *gonella* (dress). It would be more convincing, she says, if he had lost an eye or a leg; he probably hadn't been at the wars at all. Gnuia sees her Venetian lover approaching in the distance and, after impassively watching Ruzante being attacked and knocked down by a hired bully – a *bravo* – she goes off to join 'her man'. Ruzante picks himself up and shambles off, laughing.

The wars of the League of Cambrai had been the most threatening to Venice's survival up to that time. The laughter of the patrician Venetian audience at Ruzante's little dialogue may have been rather less hearty than Padua's would have been when it was produced there in the first place.

The second dialogue, set in Venice, goes further. A *villano*, Bilora (surely played by Ruzante again), has gone to look for his wife Dina. In the first brief scene Bilora, solo, tells of his agonising love for her and, as well, of his hunger – 'no bread'. Dina has been carried off, presumably as a maidservant, by Andronico, an aged Venetian. Bilora finds the house and talks with Dina, who looks down from an upper window. She tells him that Andronico is awful and that she would like to return home. Then, on the now empty stage, Andronico appears and gloats over the thought of Dina dancing the *rosina*. After consultation between the two friends, Bilora and Pitaro (another *villano*), Pitaro offers to act as intermediary and begs Andronico to let Dina go home with her husband but Dina, suddenly appearing, declares that Bilora is the lowest poltroon who ever chewed bread and that she'd rather stay. Although Andronico explains that he is fully armed and has worn a cuirass (*corazzina*) and a *falda*²⁴ the whole summer and is a veritable St George, nevertheless Bilora attacks and kills him, declaring that he will assume a Spanish accent and make a getaway. But, as the piece ends, Bilora finds that he is horrified by his act.

On both dialogues the first comment must concern the apparently accepted view of the implied humour in the perfidy of woman and the trustful loyalty of her mate; then there is the memory of the normal custom (not confined to Venice) of employing a young peasant girl as both maid and 'mistress'. But the real flavour of Ruzante's two dialogues is the atmosphere of the aftermath of a great war. Ruzante

uses his references, both to strange forms of speech – *brisighella* and Spanish – and to his characters' appearance in a type of dress foreign to their local ethnic fashion, to emphasize the bewilderment of his peasants removed from their native countryside.

In the probably slightly later *Pastoral* the memory of the war has faded but the *villano*, again played by Ruzante and in Venice, refers to his *gabbano* which he has worn for two winters but which he has now exchanged for bread. The *Pastoral* opens with a *Proemio* or, rather, two, one in Paduan dialect and the other in *lingua toscana*, to be used according to the location in which it was to be spoken. Once more Ruzante *alla villano* speaks the prologue and boasts that he has a red *berretta* for festive occasions. Then, seeing the shepherd Mopso, who has collapsed in the wood (the setting for the comedy) after finding that his friend, also a shepherd, had died of love, Ruzante goes to seek messer Francesco, him with the nose and the red *berretta*: a doctor, Bergamasque or German, Ruzante doesn't know which, but he is a good fellow. Probably with a wink, Ruzante appears to be indicating that the doctor is a Jew, but in fact Francesco appears wearing a red gown which proclaims him, Jew or not, as a graduate of the University of Padua. Francesco makes his way through the wood and, followed by his servant, asks him whether he has really polished his *zoccoli* (his heavy-soled slippers). Mopso is brought back to health and the *Pastoral* ends with an oration to the god Pan and a general dance. Like Ruzante's other works his *Pastoral* was much appreciated in Venice.

The next play by Ruzante, *La Betia*, is probably the comedy regarded by the Venetians as shockingly lascivious and full of bad language. It was first presented in the monastery of the Crociferi in 1523. As usual Ruzante appeared under the auspices of a *Compagnia della Calza*, although it seems clear that he brought his own troop to Venice with him.

In his history of the *Compagnie* Lionello Venturi pointed out that while Sanudo's list of the Companies formed during his lifetime is not complete (he omits, for example, the *Concordi*), it is nevertheless very important. As organisations they were reviewed by the Council of Ten in 1497, when they were referred to as *nobiles nostri qui sunt in societatis a caliga*, which suggests that at the time their main qualification was that they were patrician, not that they were necessarily young. In 1507 Sanudo refers to a new Company, the *Immortali*, numbering thirteen members and all about eighteen years old; in 1514 he again mentions them as young men (*zoveni*). If the membership of the *Immortali* had remained the same, by 1514 the young men who were eighteen in 1507 would have been about to assume the *toga virile* if, indeed, they had not already assumed it.²⁵ But there is plenty of evidence that at least in the second and third decades of the sixteenth

century many *Compagnie della Calza* included older members who would not have looked at all like the youths often identified as members of Companies in paintings by Carpaccio and Gentile Bellini.

Typically Venetian was the formality of the full dress worn by the *Priori* and officers of the Companies. Although the members are occasionally described as wearing *ziponi* with, apparently, no over-mantles, two or three more comprehensive descriptions of the officers show that they normally wore a long gown. In February 1504, for instance, the *Fausti* presented themselves on the Rialto dressed in *veludo cremesin* with sleeves *a comedo* and hose in their own device: one entirely rose-colour, the other, half white and half *festechina*, a term which even the famous Venetian lexicographer Giuseppe Boerio could not explain but which Martino Merlini, a Venetian merchant, seems to have equated in 1508 with pale green.²⁶ In 1511, in spite of the fact that the mainland was virtually fragmented and cordoned off – *spexe e cordoglio* – splendid mummeries were performed in the palace of sier Zorzi Corner, Procurator, for the marriage of his daughter. They were presented by the *Eterni*, all of them wearing silk, with ducal sleeves and *becheti* of silk or cloth of gold, and they wore silk caps.²⁷

On occasion, all the same, the Companions did dance in *ziponi*, sometimes in the Campo di S. Polo, where they appeared fairly often. It would be a mistake to think of them as performing only at private parties and fashionable weddings. In the Campo di S. Polo in 1507, for instance, the *Eterni* presented what Sanudo called a *mumaria* about Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece.²⁸ In this case the mummery was probably staged in the form of a series of separate scenes, for the story was mounted on *soleri*, which may have been a number of small platforms set round the Campo but which may, alternatively, have been portable litters set onto the refined successors of the medieval pageant wagons. The word *soler* (*solaio*) was used frequently in Venice for the banks of seats put up in the Piazza San Marco from which ladies were sometimes permitted to watch the processions, but the term was used too for the peripatetic shows themselves.

In the war years intermittent attempts were made to prohibit the wearing of masks during Carnival, partly because they could enable foreign spies or men carrying arms to infiltrate the crowd. But the authorities evidently considered it important to keep up the spirits of the community and, on the whole, entertainments by the *Compagnie della Calza* were not forbidden. In 1510, for instance, although no jewellery was to be worn during the 'present war', Carnival was kept, fancy dress (*molti travestiti*) was worn and so were masks.

In view of all the descriptions of society weddings it is worth glancing again at the two young men wearing elaborate badges and expensive clothes who are among those present when Carpaccio's St Ursula

departs on her pilgrimage with the prince, her bridegroom (Figure 6). If we are to assume that the marriage has just taken place it is natural that members of a *Compagnia della Calza* should linger among the guests, probably as friends of the bridegroom and responsible for arranging the entertainment at the party which followed the wedding ceremony itself. Carpaccio would have known very well that this was usual and he may even have had a specific patrician wedding in mind when he included them. These youths do not wear long gowns or sleeves *a comedo*, so they are not, presumably, officers in their Company. Furthermore, the date of the painting is earlier than Sanudo's reports of the more impressive types of clothing. On the balcony, above the landing-stage which is the scene of the actual departure, is a band of trumpeters of the kind (though perhaps rather grander) that probably saw off most Venetian newly-weds. Is Sanudo himself seated beside them, noting the details of the scene for his diary, his note-book resting on an imported Turkey carpet?

Not situated, or even raised (*levata*), in Venice, there was one *Compagnia della Calza* which took part in, or presented, an entertainment which would not have been allowed in the city itself. On 28 March 1524 a letter from Constantinople dated 14 February was read to the *Pregadi*. Its author, sier Carlo Zen, said that since he last wrote thirteen merchants of our nation had formed themselves into a company called the *Moderati*, putting on hose half scarlet and half *paonazzo*, with *dulimani* of green damask and *intulimani* of green velvet and crimson satin, with gold buttons. They sang a solemn Mass in St Peter's church and then arranged a formal supper in the Venetian style. And, he said, the Florentine merchants had previously had the idea of mounting a public festival themselves and had dressed themselves in *paonazzo* satin. They had set up scenery in a hall, sixteen feet wide, thirty feet long and eighteen feet high, and hung it with cloth of gold and beautiful ornaments. They hung a sky-cloth, sprinkled with golden stars and showing, on one side, the sun, on the other, the moon; in the centre were the papal arms, surrounded by lovely festoons among which could be read the words: *Cle. Pon. Max. VII.* Clement VII was, of course, a Medici.

But, the letter continues, two days before that, on the *Zobia de la caza*, all the members of our community here in Constantinople went to the house of His Magnificence missier Alvise Gritti, son of the Serenissimo Principe (he was in fact a natural son), with torches and together with Their Magnificences our ambassador, the Turks Alibei and Grasubei and the Florentine ambassador. They proceeded to the house of the Venetian Bailiff, where they were received in a salon, given water to wash their hands and offered seats. The illustrious ambassador and His Magnificence Alvise Gritti were at a table and on the other side all

our nationals; in the salon too were all the Turkish gentlemen and the gentlemen of Pera. The meal, which Carlo Zen also described in detail, was magnificent and lasted for a good four hours. When they rose from the tables there entered Turkish girls, virtuous, young and beautiful, who sang and played and then began to dance, crossing their arms, moving their heads, leaping beautifully in the Slavic way, so lovely and lascivious that they could have liquefied marble or melted the snows of the Alps. Indeed, how graceful they were. Their clothing so charming, so close-fitting that all their most secret parts could be clearly seen. Then came a mummery, in which a young lady, very finely decked out, was accompanied by two old men and two shepherds, also very richly dressed. In a lamentation, the girl sang of her aged companions who were consuming her youth, so that she doubted whether she would ever taste the real delights of life and, dancing, she let fall all her clothes and her golden hair and, quite naked, fell dead. That was the first act. Giants, Saracens, sea-horses followed. It was agreed that the thirteen *Compagnii* had nothing to fear from the Florentines.

On Carnival Sunday, the account continues, our splendid thirteen merchants mounted their own entertainment, with a setting designed by missier Agnolo Maduna in the ancient Venetian manner, as it is done in Venice when they decorate a church with antique festoons and carvings which could not have been more beautiful. And because they were to produce a comedy, this scenic set was built, which was praised more highly than the ones the Florentines had done, because it was so beautiful, so rich and made with such dedicated industry that it was widely remarked on, whereas that of the Florentines was not. At this *fiesta*, the magnificent Alvise Gritti, son of our Serenissimo Principe was elected. Gentlest, most liberal person, adored here and deserving all praise, as strong as Jove, for he stayed awake all night . . . the feast, where on a platform a hundred ladies sang . . . a great hush and our own Company performed a comedy on the theme of Psyche and Cupid . . . so beautifully acted . . . the Florentines were astounded. . . .

Then the dancing by the girls of Pera began. The supper, three hundred people, everything served on silver. Impossible to describe all the dishes, the wealth of tarts and sweetmeats, the precious wines, it would use up too much paper. Then the Turkish ladies again, dancing so lasciviously that all the men present became statues; those lovely ladies of Pera, if only they had been dressed in our Venetian fashions they would have been the most beautiful ever. Sweetmeats, dancing, singing. . . .

But it is impossible, in English, to find expressions that would do justice to Carlo Zen's ecstatic prose. This letter, added Sanudo, was



PLATE 7. B. Licinio, *A Family Group*. Reproduced by gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen.



PLATE 8. Palma Vecchio, *Portrait of a Lady*. Milan, Poldi Pezzoli.

written by sier Carlo Zen, son of sier Piero, who was vice-bailiff at Constantinople, to sier Jacopo Corner who lives at *san Bartholamio* on the Grand Canal.²⁹

Not the least interesting detail in this frenzied description of a triumph of Venice over Florence is the fact that the merchant *Compagnii dei Moderati* in Constantinople wore *dulimani* of green damask and *intulimani* of green velvet. The colour green was never used for the clothing of gentlemen in Venice, presumably because of its associations with Islam, where it was regarded as a sacred colour. In Constantinople their dolmans and under-dolmans must have been made in a somewhat Turkish fashion, though Carlo Zen makes it clear that their hose were visible.

Interesting too is the fact that although the Venetian gentlemen were rooted to the spot like statues when they experienced the spectacle of the Turkish girls and their lascivious dancing, they could only have seen them as truly *bellissime done* if they had been dressed *alli modi nostri* – wearing, that is to say, not Turkish dress (however provocative), but Venetian. In which case, of course, they would never have been permitted to perform in so unrestricted a way.

This carrying abroad to Constantinople of so typical a Venetian custom as the formation of a *Compagnia della Calza* was probably unique. Once more, however, it was typical of Venice and the Venetians that all private as well as public entertainments involving the production of plays or the mounting of dramatic or comic interludes should have been placed so exclusively in the hands of what were, in effect, registered companies: the *Compagnie della Calza* or, for religious festivals, the *Scuole*, those dignified extensions of what had originally been trade guilds.

In his *Feste Spettacoli divertimenti e piaceri degli antichi Veneziani*, Giuseppe Tassini includes a short chapter on the festivals which commemorated Venetian victories: *Giovedì Grasso*, the *Zuoba di la caza*, was originally held annually in memory of a victory won in 1162 by the doge Vitale Michieli II over the Patriarch of Aquileia. Further ceremonies were added to this feast in 1485, in celebration of the conquest of Polesine, and in 1500 of the capture in 1499 of Lodovico il Moro, duke of Milan, a long-standing enemy of Venice.³⁰ Sanudo, in his *Città di Venetia*, gives a list of the occasions on which the doge must offer luncheon to forty gentlemen and another of the days on which he must issue forth from the Palace in state, accompanied by all the ducal ceremonial.³¹ Among the latter the most important from the point of view of theatrical display were the feast of the Ascension – the *Sensa* – when the doge boarded the ship of state, the *Bucintoro*, to cast a ring into the open sea as a sign of Venice's marriage with the oceans, and the feast of Corpus Christi, when as well as the correct religious display, the

ducal cap of state encrusted with jewels, was carried in the procession under a golden canopy.³²

In the great Corpus Christi procession members of the *Scuola di San Rocho* carried litters on which were mounted scenes from the Old Testament, sea-horses and other things, which were highly praised. That had been in 1514.³³ In 1511, during the worst moments of the League of Cambrai there were no *soleri*, nor the usual angels,³⁴ but in 1512, they were to be included once more, now that the Holy League had come into being. In 1515, when the *guardian* of the *Scuola* of S. Rocco was Zuan Calbo, a wealthy draper, there were a great many *soleri* mounted with *tableaux vivants*, cherubs (*putti nudi*), one with a globe of the world, but the scenes from the Old Testament were *demonstration* on foot.³⁵ In his famous painting of the procession, Gentile Bellini could not find room for these additions to the spectacle but they seem to have been omitted only in exceptional circumstances.

But in October 1511, a few months after the very muted Corpus Christi procession of that year and following the news of the loss of *Gradischia*, reported by its former *Provedador* wearing *paonazo*, came the news of the pope's change of attitude towards Venice and, though in the opposite direction, towards France. This was to lead to the formation of the Holy League which, in its turn, led immediately to a series of processions in Venice, one of them probably more ambitious than anything that had been seen before.

On 12 October, on receipt of the first news from Rome, a solemn procession, with the doge in gold and the *Scuole* with their relics, was followed by a great bonfire in the Piazza, onto which every available scrap of wood was thrown. There were benches before the palace, constant cries of 'Marco, Marco', and little boys carried a painted wooden lion of St Mark round the Piazza; all the windows were lighted.³⁶

But it was on Monday, 20 October, that the formal procession celebrating the publication of the League took place. Reference has already been made to the clothing of the hundred and twenty-four Venetian *togati* who took part in this magnificent show.³⁷ The campanile was almost finished and was a beautiful sight; cloth of gold was spread across the façade of St Mark's behind the benches and the columns were wrapped round with tapestries, which made a splendid spectacle. Inside, the basilica was hung with *restagno d'oro* and its pulpit with crimson velvet embroidered in gold. The *Scuola* of the *Misericordia* led the way. Their torches were gilded and twenty-seven little boys dressed as angels carried the arms of the pope, Spain and England, as well as of St Mark, who is *la Signoria nostra*. The hand of Sta. Theodosia, adorned with silver – *adornata d'ariento* –, was carried; next, under an umbrella, was carried a spine from the Crown of Thorns; the rod of the umbrella was of silver. The pattern was more or

less repeated by the *Scuola della Carità*, which also had its angels and its relics. Encased in a *confetiera* was the red hat of the most reverend Cardinal Niceno; his cross and an altarpiece which he had given to the *Scuola* when he had been papal legate were carried too. In a *cassa* there was a *vesta* of the Madonna and there was also a shirt that had belonged to Christ.

Next came the *Scuola di San Zuane*.³⁸ Among its relics was a foot of St Martin, and among many other followers there walked *uno vestito da dona*, representing Justice, with the sword and the scales – a clear indication that no women would be expected to walk on foot in the procession wearing a disguise. The *Scuola di San Rocho* carried altarpieces, four of the Greek icons in silver and mosaic, and again came a man dressed as a woman representing Justice, as well as a great statue of San Rocco himself, in wood, life-size, and dressed in a golden mantle; in front of him the angel. There were trumpets, and then S. Marco dressed as an Apostle and mounted on a *solero*; in front of him was a woman dressed to represent Venice. She, too, was evidently standing on the *solero*. She was accompanied by a dove, bearing in its beak the message *vidi lachrimas tuas*.

There was much, much more, and then the *Scuola di San Marco* appeared, with its beautiful new banner and its relics, each under an umbrella, among them the famous ring, carried in the hand of a member of the Dolfini family of S. Salvador, little angels again and holy vestments embellished with pearls and jewels. There was Peace, there was Mercy. There followed a *solero* on which were mounted Rome, Justice and the pope, together with 'those two colleagues', the kings of Spain and England. Then on another platform the king of England alone, young, dressed in *restagno d'oro*, with an inscription on his head which read, *rex Anglie*. Similarly, and again on his own, the king of Spain, dressed in gold *a la castigliana*, with the letters, *rex Hispanie*. At another point in the procession, the king of England again appeared, this time mounted on a horse, fine to see, borne on a ship mounted on a litter. Its inscription read, 'Fear not, the gale has subsided'. There was another representation of our doge, in *restagno d'oro*, with an inscription and there was one of the pope, who directed towards the doge the message: *fides et justitia tibi coronam servavit*, while the doge seemed to reply: *fiat tibi secundum cor tuum confirmet*. Then the pope recited three verses, quoted in full by Sanudo, and San Marco replied, also in verse.³⁹ But every *solero* carried its inscriptions and the pattern recurred. There were, in fact, three 'popes', each representing Julius II; in a barber's basin was carried a narrow silver collar that had belonged to Charles VIII of France, a recent treasure that had been captured by *stradioti* at Taro.⁴⁰

After the *Scuole* followed representatives from the religious com-

munities in Venice, and here again the pattern was generally repeated. Not everything was approved of: the canons of the *Camaldulensi* of *San Zuane* were few and they brought no relics. The monks of *San Zorzi Mazor* were old, dressed in black and had not wished to bring many relics either, which caused murmurs of disapproval among the crowd; the monks were, for the most part, Ferrarese and Mantuans. On the other hand the canons of *San Zorzi di Alega* and of *Santa Maria di l'Orto*, all dressed in white, numbered thirty-two altogether and all carried relics and other things mounted in silver, making a beautiful display. It was to be noted that the friars of S. Spirito had, for some years following a decree of the Council of Ten, been forbidden to take part in processions, but more than a dozen communities did take part and some of them seem to have rivalled the *Scuole* in the *soleri* mounted with holy or revered personages that accompanied them. The brothers of *Santo Anzolo*, for instance, produced *una dona vestita in forma di Veneixia* (she must certainly have been mounted on a bier) as well as *il Cristo*, to whom was attached a *breve* directed to Venice, which read: *Fides tua te salva fecit*. Were the images of Christ and the lady dressed as Venice therefore mounted on the same *solero*?

That event was certainly unique but perhaps to us today the strangest sequence of entertainments would have been the festivities surrounding the wedding of a member of the Contarini family, a son of the knight, sier Zacaria. Polo Contarini was to marry a niece of the doge, Andrea Gritti. Her name was Viena. The first of the entertainments connected with this marriage was on 16 January 1525, a reception in the Ducal Palace. Francesco Contarini, one of the bridegroom's brothers, wore *paonazo a manege dogal*, the doge his *veludo cremexin violato* (which was probably that 'old rose' colour he had been seen in during the Christmas celebrations of 1524). The bridegroom arrived at the door of the palace dressed in black, as were other brothers of his. A large number of patricians were present and the bride was led forward by a dancing master, a sign that dancing should begin, though the bride herself did not dance.⁴¹ This had been the ceremony of the *parentà*, the coming together of the families. On the following day, 17 January, official business could not be conducted because festivities were continuing in the palace and there was dancing in the *sala* where the *Pregadi* habitually met. A great many ladies were there, a supper was served and the *Compagnii* of the *Ortolani* were present.

