

CRETE IN VENICE_
THE PRESENCE OF THE GREAT ISLAND IN VENETIAN
ARCHITECTURE, VISUAL ARTS, MUSIC, AND LITERATURE¹

CATERINA CARPINATO

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Commenta [1]:

Abstract

During the period of Venetian rule in Crete (1211–1669) many aspects of Venice’s political and cultural life were affected by this Cretan connection. Nowadays, in Venice, it is still possible to see the contacts between the two territories on open display. But although Venetian monuments in Crete are still highly visible and have been widely studied, the importance of Crete (and of modern Greek culture in general) for Venice is not yet well known and appreciated either in Venice or in Italy in general. This paper is intended as a brief guide to “Crete in Venice”. But it is not simply a tourist itinerary; through the bas-reliefs at the base of St Mark’s clock-tower, where Crete is shown allegorically next to Cyprus, through the famous icon in the church of Santa Maria della Salute, through the Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi, and also through the testimony of music, art and architecture, the paper brings into focus the close historical links with Crete

¹ Dedicated to David Holton, this paper has been written like a virtual trip around Venice. Sincere thanks to Alfred Vincent for his suggestions on matters of both language and content.

that can be witnessed in Venice to this day.

Whenever we take a walk through the streets and squares of Venice we are surrounded by traces of Greece and above all of Crete. We continually come across places that bear witness to a long history of Veneto-Cretan relations. Equally, if we take to the water, along the Grand Canal and the smaller waterways, we will find ourselves in the midst of the shared history of Venice and Crete. In this city where the possession of Crete contributed significantly towards the creation of the wealth which made possible to create such beauty, where every palace, every historical family, where almost every street corner preserves a trace of cultural interaction, you might expect that the Cretan dimension would be recognised, appreciated, valued... Yet in the present state of cultural homogenisation it is not easy to identify the traces of Crete. The signs of this cultural relationship are not always immediately decipherable. They are absorbed and assimilated into the urban environment.

Yet, just as our DNA determines our genetic heritage without ever being directly perceptible, so too Crete's presence in Venice is real, even though not immediately obvious. We have to search for it. But once we start searching, we find Crete everywhere. My paper aims to highlight things that bear witness to the presence of Crete in Venice, like pieces in a mosaic that is still decipherable.

There is an enormous volume of scholarly work on the relations between Venice and Crete in the period of Venetian rule. The Venetian presence on Crete has been widely analysed and discussed, but the Cretan presence in Venice far less so. In part the reasons are obvious. In a capital city the provinces always have a subaltern role and are regarded with a benevolent sense of superiority. Yet the flow of culture from

Crete to Venice was significant for the cultural history of the Serenissima and is traceable not just in architectural monuments but also in other fields such as literature, the visual arts, music and religion. The evidence of it is not always easy to find, but it is useful not just for identifying the traces left by Crete in Venice but also for reconstructing the ideology behind the power that Venice exercised in her overseas possessions. My paper will focus mainly on Cretan “imports” that arrived in Venice either in material form or in the form of ideology, religion, politics and culture. I will aim to examine the presence of Crete through places, names, objects and myths, both during the period of Venetian domination and more recently. And although the picture is too large to complete in one paper, I propose to address the question of how much of Crete is documented and easy to locate in Venice.

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Eliminato: Obviously it will not be possible to give a complete picture. I will simply try to put to you the question that was the starting-point for my research:

Transmission of the classics and collections of antiquities

There has been a great deal of research on the role of Crete after 1453 in the preservation and reproduction of classical manuscripts, by figures such as Michael Apostolis, to mention just one, together with his *scriptorium*. After the fall of Mistras in 1460, Crete remained for a long time the only source of Greek cultural production in the Levant. It was the birthplace of scholars such as Markos Mousouros and Zacharias Kalliergis, men attuned to the cultural aspirations of western intellectuals in the age of Humanism. From the beginning of their occupation of Crete in the early thirteenth century, the Venetians appreciated the wealth of the island, intellectual as well as material; they integrated into local society and gave opportunities to many of their subjects to develop careers in Venice. Of course, relations were not

always idyllic—the numerous Cretan revolts, bloodily suppressed, are still being studied and analyzed.