On 20 January, the feast of San Sebastiano, the doge was reported to have decided that the wedding of his niece should take place in San Marco; that there should be a hundred and fifty guests as well as members of the *Collegio*, and that the bride should then board the *Bucintoro* to sail to the house of the bridegroom as had been done in 1471, when the then doge, Nicoló Trun, had married his daughter to an

liar member of the Contarini family.⁴² On the feast of St Paul, 25 January, the wedding was celebrated. Gathering first in the palace, all ninety-five attendant young ladies were dressed alike and the bride herself wore *ruosa secha*, a gown made in the new fashion. There followed the ladies of the two families wearing heavy gold chains and quantities of pearls. A solemn sung Mass was attended also by all the *procurotori*; the church was full and so was the Piazza outside. Then *vespas* was rung and the couple were wedded. Bernardo Capello, who had brought the ring early in the morning, was 'best man' and the *compagnii dei Ortolani*, to which the bridegroom and four other members of the Contarini family belonged, were there; all, including the bridegroom, wore black, which in Sanudo's opinion was extremely improper: on such a day they should have worn silk or at least scarlet.

Returning to the palace, there was a wedding breakfast, at which Juan Polo provided the entertainment. The *Ortolani* wore black, as we have seen, with sleeves *a comedo*, which indicates that their gowns were long; the bridegroom and his brothers were similarly dressed, but the *compagnii* later shed their long gowns for the short black affairs which they wore underneath – all, that is to say, except their *signor*, who was in crimson velvet. There was dancing and then, at ten-thirty at night, the bride threw herself at the feet of the doge and, weeping, begged leave to depart; there were tears all round and then they all, apart from the doge and, presumably, some of the older patricians, boarded the *Bucintoro* and sailed with music and dancing down the Grand Canal to the house of the bridegroom where cannons were fired as a sign of joy. The air was cold but the ladies bore it; the *Bucintoro* was covered by a canopy. On their arrival, there was a banquet, more dancing and then the bride and groom retired to bed. They had not done so previously because the doge considered it a bad practice to pledge the troth in the morning and sleep together the same night. In fact the bride had been under guard since the *parentà* over a week earlier.

È da saper – by the way – added Sanudo, when Bernardo Capello had bought the ring he also bought a present for the bride, a heavy silver casket in which was a lovely *zibellin*, a little stuffed animal with a beautifully made covering for its head to which was fastened a gold chain.⁴³ This must have been the kind of toy that the Germans of the time had rather indelicately named a *Flohpelz*. It was also to be noted that back in the palace there had been an oration in Latin and an epithalamium in verse. Concluding his narration of these wedding festivities, Sanudo appended a list of the names of the thirty members of the *Ortolani* company – one of them was absent. He also included the information that six *popolari* (minor citizens) and a foreign lady had been among the guests invited by the doge to the party after the wedding.⁴⁴

In this interesting account of the state wedding of Polo Contarini and Viena, whose family name is not mentioned but was, presumably, Gritti, what surprises most is the important part played by the *Compagnia della Calza*, the *Ortolani*. It is difficult not to sympathise with Sanudo's disapproval of the groom's constant appearance in their black livery which seems to have been given the importance of a military uniform – surely an indication of the respect felt for these companies, primarily devoted to providing entertainments, in the hierarchy of the state.

References to theatrical performances other than those presented by the *Compagnie della Calza* or, in a more limited way, by the *Scuole* in procession are almost non-existent in Venice at this period. One exception is a very brief account of a religious play performed in the church of San Donato on Murano in May 1515, when with beautiful scenery and costumes there was a splendid presentation of a drama on the life of St Ilarion, who had been converted by St Anthony. It was completed on the following day; like most religious dramas of the time it was probably very long.⁴⁵

Although all over Europe in the sixteenth century religious drama was threatened both by the profound controversies within the Church and by a growing taste for elaboration and luxury in its presentation, Venice's attitude to plays with sacred themes seems to have been unique. Alessandro d'Ancona, noting this Venetian characteristic, does call attention to one other production recorded by Sanudo, a play performed in the monastery of San Salvador, also in 1515. Sanudo saw it as a *devota cossa*.⁴⁶ According to d'Ancona, the underlying reason for Venice's disapproval of plays produced in churches was first voiced in 1420, when it was pointed out that they necessitated dressing-up in wigs and beards – *cum barbibus aut capillariis* – which were unsuitable in a holy place.⁴⁷ When Philippe de Commines referred in his *Mémoires* to the Palm Sunday procession in Venice in 1495, where *se montrèrent nombre de mistères et de personnages, premier d'Ytalie e après tous ces roys et princes et la royne d'Espagne*, he was certainly referring to scenes mounted on pageant wagons and not to what are commonly thought of in England as Mystery plays.⁴⁸

In Venice extra-liturgical expressions of devotion took the form not of religious dramas but of expertly organised processions which were usually also marks of gratitude for past victories. Although the procession (the most important held annually was on the feast day of Corpus Christi) often included a mildly theatrical following of *soleri* on wheels dressed with dramatic scenes, it was the precise order of the official participants that was paramount. The placing of each officer, cleric, musician and civil servant was immutable. In *La Città di Venetia* Marin Sanudo includes a list of the participants required to appear, and the

order in which they should progress. In a chapter on *The Ritual Occasion*, Edward Muir⁴⁹ discusses both Sanudo's Corpus Christi list and the various written eye-witness accounts of the Corpus Christi procession by visitors to the Republic during Sanudo's lifetime, all of whom were deeply impressed not only by the solemnity with which they were conducted but also by the respectful silence with which they were viewed by the inhabitants of Venice, an aspect which is not particularly emphasised by Gentile Bellini in his painting of the procession in 1496.

But it is of course Sanudo who, with subtle Venetian insight, singles out the procession's most important participants after the doge and the ambassadors. These were, apparently, the swordbearer and his 'companion', newly chosen each year from amongst the most distinguished patricians. Naturally Sanudo always carefully notes the colour and the fabric of the *vesta* and the *bechetto* worn by each of these two men.

Scarcely to be regarded as festive, though certainly entertaining, was a strange creature described by the Paduan Luigi da Porto in a letter to his uncle written in Venice on 10 April 1509. Completely naked except for two bear-skins wrapped round his body, he is identified by da Porto as a *ciarlatano bergamasco* who, speaking in the dialect of Bergamo, went about in the early days of the wars of Cambrai prophesying their final victory to the Venetians. Carrying a loaf of bread and an orange impaled on a spear, he wore on his head a helmet in the antique style which, when he emptied it, proved to have been full of written prognostications. So Wagnerian a figure in sophisticated Venice was surely worthy of a mention in da Porto's ample correspondence with his maternal uncle, resident in embattled Udine.⁵⁰

Only four days earlier da Porto had written to him describing the arrival in Venice of a herald from the French king, wearing a short leather cloak in the guise of a pilgrim. Making his way with great audacity to the very door of the Senate, he explained to the custodian that he was a representative of the king of France and revealed to him beneath his mantle a sword attached by a strap round his neck and bearing the royal arms. With an unfaltering step he made his way into the Chamber and with no sign of respect for the doge nor with any preliminary salutation he announced in an arrogant tone and with insupportable presumption, 'O duke of Venice, I am a herald of the most Christian king'.⁵¹ As late as the sixteenth century there was still a tenuous link between heralds and actors and, since it was not particularly unusual, especially in time of war, for heralds to travel in disguise through enemy territory, this must have involved an ability to assume a different personality. On this occasion the herald's title appears to have been Monjoie (*Mongioia*).

Typical of the rigidity of Venetian practice, the production of

entertainment was, as we have seen, virtually divided exclusively between the *Scuole*, who organised the overtly theatrical aspect of official processions, and the Companions of the Stocking. The fact that the *Compagni* were usually excluded from sumptuary regulations does not mean that the Serenissima was uninterested in their activities. On the contrary, the *Compagnie della Calza* were no less a part of the State than the Senate itself or any of its minor committees of government, for each Company, as it was 'raised', was submitted for approval by the Council of Ten and, if approved, granted a licence to operate for a specified period. Officers, headed by a *Priore*, were elected and at least some Companies employed a salaried poet, painter and even architect.

Regulations concerning the period of mourning after the death of a Companion were agreed officially, and a new Company's licence was sealed, on an appointed day, at a special Mass arranged, with full musical accompaniment, by their Chaplain, when an oath to obey the Company's statutes was solemnly sworn. Indeed, apart from their sometimes rather frivolous habit of dress – not by any means always confined to fancy hose and a jaunty *zipon*, for a long mantle was required too – the *Compagnie della Calza* were as Venetian as the *Procuratori* themselves. Giuseppe Tassini, writing before Venturi embarked on his definitive researches, published a brief and useful account of the *Compagnie della Calza*, based on his own studies of original sources.⁵²

In view of Venice's usual severe attitude to her female subjects, one astonishing, though perhaps not very frequent, frolic was the *Ballo del Capello*, which Sanudo, normally censorious where any social behaviour that might be considered even mildly daring was concerned, refers to without comment on at least four occasions. This party antic involved an item of dress and is therefore worth including here. It was described in detail by Simeon Zuccollo da Cologna, and published in Padua in 1549.⁵³ Briefly, in dancing the *ballo del capello*, the ladies rose from their seats and crossed the dance-floor to invite the gentlemen to dance with them, whereupon each selected gentleman lifted his cap from his head and placed it on the head of the lady as a sign of acceptance. She then, raising the cap from her head, kissed it and placed it back upon *his* head, whereupon her cavalier kissed it in his turn and put it back on the head of his lady. The partners proceeded to dance, the caps bestowing on the women their right to dominate the occasion and, indeed, it was the aim of each to dance her chosen partner into a state of exhaustion when, staggering to his seat, his cap would be restored to him by his Amazon, who, ideally, should then set out to invite, with the same ceremonial, the gentleman of her next choice.

This bare account does no justice to Simeon Zuccollo, who describes the *ballo* as *dolcissimo e amorosissimo* but, nevertheless, a danger as

possibly leading to adultery. His *inamorata* is invited with *un dolce riso*, and he places his *baretta cortegianescamente* kissed, on her *bionde treccie*.

On one almost unbelievable occasion, Sanudo reported that the *ballo* was danced at a party in the Ca' Corner, held in honour of the pope's nephew, the Cardinal Cibo, at which the Cardinals Pixani and Corner were also present as well as four bishops. The three cardinals were, it appears, persuaded to take to the floor – *Poi le done a mariti cenono li et balono il ballo dil capello, e tolseno tutti tre li cardinali suso*.⁵⁴ In 1524 in the Ca' Pesaro, the duke of Urbino, *capitano generale* of Venice, was persuaded onto the floor by the wife of sier Marco Antonio Venier; they too danced the *ballo del capello*.

As was so frequently the case in Venice, any custom that was disapproved of was ascribed to foreign influence. In 1512 the authorities issued a prohibition which stated that 'certe inhonestissimo ballo de la bereta over del capello & alcuni altrij ballj francisi pienj de giesti lascivij & dañabilj' were forbidden, and, further, 'Perho' sia prexo chel sia prohibito a cadauna psona si maschio come femene ballar dietj ballo dal capello & francesi', the fine for breaking this rule was the considerable sum of 50 ducats.⁵⁵ From the occasions described the ban was, as usual, soon forgotten.

7 The Tailors of Venice

The year 1642 saw what was probably the first publication of a statement by the 'Fiorentino Historico famoso de suoi tempi', Matteo Palmieri, concerning the removal in 1258 of the holy body of the virgin and martyr, Sta. Barbara of Nicomedia, from its resting place in S. Salvatore in Constantinople. Her body had, much earlier, been transported to Constantinople by the emperor Justinian. In 1258 Constantinople had been in the hands of the Venetians for half a century and it was during one of the Venetian Republic's recurring wars with her rivals, the Genoese, that a seasoned traveller, the *nobile* Venetian, Raffael Basegio, found himself in the city and took the opportunity of making a tour of the sights. This, Palmieri reminds us, was at the moment when Alexander VI occupied the papal throne, when the 'emperor of the Greeks' was Baldwin II, when the West was temporarily without an emperor, when Richard, brother of the king of England, was among the prominent warriors of the day and when Renier Zen was doge of the illustrious city of Venice.

During his inspection of Constantinople, Raffael Basegio came across Sta. Barbara's shrine in the church of S. Salvatore. What prompted him, following this discovery, to proceed to take action is not known but, prudently waiting until dark, he removed the blessed holy body of the saint from its shrine, arranged for it to be sewn up in a linen sheet perfumed with balsam and took it aboard the mighty Venetian ship the *Sta. Felice*, which was presumably at anchor in the harbour. Sta. Barbara's head, separated from her body (she had finally been beheaded), was wrapped in a cloth of scarlet and placed in a casket. The ship, aided by a favourable wind, reached the Venetian port of the *doi Castelli*, Palmieri tells us, after a voyage of fifty days.

Arrived in Venice, Raffael Basegio must, following the correct Venetian procedure, have immediately laid his treasure before the doge and the Senate, although Palmieri does not actually record this fact. The doge, a prince of great piety, was the founder of an oratory and hospital, administered by the brethren of the *Scuola* of the Crociferi, across the Campo from the church of Sta. Maria dell'Assunta, usually known at the time as Sta. Maria dei Crociferi (*Crosechieri*). In view of Renier Zen's interest in the charitable works of the brotherhood it was natural that Sta. Maria should have been chosen as the new resting-place for the newly acquired bones of the holy virgin, and it was to this

church that, amid infinite signs of joy from the populace, they were transported. During this process a bone from an arm of the saint was detached and given, as an act of especial grace, to the Abbess (*Badessa*) of San' Antonio on the island of Torcello. It was an act which led more than one later historian to assume that Sta. Barbara was buried there in her entirety. Such dismemberment was not, in fact, at all unusual; Sta. Barbara's bones had not, in any case, been a complete set. As was natural, once the translation was accomplished and the saint's remains had been placed in suitably dignified surroundings in a specially built chapel entirely encrusted with Parian marble, within the church of Sta. Maria dei Crociferi, miraculous cures and other comforts began to occur; Matteo Palmieri recorded a number of them. More than one blind woman, for instance, recovered her sight.

The church of the Crociferi stood, in 1258, on the site now occupied by the Gesuiti, in the Campo now called by their name. Sta. Maria had been badly damaged by fire in 1514 and was repaired, but in 1715 the Gesuiti rebuilt it from its foundations. The shrine of Sta. Barbara was, of course, respected, though it is not much in evidence in the church today.¹ The hospital and its chapel still survive on the other side of the Campo, which, in Renier Zen's day, may already have been, as it certainly was later, occupied by tailors, furriers and weavers of silk. A confraternity of tailors is recorded by Palmieri as having been established in 1391, a date confirmed by other historians, one of whom reported that until the year 1483 Sta. Barbara's chapel had been a special responsibility of their brotherhood.² Not far away, on what is still the *Fondamenta dei Sartori*, stands the building which they erected as a hospital for poor tailors and, as well as their altar dedicated to Sta. Barbara in the church, the tailors of Venice owned a *Scuola* which housed a fine collection of works of art.

Matteo Palmieri's curious account of Venice's acquisition of the bones of Sta. Barbara ends with a formal and dramatic statement in Latin which, in what seems to have been the first publication of his report, in the year 1642 in Padua, is laid out in a form which suggests an inscription composed by Palmieri and intended for the chapel itself. In this statement Palmieri calls the visitors' attention to Raffael Basegio's and Renier Zen's respective participation in the acquisition of the saint's bones and, asking rhetorically what further testimonies are needed, proceeds to quote the indulgences granted by Pope Alexander IV and the supporting evidence of Cardinal Bessarion and other distinguished churchmen. He then adds his own confirmation together with those of Francesco Sansovino, the papal nuncio and the bishop of Verona.³ Why, at this particular moment, had Matteo Palmieri felt called upon to do all this? Was it possible that some doubt had arisen which had prompted a summons to Venice to support the claim that

Sta. Barbara's bones did, indeed, lie in the damaged church of Sta. Maria dei Crociferi?

There certainly had been doubts, for what Matteo reported as a gift of a bone of the saint to the Abbess of San' Antonio on Torcello did not correspond to another report which claimed that Sta. Barbara's body, on its arrival in Venice, was first deposited in the *Ducal Chiesa* and then transferred to the most ancient church of S. Giovanni Evangelista on Torcello. This account was evidently accepted at least by some for, on 7 August 1579, according to another report, the nuns of San Giovanni Evangelista made a present of a part of the body of Santa Barbara to the empress of Austria.⁴ Whether any tailors worked on the island of Torcello, which was renowned for the manufacture of textiles, would be difficult to ascertain.

Matteo Palmieri's account is not, however, without support, for an encomium on Sta. Barbara is included, together with those of a number of other female saints, as well as accounts of several secular ladies such as Leonora of Aragon and Medusa, in *De claris sceletisq. Mulieribus* by 'Fra Jacobi Phillipi Bergomensis', which was almost certainly first published, with illustrations of most of its subjects, in Ferrara and dedicated in 1497 to both Beatrice of Aragon and Ercole d'Este. One of the famous (or infamous) women to whom the book is devoted is Joanna of Sicily (daughter of Robert of Anjou); she is shown wearing Roman armour.

Fra Giacomo Filippo's entry on Sta. Barbara ends with a sentence which, translated, runs: 'It is true that her most saintly body was later transported to Venice: it now rests in the monastery of the Crociferi, in a chapel dedicated to her and enclosed in a marble sarcophagus'. The woodcut of Sta. Barbara (slightly misplaced in this edition) shows her wearing a simple untrimmed high-waisted dress with long wavy hair falling over her shoulders. She holds a small, squat, domed edifice in her right hand.

The dedication to Ercole d'Este suggests that *De claris . . . Mulieribus* was first published in 1497; a full-page frontispiece shows the author as a bearded and tonsured friar, attended by a younger Brother, presenting his book to Beatrice, queen of Hungary, who is mounted on a high throne and wearing a crown.⁵ The work ran into several editions and was published in Paris in 1521 without illustrations. Fra Giacomo Filippo of Bergamo, famous under his surname, Foresti, was one of a number of authors included in this collection, edited by Iohannes Ravisius Textor S.D. Its title reads, *De memorabilibus et claris Mulieribus*, slightly different from Giacomo Filippo Foresti's, but his entry on Sta. Barbara, reprinted in full, ends with the same words: 'Plura enim miracula in similibus eam fecisse, nō sum nescius, sed ea nunc scripto mandare longum esset. Suum vero sanctis-

simum corpus postmodum Venetiis translatum, nunc in monasterio crucigerorum, in sacello nomini suo dicato, sarcophago marmoreo conditum reuerenter seruatur.'

That the Gesuiti considered that they had indeed inherited from the Crociferi the body of Sta. Barbara is attested by the fact that in writing of the *Cose Notabili et Maravigliose della Città di Venetia*, in 1666, its author, Nicolò Dolgioni, says that in the church of Sta. Maria de' Gesuiti 'riposa il corpo della Vergine & martire Santa Barbara di fuori del choro in una bella capella'.

In the later fifteenth century and during the whole of the sixteenth, St Barbara's cult was widespread in Europe but it appears that, apart from Venice, she was seldom adopted as the patron saint of tailors. An exception is Freiburg im Breisgau, where, in the fourteenth-century stained glass *Schneidfenster*, liberally decorated with large scissors, she stands on the Virgin's right hand, holding her tower.⁶ In Rome there is a chapel dedicated to Sta. Barbara on the Via dei Giubbonari (the doublet-makers). In Florence she was especially venerated by the Flemish immigrant cloth-weavers, whose Confraternity worshipped in the church of the S. Annunciata, where, incidentally, a bust decorates the tomb of a 'Laurentio Palmiero fiorentino' who died in 1624. Writing of the Confraternity, Mario Battistini says that Palmieri was 'attaché à la cour et cher aux princes, membre probablement de la confrérie', and 'enterré dans la chapelle de Sainte-Barbe en 1624'.⁷ Elsewhere St Barbara was adopted as a patroness by carpenters, masons and, perhaps because of her invulnerable tower, by bombardiers and artillerymen in general.⁸

Although the *Enciclopedia Cattolica* is somewhat chilly on the subject of St Barbara, it points out that there is an eighth-century painting of her in Sta. Maria Antiqua in the Forum in Rome. The revised version of Butler's *Lives of the Saints* of 1956 is implicitly sceptical as to her existence, though it refers to Latin and Syriac versions of her life from the seventh century onwards. It is, however, the *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* which has a longer account and refers both to the *Oratoria of Sta Barbara dei Librari* on the Via dei Giubbonari in Rome and to the fact that the Venetians, in AD 1009 (a new date), carried her body away from Constantinople and placed it in the church of S. Giovanni Evangelista on Torcello. Neither S. Giovanni Evangelista nor, in reality, Sta. Maria dei Crociferi exists today.

The devotion of the Venetian tailors to Sta. Barbara may have been partly due to the fact that they believed her to have been buried near to their meeting-place; they can hardly have admitted the Torcello claim. But it is more likely, as must have been the case with the cloth-makers of Florence and the bombardiers and artillerymen and masons, that some episode in her life was seen as especially relevant to their trade.

There is certainly no scarcity of accounts of the sufferings of St Barbara and of her eventual martyrdom and, although they do not by any means all agree as to detail, in the sequence of events they record they are all more or less in agreement.