Through teaching Modern Greek language and literature in Venice, I have learned to use the city as a kind of Powerpoint—not virtual but real. No other European city before the beginning of the nineteenth century possessed such a rich and time-honoured patrimony of Greek statues, architectural fragments and manuscripts, and probably no other city had integrated, reworked and assimilated such artefacts as thoroughly as Venice. The city is an open-air museum, designed to convey a vision of power and wisdom. It is an encyclopaedia of Greek culture, from ancient to modern times. If you type the word “Crete” into this search engine, you immediately find links that are extremely useful for teaching purposes and as a starting point for scholarly research.

The invention of the aristocratic “myth of Venice”, based as it was partly on the Venetians’ ability to dominate the lands of Greece, the birthplace of western civilisation, has been studied and interpreted in various ways, including, recently, by Dorit Raines². The ideological uses of antiquity in Venice have been interpreted by Maria Georgopoulou (1995), Patricia Fortini Brown (1997), Sally McKee (2000) and others. In recent decades Luigi Beschi (1972–73), Irene Favaretto (1990) and other scholars have sketched out a reconstruction of the collections of antiquities and a new reading of the archaeological monuments and their re-use in the city of the lagoon.

But nothing makes us feel in contact with the history and culture of Crete in Venice with more evocative force than an actual walk through the city. Even when looking at a place that’s not particularly edifying, such as the Casino [Palazzo

² Raines 2006, vol. I, chapter III, Morosini, “Candie perdue ne signifie pas Candie trahie”, 320–341). Fortini Brown 2016, 43–89.

Vendramin-Calergi], we can meditate on some aspects of the interrelation between Venice and Crete. I might use this image to talk about the poem *Apókopos*, published by Nikolaos Kalliergis in 1509, the first book to be printed in Greek for a Greek-speaking readership (Vejleskov 2005). Zacharias Kalliergis, Nikolaos's father, was one of the most refined and cultivated copyists and editors of classical texts in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. I might go back further in time to discuss the revolt against the Venetians organised in the thirteenth century by the Kalliergis or Calergi clan. I might speak about Antonio Calergi, a scholar and historian who amassed an extensive and valuable collection of books in sixteenth-century Crete; and about Antonio Pandimo, the young Cretan who wrote his tragicomedy *L'amorosa fede* in Italian for the wedding of Calerga Calergi and Francesco Querini; it was printed in Venice in 1620 (Luciani and Vincent 2003; Pandimo 1620). The names of the various Calergis show how the histories of Crete and Venice come together in this palace; there is even a link with Richard Wagner, who spent part of his life here. The Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi keeps alive, through its very name, the connection between the influential Venetian families and the local Cretan magnates. The names are resistant to change and preserve fragments of history.

The paper “**Ερευνά** εν Βενετία, (*Researches in Venice*)” by Nikolaos M. Panagiotakis³, that unforgettable Cretan who was resident in Venice in the later years of the twentieth century, remains to this day a precious source of documentation on the Calergi and a mine of invaluable bibliographical references. He published it in *Thesaurismata* in 1968, as a young scholar in his early thirties. Thanks to Panagiotakis' research among Veneto-Cretan manuscripts, many of them still unexplored and discovered by him in

³ Panagiotakis 1968 now 2002.

Venetian archives and libraries, numerous other studies have been published, expanding considerably the range of our historical knowledge. (One might think for example of studies by Alfred Vincent, Stefanos Kaklamanis and Cristiano Luciani, which take Panagiotakis' work as their starting point).

But for the purposes of a direct and concrete exploration of Crete in Venice Panagiotakis' study, dense as it is with names, dates and references to manuscripts, has not got sufficient appeal. We might instead begin by deciphering the façades of the *palazzi* (such as Vendramin-Calergi, Flangini, Ferro-Fini and Barozzi, now Treves de' Bonfilii) and the churches (such as Santa Maria del Giglio⁴ and San Moisè) in order to make our discussion of Venetian Crete immediately accessible, even to someone who has never entered an archive. From this contact—from the exploration of an objective reality present before our eyes—I hope that some of my students may sooner or later want to learn more, and may even venture to pass through the doors of the State Archives, the library of the Museo Correr or the Marcian Library. Every so often this actually happens. It is worth mentioning that in the 14th century [over a hundred Candiot notaries are known](#). Marco Brunetti even found Cretan connections in the Querini-Tiepolo conspiracy of 1310 (Brunetti 1948–49).