Barbara is reported as the daughter of a man named Dioscorus, who is occasionally represented as having been a king and who is very occasionally shown as having a wife. The family lived in Nicomedia and, in view of their pagan origins, Dioscorus is said to have worshipped 'idols' and to have insisted that Barbara should do so too. The beautiful girl Barbara, converted to the Christian faith, refused, nor would she agree to marry a pagan suitor of her father's choice. As a punishment she was locked up in a high tower. Once there she insisted that a third window should be added to the two already there, which was done during her father's absence. It has naturally been suggested that the three windows were a reference to the Trinity. For ordering the third window, Barbara was further punished by her father but escaped, some say, on a flying stone which landed on a hillside among shepherds and their sheep.⁹ It is perhaps this incident which accounts for the veneration paid to her by the cloth-weavers of Florence. She was, however, recaptured and, dragging her by her hair, her father offered her a choice between idolatry and torture. Choosing the latter, Barbara was stripped naked, tortured to a state of insensibility and then carried, still naked, through the streets of Nicomedia. But the following morning she was found not only completely recovered physically but fully dressed in new clothing and it must have been this last miracle which inclined the tailors of Venice to adopt her as their patron. The sight of her bones, newly sewn into perfumed linen and carried through the lanes of Venice, may have strengthened their devotion as stitchers of cloth.

There have been few saints whose temporary martyrdom involved the acquisition of new clothes. At the moment when Barbara was finally beheaded – a fate from which, apparently, like that of St Catherine, there was no escape – Barbara's father was found burnt to death, an event which is said by some to account for the devotion to her cult by bombardiers; others have said that the miniature tower she is often depicted as holding had been mistaken for a cannon.¹⁰

The other patron saint of Venetian tailors was St Omobono, a much less controversial figure. A citizen of Cremona, Omobono (his baptismal name), lived a virtuous but otherwise normal life and died an apparently natural death there in 1197. Two years later he was canonised by Innocent III on the recommendation of Gicard, bishop of Cremona. Brought up by his father to go into business as a merchant, Omobono was honest and frugal, industrious and consistently generous to the poor. He was buried in a church named after him in Cremona, a



28. Sculptor unknown, *The Virgin with SS. Barbara and Omobono*, 1511. A plaque over the doorway of what was the Hospital for poor tailors shows St Omobono and St Barbara, with kneeling members of the Scuola dei Sartori. Venice, Fondamenta dei Sartori.



29. B. Diana, *Madonna and Child with SS. Omobono and Barbara*, 1533. St Omobono is wearing the dress of a merchant of the mainland; it has nothing in common with the dress in Venice at the time. A large pair of tailor's shears on the steps means that this must have been commissioned by the Tailors' *Scuola*. Venice Accademia.

city which, during the second half of the fifteenth century and, intermittently, the whole of the sixteenth, belonged to Venice. St Omobono was an obvious choice as a patron for those who followed a trade; a church in Rome was dedicated to him and his cult was widespread.¹¹

So long a discussion of the two patron saints of the tailors of Venice might seem unnecessary until it is remembered that two works of Venetian art have survived in which they are both portrayed. That these works must have been commissioned by the Venetian Confraternity of tailors is proved by the appearance in both of the *Scuola's* device – a large pair of tailor's shears.¹² It must, moreover, be agreed, that since the tailors ordered portrayals of them, they would have seen to it that their respected patron and patroness were absolutely correct in their styles of dress both in order to be recognisable and in order to do honour to the tailor's art. According to the histories of their lives, St Barbara should look young, beautiful, upper-class and modest, while St Omobono, in contrast, should look elderly (he had earned the money he gave away) and should wear the dress of a merchant either of his native Lombardy or of Venice herself.

The earlier of these two works commissioned by the tailors can still be found in its original position on the façade of their one-time hospice on the Fondamenta dei Sartori, which they had established in 1492.¹³ It is a carved marble plaque on which, on a central dais, which bears the inscription *Ospedal. dei. poveri. stori*, the Madonna sits with the Child on her knee; above her right shoulder appears the date: MDXI. St Omobono stands on her right, St Barbara on her left (see Figure 28). The Virgin herself, her head seen in profile, wears as stylish and fashionable a headdress as could possibly have been permitted to her at that date. St Omobono wears the ceremonial dress of a member of the Confraternity, a long gown with straight sleeves and, over it, a hooded mantle fastened on the right shoulder with buttons. Over his tight-fitting hood this bearded and benign-looking elderly St Omobono wears a distinctly un-Venetian hat. In his right hand he holds an immense pair of tailor's shears; in his left, the money-bag which is his personal symbol. The background to this group is discreetly inhabited by charming little features – rocky prominences surmounted by oratories, churches nestling at their bases and tiny figures kneeling in veneration on their ledges; above two of them flutters a tiny banner bearing again the tailors' device – a large pair of shears.

St Barbara, on the Virgin's left, appears as a very young girl, hardly more than a child. Her wavy hair hangs about her shoulders and she wears an extremely simple dress, high-waisted as in Venice at this date it should still correctly be. In her left hand St Barbara supports a small, sturdy battlemented tower, in her right, the palm leaf of a martyr

together with an arrow with which she was presumably pierced (perhaps in yet another version of her story) during her period of torture: a symbol more usually associated with St Ursula. Between St Barbara and the Virgin is cut into the background the outline of what is certainly intended as a tailor, wearing the gown of his *Scuola*, his hands clasped in adoration but held inside the cap which he has removed from his head. Another such character is engraved on the back of the Virgin's very handsome ornamental chair, beneath which there lurks what must be a domesticated and almost smiling minute lion of St Mark, in the guise of a pet dog.

The second work of art which must indubitably have been commissioned by tailors is a painting by Benedetto Diana which bears the date: MDXXXIII ADI VIII Novēb (St Omobono's feast day is November 13) (Figure 29). Here again the Madonna and her Child are enthroned in the centre; a little St John the Baptist forms part of the group. On the Virgin's right St Omobono actually turns away from her to drop a coin from his pouch into the bowl of a naked beggar at his feet. On her left, St Barbara offers her tower as a gift and places a foot on a torturer's wheel. Lying negligently on the steps of the Virgin's throne is a large pair of shears.

In this painting, done twenty years after the hospice plaque, St Omobono almost certainly wears the normal occupational dress of a merchant of the mainland: an ample grey-blue tunic which covers his knees and rises, closed all the way up the front, to a standing neck-band inside which barely a white line of his shirt is revealed. He wears stout red hose and a red mantle draped round his shoulders. It is the shapeless and almost timeless tunic, closed at the neck, which, in 1533, when the picture was painted, must have represented a traditional uniform recognisable as that of a merchant. It could not have been worn by an ordinary citizen of Venice, nor by a Venetian patrician of the day. Again St Omobono is bearded and his thinned hair is perhaps a little too long at the back to have suited the taste of a man of fashion. The grey-blue of St Omobono's tunic suggests that even when wearing the dress of his calling he wore it, beneath his red mantle, in a humble form.¹⁴ St Barbara, too, wears a red mantle that hides most of her simple bronze-green dress whose neckline, though untrimmed, belongs to the fashion of 1533. Her hair, which at first glance seems to be too plain in its arrangement to belong to any fashion, is, in fact, very carefully dressed into a scarf which exactly follows the style that would have been worn in 1533. The hair arrangement, with its more elaborate ornaments, worn by St Catharine in Titian's *Madonna with the Rabbit*, is an example of the same fashion.¹⁵

The clothes in which Benedetto portrayed the two saints must have been scrutinised carefully (probably at an early stage) by members of

HISTORIA

DELLA TRANSLATIONE DEL
Glorioso Corpo della Beata Vergine, e
Martire Santa Barbara di Nicomedia
portato à Venetia,

*Da Costantinopoli dal Nobil homo Sier Raffael Ba-
seggio l'anno 1258. & riposto nella Chiesa di
Santa Maria de Padri Crociferi.*

Scritta da Matheo Palmieri Fiorentino Histori-
co famolo de suoi tempi -



In Padoua per il Criuellari. 1642. con lic. de' sup.



30. Title-page of Matteo Palmieri's account of the finding of the body of Sta. Barbara. Published in Padua, 1642. Venice, Biblioteca Marciana.

**CRONICHE
DE' TRASPORTI,**

**CON LA VITA, E MIRACOLI
di S. BARBARA di Nicomedia
Vergine, e Martire;**

Raccolte dalla Molto Reuerenda Madre

SVOR CORNELIA PESARO
Abbadessa del Monastero di S. Gio: Euangelista
di Torcello.

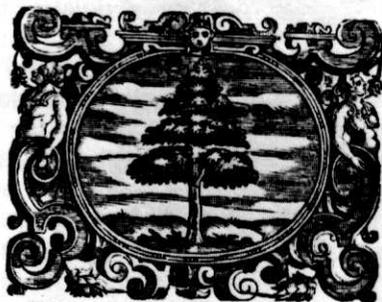
Nella cui Chiesa riposa il detto Glorioso Corpo.

DEDICATE

Al' Illustr.^{mo} e R.^{mo} Monfig.

MARCOZENO

Vescovo di quella Città, & Diocesi.



IN VENETIA, Presso Gio: Pietro Pinelli. 1636.

Con Licenza de' Superiori.



31. Title-page of Sister Cornelia Pesaro's account of the life and miracles of Sta. Barbara, as well as of the transportation of her body to Torcello. Published in Venice, 1636. Venice, Biblioteca Marciana.

the tailors' Confraternity responsible for placing the order and accepting the painting. They would have been unwilling to offend the authorities. Both the mantle buttoned on the right shoulder (like the one on the plaque) and the tunic, which rises to a fitted neck-band in Benedetto's painting, are present in a drawing of St Omobono, probably done by a Venetian in the second half of the fifteenth century. In this the saint holds a money-bag and wears a rolled hood of the type which had disappeared by the end of the century.¹⁶ The occupational nature of the dress is as recognisable here as it is in the two later representations of him; only his rolled hood belongs to an earlier date.

St Barbara and her miraculously restored clothing were not an inspiration only to the tailors of Venice for it was on her feast day, 4 December, that young men of Venice who had reached the age of twenty-five first put on the *toga*. From that date onwards a young man from a suitable family background could be referred to as a *togato* and, moreover, a list has survived of the names of those young men who, between 1409 and 1499, having put on the *toga* were admitted to the *Maior Consiglio*. This list of the *prove di Santa Barbara* is entitled *Barbarella*.¹⁷

As for the tailors (*sartori*) themselves, the conditions under which they were permitted to follow their craft had been drawn up in February 1219. These included attempts to guarantee the client against fraud and insisted on personal undertakings that only good quality cloth would be used, that workmanship would be of a high standard and that the tailor would not pretend to need more cloth for the making of a garment than was actually the case. Workrooms must not be kept open on public holidays (which, of course, included Sundays), a ruling that was also insisted on in northern Europe and one that must have been designed both to spread employment as evenly as possible and to discourage sweated labour. Women (*sartoressas*) employed in the craft were subject to the same rules as the men.¹⁸

In the fourteenth century the workshops occupied by tailors were gathered in the same district as the jewellers; round about the church of San Giacomo di Rialto, which escaped the devastating fire of 1513, and the church of San Giovanni Elemosinario (called San Zuane di Rialto), which did not. Accompanying a drawing of an eighteenth-century tailor of Venetian gowns, Giovanni Grevembroch tells us in his text that in the middle of the eighteenth century tailors still worked in the Rialto district.¹⁹

In March 1219, a month after the *capitulari* of the tailors had been formulated, similar rules were laid down for the doublet-makers – the *giubbonari*, *zuparii*, or *giubbettieri* – of Venice.²⁰ This was a branch of tailoring but, probably because, especially in the earlier period, a doublet or a *zupon*²¹ could involve materials other than cloth – leather

and cotton-wool, for instance – rather different rules prevailed. As in the tailoring of the outer garment there was to be no mixing of old cloth with new, so the *giubbettieri* were not to mix old and new *bombacinum* to use as padding. A very early though almost certainly unofficial association had existed between doublet-makers and the makers of palls for the covering of coffins as well, perhaps, as with those who made bed-covers. Both these coverings were probably given extra substance by some internal form of padding and hence, no doubt, the loose association between *giubbettieri* and the *coltreri*.

Although some friction must inevitably have existed between those tailors who made outer garments and those who were responsible for the *zuponi* worn beneath them, they probably worked fairly peacefully side by side, though in separate workshops. More difficulty arose over those who tailored 'nether-garments' and who were certainly regarded as less dignified and even less worthy than those who dressed man's upper structure. On 11 November 1492 an application was made to the *illustrissimi signori*, the *Gastaldi* of the tailors' *Scuola*, concerning various altercations between *sartori* and the master of the *taie calce*.²² Apart from anything else, this shows that *sartori* did not make coverings for legs.

In 1492 and all over Europe, men wore long hose which fitted over their feet and rose to the waist, round which they were tied at intervals to the *zupon* or corresponding short garment. No over-breeches had yet appeared, though they were fairly soon to do so. At the time of the dispute, therefore, the word *calce* referred to long tight stockings, joined at the crutch whence a triangular gusset was set into the back to ensure freedom of movement. All paintings and sculpture of the time that show men of fashion show that they must have insisted on well-made hose that fitted closely. A complication in any relationship between tailors and *taie calze* must have been the fact that not all hose need necessarily be tailored; some could be knitted.

The *taia calze* was, nevertheless, regarded as being engaged in the true business of tailoring, which was thus divided into three branches: the *sartori delle veste* (*vesta* being the general term for the outer garment of either a man or a woman), the *giubbettieri* (or *zuparii*) and the *taie calze*. Because of obvious internal altercations it was in 1492, when the rules governing the correct procedure in all three branches of the craft were reiterated, that the *taie calze* attempted to break away from the *Scuola dei Sartori* and to form a *Scuola* of their own. They were not successful.

In 1520 the guidelines for admission to the status of 'master tailor' (and doublet-maker and hosier) were stated as *correctiones* to their original rules. Those who hoped to matriculate as makers of *veste* were obliged to prove themselves fully capable of making any kind of *vesta*

either for a man or for a woman. Doublet-makers had to be fully competent to make *zuponi* with sleeves and *zuponi* lined with fur; there were special conditions for those who worked on the fur linings. The *taie calze* too had to submit concrete proof that they were sufficiently skilled in their craft. Within twenty years of 1520 the term *calze* would begin to mean breeches as well as hose.²³

Like most Venetian archives those of Venetian tailors have survived only in part; from what does remain, however, it can be seen that their regulations were often designed to ensure that both foreign craftsmen who wanted to settle to work in the Republic and the, perhaps, privileged sons of native master tailors could show that they possessed adequate skills. Papers that concern especially the charitable and ceremonial aspects of the *Scuola* seem invariably to have referred to the *Madonna Sancta Barbara et mj. P. Homobon of Sta. Maria di Crosechiere de Venetia*.²⁴

By the end of the fifteenth century the tailor had emerged as a craftsman who could consider himself to be an individual practitioner, comparable to the painter or the architect. A hundred years earlier, at least in the north of Europe, this had not been so. In the fourteenth century the tailor, though a respected servant, was often permanently employed, as were the head groom and the head cook, by the head of the household. Exactly at what moment the tailor could first be seen as a 'free lance', answerable only to his Confraternity, would be difficult to discover. It is very probable that the political structure of the Italian city states led to an independent standing for the tailor at a comparatively early date; as we have seen his organisation was in being in Venice in the thirteenth century. That the tailor had already entered the consciousness of the upper classes as an individual, rather than as an anonymous member of a group, can be judged from a comment in the *Signoria* on 6 December 1498. Discussing a possible final solution for the controversy with Florence over the question of Pisa, the Council was advised to proceed carefully, like the good tailor who measures very scrupulously before cutting his cloth.²⁵

A glance at the famous painting of a tailor by Moroni²⁶ is enough to show that although he stands behind a table on which is spread the cloth to be made up as a garment for a customer he is, himself, in no way inferior in his dress to a gentleman of fashion. Because of his very respectable clothing the idea has lately been put forward that the sitter in Moroni's portrait is not a tailor at all but a cloth-merchant, a suggestion which implies that the cloth-merchant held a higher position in society.²⁷ From the end of the fifteenth century this is not certain, but if indeed he did, then the merchant would surely not have been shown handling the cloth but more probably in the guise of St Omobono. Perhaps the strongest argument in favour of the theory that

Moroni painted a specific tailor in the very prominent position occupied by the shears, a symbol of the tailors' craft, as we have already seen from the marble plaque and the Benedetto Diana painting as well as their appearance elsewhere in Venice as an isolated device.²⁸

In 1589 in an illustration in one of the many Venetian books of engravings of costumes published at about that time, a little brat dressed in the latest and most affected masculine style of the moment is labelled: *Garzone di Sartoria*.²⁹ This tailor's apprentice, partly veiled in a casual mantle, clutches a pair of tailor's shears. The surely cynical subtitle to the picture is *Habitio di Artigiano*.

It was indeed a period when tailors were much in evidence, to judge from the frequent references to them in the plays of Shakespeare, and paintings and engravings of the complicated and rigidly contrived fashionable dress of the end of the century provide a sufficient reason for the importance of their skills. By that time what are sometimes today called 'custom-made' suits were the rule where young men were involved. One of Shakespeare's characters can ask, 'Pray you sir, who's his tailor?'³⁰ Another can remark, 'Yes, and a gentleman's son,' to which the reply is, 'That's more than some whose tailors are as dear as yours / Can justly boast of.'³¹

Whether such conversations could have taken place at the beginning of the century, when tailors were commissioning their works of art, is doubtful. Nevertheless, by that time the personal tailor must certainly have emerged. From then onwards he was to maintain his place in western urban societies all over Europe until the First World War.

Grevembroch places his eighteenth-century tailor among his craftsmen and tradesmen of Venice. Decently dressed but less elegant than Moroni's tailor, Grevembroch's craftsman is working on a *vesta* of crimson damask. Behind him, on the wall, hang two official gowns – one of black and the other, perhaps, of the eighteenth century's version of *pavonazzo*. Grevembroch labels him *Sartore ducale*.³² Grevembroch's tailor, like his twentieth-century counterpart (where he still survives), sits cross-legged on his cutting-table. This must have already been established as the tailor's most practical pose in Sanudo's day for, in a letter from Adrianople, received in Venice on 30 April 1511, Agostin Bernardo describes the *albergi* in Adrianople, where, he says, on beautiful carpets, gentlemen sit in the manner of tailors – *a modo sarti* – a reference that must have been comprehensible to sior Zuan Badoer, doctor and knight, to whom the letter was addressed.³³

What may be the only surviving copy of the tiny pamphlet of 1642 in which Matteo Palmieri described the presentation of the body of Sta. Barbara to the church of the Crociferi is to be found today in Venice's Biblioteca Ma3rciana (Figure 30).³⁴ But further investigation of the library's catalogue reveals the fact that the pamphlet must have been

published in that year in answer to a new claim, put forward in 1630 by Cornelia Pesaro, *Abbadessa* of the nunnery of S. Giovanni Evangelista on Torcello, that, far from being buried in Venice, Sta. Barbara's body had, in reality, been carried to Venice in 1009, when Piero Orseolo was doge, was given as a wedding present to his daughter-in-law, a descendant of the eastern imperial line, and was then presented by her to the nuns of S. Giovanni.³⁵

The Abbess, in her publication, quoted a number of highly respectable pieces of evidence to support the truth of her account, including some much earlier chronicles (Figure 31). It appears that, with the suppression of the nunnery of S. Giovanni Evangelista in 1811 and the earlier destruction of the church itself, the remains of Sta. Barbara were transported to the church of S. Martino on the island of Burano, where they are said to remain to this day.³⁶ A plaque on Torcello commemorates their one-time residence on that island.

That the marble sarcophagus in the church of the *Crociferi* did contain bones was testified in 1628 by three distinguished Venetians, who opened it. In 1629 the members of the *Bombardieri* were forbidden to continue to pay ceremonial visits in procession to Torcello, though they were permitted to go privately and unarmed.³⁷

Torcello, a flourishing centre for the spinning and weaving of wool, had, in the middle ages and much later, a large and active population, but there is no evidence that it was renowned for tailoring. If, as an outsider, the present writer were to be called upon to choose between the two equally earnest and persuasive accounts of the early history of the bones of St Barbara, she would choose to side with Marin Sanudo, who stated that they lay in the church of the *Crociferi*,³⁸ partly out of affectionate respect for Sanudo but mainly, perhaps, as a result of her reluctance to deprive the tailors of Venice of one of their revered patron saints. Venetians of today with whom she has discussed the matter have all expressed surprise that such an issue exists.

8 Venice and the Dress of Foreigners

It was not only the dress worn by foreign visitors to the Serenissima that interested Venetians; they also took note of descriptions of what was being worn in other parts of Italy and, indeed, of Europe.

Unfamiliar clothing is often difficult to describe, but in some instances labels had been attached to certain types of dress which, at the end of the fifteenth century, enabled them to be called to mind. The commonest of these labels at that moment was 'French'. As late as 1496 Ercole d'Este, the duke of Ferrara, was actually suspected of being a Frenchman because he was wearing a French style of dress. This was nothing new. For years – as a matter of fact, for more or less the whole of the second half of the fifteenth century – gentlemen of Ferrara had worn clothes made in the French fashion.¹

The motive was certainly political. In 1497, the Spanish king Federico of Naples was noticed to be dressed *a la francese*, as, at about the same time, were the prince of Salerno,² the duke of Urbino, and Cesare Borgia, and it was often observed that the Milanese were wearing French styles of dress. Ercole d'Este was still wearing them in 1500. But in August 1502, the footloose Cesare Borgia was described as being *stravestito a la tedesca*,³ that is to say, as a German. When observations of this kind were made they were certainly understood by those who heard or read them; the point was taken and detailed descriptions were unnecessary.

These were foreign fashions deliberately adopted by those who belonged to communities which had their own local styles of dress, though whether an indigenous Ferrarese fashion had survived side by side with the apparent obsession for looking French would be difficult to discover. Ferrara apart, however, most Italians who adopted foreign dress did so only for single occasions or at the most for short periods.

Genuine French fashions as they were worn in France naturally evolved at the rate maintained by fashions in all western urban communities (even in Venice young men kept up with the times). The label 'French', therefore, could obviously apply either to what was being worn by French gentlemen of fashion at any particular moment or, alternatively, to some item of clothing to which, for convenience, the label had remained permanently attached, in the way that some bread is permanently labelled 'French'.

In January 1500, for instance, a report was received in Venice on the

appearance of the *castellan* of Cremona, Annibal Augusolo. He had until then, apparently, been going about in a short *vesta*, a cap *a la milanese* and shoes – whereas today, said the correspondent, he is to be seen in a long black gown, black cap and shoes, a *becheto* over his shoulder and *manege dogal*; entirely Venetian in dress, he continued, as though he were one of our own gentlemen.⁴ What had happened was that in a brief league which included France, Venice had regained control over Cremona. But apart from this political change, the reference to a *bareta a la milanese* is interesting because, in another context, it might simply have meant a certain recognisable type of cap. The ‘Milanese bonnet’ not only was famous throughout Europe – it appears in an English chronicle of 1542⁵ – but was later to give rise to the term ‘milliner’. References to caps *a la francese* and *a la milanese* occur frequently in Venice in the early sixteenth century, so that they may have been the most characteristic part of the dress of both France and Milan; they were certainly very different from the small round caps worn not only by the gentlemen of the councils but by the young men of Venice as well.

In October 1499 Milan had been captured by Louis XII of France, supported by the marquis of Mantua (one of those said to have adopted French dress). Louis made a very splendid state entry into the conquered city (regarded, of course, as liberated), riding under a canopy and surrounded by learned doctors in their best miniver but Louis’ own clothes were too ceremonial in character to bear a national stamp.

This was the moment of that very temporary league between Venice and France which was joined by Hungary, Poland and Russia, an event which provoked a visit to Venice by two envoys from Russia. They attended a meeting of the *Collegio* in December 1499 dressed *a la loro modo*, and wearing *barete longe*, which may have meant either the tall caps of Tartar origin, or the large soft caps with a long drooping point, familiar in later engravings of Russians. The caps were lined with fur. The envoys spoke *quasi turco* and brought with them for sale a great many furs, most of them white hare-skins; they also brought knives with handles of whale-bone. Accompanying the Russians was a member of the Paleologus family who spoke Latin and was dressed in cloth of gold.⁷ More than twenty years later Teodaro Paleologus returned to Venice as interpreter for a contingent of Turkish envoys.

The League of 1499 and the French invasion of Milan was, of course, a period of intense diplomatic movement and in August 1500 two envoys from Buda arrived in Venice bringing gifts for the French envoys there. They had brought each of the two a *vesta* of (old) cloth of gold lined with ermine and, for a son, a gown of Turkish silk lined with *dossi* and made in the Hungarian style – of little value.⁸

But if French dress had been important in 1500, with Venetian disillusionment activities at the court of Maximilian became of greater interest. In October 1501 the Venetian ambassador to the imperial court wrote to the Serenissima from Trent, describing a large gathering of the emperor's courtiers and servants, the latter wearing *gabani of beretino* (ash-colour) made *a la todesca*. The emperor himself was in hunting dress, for this was the occasion of one of the bear and stag hunts of which he was so fond.⁹ *Gabano* (*gabbano*) was not, at the time, a term used to describe French dress; it implied an open mantle with sleeves, which was, of course, what the Germans were already wearing at this period whereas the French, in all probability, were not. The royal hunt was attended by a German nobleman said to be the owner of many castles; in the Venetian ambassador's letter describing the affair he rated a separate sentence, which began, '*Item*', for he was seen to be wearing four pearls knotted into the hairs of his beard,¹⁰ a fashion which a Frenchman would have been most unlikely to adopt.

Maximilian's heraldic colours were red and white, only occasionally worn by the emperor himself but often by his followers. In a letter from Innsbruck dated January 1502, his imperial majesty was described as appearing in a *sopraveste*, half lion-coloured damask and half green and white; here the term *sopraveste* gives no clue as to the garment's form. The descriptions of the festivities in Innsbruck during this carnival time are long and interesting. On 3 February, they included a joust *a la italiana*. For this Maximilian did wear *uno sirello di veluto bianco e cremesino con alcuni traversi e taliamenti*.¹¹ He conducted himself, the report continues, as a man of great power.

At the party which followed, the emperor, the duke of Mechlenburg and the master of the royal stables appeared disguised as three Italian peasants, with *zazare* hairstyles and caps. The *zazzara*, a bulkily fluffed-out manner of dressing the hair, had by this time ceased to be a part of high fashion in Italy but no doubt at the imperial court in Germany it still served as a badge that could represent an Italian. The three magnates, having danced in a separate dance *a la italiana*, retired from the crowded ball-room and, removing their outer disguise, remained in the *ziponi* of silk which they had worn underneath their *gonelle de panni d'oro a la italiana*. The Italian peasants as represented by an emperor and a duke, therefore, had themselves evidently been raised in status. Then, after some dances in the German fashion, his majesty returned wearing a splendid *turcha* of cloth of gold – *rizo sopra rizo*.¹² *Turcha*, like *casacha*, could be used to signify a long gown open in front, resembling those worn in Turkey. The Venetian *vesta*, it will be remembered, was always closed.

Although these festivities took place a dozen years before the engravings of jousts and dances at Maximilian's court collected under

the title *Freydal*,¹³ the same spirit was already in favour. The *Freydal* engravings can be shown to have been extremely acute in their portrayals of foreign dress, some of it dress of the past, and it is quite clear that, accurate or not, the dress of the Italian peasants assumed by Maximilian and his two partners was perfectly recognisable to those who were present. Ten days later, on 13 February, another tournament was held on the sand-covered piazza in Innsbruck; again Italian dress was worn.

In the carnival of 1502 it was not surprising to find Italian disguise worn at a German party, but at the end of that year Sanudo expressed astonishment when the Spanish envoy appeared in *Collegio* dressed as a Frenchman. The doge, marvelling, laughingly challenged him: 'What, the magnificent envoy goes abroad dressed *a la francese*?' The answer is enigmatic.¹⁴ What is certain is that the Spanish envoy's dress was not, as were the fantasies at Maximilian's court, a light-hearted gesture.

A la francese and *a la todesca* were useful adjectives, but far from precise. Not only was dress different in the various provinces and dukedoms within the two countries but there were the separate countries of Brittany and the Netherlands, north and south. In all of them 'national' fashions were worn, fashions of which the Venetians had no understanding and for which they could find no useful labels. From this distance in time their ignorance can seem amusing. Margaret of Austria, for example, was a daughter of the emperor Maximilian and held the title of Regent of the Netherlands; she is said to have adopted Netherlandish dress. But in 1497 Margaret was betrothed to Juan, a son of the Catholic monarchs of Spain, and, because of the illness of the Venetian ambassador, the news of her arrival in Burgos reached Venice through a report of the Milanese envoy, who described her as being *vestita a la francese*, in gold brocade lined with ermine with a headdress of black velvet *al modo suo*. Margaret was greeted by the Most Serene King Ferdinand, who was richly dressed in a suit described as *quasi French*; he changed later into a long gown of gold *a la francese*. The Most Serene Queen of Spain, also in cloth of gold with a quantity of jewels, wore on her head a black velvet cap in a masculine style – *una bereta de homo* – over the normal veil. The princely bridegroom too was dressed *a la francese*.¹⁵

The letters describing this event were written by an ambassador accredited to the Spanish court; he must have been perfectly familiar with what was normally worn there, so that the emphasis on the French fashions worn on this politically important occasion must have been deliberate if, perhaps, inaccurate. The bride, of course, was not French but German, and yet there is no suggestion that German dress was worn as a compliment to the nationality of the bride. For this reason it seems likely that, while perhaps Ferdinand and Isabella wore French dress,

Margaret's dress was Netherlandish, as her headdress *al modo suo* suggests.

Once again the *Freydal* engravings may provide a further clue. At least two of them portray *moresca* dancers wearing Burgundian fashions of the period of Maximilian's marriage to his first wife, Mary of Burgundy, Margaret of Austria's mother. Although executed two decades after the event, as records of the Burgundian fashions of the earlier time the engravings are remarkably accurate. If, then, *a la francese* was used as an umbrella term to denote the non-German north of Europe, the fact that it was worn by the Spanish royal family could have been a complimentary reference to Margaret's mother as well as to her own title. The use of *a la francese* would, in that case, be a parallel to the casual use of *turcha* and *casacha* for any long open gown as well as to the descriptions of the envoys from Russia who spoke *quasi turco*.

A later example of the impossibility of finding precise names for unfamiliar articles of clothing is Sanudo's report of the return, in 1504, of slier Zuan Badoer, Venetian ambassador to Hungary, wearing a knightly mantle fastened on the shoulder with *campononi* and a cap *a la forestiera* (foreign): *Videlicet*, added Sanudo, *a la francese*.¹⁶

By 1504, as we have seen, the Venetian *Provedadori sopra le pompe* had begun to be uneasy about the adoption of what they regarded as French fashions by the young men and the women of Venice. Their recognition of some details of dress which seemed to them to be designed *a la francese* may not, in fact, have owed much to the French after all. But it was not to be long before the wearing of foreign fashions could have sinister implications. With the joining of the three great powers, France, Germany and the Papacy, in the League of Cambrai against Venice it was not merely patriotism that moved the *Provedadori* to prohibit the wearing in Venice of styles imitating foreign fashions.

In January 1509, in Trieste, a Turk on his way to Maximilian's court, and carrying letters from the sultan to the emperor, was arrested. He was dressed as a friar and suspected of being a spy.¹⁷ In March, the archbishop of Crete, dressed *a la francese* and with his servants, was caught sight of by officials and fled into the church of San Martino.¹⁸ In June, when Venetian cities were falling to Maximilian's troops under the leadership of the *commisario imperiale*, Leonardo 'Dressano', a traitorous Vicentine, Leonardo was described as dressing *a la todesca*, in a black *vesta* striped with gold and with a gold *scufion* on his head. Here is a true description of 'foreign' dress; striped materials are constantly referred to as being worn by the French and a *scuffia*, a soft full, round cap probably made by the process resembling knitting known as 'sprang', was much in favour with high-ranking officers in France and in Italy outside Venice. When, a few days later, news arrived of the capture of Padua by 'da Dressano' and his troops, he was

described as having had made for him in Padua a *vesta* of white velvet with gold stripes; he was wearing a beard and again a *scufion a la todescha*.¹⁹ Once in control of the city he was seen in the piazza eating cherries and wearing a garland of flowers round his *scufia*.²⁰ The following month, when Venetian troops had managed, by a clever trick, to infiltrate and recapture Padua, 'da Dressano', wearing his white with gold stripes and gold *scufia* and with a heavy gold chain round his neck, was captured and taken to Venice, where he was held prisoner on Torcello. It was at about the same time that a French spy, disguised as a Jew and wearing the yellow cap obligatory to them, was arrested in Venice.²¹ Regarded in Venice as an outcast people, Jews were compelled, unless they were doctors of medicine, to wear a yellow *bareta*. Being indispensable to the Christian community, Jewish doctors were for a time exempt. Sanudo reported that on 20 July 1525 a son of Anselmo *dal Banco*, a noted Jew, was arrested wearing on his head a black *scufia* and holding in his hand his yellow *bareta*.

Another magnate serving as a general with the forces of the League was Federigo Gonzaga, marquis of Mantua. He too was captured in 1509 and taken to Venice where he was held in comfortable conditions in the *Torrecello*. When he was taken, the marquis was wearing a *zipon* striped in gold and *paonazo*. Once imprisoned, Federigo's marchesa, Isabella, sent him a gold *scuffia*, which was brought to the *Collegio* by a private secretary of the marquis. Two months later he was sent a book of poems by a Carmelite monk, which gave him much comfort. In 1510, when the situation was considerably eased from Venice's point of view, the marquis was conducted by ten gentlemen to a meeting of the *Colegio*. The gentlemen wore black or *paonazzo*, suitable to the gravity of the occasion, while the marquis himself was dressed in black, including a short mantle (*capa*)—thin, old and unbecoming.²² The doge shook hands with his distinguished prisoner.

In February 1511 the Heads of the Council of Forty called attention to the laxity over compliance with the sumptuary regulations and pointed out that women were wearing the French and Ferrarese fashions of 'our enemies'; in April 1511 a proclamation was published forbidding women to wear *habiti a la visentina*, perhaps the most surprising of all sumptuary rules in view of Vicenza's proximity to Venice.²³

In October 1511 a sudden change of partners, which led to the formation of the Holy League, brought together Venice, the Papacy and Spain. The procession with which Venice welcomed this transformation in her fortunes must have rivalled any in her history. This procession has been discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, but it is worth noting again that effigies of the pope (there were in fact three) and of the king of Spain were carried round the Piazza, the pope in mitre and cope

and the king of Spain in *restagno d'oro a la castigliana*. There were also effigies dressed as Moors. Some young Saracens were dressed in Arabian style, and there was an effigy of the sultan of Turkey wearing a fez. On the eve of All Saints in that same year, sier Hironimo Savorgnan returned with sier Antonio Loredan from Germany to Venice, wearing a black *capa a la spagnola*, *bolzegini in piedi* and a sword at his side. *Bolzegini* were probably loose baggy boots.²⁴ Although both *a la castigliana* and *a la spagnola* were terms used in Venice to describe styles of dress, it seems unlikely that any real distinction was made between them.

French, German and Spanish dress must have been distinguishable in Venice, if not with perfect accuracy. English dress was not. On 12 November 1511 a letter was despatched from London by sier Francesco Pasqualigo reporting that sumptuary regulations were being imposed in England and that, in order to set a good example, the king and his courtiers were wearing long gowns *a l'ongarescha* made in ash-coloured cloth (*beretino*).²⁵ 'Hungarian' was evidently the nearest comparison that Pasqualigo could find for a gown in the English style. This was not, however, the only time that English fashions appeared to Italians to be Hungarian in character for, in 1517, Henry VIII was said to have worn, at a party, a suit of cloth of gold made in the Hungarian style.

Some months later, in 1512, the cities of the Veneto were being recovered one by one. Brescia was freed, the banner of St Mark was hoisted in Bergamo, where there was music and dancing, and on the door of the palace appeared satirical verses warning the Milanese to dress only in black with *bechi fotuti milanesi* because their wives were going with the French.²⁶ Before long the *Signoria* was ordering distinguished patricians, among them Marin Sanudo, to form an escort for the twelve Swiss envoys, led by an archpriest in black damask but the rest *vestiti a la sguizara*.²⁷ Still the *Provedadori sopra le pompe* were barring *ziponi* made *a la francese* and also shirts gathered up to the chest (*crespade*) *a la francese*.²⁸ In 1513, when a pact between Venice and France was drawn up, these particular prohibitions ceased.

The presence of foreigners in several Venetian paintings of the end of the fifteenth century is very obvious. Caterina Cornaro, queen of Cyprus, both in her portrait in Prague and as painted with her attendant ladies by Gentile Bellini in 1500, wears a type of dress that has very little in common with what was currently being worn in Venice. Bellini, while he naturally gave the queen and the Cypriot ladies a place of honour kneeling along the bank of the canal in the foreground on the left, includes in this painting of a *Miracle on the Canal* about a dozen ladies of Venice standing behind them. These Venetian beauties are portrayed in the fashionable dress of 1500. The little girl who kneels, with her governess behind her, in the foreground, wears a dress which

shows the Venetian fashion in detail.²⁹ Clerics, members of the *Scuola* of S. Giovanni Evangelista, Venetian patricians as well as gondoliers are a part of the general scene, as is also a contingent of Venetian knights supporting the queen and her party on the left. They wear their knightly mantles fastened on the right shoulder with a row of buttons. It is the Cypriot group who stand out as members of a foreign country.

It is obvious that Gentile Bellini was once more recording a scene from contemporary life in Venice when he painted the *Corpus Domini* procession in the Piazza in 1496 (see Plate 5). The painting commemorates another miracle connected with the *Scuola* of S. Giovanni Evangelista, as a part of a series commissioned for the Guild's building, now destroyed. In this painting the miracle portrayed actually took place in 1444, when a son of a Brescian merchant visiting Venice was miraculously cured of a fatal illness through his prayers at the moment when the *Scuola's* relic of the True Cross was carried past, but in Bellini's painting both the merchant and the bystanders belong to 1496. Among the stylish young men not yet *togati* and the patricians, the *cittadini*, the friars and the clergy, stand groups of foreigners. On the left are Greeks (or Armenians), wearing their hard, square-topped hats and long open gowns (see Figure 11); on the right of centre a group of Germans in ample short dark mantles, almost certainly what Venetians referred to as *gabbani*, and large felt caps. These *forestieri* are familiar in Venetian paintings and engravings done around the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; their presence in scenes not directly connected with Venice, such as some of the paintings in Carpaccio's Sant' Orsola series, shows that they were a familiar enough sight in the lanes and squares of Venice to be useful in producing some variety among the Venetians who populate the backgrounds of these paintings. The foreigners stand, as a rule, either in isolation or in small groups with their compatriots (see Figure 3, detail).

Carpaccio was faced with at least one major problem in painting the Sant' Orsola series, a problem which when he worked on the story of San Giorgio or even of San Trifono he was not troubled by. St Ursula, a princess of Cologne, was betrothed, according to legend, to a son of the English king. Carpaccio had no scruples about transplanting Ursula's family to Venice, as she was the heroine of the story, but the prince had, therefore, to be shown to belong to a different nationality. Whether Carpaccio was able to discover anything about English dress at the end of the fifteenth century would be impossible to ascertain but a close look at his paintings involving Englishmen reveals a certain type of large furry hat which he seems to have used exclusively to identify the English. In other respects their clothing is mildly German in style (see Figure 3, detail).

Evidence as to what Englishmen were actually wearing in the 1490s is extremely sparse, but there may be some slight support for Carpaccio's furry hats (perhaps of brushed felt) in a painted glass panel, one of a set representing the Life and Joys of Mary, made for a private house in Leicester probably in about 1500.³⁰ The chief male character in many of the scenes has been called the 'Benefactor'; he wears a more or less international type of cap and a long open gown but in the scene which represents 'Matrimony' an attendant of the bridegroom wears a large furry hat with an upstanding feather and the bridegroom himself has another such hat, without a feather, slung on a band over his shoulder. It is just possible that hats of this type may have been relatively common in England at the time and may have been noticed by a Venetian ambassador to the English court as being typically 'English'. When the Sant' Orsola series was being painted Venetian men, whether young and fashionable, gondoliers, or mature members of the government, wore small round caps; it is particularly by their hats or turbans that foreigners in Venetian settings are immediately recognisable. Among the crowd in the painting of the *Return of the English Ambassadors* stands a Greek, wearing an open gown and square-topped hard hat, an exact parallel to the clothes worn by the Greeks (or Armenians) in Gentile Bellini's *Procession in the Piazza S. Marco*. In another painting in the series a white-turbaned black African stands on a bridge and a man with a short pointed beard and a tilted red hat looks out at the spectator. His nationality would no doubt have been recognisable to a Venetian of the day and his well-trimmed beard alone would suggest that he was not an Italian but more probably French. Close scrutiny of any of Carpaccio's paintings of Venetian crowds reveals white-bearded Turks, always a Greek or two and a variety of natives of the Near East and of the north coast of Africa, all very carefully observed and often repeated with slight but well-understood variations in their dress. A study of these orientals, especially in the San Giorgio cycle, would be very rewarding.

The Sant' Orsola cycle was completed by 1500; the paintings for the *Scuola* of San Giovanni Evangelista, involving not one but several painters, took much longer, although the earliest of them can be dated to about 1494, when Lazzaro Bastiani painted the *Offering of the Relic of the True Cross*, an event that actually took place in 1369, when the donation had been made on behalf of Philippe de Mezières. As might be expected the painting includes a considerable number of Venetian gentlemen wearing their gowns and *bechi* and, rather surprisingly within the church, their black caps. There are a few women in the background and two in the middle distance, while in the foreground stand two men in a very unusual style of dress, possibly Hungarian. The evidence for this is slight and depends on their round stiff caps,

with fine ridges converging at the centre. In two or three fourteenth-century paintings such caps are worn by identifiable Hungarians, and resemble the helmets worn by one or two of the Huns who massacre St Ursula and her companions in Carpaccio's painting of the scene. In the Bastiani painting, the characters who wear these hard caps also wear long gowns, one of them with sleeves hanging from the arm-holes which may have been thought of as a *Pongarescha*. Whether Hungarians or not, these two men are intended as foreigners.

In all these paintings foreigners play a more or less benign part, but the best portraits of Venice's enemies were painted not in Venice itself but in Padua, and fairly soon after her sudden and almost too-much-to-be-hoped-for release from the occupation by the imperial troops. It was probably early in 1511 that Titian went to Padua, where he was commissioned to paint three of a series of frescoes of the miracles of St Anthony.³¹ Titian, who had arrived in Venice at a very early age, had worked in the studio of Giovanni Bellini and, by the time he went to Padua, must have become Venetian in his outlook, but the painters of the other frescoes in the series for the great hall in the *Scuola*, so far as their names are known, had not. Whereas, when the characters were sympathetic, Titian dressed them in Venetian style, some of the other frescoes reflect the state of mind of Padua under her recent occupation, although they purport to represent miracles performed by the saint more than two and a half centuries earlier.³²

One of the most telling of these, probably by Giovanni Antonio Corona, shows St Anthony confronting the tyrant ruler of the city, Ezzelino da Romano, whom Dante placed in the seventh – the violent – circle of Hell. The meeting takes place in open country outside Padua, which we see in the background, supposedly in the year 1231. The fact that Ezzelino himself wears Roman armour could be a veiled reference to Maximilian as king of the Romans. All the supporting warriors wear plate armour of the early sixteenth century with tilted, quite un-Venetian hats. In a secondary scene in the middle distance on the right, an armoured man wearing a large hat (perhaps Ezzelino in another aspect) kneels in penitence before a Franciscan, perhaps St Anthony once more. The episode is watched by a groom wearing Tartar clothing; he makes a sympathetic gesture. Is he one of the *stradioti* of the Venetian mercenary forces?

In another fresco, also by one of the minor painters of the *Scuola* murals, St Anthony disperses a hurricane that has torn down a bridge over the Brenta; pilgrims are gathered to hear the saint preach, a large crowd of them who would not in fact, in the lifetime of the saint, have regarded Padua as so important a place of pilgrimage. Again the scene is set in open country and in the middle distance stands a group of men, at least one of them in what must surely be contemporary dress. In this

painting, on the extreme right, is a woman wearing a head-veil of the style painted by Giotto in two of his frescoes in the Upper Church of S. Francesco in Assisi, a type which may have travelled very slowly across the Italian countryside.³³

A third painting in the *Scuola* is attributed to Filippo da Verona, though apparently with some hesitation. Its subject is the appearance of St Anthony to the Blessed Ballandi, another Franciscan, with exhortations to pray for the liberation of Padua. Tents are pitched round the walls of the city; citizens and friars are seen crowded into a nearby church. In the foreground a bearded man, almost certainly represented as a German, mounts his white horse while in the middle distance are another man recognisably dressed as a Greek and a Turkish janissary in anxious consultation. The overt intention is to record vividly a perilous moment in Padua's past. In reality it is surely a picture of Padua's most recent escape; the latest studies have proposed dates for several of these hitherto undated paintings.³⁴

Titian's three paintings for the *Scuola* seem, superficially, to be detached from the recent situation in Padua. He certainly used some Venetian styles of dress to clothe the sympathetic characters, except where they would have been quite inappropriate. It should be possible, though at present it is not, to identify the type of gown worn by the man standing on the right in the *Miracle of the Boy's Leg*. It is probably based on the livery of a member of a *Scuola*, though the badge on his chest may be pure invention. But the *saion* of the jealous husband killing his wife in the mural now numbered 12 can only, surely, be seen as German. It is white, striped with deep red – Maximilian's colours and those in which he dressed his troops.³⁵ It is interesting that in his preliminary sketch, Titian dressed the young husband in the normal shirt, *zipon* and tights that virtually every Venetian youth wore under an outer tunic and every gondolier wore without one. These garments were not confined to Venice, of course, but it may perhaps be significant that Titian so completely changed the appearance of the villain in this scene. In Venice the livery of Maximilian's men would have been unfamiliar; was Titian persuaded to change the dress by some Paduan patriot?

The specifically fashionable version of the *camisa*, *calze* and *zipon*, with puffed-out upper sleeves, is the dress chosen by Titian for the two youths on the left in his fresco of the *Newborn Child identifying its Father*. But what about the dress of the suspicious father, who wears a beard, forbidden to Venetians except as mourning? He is rich, as his thick gold chain reveals, but he is not dressed as a Venetian patrician. In Padua a Venetian might well have been a *forestiero*. This man may be one, of course, but he is certainly not a Venetian.

Paintings recording the actual details of the dress of exotic foreigners

could be precise; they were almost always painted from life – from, that is to say, visiting potentates, ambassadors, or members of their respective trains. Far more careful investigation of the dress of these foreigners in works of art would be necessary before they could all be confidently identified. The extraordinary oriental headdresses that Carpaccio collected together in his paintings for the *Scuola di san Giorgio degli Schiavoni*, for instance, must whet the curiosity of any student of dress.

Sanudo, no less anxious than Carpaccio to be precise, lacked, of course, the means to convey the actual appearance of these *forestieri* and *stranieri*, but his constant attempts to do so show how passionately interested Venice had always been in her visitors. Noting that the ambassador of the king of Tunis was dressed *a la barbaresca*,³⁶ Sanudo found it no less intriguing that in 1521 Francis I wore a *zippone a la svizara*,³⁷ and that in 1518 the duchess of Urbino, daughter of the marquis of Mantua, had appeared together with the 'old duchess' and many other Mantuans and ladies dressed in the fashions of Mantua.³⁸ For a great deal of this information Sanudo depended on letters from Venetian envoys attached to foreign courts; their own descriptions of the clothes they saw are further evidence of the importance of the subject: their letters were read aloud in Council.

Every time an envoy from a city in the Veneto arrived in Venice he and his attendants were scrutinised with care. In 1522 six representatives came from Brescia; they were dressed very properly (*bel in hordine*), and with them came about thirty citizens of Brescia, all of them wearing black velvet, damask or *raso*, lined with marten or wolf, with gold *scufioni* on their heads and, over them, *barette*. This detailed description is a clear indication both that the Brescian contingent had made a very considerable effort to impress the Venetians and that they had succeeded in doing so.³⁹

Then there was the occasion when the count Bernardo Frangipani, a Croation, attended a meeting of the *Collegio* in 1524 wearing Hungarian dress: a *vesta* of *paonazo* and a gold *scuffia*; with him was his page, who carried his long sword in its sheath of gilded silver, a very beautiful piece of work.⁴⁰ In 1515 news reached Sanudo that in Florence ninety gentlemen of the household of Lorenzo de' Medici had turned out wearing *saioni* of cloth of the livery of their lord, that is to say, *morello* and green with the image of a lion surrounded by a laurel wreath on the chest and the motto *uia et virtus*,⁴¹ a fact worth recording in his diary: no corresponding liveries existed in Venice notwithstanding the immense respect paid to the lion of St Mark.

Also manifestly worthy of note in 1524 was the fact that Pietro Coren, a rich Genoese merchant, long resident in Venice, who had just died, had used to dress *a la venetiana*.⁴² Relations between Venice and her rival, Genoa, were seldom good. Would Pietro Coren, even though no

doubt rich, have been acceptable as an established resident in Venice wearing Genoese dress? And when Sanudo reports that an ambassador from the sultan of Turkey was dressed *a la grecha* and accompanied by twelve Greeks are we learning something about Turkish politics?

While Venetian envoys accredited to foreign courts evidently realised the importance of including in their despatches descriptions of the local fashions worn by the gentlemen, apart from the extremely unsuccessful attempt to convey an idea of what Margaret of Austria wore for the occasions surrounding her marriage to the Spanish Infante, the dress of foreign women was seldom described. What is quite clear, however, is that critical as the authorities might be of the wardrobes of the ladies of Venice they were, unless they were tainted by foreign fashions, infinitely preferable to anything worn abroad. In 1524, for instance, sier Carlo Contarini, ambassador to the Archduke of Austria, commented in a letter from Vienna on the appearance of the ladies of the court. There was, he said, an occasional one who was beautiful but their dress was so distorted in comparison to that of our ladies that it made them look actually ugly.⁴³ And there was the occasion, already discussed, when it was agreed that the exquisitely beautiful ladies of Pera, in spite of the provocative nature of their dress, would have looked far more lovely had they been dressed as Venetians.⁴⁴

Today, without the diaries of Marin Sanudo we should know almost nothing of all this, but there is not the slightest doubt that every one of his Venetian contemporaries was as sensitive to the dress of foreigners as he was himself and that, just as Venetians were reprimanded for failing to appear in dress that was exactly appropriate to the situations in which they found themselves, so the same critical eyes were constantly directed at the extraordinary fashions in which their foreign visitors chose to appear. As a Venetian characteristic, this interest in foreigners was noted by contemporaries from other parts of Italy. In his play *La Talanta*, Pietro Aretino, a Tuscan, includes a character, messer Vergola, who at one point remarks that he himself, when he is in Venice, laughs at foreigners and the way they get out of a gondola at the wrong end.⁴⁵

9 Conclusion

Permission to wear a beard, exceptionally to attend a meeting of the *Pregadi* not in crimson or scarlet but in *beretino* – these were questions which, in Venice, affected men of the upper and middle classes. They reflect the unique complacency of the Serenissima towards her people, for while in the north of Europe repeated governmental directions to refrain from poaching the fashions of their betters were issued to workers, artisans and even to small landowners, in matters of dress Venice was evidently prepared to leave her *popolani* to their own devices.

In works of art of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Venice the *popolani* rarely appear. Those who do are usually elderly women who look like former ‘nannies’ or other trusted household servants. One of these holds the miraculously preserved infant in Benedetto Diana’s painting of a lady who has fallen downstairs (Figure 32).¹ Another humble but very respectably dressed woman, holding a crutch, sits musing on the steps which lead to the bedroom in which St Ursula is interviewed by her father (Figure 33).² There is nothing ‘ethnic’ about the clothes of these women; they belong to the city, but nothing in their appearance would earn them a glance from a member of the *Provedadori sopra le pompe delle donne*. There is an undoubted relationship between the neat cap of that seated old woman, worn on the back of the head, and the untidy version that occupies the same position on the thin hair of Giorgione’s *Vecchia*.³ Even in this simple cap there seems to be an urban and certainly local style which is still not a rustic ‘peasant’ fashion (Figure 34). It is possible to catch a glimpse of similar women in distant kitchens⁴ and a little later, in the 1530s, Titian included in his *Presentation of the Virgin*, painted for the *Scuola della Carità*, an equally quietly dressed and respectable young mother who holds out a begging palm to an elderly bearded official.

In works of art, male counterparts of these women are virtually non-existent. Well-liveried gondoliers, certainly some if not all of them slaves, abound, and so do smart youths, sons, probably, of prosperous artisans but almost indistinguishable in their dress, though not in their bearing, from their young patrician masters.

In her insistence on perfect correctness in the dress of any man even remotely connected with governmental office, or ever likely to be, and in her indifference to the wardrobes of the workers, Venice displayed

an attitude to the social structure of her population that was totally different from those of the rest of Europe. Since Venice was Venice and the nearby mainland was the *Terraferma*, a rustic manner of dress of the kind that must be suspected in Giotto's Arena Chapel frescoes, with its reliance on woven decoration, is naturally not to be found in the city. Whether anything of the kind had developed on Venice's agricultural islands would be almost impossible to discover, though there is a trace of typical 'rural' taste in the Madonna's dress painted by Cima da Conegliano in his *Madonna dell'arancia* of about 1495. Originally executed for the church of Santa Chiara on Murano, the tiny patch of embroidery on the Madonna's sleeve and her highly decorative though heavy underveil have an authentic 'peasant' look.⁵

Sanudo seldom found himself tempted to refer to members of the working class but when he did the occasion was sure to be an interesting one. He records, for instance, the presentation of melons to a newly created doge, accompanied by fifes and drums. In 1521 a representative of each of the fruiterers of Venice presented the Serenissimo Antonio Grimani with a melon decorated with cloves in accordance with the traditional custom on the day of his election. There were a hundred and thirty melons. This place, adds Sanudo, has a great many fruit stores.⁶ The fruiterers must certainly have already developed a distinctive dress for the occasion, though not necessarily one that resembled the picturesque flowered calico overalls which Grevembroch showed the *Fruttaroli* as wearing in the middle of the eighteenth century, as they carried their litters filled with melons to present to the new doge.⁷

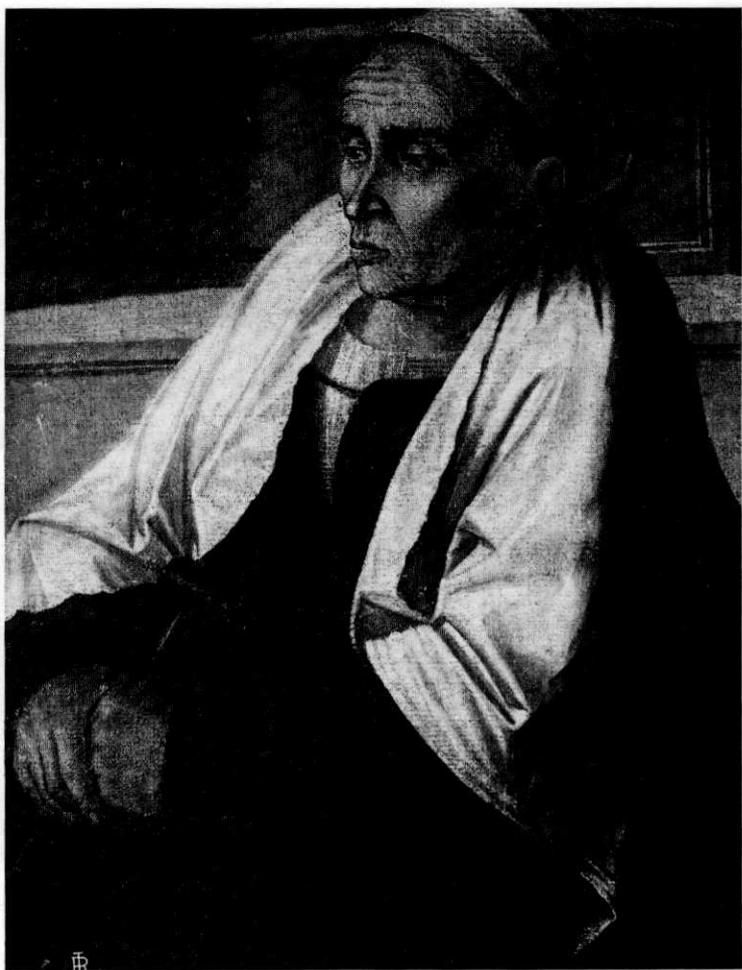
In July 1524, on the day after his election, the new *Canzelier grando* appeared for the first time in *Collegio*, accompanied by his relatives, some of them *zenthomini*, wearing scarlet or black, and some of them *popolari* in scarlet with sleeves *a comedo*.⁸

Both these references are exceptional and neither can provide any imaginable vision of what, for instance, being neither fruiterer nor *togato*, Zuan Polo the clown would have put on to go to Mass on a Sunday; nor is it likely that we should be able to find such information elsewhere. Nevertheless, both the inclusion of fruiterers in a ceremony as magnificent as the crowning of a doge and the exceptional permission for members of the *popolari* to appear in *Collegio* wearing scarlet add something to our understanding of the Serenissima's attitude to her people. In this she can be contrasted with her intermittent enemy Milan, whose view of her own social classes approached much more nearly that found in the countries of northern Europe of their own.

In Milan, for example, sumptuary regulations of 1498 granted special concessions to the wives of noblemen, merchants, barristers belonging to the College of Notaries and members of the archbishop's Curia. In Venice there appears to have been no class distinction where



32. B. Diana. *Miracle of a Relic of the True Cross*, detail. As can be seen from the simplicity of her dress and hairstyle, the mother of the baby miraculously saved after falling from a height is a *cittadina*. The lines of her dress and its tied-in sleeve are, nevertheless, fashionable. They belong to the early years of the sixteenth century. Her left *zoccolo* stands on the ground beside her. Venice, Accademia.



33. V. Carpaccio, *St Ursula Cycle, The arrival of the English ambassadors*, detail. The neat but plain *camicia*, as well as the cap, places the sitter as a respectable elderly *cittadina*. Surely this must have been a portrait. Venice, Accademia.

married women were concerned. Milan also discriminated in favour of members of certain professions themselves: expensive furs were allowed only to high officers in military service and to lawyers.⁹ In Venice the actual profession of the gentleman apparently counted for little; it was his position as a member of the government that was important.

A peculiarity in the social structure within the city of Venice was the apparent absence of the great hierarchy of household servants of the pattern that still, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, could supply virtually all the demands of the royal and noble houses of northern Europe, their respective functions and ranks defined so clearly in the Great Wardrobe Accounts of England and, though more depleted, in the *Ordonnances des rois de France*. In these countries, although the individual members of the household may not all have been resident within the mansion itself, they were certainly exclusively employed either by the head of the household or by a resident member of his family.

Admittedly, through fire, theft, and looting unofficial and official, the Venetian archives must be merely a small part of their original bulk, but there is no sign that, at least by the end of the fifteenth century, there existed craftsmen who were permanent paid servants of the ducal (or, as they would have said, 'princely') household. The early establishment, for instance, of a tailors' guild (or a shoemakers' guild; see Figure 35) itself points to a system of private enterprise, and since the office of doge was not hereditary, it can be presumed that before his election he had already, as a patrician, patronised the tailors, shoemakers and cap-makers of his choice, who would, as soon as his election was announced, set to with all speed to produce the new clothing that would be immediately required. But if the craftsmen left a record of this important moment, it is unlikely to have survived and one can only guess at their skills through the avid curiosity of Marin Sanudo in all things of this kind. The works of art discussed in an earlier chapter are a mark of their prosperity and of the security they must have felt in following their crafts. The same conditions were not necessarily common to the cities in the Veneto, which, in any case, differed considerably one from another. Aristocratic households in and around Bergamo and Brescia, for instance, may have been much nearer in social structure to those in Milan or even France.

To what extent the *Podestà* or the *capitano* of a city of the mainland was able to impose the Venetian regulations where dress was concerned is uncertain, but it is recorded that in 1503 ornamental hose were forbidden in Brescia and that in 1507 ladies in Treviso were not to wear a certain type of cloak known as a *sbernia*, nor hooped skirts nor any foreign fashion.¹⁰ Both cities were, at those dates, under Venetian rule

and certainly the fuller skirt (*faldia*) forbidden in Treviso was a part of the fashion that in Venice was regarded as French; in 1507 Venetian women too were attempting to widen their skirts. Nevertheless there certainly existed very distinct differences between the fashions of both men and women in the various cities of the Veneto, though it is quite possible that the *Podeste* struggled unsuccessfully to impose the regulations that were current in Venice herself. It is of some significance that the examples of Brescia and Treviso are both cited in an article in the *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, that is to say, when it had long been forgotten that both in Brescia and in Treviso the inhabitants would have been expected to have been influenced by Venetian and not Lombardic fashions. That each city long continued to maintain its individuality where dress was concerned is proved by the examples recorded by Cesare Vecellio in his *Habiti Antichi e Moderni*, first published in Venice in 1589. How far this practice continued into, say, the eighteenth century has probably not been investigated.

It is just beginning to be possible, from pictorial evidence, to recognise some characteristics of dress and hairdressing worn during or very near to the period covered by this study, in certain cities in the Veneto. It would be unwise, however, to discuss them until more work has been done. Like Vecellio, Sanudo shows conclusively that in the fashionable wear of his own time the differences between city and city were as remarkable as they were to be at the end of the century. As to the ethnic dress of the villagers, so popular in the drama of the time both throughout Italy and in all the other countries of Europe, with the exception of England, recent studies have shown not merely that the ephemeral fashions of the town varied from place to place but that styles of dress varied fundamentally from village to village.

Where fashionable dress was concerned, the so-called French styles which the authorities insisted were constantly being adopted in Venice herself must have made a lasting impression, for the Venetian historian Giambattista Galliccioli, looking back on the dress of the Venetians from 1795, quoted Priuli, who, in his diary entry for May 1512, bemoaned the lamentable Venetian characteristics which, it seems, were very difficult to overcome.

Priuli had noted, firstly, the tendency to blaspheme, prevalent among all social classes, and secondly, the Venetian love of dressing in the French style – *troppo inseriti nell' interno de' genii* – even though the French were detested throughout Italy.¹¹ Galliccioli's chapter on the history of Venetian fashions is short and it is significant, therefore, that he should have chosen, in the five pages that he has allowed to the subject, to quote that particular passage of Priuli's. Or was it, perhaps, that the far more deadly threat from the French was already sensed by Galliccioli at the moment of writing?¹² In seeking to explain the form of



34. V. Carpaccio, *The Birth of the Virgin*, detail. Two maid-servants in a kitchen; their heads are completely covered but their caps follow the fashionable line of the hairdressing of the early years of the sixteenth century. Bergamo, Accademia Carrara.



35. Pietro Lombardo, Plaque over the doorway of the *Scuola* of the Shoemakers, 1478. The shoemaker shown here is an Oriental, known as Aniano, who has injured his hand with his awl and is being cured by St Mark. Venice, Campo San Toma.

the everyday sleeve of the Venetian patrician, still worn in the *togas* of Galliccioli's day, he either invented or repeated a delightful myth in his suggestion that they had been named *a comeo* because they resembled the hump of the camel – *la gobbosità del camelo*.¹³

Because of an occasion in the past when, attempting to suggest a date for a portrait by a Venetian painter on the evidence of dress, the present writer erroneously assumed that the sitter too was a Venetian,¹⁴ in this study of the dress of the Venetians an effort has been made to restrict the illustrations to paintings commissioned for a church or a *Scuola* in the city itself or to portraits of known sitters; exceptions have been noted in the text. This has inevitably meant that comparatively little visual evidence is available from the second decade of the sixteenth century. Venice's poverty in the later years, and in the aftermath of the wars of the League of Cambrai, was probably the reason for an unwillingness to invest officially in works of art and this must have applied also to private patrons and the *Scuole*.

That at least one important change in the official point of view must have been well on its way in 1525 can be exemplified by the apparently trivial but actually fundamental shift in Venetian official opinion over the matter of beards. Before that date it would have been difficult to identify a bearded man in a Venetian painting as a Venetian. By the 1530s, bearded gentlemen, wearing *scarlato* made up in the distinctive form of the Venetian *toga*, can be found in, for instance, Titian's *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple* (Figure 36), now in the Accademia, a painting executed between 1534 and 1538 and commissioned by the *Scuola* of Sta. Maria della Carità, whose building now houses the Accademia. It would be impossible, given its subject, to maintain the view that the four or so bearded gentlemen in this painting were all in mourning.

As to the conditions imposed on the wearing of beards in the city of Venice, this is an issue which invariably causes astonishment in the modern student. It is impossible to ignore Sanudo's painstaking reports of the appearance in *Collegio* of bearded gentlemen recently afflicted by the death of a near relative, or by the humiliation of having allowed themselves to be captured by an enemy; his reports were certainly accurate. Nor is that Venetian practice without its counterpart in modern times. After the death of his wife in 1982, Menachem Begin, Israel's head of state, was photographed by members of the Press wearing several days' growth of beard, a fact that was remarked on at the time.¹⁵ Investigations of ancient practices concerning the wearing of beards are contradictory, but it is perhaps a sign of the disquiet provoked by the subject that Galliccioli, in his retrospective account of the Venetian Republic, chose to devote a short chapter to beards which, however, does nothing to illuminate the subject. In this respect at least

Venice was not alone¹⁶; in Florence too, during the fifteenth century, the wearing of a beard signified mourning.

The probable explanation of Venice's final abandonment of her rigid attitude to the wearing of beards can be found in an entry by the anonymous *Follower* of the Florentine Diarist Luca Landucci in which he notes that in 1529 men began to cut their hair short, whereas everyone without exception had formerly worn it long enough to reach the shoulder. And they now began to wear a beard, which formerly was only worn by two men in Florence, Corbizo and one of the Marbige.¹⁷ In fact, as in the matter of the rolled hood, even Venice must occasionally have yielded to the power of fashion, and even when it involved an abandonment that would have seemed to be a betrayal of fundamental principles.

No satisfactory explanation of the origins of changes in style of dress has ever been agreed on, though the reason for some drastic spasmodic change may occasionally have been suspected. What has not, perhaps, been investigated is a possible relationship between mutations in local or national speech and changes in fashions in clothing. The usual rather sentimental assumption that '*lingua toscana in bocca romana*' has always been the Italian ideal has lately been questioned. 'Tuscan as it came to be defined was not the polite parlance of contemporary Tuscany, nor even, exactly, the language of contemporary Tuscan literature, but a synthetic language based on analysis of what were regarded as the best models of literary elegance'.¹⁸

Another modern writer, in discussing Pietro Bembo, goes further: 'If,' he says, 'in the later Quattrocento, Florence was Latin and Tuscan, and then in the Cinquecento, Tuscan and Italian, Venice was always, through the whole century, polyglot: Greek and Latin and Venetian and Provençal, and again Venetian and finally dialect, her speech was universal.'¹⁹ This is an opinion that must remind us of the groups of foreign spectators, each wearing his local dress yet so comfortably part of those great *Scuole* paintings of the *calli* and *campi* of Venice.

When Baldassare Castiglione, that great authority on Italian dress, published his *Libro del Cortegiano*, he was berated for not following Boccaccio by writing in pure Tuscan, although this did nothing to affect the sales of this spectacular bestseller, which ran into more editions during its first century than can conveniently be counted in one visit to Venice's Biblioteca Marciana.²⁰ In a new foreword to a new edition, *il conte* Baldassare hit back at his critics: 'I still have not felt obliged to follow the custom of writing in today's Tuscan,' he wrote, 'because, like merchandise, new words are admitted, sometimes permanently, sometimes temporarily. And this was true too of the old days, as can be seen clearly from Boccaccio, whose writings include so many French, Spanish and Provençal words.'²¹



36. Titian, *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*, 1534–38, detail. By this time it was evidently acceptable to wear a beard without any implication that sorrow was involved. Venice, Accademia.

On the subject of dress, Castiglione was no doubt expressing his own views when, on one occasion, his 'messer Federico' points out that the Italians were so prone to take up any fashion that was going, that really everyone is free to wear what he likes.²² This alleged eclecticism on the part of at least some Italians was carried much further nearly forty years later, in the comedy *La Strega*, when, at one point, a servant says: 'These lords of yours, they wear a German cap, a French hat; their tunics are in the Florentine style, with a Spanish collar over the top. Their breeches are from Gascony, their shoes are Roman. Their faces, mind you, are characteristic of Fiesole and their brains are Siense . . .'²³ The opinion was, of course, transferred, later still, by Shakespeare in his description of an Englishman: 'A Spaniard from the waist up, no doublet; a German from the waist down, all slops'.²⁴

Since Venice was unable to emulate the *Toscani* in the purity of her speech she can, perhaps, be admired rather than condemned for her efforts to maintain a purity in the style of her dress. Furthermore, of all the cities of Italy, it was declared, it was only in Venice that civil strife was unknown.²⁵

Notes

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Marin Sanudo il giovane, *La Città di Venetia*, is the main source for all later studies. Pp. 85–154.
2. Also referred to as the *Gran Consejo/Maggior Consejo/Mazo Consejo/Maior Consiglio*. Apart from the appropriate Venetian patricians, lawyers and judges, knights as well as governors, rectors and captains representing Venice in her cities on the mainland and her overseas possessions were eligible to attend. For a clear exposition of the structure of the Venetian government see Horatio F. Brown, *Studies in the History of Venice*, Vol. I, p. 293, *The Constitution of the Venetian Republic* and the State Archives. See also D. S. Chambers, *The Imperial Age of Venice*, pp. 74–6.
3. The *Collegio* was an assembly composed of members of the Senate (*Signoria*) and the consultative *Savii*. See Chambers, *op.cit.*, p. 74.
4. Sanudo, *Città*, p. 172.
5. See Chapter 9 below, p. 154.
6. Ruth Matilda Anderson, *Hispanic Costume 1480–1530*.
7. See, e.g. Cicogna, *Intorno la Vita e le Opere di Marcantonio Michiel . . .*
8. The painting is in the Accademia, Venice. A detail is reproduced by Pompeo Molmenti, *La Storia di Venezia nella Vita Privata*, II, p. 319.

Chapter 2: Official Dress in Venice

1. Baldassare Castiglione, *Il Cortegiano*, Lib. II, cap. xxvii. First published in 1524, the *Cortegiano* was probably first conceived in about 1506.
2. Sanudo, *Città*, p. 22: ‘. . . le Senatori delli magistrati, mentre sono in officio . . . vanno vestiti de color per lezzi’.
3. When it was to the Republic’s advantage the rule could be modified, so that on 4 December (the feast of Santa Barbara), after reaching the age of twenty, the so-called *Barbarelli* were admitted to the *Gran Consiglio* – or even, on the payment of a considerable sum, at the age of eighteen. Horatio Brown, *Studies in the History of Venice*, p. 297. For *Barbarelli*, see also Chapter 7 p. 127 below.
4. Cesare Vecellio, *Habiti Antichi e Moderni*, p. 92: Nobili et altre persone commode nell ‘habito per casa’. Also, perhaps, Lorenzo Lotto, *Family Group*, London, National Gallery No. 1047, probably painted in 1547.

Here the father appears to be wearing an indoor gown similar to the one engraved by Vecellio.

5. Two or three official Venetian gowns with an opening at the back of the neck are preserved in the Museo Correr, Venice.
6. See, for instance, Jan van Eyck, *The Marriage of Giovanni* [?] *Arnolfini and Giovanna Cerami* [?] London, National Gallery, No. 1860.
7. Sanudo, *Città*, p. 22: '... con maneghe a comedo...'
8. *The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff*, pp. 55-56.
9. Sanudo, *XXIX*, 630-1 (1520), quotes an occasion when an acknowledged wealthy miser, sier Marin Grimani, was jeered at by a group of young patricians for wearing *manege dugal*, though he had never attended a meeting of the *Pregadi*, 'Give me ten ducats not to cut them off,' said one.
10. Luca Landucci, in his *Diario fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516*, p. 371, noted that, 'Nel 1529 si comincio a lasciare la portatura de' capucci e nel 1532 non se vedeva pure uno... si porta berrette e cappegli.' This was the final discarding of the hood in Florence.
11. Vecellio, *Abiti*, p. 62.
12. Sanudo, *Città*, p. 22.
13. For dyes, see Appendix B, p. 175. In 1454 members of the Venetian *Arte della Seta* were forbidden to use anything but pure *cremesino* for dyeing silk fabrics, nor was anyone allowed to sell silks that had been dyed in mixed dyes. This order does not seem to have been repealed until 1636, when prices had risen so sharply that mixed dyes were allowed in the production of a 'crimson' colour. A.S.V. Busta 1^a 553.
14. Dolce, *Dialogo*... 15m Boerio, *Dizionario veneziano. Paonazzo*, add. Pagonazzo o Pavonaccio e Pavonazzo, Agg. di Colore tra azzuro e nero. For a discussion on the colour see Appendix C, p. 178.
15. *Zambellotto*, woollen cloth, the name derived through *camellotto* from the Arabic, *khamel*. Originally made from camel-hair, later goats' hair was also used. Bistort, *Il Lusso nella Vita e nelle Leggi*, pp. 431-3, a long and interesting note. In Sanudo's day *zambellotto* was imported from Alexandria and elsewhere, often via Cyprus. See Appendix B, p. 175.
16. Following the death of Antonio Grimani, on 7 May 1523. Sanudo, *XXXIV*, 142.
17. *Ibid.*, 139.
18. *Ibid.* (1521), *XXXII*, 236 '... come paonazo scuro che era segno di veneno': a sign that he had been poisoned. On the death of Leo X see, for instance, H. F. Brown, *Studies*, pp. 245-8.
19. Sanudo (1524), *XXXVII*, 16-7.
20. *Ibid.* (1509), *VIII*, 372-3.
21. *Ibid.* (1521), *XXX*, 480.
22. *Ibid.*, 487; *XXXI*, 28, 71.
23. H. F. Brown, *Studies*: 'The College proposed measures which became law in the Senate; and the execution of those laws was entrusted to the College' (p. 302). The *Collegio* met every morning in the *Audentia* of the Ducal Palace and was attended by the doge, councillors, the three heads

- of the *Quarentia*, the *Savii Grandi*, the *Savii a Terra Ferma* and the *Savii ai Ordemi*, who together made up the *Collegio*. See Sanudo, *Città*, p. 96.
24. Sanudo, XXXIII, 224 (1522): '*Praeterea . . . quelli di Collegio debano vestiti di color con bechi di seda o di scarlate comme vol la leze soto pena etc., e il vicedoxe andar debbi vestido di scarlato a Gran Conseio.*'
 25. *Ibid.* (1519), XXVII, 182, 191. Three years later, sier Alvise Contarini, again acting as vice-doge appeared in black and was fined 100 ducats (1522), XXXIII, 296.
 26. In 1517 an attempt was made by the heads of the Council of Ten to restrict the wearing of *manege dogal* in Venice itself to magistrates actually holding office in the Senate but the motion just failed to be adopted. Sanudo, XXIV, 347. 'There are those who would like to occupy the office of Censor in order to receive 10 ducats a month, do nothing and wear *manege dogal* . . .' *Ibid.* (1520), XXIX, 559.
 27. Sanudo, *Città* ' . . . bisogno sii fidelissimo e vecchio, va vestido di color il forzo . . .' (p. 145). 'Veste di scarlato et paonazo et ha grandissimo auctorità' (p. 277).
 28. Sanudo, XXXVI, 421 (1524).
 29. *Ibid.* (22 June), 422: 'che'l dovesse venir in altra vesta che in manege ducal . . .' For the rest of his story, see *Ibid.*, 437, 464-5.
 30. On the election and status of the doge see Chambers, *The Imperial Age of Venice*, pp. 86-93. H. F. Brown, *Studies*, pp. 303-5. Referred to as the *baretta*, in Sanudo's day the state 'baretta del Dose con le zoie [jewels] suso' was kept on show in the Sanctuary of St Mark's basilica (Sanudo, *Città*, p. 179); it was never worn but carried in procession under an umbrella of gold.
 31. Sanudo, *Città*, p. 89.
 32. The coif (*scuffia*) was worn all over Europe in the thirteenth century by gentlemen of fashion; it lingered in England as the distinguishing mark of sergeants-at-law (see Alexander Pulling, *The Order of the Coif*), and elsewhere it continued to be worn by some officials of various grades. The term *scuffia* was also used for a large turban-like cap which came into fashion in Italy at the end of the first decade of the sixteenth century. *Veta: Boerio, Dizionario*: ' . . . quantità di filo, seta o simile, che s'infila nella cruna dell'ago per cucire. . . '. See also Sanudo, *Città*, p. 89.
 33. *Campanoni*: see Boerio, *op. cit.* In English, 'large bells'.
 34. Sanudo, XIX, 331 (1514): ' . . . manto di raxo cremesino taiato a fanestrele. . . '. In February 1521 the frail old doge, Grimani, could not lift a heavy mantle to stretch out his hands: 'non poteva cavar le maniche fuora, cussi adesso è sta taja dito manto e cavà le maniche fuora. . . ', for the better comfort of his Serenity (Sanudo, XXIX, 660).
 35. *Ibid.*, XXIX (July 1520), 95. 'Il Serenissimo Principe . . . vestito damaschin cremexin, portato in la sua cariega. . . '.
 36. Giovanni Bellini, London, National Gallery, No. 189.
 37. Sanudo, *Città*, pp. 87, 88.
 38. Sanudo, XXX, 487: ' . . . la vesta solita damaschin cremexin, ma è molto

- curta, et bareta di raso cremexin col friso d'oro fata nova, et molto gajado, licet habbi anni 87'.
39. Sanudo, XXXIV, 185: '... era piccola et li stava malissimo. . .'. Ibid., 188, '... piu grande di l'altra, che li stà meglio. . .'.
 40. Sanudo, XXXVI, 110 (1524): *bareta d'oro con fiori*.
 41. Ibid., XXXIV, 157. Before his coronation, which would allow him to wear the ducal *bareta*, Andrea Gritti received the *Signoria*, '... soa Serenità . . . era vestiti damaschin cremexin a la dogalina e una bareta di raxo cremexin nuova fata questa note a la francese . . .'.
 42. Sanudo, XXXVII, 470: The celebrations were prolonged '... la noviza prima vestita de veludo ruosa secha . . .'. See pp. 110–12 below.

Chapter 3: The Dress of the Young Men of Venice

1. The assumption that the *toga* signalled the right to attend meetings of the *Maggior Consiglio*: '... i giovani patrizi entravano in Maggior Consiglio soltanto all'eta normale de 25 anni.' Bistort, *Il Lusso*, p. 276. Members of the privileged families who were permitted to enter it earlier were recorded in the register entitled *Barbarella* from the fact that December 4, the feast of Santa Barbara, was the annual date of entry. A manuscript list of *Barbarelli* from 1409 to 1530 is preserved in an eighteenth century copy in the Bib. Marciana, Cat. Farsetti 8379, Ms. It. vii Cod. xxiv. See also H. F. Brown, *Studies*, p. 297.
2. Venice, Accademia. Inscribed 'VICTOR Carp. F. MCCCCLXXXV'. The date, perhaps repainted in the seventeenth century, may be apocryphal but a preparatory drawing in the Uffizi shows St Ursula with the same hairdressing. It is also unlikely that the profile of the angel's torso would have appealed to the seventeenth century, whereas it accords perfectly with the line fashionable in the mid-1490s.
3. See below, Chapter 7, pp. 127–8.
4. Bistort, *Il Lusso*, p. 389, points out that in Venice a *saiò* could appear in the earlier form as *sagum*, which in medieval Latin was the equivalent of the English *say*, a woollen cloth. See Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin word-list*.
5. *La Tempesta*, Venice, Accademia. 'a 1507 c.'
6. The tying of the hose to the *zupon* ensured a smooth tight fit to both.
7. See below, Chapter 8.
8. G. Priuli, *I Diarii*, r. p. 399 '... li giovani dela citade si popular, come nobelli. . .'.
 9. Ibid., p. 400.
10. Sanudo, VIII, 77–8 (1509): '... Et primo, ut nulli comam et barbam nutrire debeant . . . nec aliquas alias habentes manicas majoris latitudis duarum quartarum. . .'.
 11. Ibid., 163.

12. Priuli, IV, p. 37: '... la citade veneta divenuto in tanta lascivia, luxuria in ogni genere et sexu . . . '.
13. Sanudo XIV, 117 (1512): '... i ziponi non possi esser imbotidi salvo al colar et al traverso . . . '.
14. London, National Gallery No. 1944.
15. See Cecil Gould, *The Sixteenth-Century Venetian School*. National Gallery catalogues, pp. 114-15.
16. *Fête Champêtre*, Paris, Louvre. Opinions have varied as to who painted it. Tietze considered it to be by Giorgione; A. Venturi assigned it to Sebastiano del Piombo; Suida attributed it to Titian.
17. Somewhat resembling knitting, sprang is the interweaving of strands of wool round the hands, without the aid of needles or a hook.
18. Sometimes ascribed to Giorgione, Sebastiano del Piombo or Domenico Campagnola, the painting was acquired in Venice in 1654, so that it was probably executed in Venice. Florence, Pitti Palace, as by Titian. There is no evidence as to what members of the *Compagnie della Calza* used as liveries at this date (about 1515); the young man may, therefore, have belonged to a Company, though from later evidence of their dress this seems unlikely.
19. Venice, Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, painted between 1519 and 1526.
20. The attribution of this painting has also been disputed. It was formerly at Temple Newsam.
21. Venice, Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari. The *Assumption of the Virgin*, signed Ticianus, commissioned in 1516, unveiled on 20 May 1518.

Chapter 4: The Dress of the Women of Venice

1. Venice, Accademia. *Processione in Piazza S. Marco*, 1496. The woman, on the spectator's left, may be a 'courtesan'. A party of pilgrims, including some peasant women, also make their way into the basilica.
2. Venice, Accademia. *Miracolo de la Reliquia della Croce*. Painted for the Scuola of San Giovanni Evangelista. The miracle itself is reported as having occurred in 1494.
3. Venice, Accademia. *Il ciclo di Sant' Orsola*, begun in 1490. The Scuola di Sant' Orsola, situated behind the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, was suppressed during the Napoleonic era.
4. Florence, Pitti Palace. Raphael, *Angelo Doni, Maddalina Doni*, c. 1505.
5. London, National Gallery. As Titian, c. 1511.
6. Rome, Galleria Borghese. 1514-1515. Among the many theories as to the meaning of this subject the most recent, by Charles Hope (*Titian*, pp. 34-6), is by far the most convincing. He regards the girl in the rich dress as the bride of Nicolò Aurelio, who almost certainly commissioned the painting in 1514, the year of his marriage. It was traditional for unmarried women,

and for brides during their first year of marriage, to wear their hair down. It is not certain that brides at this period customarily wore white; see Molmenti, *Storia*, II, p. 335.

7. Sanudo, XIII, col. 85 (13 October 1511), notes that on news of the pact of the Holy League, 'tuta la terra fo in feste, le done sopra i balconi e tuto il popoloni in piazza. . . '.
8. Sanudo, XIV, col. 306 (10 June 1512, Corpus Christi): ' . . . Adeo le done, che soleva andar su le finestre di le procuratie e ditto caze atorno la piazza, non vi andoe, nè vedeva nulla. . . '.
9. Venice, Accademia. *S Orsola con le Compagne e la Monaca committente inginocchiata*.
10. Information from Jennifer Fletcher, Courtauld Institute.
11. Bistort, *Il Lusso nella Vita e nelle Leggi*, pp. 121 ff.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
13. Venice, Museo Correr. Called *Due dame veneziane* until 1852, when it was given the name *Due giovani maliarde* and following that *Le cortigiane*. Perocco, *L'Opera completa del Carpaccio*.
14. Vienna, Albertina. Albrecht Dürer. *Venetian Lady*. Pen drawing.
15. Sanudo, V, col. 653. *Terra R.14, c.197*.
16. *Senato, Terra, R. 15, c. 37*. Sanudo, VI, col. 79, where it is quoted in part. See also Bistort, *Il Lusso*, pp. 125, 126.
17. *Senato, Terra, R.15, e. 77*. 'Restino proibiti i cerchi, centi, o crochi alla catalana o spagnuola ed ogni altra sorte di cinture, che non siano convenienti per donne e costino, oltre 15 ducati.'
18. Priuli, *I diarii* (R.I.S., 24, Vol. I, p. iii): ' . . . alcuni animali textuti d'oro dentro et a verdure. . . '.
19. Priuli, *Ibid.* IV, p. 37: 'non porti piu ziponi né camise a la francese. . . '. Sanudo *Diarii IX*, col. 474. 19 January 1510: ' . . . sia bandito li tondini d'oro et le gorzarine e cadene di done durante la presente guerra. . . '.
20. Rome, Galleria Borghese, but see below, p. 60.
21. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum. *Young Venetian Woman*, 1505.
22. Prague, National Gallery. Albrecht Dürer, *Feast of the Rose Garlands*, 1506; *Madonna with the Siskin*.
23. Palma Vecchio, *Sacra Conversazione*. Berenson, *Lorenzo Lotto*, p. 33. See also Mariacher, *Palma il Vecchio*, who lists the various attributions.
24. Sanudo, XII, col. 115: 'A di 15 [April], da matina, fo il marti santo . . . Fo publichà, prima, una proclama far per sier Nicoló Michiel, dotor, cavalier, provedador, sier Thomà Mocenigo, procurator, provedori sora le pompe di le done che non si porto havviti a la visentina, e che tutti ubedissa le parte, soto pena di esser mandata le leze inviolabiliter ad execution. . . '.
25. Sanudo, XIV, col. 61 (Marzo 30 1512), *Ibid.*, cols. 114-17 (17 April 1512). These regulations are specific as regards household furniture.
26. Today a *grembiule* is an apron but there does not seem to be any pictorial evidence that aprons were worn by fashionable women in Venice in the early sixteenth century.

27. Venice, Accademia. A cartouche at the base of the central pedestal bears the inscription 'Op[us] Victoris Carpatio MCCCCLXXXI', when, no doubt, the composition was begun. The painting was evidently put aside and most authorities agree that the painting should be dated not earlier than 1510, which is what the dress shows. See Perocco, *L'Opera completa del Carpaccio*.
28. See below p. 74. The *scuffia* was worn by both sexes; the masculine version was a little smaller than the women's and appears not to have changed its size or shape during the ten to fifteen years when it was most popular.
29. Sanudo XXXIII, col. 558. Col. 559 (Decembris 27 1522): '. . . L'acusator veramente sia tenuto secreto. . .' Ibid.: 'Li sartori o altri che facesseno o lavorasseno ditte veste che sarano acusati pagar debbino ducati 25 e star mesi 6 in preson. . .'
30. Ibid., col. 559: '. . .ne pelize fodrate de lovi, zebelini nè martori, nè cum garzi de le ditte sorte pellami, né de panni d'oro'. *Garza* (today *gauze*) is impossible to identify at this date.
31. Ibid., col. 607. The *prete senese* was probably Cherea, described earlier as a Lucchese, whose comedy had been presented by the Crosechieri, when it had been very well received (ibid., cols. 564 & 581).
32. Sanudo, XXXIV, cols. 159 & 184.
33. Sanudo, XXXVI, col. 265 (Aprile 27 1524) Ibid., cols. 272 & 285.
34. *Corona*, 'crown', a coin.
35. Sanudo, XXXVI, col. 285 (A di primo [Mazo] 1524).
36. Ibid.: '. . . una vestura di sarza'.
37. Venice, Ca' d'Oro. *Ritratto di gentildonna*, inscribed 'MDXXIII'. For examples of the more northern type see, for instance, portraits by Lorenzo Lotto, painted between 1518 and 1528, in what Berenson called his Bergamask period, e.g. the portrait of Lucina Brembate in the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo.
38. See Michael Levey, *Painting in XVIII Century Venice*, p. 8: 'In 1760 he had published *Vecchie pitture a fresco*. . .'
39. She was born in Venice c. 1465. Invited to the court of Isabella of Aragon in 1488, the Venetian Senate opposed her going as they did not wish to deprive the city of so distinguished a lady. See C. Cavazzana, *Cassandra Fedele, Erudita Veneziana del Rinascimento*.
40. Titian, *Noli me Tangere*, London, National Gallery No. 270.
41. See Cecil Gould, *The Sixteenth-Century Venetian School*, pp. 109-11.

Chapter 5: Venetian Official Dress

1. Sanudo, XXXIV, col. 108 (23 April 1523): Copia di una lettera di Roma.
2. Ibid., col. 110: Sumarro di lettere di Roma.
3. Ibid., cols. 197-227 (25 May 1523).
4. Ibid., col. 207: '... vini preciosissimi di molte sorte.'
5. Ibid., col. 208: '... una vesta crespada su le spale e al colar con manege assà large di centà di oro tirado . . .'
6. Ibid., col. 215.
7. Sanudo, XXIX, col. 303 (21 October 1520): '... da poi disnar fo Gran Consejo e tutti li Consieri veneno vestiti di scarlato per tal optima nova.'
8. Sanudo XXVIII, col. 46 (1 November 1519).
9. Sanudo, V, cols. 804, 805, 823 (5 February 1503).
10. Sanudo XIV, cols. 643-51. The letter was reported by Sanudo on 29 August 1512 '... le mie saronno de frixo. . .'
11. '... le mie veste non le potrò usar a Venexia, per esser fatto piu alla inglese che a l'italiana'.
12. Sanudo VIII, col. 490 (*A di 7 [July] Sabato*): 'Da matina per tempo Jo andai a Mestre con alcuni patricij . . .'
13. Ibid., col. 524: '... con mei fradelli andai fino a Padoa zonzi a hore 23. . .'
14. Sanudo, *Città*, pp. 180-1.
15. Sanudo XXXIV, col. 300 (17 July 1523): '... perché in tal di dil 1509 nostri introno in Padoa, e fo proprio il Serenissimo, qual desiderava andar vestito d'oro.'
16. Priuli, *I diarii*, IV, p. 104 (23 June 1509).
17. Ibid., pp. 423-5 (25 October 1509): '... Et li poveri Venetiani . . . so portare in pace et monstrare di non vedere. . .'. Priuli (IV, p. 370) said that nothing since Troy had equalled the siege of Padua.
18. Daru, *Histoire de la République de Venise*.
19. Sanudo, *Diarii*, VIII, col. 248 (19 May 1509): '... il doxe Foscarì vene in colegio et si vesti d'oro, et fece per confortar li altri. . .'
20. Ibid., col. 251 (15 May 1509).
21. Ibid., col. 559 (26 July 1509).
22. Ibid., col. 257.
23. Ibid., col. 313 (27 May 1509): '*zorno di Pasqua di mazo* . . . che indichava gran mesticia. . .'
24. Ibid., cols. 372, 373 (7 June 1509): '... Erano pochi patricij con la Signoria, quasi tutti vestiti di paonazo. . .'
25. Priuli *I diarii*, IV, p. 63: '... li forestieri . . . che scriveranno fuori dela citade, che'l Duce Veneto temeua andare per la piazza de Sancto Marco senza custodia. . .'
26. Sanudo, VIII, cols. 496, 497 (8 July 1509).
27. Ibid., X, cols. 7, 8 (1 March 1510).

28. *Ibid.*, XIII, cols. 130–46 (10 October 1511).
29. *Ibid.*, XIV, col. 259 (30 May 1512): ‘. . . il zorno di Pasqua di mazo, nel qual era stà ordinato una procession per l’intrar in la liga dil serenissimo re de Ingaltera. . .’.
30. *Ibid.*, XIV, col. 327
31. *Ibid.*, XIX, col. 314 (10 December 1514).
32. *Ibid.*, IX, col. 506 (2 February 1509).
33. *Ibid.*, XII, col. 68 (19 March 1511). But see also: Sanudo, X, vol. 614: ‘. . . in Colegio vene sier Marco Orio fo provedador a Faenza, stato prexon dil papa fin hora, vestito di negro con barba.’ Also, XI, col. 5: ‘. . . sier Alvise d’Armer, con barba e paonazo, qual é stato prexon dil papa. . .’.
34. *Ibid.*, IX, col. 53 (14 August 1509).
35. *Ibid.*, X, col. 121 (9 April 1510): ‘. . . haveano barba vestiti perhò a manege a comedo. . .’.
36. Sanudo, *Città*, pp. 22, 23: ‘. . . lievano vesta et barba certo tempo. . .’.
37. Sanudo, XIII, cols. 418, 421 (27 and 29 January 1512).
38. Molmenti, *La Storia*, II, p. 352: ‘Non interamente cessato era l’antico costume che gli uomini si lasciassero cresca la barba in segno di lutto. . .’.
39. Sanudo, XXXIII, col. 444 (11 September 1522): ‘*Item* havia fato taiar la barba a tutti li cardinali, excepto il cardinal Egidio, qual per esser frate heremitano li havia concesso la portasse.’
40. *Ibid.*, XII, col. 101 (2 April 1511).
41. *Ibid.*, XXXVII, col. 389 (1 January 1524): ‘. . . sier Vincenzo Grimani, fo dil Serenissimo, vestito di beretin. . .’.
42. *Ibid.*, col. 649 (24 February 1524).
43. *Ibid.*, XXXVIII, col. 260 (4 May 1525): ‘Le monache et frati si maridano insieme.’
44. *Ibid.*, XXXIX, col. 24.
45. *Ibid.*, col. 215 (17 July 1525).

Chapter 6: Venetian Entertainments and Festivals

1. Records show that similar Companies had existed in most Italian cities. Petrarch, *Lettere senili*, writes of ‘24 nobili garzoni belli tutti della persona e magnificamente vestiti’ (1869), p. 205. Florence had, among others, her *Compagnia della Gazza* and *Compagnia del Falcone*; see Marpurgo in *Misc. Fior. di Erudiz. e Storia Gen.*, pp. 92 ff.
2. Cod. Cicogna 3287, 17, lists: ‘tre soggetti Forestieri di condigione ellevato, Guido Ubaldo Duca di Urbino, Roberto Sanseverino, Conte di Galazzo & Vettore Gonello’ from *Memoria in Ca’ Duodo*.
3. The *Fedele* was a Company founded in 1459 and composed of ten *cittadini*; five *cittadini* were admitted as members of the *Concordi* in 1489. See Tassini, *Feste spettacoli* (1961), p. 50, notes 3, 5.

4. See, for instance, Grevembroch, *Gli Abiti* . . . T. I, pl. 45: 'il ricco Luigi Balanzani avea in sua cases tutti li Ritratti di quelli / cittadini / ch'erano aggregati alla sua.'
5. Sanudo XXXVI, col. 457, 458 (July 1524) includes a list of twenty-two members of the *compagni zoveni chiamati Valorosi*.
6. See above, p. 38.
7. Zanetti, *Varie Pitture a fresco de' principali Maestri Veneziani*, p. 6.
8. Vecellio, *Degli Habiti Antichi e Moderni*, p. 50.
9. Venturi, *Nuov. Arch. Ven.* X (1909), ii, p. 167, considers that Molmenti and others placed too much confidence in Carpaccio's accuracy in reproducing the livery and badges of the *Calze*.
10. The heavy mantle shown by both Carpaccio and Grevembroch was not a part of the Venetian current fashion.
11. Sanudo XXXV, col. 390.
12. Fol 473 vo. of the *Grandes Chroniques de France*, for instance, shows a mock invasion being fought in front of diners, including the king.
13. Sanudo XXXV, col. 393: ' . . . cantaveno villote, et caduan havea cosse rusticale varie in man, come zape, badili etc. . . '.
14. *Ibid.*, cols. 393, 394.
15. Sanudo XVI, cols. 206-8 (1513): 'Poi Zuan Polo disse alcune piasevoleze. . . '.
16. Sanudo, XVII, col. 543 (9 February 1513).
17. Sanudo, XIX, cols. 418-44 (February 1514): 'Zuan Polo . . . fense poi farsi Dio d'amor, e fo portà a l'inferno, trovo Domenego Taiacalze cazava castroni. . . '. In quoting this passage Venturi, *Nuov. Arch. Ven.* T. X (1909), p. 221, adds the word *capri* in brackets after *castroni*. In *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, Edward Muir includes what seems to me a very strange translation of this passage, p. 173.
18. Sanudo, XXIII, col. 604 (25 February 1516): ' . . . vestiti come homeni salvadegi. . . '.
19. Sanudo, XXXVI, col. 256 (25 April 1524).
20. Sanudo, XXXVII, cols. 559-60 (9 February 1524): ' . . . parole molto sporche. . . '.
21. *Ibid.*, col. 572 (13 February): ' . . . fo bellissime e honesta. . . '.
22. Ruzante, *Teatro*, ed. Zorzi: ' . . . e poi io ero con i brisighellesi di Urbino, e parlavano in questo modo. . . '. There is no consensus as to whether Beolco's 'stage name' should be 'Ruzzante' or 'Ruzante'; Zorzi, in his definitive work, chooses the latter.
23. Venice was said to be crowded with refugees from the mainland during the wars of the League of Cambrai.
24. *Falda*, see Boerio, but so far it has been impossible to identify this probably padded military garment, said by some to belong in the sixteenth century.
25. Sanudo, XXVIII, cols. 253-6 (13 February 1519), lists the members of the *Immortali*. This was an occasion when three new members were admitted to

- the Company, most of whom went on to hold important posts: e.g. Andrea Lion became *Podestà* of Vicenza and later Procuratore di San Marco. See also *Nozze Giovanelli-Chigi*.
26. Dalla Santa, *Commerci*, pp. 1573-4.
 27. Sanudo, XII, col. 16 (3 March 1511): '... le compagni eterni si vestiteno tutti a manege dogal di seda e becheti di seda e d'oro, e barete di seda. . . '.
 28. Sanudo, VII, col. 161 (14 August 1507): '... durò fin hore 4 di note. Fo bellissima mumaria di Jason, quando l'ando a tuoi il *vellus aureum*.'
 29. Sanudo, XXXVI, cols. 117-21 (28 March 1524).
 30. Tassini, *Feste spettacoli* (1961), p. 23. In return for the release of prisoners, the Patriarch promised to hand over, annually, 12 loaves, 1 bull and 12 pigs. Traditionally the bull represented the Patriarch and the pigs his twelve Canons.
 31. Sanudo, *Città*, pp. 183 and 59.
 32. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-1.
 33. Sanudo, XVIII, col. 271 (15 June 1514). In that year the feasts of San Vido and Corpus Christi fell on the same day.
 34. Sanudo, XII, cols. 243, 244: 'Fu fato processione per piazza senza anzoli ni soleri et pochissimi arzenti . . . li consieri vestiti 5 . . . di seda, tutto il resto di scarlato.'
 35. Sanudo, XX, cols. 274, 275 (7 June 1515).
 36. Sanudo, XIII, cols. 79, 80 (12 October 1511).
 37. *Ibid.*, cols. 127-48 (20 October 1511). This is one of Sanudo's most lavish descriptions. The tapestries were provided by 'uno maestro Stephano strazaruol tien botega sopra la dita piazza. . . '.
 38. The *Scuola* of S. Giovanni Evangelista.
 39. Sanudo, XIII, col. 139: '... San Marco Evangelista tuo tutore. . . '.
 40. *Ibid.*: '... et uno bazil da barbier con il colar d'arzeno schieto, fo di re Carlo di Franza. . . '.
 41. Sanudo, XXXVII, col. 445.
 42. *Ibid.*, col. 456.
 43. Popular all over Europe, the fashion for wearing a single stuffed sable ornamented with gold and jewels and suspended on a chain round the waist seems to have appeared first at the end of the fifteenth century. Toys, rather than items of clothing, they were referred to as 'piccoli zebellini da tenere in mano', Tassini, *Feste spettacoli*, p. 386. See also Molmenti, *La Storia di Venezia*, II, p. 283.
 44. Sanudo, XXXVII, cols. 474-6: '... E nota. In queste erano 6 popular fate invidiar a posta per il Serenissimo, e una forestiera.' Among the *Ortolani* was sier Bernardo Capello, who had bought the wedding-ring.
 45. Sanudo, XX, col. 234 (28 May 1515): '... fo fato bello aparato e ben vestido e fo compida il zorno sequente.'
 46. Sanudo, XIX, col. 434.
 47. D'Ancona, *Origini del Teatro*, I, p. 344: '... Sinodo di Marco Laudo circa il 1420 nel quale si prescrive che non si facciano Rappresentazioni in chiesa,

- perchè non si abbiano a far cangiamenti di abiti *cum barbibus aut capillaribus*, che sono le parucche.'
48. *Mémoires*, p. 131.
 49. Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, pp. 190, 191.
 50. *Lettere storiche di Luigi da Porto vicentino dall' anno 1509 al 1528*, pp. 38, 40.
 51. *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 35.
 52. *Feste spettacoli*, vii, pp. 48-52.
 53. Zuccollo, *La Pazzia de Ballo*, cap. xi, p. 38.
 54. Sanudo, XXVI, col. 54 (September 1518).
 55. *Senato, Terra* 18, MDXII, Die viij Maij. A.S.V.

Chapter 7: The Tailors of Venice

1. On the second altar in the right aisle there is a statue of Sta. Barbara by the eighteenth-century sculptor G. M. Morleiter.
2. Tassini, *Curiosità veneziane*, p. 580. 'L'arte dei Sartori fu eretta in corpo nel 1391, e secondo Flaminio Corner ottiene fino dal 1485 il dominio sopra il corpo di S. Barbara.'
3. Venice, Bib. Marciana, Misc. D. 1880. *Historia della Translatione del glorioso corpo della Beata Vergine e martire santa Barbara di Nicomedia portato a Venetia Da Costantinopoli dal Nobil' homo sier Raffael Baseggio l'anno 1258 & riposto nella chiesa di Santa Maria de Padri Crociferi scritta da Matheo Palmieri, Fiorentino Historico famoso de suoi tempi*. In Padova . . . 1642.
4. E. A. Cicogna, *Delle Iscrizioni Veneziane*, V, p. 191.
5. Beatrice of Aragon married Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary, and, on his death in 1490, was secretly married to his successor, Ladislaus Jagiello. Later repudiated by him she returned to Ferrara on her way to Naples in 1501. See *Diario Ferrarese*, p. 303.
6. Professor Julian Gardner has kindly drawn my attention to the Tailors' window in the cathedral in Freiburg.
7. Mario Battistini, *La Confrèrie de Sainte Barbe des Flamands à Florence*, pp. 27, 28.
8. *Butler's Lives of the Saints* (1956), IV, p. 487, states that St Barbara was the patroness of architects, builders and stone-masons, as well as gunners. Louis Pottier in the *Revue historique et archéologique du Maine* (1901), T.49, p. 240, says that she was also a patroness of goldsmiths, shepherds, beggars, the blind and the deaf.
9. Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*.
10. *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, pp. 760-3.
11. See *Butler's Lives*, p. 334, under St Homobonus.
12. Molmenti, *La Storia di Venezia nella Vita privata*, II, p. 308, reproduces the device of a large pair of tailor's shears carved 'sullo stipite di una finestra

- della scuola dei sartori, attigua al soppresso convento dei crociferi. . .'. If they are still there, I have not been able to find them.
13. See Tassini, *Curiosità veneziane*, p. 580.
 14. Blue, produced by a cheap and non-permanent dye, was a colour often adopted for their clothing by religious Orders and used, in many places, for the dress of the clergy. The painting is now in the Accademia, Venice.
 15. Paris, Louvre.
 16. J. Byam Shaw, *Disegni veneti della collezione Lugt*. Catalogo della Mostra, Venice, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, 1981, 'seconda meta sec. XV', pl. 22.
 17. Venice, Bib. Marciana, Ms. It. vii., cod. xxiv (Cat. Farsetti 8379).
 18. Giovanni Monticolo (ed.), *I Capitolari delle Arti veneziane . . . dalle origini al MCCCXXX*, Vol. I, p. 18: '. . . omnes sartoresas, sive omnes mulieres que incidunt et laborant pannos novas, sicut alios sartores. . .'.
 19. Grevembroch, *Gli abiti*, IV, p. 102.
 20. Monticolo, p. 33, xii, *Capitularo de zupariis*.
 21. The term *doublettum* was rarely used in Italy. At this period the doublet was more or less identical to the *zupon* or *giubbone*. Both were used to indicate a waist-length, lined garment, with or without sleeves, which could include interlayers of padding.
 22. Venice, A.S.V. *Arte dei Sartori*. Busta 1-501, fol. 1. 1492, die II novembris. The question as to whether the *taie calze* should belong to the same guild as the tailors is discussed. It is noticeable here that whereas *sartori* are always given a capital 'S', the *taie calze* always begin with a lower case 't'.
 23. *Ibid.*, fol. 3v. 'MDXX die 13 Septembris . . . zupperelli ano obligat di far la prova de zupponi cola manege et pellino . . . taie-calze siano tenari . . . di far la prova de calze. . .'.
 24. *Ibid.*, fol. 17, 'MDXIJ . . . Mj P. Homobon . . . nostri confalloni. . .'.
 25. Sanudo, II, col. 182 (Decembris, 1498): '. . . a modo dil bon sarto che misura assa' fiate prima che taglii. . .'.
 26. London, National Gallery No. 697. *Il Sarto (Il Mercante di Panni?)*.
 27. See Mina Gregori, *Giovan Battista Moroni*, pp. 270-2. Ellis Waterhouse believed that the sitter was probably a merchant because he is too well dressed for a tailor.
 28. See note 12 above.
 29. Molmenti, *La Storia*, II, p. 290, where he reproduces Franco's engraving. Franco's *Habiti* is rare and to be found in few European libraries.
 30. *All's Well that Ends Well*, II. v.
 31. *Cymbeline*, II. iii.
 32. Grevembroch, *Gli Abiti*, IV, p. 102.
 33. Sanudo, XII, col. 145 (30 April 1511).
 34. Venice, Bib. Marciana, Misc. D. 1880, *Historia della translatione del Glorioso Corpo della Beata Vergine e Martire Santa Barbara di Nicomedia portato a Venetia*.
 35. *Ibid.*, Misc. 133.5, *Croniche de trasporti con la vita e Miracoli di S. Barbara di Nicomedia Vergine e Martire Raccolte dalla Molto Reverenda Madre Suor*

Cornelia Pesaro Abbadessa de monastero di S. Gio. Evangelista di Torcello. This, according to Luigi Lanfranchi, is the 2nd edition; the first appears to have been published in 1630 and the third in 1658.

36. *Ibid.*, col. 1335 (Fonti per la Storia di Venezia, ser. II. Archiv. Eccles. Diocesi Torcelliana): 'S. Giovanni Ev. di torcello a cura di Luigi Lanfranchi, p. VIII . . . I Resti furono trasportati, insieme a quelli di S. Sissinio vescovo, in S. Martino di Burano nel 1811, 10 marzo ove tuttora conservansi. . . '.
37. *Ibid.*, Misc. D. 1880, p. 23.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 17: ' . . . La Cronica manuscritti di Marin Sanudo Patricio veneto, si vede in penna a carte 42 . . . dicendo per conclusione che veramente la Vergine e Martire di Nicomedia, sia ne Crociferi, e quella di Torcello altra santa sia.'

Chapter 8: Venice and the Dress of Foreigners

1. See *Diario Ferrarese*, R.I.S. XXIV, 7, p. 144 (A. 1495): ' . . . In questo tempo in Ferrara, per Cortesani *maxime*, se usavano . . . berrette e scarpe a la Francexe. . . ', p. 171 (A. 1499): ' . . . Ferrarexi quasi tuti *universaliter* tengono e sono partesani del Re di Franza, e molti ne vano vestiti e calzati et imbiretati a la Francese. . . ', p. 239 (A. 1499): 'El vestire de la Corte et calzare a la Franxese. . . '. There are many other such examples.
2. Sanudo, I, col. 929 (7 April 1498): '[Antonello di Sanseverno] questo principe era vestio di negro a la francese con una scuffia in testa, et il capello francese sopra, e tutti li soivestito a la francese.'
3. Sanudo, II, col. 320 (21 January 1498): ' . . . duca Valentino . . . havea sua Signoria in dosso uno vestito a la francese da cavalchar. . . '. Sanudo, IV, col. 299 (August 1502): ' . . . in questo mezo el ducha Valentino stravestito a la todesca. . . '.
4. Sanudo, III, col. 91 (26 January 1499).
5. 'Myllaine bonetes of erimosyn saltin straven through with cloth of gold', Hall's Chronicle, 1542.
6. Sanudo, III, col. 61 (1 December 1499).
7. Col. 244 (20 April 1500): ' . . . era greco di li Paleologi. . . '.
8. Sanudo, III, col. 566 (13 August 1500): ' . . . qual val pochi soldi. . . '.
9. Sanudo, IV, col. 149 (10 October 1501).
10. *Ibid.*, col. 152: ' . . . qual havia in la barba 4 perle infilate in li pelli. . . '.
11. *Ibid.*, col. 217 (3 February 1501): ' . . . con uno *sirello*. . . '.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Freydal Codex, Vienna. A facsimile with black-and-white illustrations was published in 1880-2.
14. Sanudo, IV, col. 571 (28 December 1502): ' . . . Magnifico orator seti vestiti a la francese? . . . Lui rispose: Li voglio tanto bien che non tengo *nada* dentro. . . '.

15. Sanudo, I, cols. 615, 618 (4 May 1497).
16. Sanudo, V, cols. 804, 805 (5 February 1503).
17. Sanudo, VII, col. 717 (15 January 1508).
18. Sanudo, VIII, col. 19 (14 March 1509).
19. Ibid., cols. 366, 387 (3-7 June 1509): '... *Di Padoa*. . .' Dressano is better known to historians as *Trissino*.
20. Ibid., col. 408 (16 June 1509).
21. Ibid., col. 424 (21 June 1509): '... vestito da zudio e con la bareta zalla.' In January 1510 a Jewish doctor had official permission to wear a black *bareta* but this permission was withdrawn in March 1517.
22. Sanudo, X, col. 249 (1 May 1510).
23. Sanudo, XII, col. 115 (15 April 1511): '... non si porti habiti a la visentina, e che tutti ubedess a le parte, soto pena di esser mandada la leze *inviolabiliter* ad execution. . . '.
24. Sanudo, XIII, col. 187 (1 November 1511): '... venuto eri sera di Alemagna. . . '.
25. Ibid., col. 327.
26. Sanudo, XIII, col. 459 (10 February 1511): '... Però, bechi fotuti Milanesi, / Aparechiate tutti veste nera / Che vostre mogli andrar pur con Francesi. . . '.
27. Sanudo, XIV, cols. 44-8 (23 March, 1512).
28. Ibid., cols. 53, 61, 109, 115-17 (April 1512).
29. Venice, Accademia. The identity of this child is uncertain.
30. Leicester Museum. *The Life and Joys of Mary and The Seven Sacraments*. Sacrament VI, *Matrimony*. The so-called Benefactor in this series probably wears the gown and cap of some office, while the man in the furry hat is certainly dressed fashionably. See also, for these hats, *Henry Thredwell's Interlude of 1515 and The Boke of Hawkyng of 1496*.
31. The receipt, dated 1511, recording Titian's fee for painting three murals in the *Scuola*, has survived.
32. St Anthony of Padua died in AD 1231.
33. Assisi, San Francesco, Upper Church. Giotto, *Il Presepe di Greccio* and *La Morte del Cavaliere di Celano*. Ethnic fashions of this kind often travelled, exceedingly slowly, to distant areas.
34. See, for instance, Sartori, *Archivio Sartori*, I.
35. Sanudo, IV, col. 217 (3 February 1500). Crimson and white are the colours in which Maximilian and his attendants are most frequently represented in the *Freydal*.
36. Sanudo, XXVII, col. 45 (13 March 1519): '... Vene in Colegio l'orator dil re di Tunis vestito a la barbaresca. . . '.
37. Sanudo, XXXI, col. 460 (29 September 1521). The king of France's clothes are described in the greatest detail; each single item caused surprise.
38. Sanudo, XXV, col. 437 (13 June 1518): '... et altri mantoani e done. . . vestite al modo mantoan. . . '.

39. Sanudo, XXXII, col. 452 (13 February 1521).
40. Sanudo, XXXVII, col. 103 (26 October 1524): '... la sua spada longa con la vazina d'arzeno dorada, bella e di gran fattura. . . '.
41. Sanudo, XX, col. 530 (13 August 1515). This was of course Lorenzo II.
42. Sanudo, XXXV, col. 373 (26 January 1523).
43. Sanudo, XXXVI, col. 572 (27 August 1524): '... ma li soi habiti disformi da li nostri . . . che le fanno brute. . . '.
44. See above, Chapter 6, p. 106.
45. *La Talanta* (1542). *Teat. ital. ant.* T.8, p. 155: '... Anche io, quando sono in Vinegia, rido de' forestieri, quando ne lo smontar di gondola escono per la poppa.'

Chapter 9: Conclusion

1. Venice, Accademia. Benedetto Diana, *Miracolo della reliquia delle Santa Croce*.
2. Venice, Accademia. Vittore Carpaccio, *Arrivo degli ambasciatori inglesi alla corte del re di Bretagna*.
3. Venice, Accademia. Giorgione, *La Vecchia*.
4. Bergamo, Accademia Carrara. Vittore Carpaccio, *La Nativita della Vergine*, for example. Although this may not be a Venetian interior, the dress of the seated woman suggests that it is.
5. Venice, Accademia. Giambattista Cima da Conegliano, *Madonna dell' arancia*.
6. Sanudo, XXXI, col. 97 (25 July 1521): 'Fo san Jacomo . . . e questo si far una volta solamente poi creato il Doxe in tal zorno . . . Et il Doxe ne mandoe a li Consieri e Cai di XL, Savii e Procuratori e altri secretari e soi parenti. . . '.
7. Giovanni Grevembroch, *Gli abiti de veneziani*, vol. III, p. 23, illustrates the carrying of the melons by the *Fruttaroli* in the mid-eighteenth century.
8. Sanudo, XXXVI, col. 477 (18 July 1524): '... apresso di lui zentilhomini . . . et popolari so' parenti in scarlato a manega a comedo.' The office of 'Cancellier Grando é uno dignissimo officio de cittadini benemeriti . . . ' Sanudo, *Città*, p. 145.
9. *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, 1898, ser. 3, vol. 9. Ettore Verga, *Le Leggi suntuaria Milanese*, p. 17: 'Nulla persona cuiuscumque status etc, excepti militibus et avocatis collegii Mediolani tantum, debeat, audeat nec presumat portare drapos BREVIATOS de vairo nec armellino . . . ' ; p. 18: 'Nulla . . . exceptis militibus et advocatis et uxores militum et advocatrum vestire possit aliqua veste BROSTI, veluti, purpure nec alterius drapi aureati seu argentati. . . '.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 54: 'Brescia nel 1503 proibiva gli ornamente sulle calze.' p. 65 '... Mulieres non possint portare Faldias . . . [Treviso] . . . sberne e

- investidure cum cerchi e ogni altra foza forestiera . . . [forbidden] . . .'
 There has been some discussion as to the meaning of the term *Faldia*, which certainly refers to the new fashion for wearing wide skirts – the forerunners of farthingales.
11. Giambattista Galliccioli, *Delle memorie venete antiche*, I, p. 341.
 12. Napoleon's invasion of 1796 led to the end of Venice as an independent State.
 13. Galliccioli, p. 335.
 14. See *Arte Veneta* A. XXX (1976): Stella Mary Newton, 'The dating of a painting by Bartolommeo Veneto'.
 15. For reproductions of photographs of Mr Begin at this period see, for instance, the *Guardian*, 25 November 1982.
 16. Sanudo, I, col. 491 (17 January 1496). In Milan too, after the death of his wife, Beatrice d'Este, the duke wore a beard for a considerable time.
 17. *Diario fiorentino*, p. 371: ' . . . cominciassi a portare la barba, che prima non si trovava persona che portassi barba ecetto che due. . . '.
 18. Oliver Logan, *Culture and Society in Venice 1470–1790. The Renaissance and its Heritage*, p. 94.
 19. *La Civiltà Veneziana del Rinascimento*. W. Theodor Elwert, *Pietro Bembo e la vita Letteraria*, p. 130.
 20. Not only was the *Cortegiano* constantly reprinted in Venice but it was also published repeatedly elsewhere in Italy as well as, in translations, in many other European countries during the sixteenth century.
 21. Edition 1550, with dedication: 'Al Reverendo et Ill. S. D. Michel de Selva vescovo di Visco'. P. 5: ' . . . Non ho anchor voluto obligarmi alla consuetudine del parlar Thoscano d'hoggidi, perche il commercio tra diverse nationi ha sempre hauto forza a di trasportare dall'una all' altra, quasi come le mercantie, cosi anchor nuovi vocabuli. . . '.
 22. Lib. II, cap. XXV: ' . . . vero é ch'io per me amerie che non fusero estremi in alcuna parte, come talor sol essere il franzese in troppo grandezza, e'l tedesco in troppo piccolezza, ma come sono e l'uno e l'altro corretti e ridutti in miglior forma dagl' Italiani.'
 23. *La Strega* by Antonio Francesco Grazzini, known as Il Lasca, 1566.
 24. *Much Ado About Nothing*, III. ii.
 25. *La Civiltà Veneziana del Quattrocento*. Nino Valeri, *Venezia nelle italiana del Rinascimento*, p. 40: 'Di tutti le città d'Italia solo Venezia non conosce dissidi civili', affermava Filippo de Communes.'

Appendix A

Monarchs and Rulers, 1495–1525

Popes

- 1492 Alexander VI
- 1503 Pius III
- 1503 Julius II
- 1513 Leo X
- 1522 Adrian VI
- 1523 Clement VII

Doges of Venice

- 1486 Agostin Barbarigo (Agostino Barbarigo)
- 1501 Lunardo Loredan (Leonardo Loredano)
- 1521 Antonio Grimani
- 1523 Andrea Gritti

Emperors of Germany

- 1493 Maximilian I
- 1519 Charles V

Kings of France

- 1483 Charles VIII
- 1498 Louis XII
- 1515 Francis I

Kings of England

- 1485 Henry VII
- 1510 Henry VIII

Kings of Hungary

- 1458 Matthias Corvinus
- 1490 Ladislaus Jagiello (Wladislaw Jagellon)
- 1516 Lewis

Kings of Spain (Castile and Aragon)

- 1479 Ferdinand of Castile, m Isabella of Aragon
- 1516 Charles I, later Emperor Charles V

Kings of the Two Sicilies

- 1458 Alfonso II
- 1458 Ferdinand I
- 1496 Frederick
- 1501 deposed.

Appendix B

Venice and the Textile Industry

I. Cloth of gold and silk fabric

Although, today, it seems that it is not possible to identify a silk textile that was actually made in Venice during the period covered by this study, this, in itself, may prove the excellence of the cloths of gold, silver and silk woven in Venice at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

In the late fifteenth century, silk weaving in Venice appears to have reached such a high standard that her damasks could be mistaken for those woven in Damascus herself.

Bistort, *Il Lusso nella Vita e nelle Leggi*, p. 116, note 3, quotes *status des tisserands de Tours confirmés par Louis XI, à Tours, 1 mai 1481* that no master nor workman can be employed unless he is proved to be as good or better than those of Venice, Damascus and other centres, 'qu'on a acoustumie ouvrier au temps passé . . . '.

In *La Città di Venetia*, p. 58, Sanudo gives the prices of a few textiles almost certainly made in Venice, and the duty charged on them:

Veludo cremexin braza . . . val ducati 90, et ha ducati 15.

Damaschin cremexin braza . . . val ducati 45, ha ducati diese.

Scarlatto brazza 26 ducati . . . ha ducati diese.

Paonazzo morello braza // ducati sedese, ha ducati diese, (sic).

In his *Diarii*, vol. V, col. 588, Sanudo reported that on 11 December 1503, certain textiles were sent as a wedding present by the *Signoria* to the queen of Hungary:

Razo d'oro rizado, braza 14

Veludo alto e basso verde, braza 14

Veludo alto e basso alexandrine, braza 14

Veludo negro in do pelli, braza 28

Raso negro, braza 26

Telle di renz, pezze 4.

But while Venice exported fine silks to other countries, she also imported or at least shipped silk fabrics from abroad. Restrictions on these were severe. In 1490, the Senate decreed that no *zentilhomio*, *citadin* or *habitante* of Venice or her dominions on the mainland was to wear or to use in any way any cloth of gold, silver or silk which had not been manufactured in *questa città* (*Senato, Terra, R* 11, c. 51).

In 1505 silks made in Vicenza and her countryside were, it was reported, being bought by the Genoese without payment of duty whereas silks from Syria were subject to duty (Priuli, *I diarii*, I, p. 376). In the same year the city fathers of Venice were much distressed by the importation, especially, of cloth and silk stuffs while there was, at the same time, great poverty among local people who

worked in the textile industry (Priuli, *I diarii*, I, p. 384). In 1520 it was noted, in reference to a cargo of wool arriving from Tunis, that no silks or cloth of gold were to be imported, under penalty (Sanudo, XXIX, cols. 186, 187).

In her anxiety to protect her own textile industry Venice was always unwilling to allow merchants from other Italian cities carrying silks to cross her territories in pursuance of their business, but in August 1525, Pope Clement VII, himself a Medici and therefore alive to Florentine interests, ordered the Venetians to allow *li pani d'oro et de seda de marcadenti fiorentini* to be transported in transit across her territories (*Senato, Terra*, 24, c. 26).

For a brief survey of both trade in and the manufacture of cloths of gold, silver and silk in Venice see Bistort, *Il Lusso*, 4, *Il Vestitiario*, pp. 113-19. This author's chief secondary sources are, L. de Mas Latrie, *Histoire de l'île de Chypre*; G. Heyd, *Histoire du Commerce du Levant au Moyen Age*; G. Zanetti, *Della origine di alcune arti principali appresso i Veneziani* and J. Savary, *Dictionnaire universel de Commerce*. All these remain useful today.

II. *The cloth trade*

A very revealing entry in Priuli's *Diario* for 13 March 1501 records the importation of wool from *gotisvalde et de Ingeltera, tamen chiamate francesse, che se facevanno li pani per vestire la nobilitate Venete*. 'Gotisvalde' was presumably Venetian for 'Cotswold'. It is significant that the term 'French' was used to cover woollens from England. Priuli is here concerned not so much with the countries of origin as with the fact that because of war with Turkey, wool was to be permitted to be carried either by sea or overland and by either local merchants or by foreigners. He goes on to emphasise the fact that Venetian weavers were undergoing a period of great poverty owing to the shortage of wool (I, p. 111).

In 1505 (5 August) the city fathers were moved by the fact that imports, above all of *pani di lanna et pani di seda*, were affecting the *povero gente che hera sustinimento de la povertá* (Priuli, *I diarii*, I, p. 384). But a year later there is satisfaction that the aforesaid merchandise, *maxime pani*, was selling well; Venetian cloth, that is to say Venetian scarlet, was fetching 3½ ducats the *picho*, and the Paduan cloth 2½ the *picho* (*picho/picchio*, probably *batúa/batúfolō*, meaning a bundle (ref. Boerio).

Since the Venetian *toga*, black or red, was for usual wear made of woollen cloth, wool was of great importance to the Republic and not only raw wool but some cloth was certainly usually imported from Flanders and elsewhere. On 1 July 1509, three large ships returned from Flanders laden with wool, tin and cloth - *che fu bona nova ala citade Veneta* in these times. These ships, without touching Spanish shores, came from *Amptona d'Engeltera* (Southampton), by way of Otranto in Apulia (Priuli, *I diarii*, I, p. 115). Venice's constant demand for woollen cloth meant that there was inevitably a temptation to import cloth made not in the Netherlands or England but in comparatively nearby Florence. The possibility was put to the *Collegio* and the *Savii* on 21 April 1515 by the *Provedadori sopra la mercadantia*, but the *Collegio* refused to agree to the request (Sanudo, XX, col. 134). However, in March it was agreed that in the coming September a free fair would be held in *questa terra*, to which the Florentines would be permitted to bring their cloth (Sanudo, XX, col. 185).

Once more, on 4 June 1517, many drapers complained in *Collegio* that there was no wool; in the afternoon the *Collegio* investigated the situation and found that no cargoes had arrived from either Flanders or Beirut (Sanudo, XXIV, cols. 325-7). However, by December 1517, 1200 pieces of *zambeloti* and other woollens were arriving from Cyprus (Sanudo, XXV, col. 149).

Again, on 7 May 1524, the question of foreign cloth, especially from the region of Padua, was raised before the *Savii* and it was finally agreed that the only *panni forestieri* to be allowed should be white, *beretin* and grey, at about 16 soldi the *brazza* (Sanudo, XXXVI, col. 311). The only woollen fabric to be identified, other than by the general term *panno*, is *zambeloto*, which must clearly have been the equivalent of the English camlet, itself imported from the East and probably made from, or including, camel-hair. There are references to *zambeloto cyprioto*, as, for instance, on 10 May 1517 (Sanudo, XXIV, col. 222). No objections seem to have been raised over the importation of textiles from Cyprus, which was, in fact, a Venetian colony.

III. Other textiles in Venice

As in other parts of Europe, the fine linen made in northern France was greatly prized and was generally referred to in Venice as *tella de renz* (Rheims); it was listed with the silk fabrics. *Renz*, or *raines*, had probably become a general term for the finest linens from the north of Europe.

As would be expected, references to cotton at this date are rare but a few do exist. On 28 June 1506, Priuli (*I diarii*, I, p. 424) noted the arrival of ships from Syria *cum sachi 700 gottoni* of Cyprus and *sachi 160* of Syria. On 15 June 1525 a letter from 'India' includes the information that the country is healthy; there are fruits, palms, hens and pigs and many cotton cloths - *panni de goton* (Sanudo, XXXIX, col. 59). The letter was addressed to the emperor from the town of Panama, so that although the index to this volume includes this entry under *India orientale*, the reference must, surely, be to the New World. The letter also states that the cotton was sold through the Castile market. On 21 August of the same year a cargo from Tripoli, passing through Cyprus, includes salt and *gotoni* (Sanudo, XXXIX, col. 332).

In discussing textiles in Venice it is worth noting that in 1488 permission was given to the silk weavers to set up a *Scolam seu Confraternitate*, to be established, like that of the dyers, near the Rialto at S. Giovanni Crisostomo. It was stated, on 16 July, that there was to be no mixing of any other thread with silk and that the *Scuola* was to be confined to silk weavers (*Consiglio di X.*, A.S.V. Misto Registro 24, 3v). On 22 December permission was given for *Velutorēys et Samitareys*, which are two mysteries (crafts) to become one with *unū guberēnū et una scola* (Ibid., 44a). This very interesting piece of information must help to throw light on the confusion between the English and the German terminologies regarding the terms 'velvet' and 'samite'.

In Venice, slaves were not permitted to make velvet and samite; see Robert Smith, *Italian Studies XXXIV* (1979), p. 53.

Appendix C

Pavonazzo

Although there are conflicting opinions as to what actual shade was intended in the use of the word *pavonazzo/paonazzo*, it seems clear that it was used fairly loosely.

In 1504 gifts to the *Signoria* from the sultan of Turkey included stuffs made in Brusa, among them a *brocatello d'oro et paonazo con fojani turchini* (a leaf design, presumably), and four pieces of *zambeloto*, two of them *paonazo*, one of them darker – *piu scuro* – than the other.

Paonazzo morello is included in the list of prices for textiles quoted by Sanudo, see Appendix B, p. 175 above. This again suggests that the colour could exist in different depths of shade. In its darker tone it would be difficult to record in paintings but it seems probable that a portrait of a bearded man by Titian (Figure 36), sometimes regarded as of Francesco Savorgnan della Torre, shows the sitter wearing *pavonazzo* velvet. There is some evidence that *pavonazzo* velvet with a crimson *becho* was the usual wear of a *procuratore*.

The dyers of Venice were united in 1436 and their *Scuola* met in the church of San Giovanni Crisostomo, near the Rialto. Their patron was S. Onofrio. Regulations governing the dyeing of textiles were severe, particularly those which applied to *grana* and *cremesino* (*kermes*), by no means regarded as the same dye. Detailed instructions as to the dyeing of *paonazzo* were issued in 1569; they can be found in the A. S. V. Misc. B. 2434, and are quoted in *Nozze Olga Cini/Giuseppe de Mori*, 1884, by Attilio Leandro and Nico Rubelli. In this act it is claimed that Venice was the only place in the world to be permitted to use the dye *grano*. An Act of 1360 stated that all stuffs dyed in Venice must carry the leaden seal *de san Marcho* (the emblem of a lion) (*Ibid.*). Sanudo, conscientious as usual, noted that 11 June 1521 was the feast of Santo Honofrio, and that the festival was celebrated at San Zuan Crisostomo where there is *uno altar e la scuola di tentori* (XXX, col. 350).