These Veneto-Cretan walks give me the opportunity to mention the editors of the first work attributed to Homer to have appeared in print, in 1486. Alexandros Georgiou and Laonicus Cretensis, the editors, were both Cretans, like most copyists of ancient texts active at the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth, when printing had not yet made copying by hand obsolete. (Moreover,

⁴ See now Stouraiti 2016 for this representation of Candia, 362.

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recentiores are not necessarily *deteriores*). Crete was the origin of most of the manuscripts and the copyists who made it possible for westerners to satisfy their interest in ancient literature. From Crete also came the vast majority of the works of sculpture forming the nucleus of the first collections of antiquities, which continued to develop throughout the Renaissance, [as I discuss below](#).

There is also an important Veneto-Cretan school of painting, and an influx of artists from Crete who settled in Venice and in some cases moved on to other places. Here there is only time to mention a few of the best-known names: Georgios Klondzas, Michael Damaskinós (1530/5–1592/3) and above all Dominikos Theotokópoulos, El Greco, whose time in Venice has been studied by L. Puppi (2012a; 2012b). These artists have left obvious traces in various parts of the city, not only in the museum attached to the Hellenic Institute. Sergio Bettini⁵ in the 1930s, and more recently Nanó Chatzidakis (1993), V. Lazareff (1966), Maria Constantoudaki-Kitromilides (1975; 1999; 2012), Nikolaos M. Panagiotakis (2009) and many scholars of the younger generation have been mapping the evidence of this activity.

More than four centuries of uninterrupted contact cannot have left traces in the province alone. In Venice too contact with Crete determined the rise and establishment of a specific taste and a particular sensibility. Thanks to the presence of Venetians on Crete and to their despoiling the island of its ancient remains, in the late fifteenth century and the early decades of the sixteenth, there developed in Venice a strong interest in ancient art and its history, in particular in ancient sculpture. This determined the shape of the first collections of antiquities, such as the prestigious ones created by Domenico Grimani (1461-1523) or by Federico Contarini (1538-1613), which are now held in the Venice National Archaeological

⁵ Bettini 1933. For recent bibliography on Bettini's studies see Ioannou 2009.

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Museum, in Piazza San Marco, a modern successor to the important Collection of Statuary (Favaretto 1997, see also Stouraiti 2014). In the Venice Archaeological Museum we can also see works of Cretan provenance such as the Ierapetra Nike, signed by Damokrates of Itanos (Beschi 1986), and the so-called Grimani statuette.

Particularly important for the study of the presence of Cretan antiquities in Venice are the researches of Luigi Beschi (Beschi 1999; 2000), who has also published papers on Onorio Belli from Vicenza (mid-sixteenth century–1604), close friend of the famous botanist Carlo Clusio (1526-1609). During Belli's residence on Crete from 1584 to 1599 he described the island's flora and its medicinal properties, as well as sketching architectural remains in the spirit of a precursor of modern archaeology. It is most unfortunate that Belli's work *Rerum Creticarum observationes variae* is lost, and known only from indirect references. It would have given us precious information on the final years of the sixteenth century in Crete. Stefanos Kaklamanis (2004) has noted the possible interaction between Belli, the physician of the [Venetian](#) Governor in Crete, and the well-known Veneto-Cretan polymath Francesco Barozzi (1537–1604), whose *Description of Crete* was first published in 2004.

Giuseppe Gerola (1877–1938) (Gerola 1903; Curuni and Donati 1988) collected and catalogued artistic and architectural monuments of the Venetian period in Crete. Gerola's archive, together with many of the sketches that he had executed in Crete, some of them showing buildings or other objects no longer in existence, are preserved in the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti at Campo Santo Stefano. Luigi Beschi has given an account of the classical material of Cretan origin that arrived in Venice during the period of Venetian domination, leading, as we said, to the formation of a particular taste in art. It is well known that

sixteenth-century Venetian collections were a major source of material for collections of antiquities in many European museums in the following centuries.

In Piazza San Marco it is impossible not to be overwhelmed by the imposing Basilica. I want to add to our Venetian mosaic just one small but not insignificant piece: the artist Nikolaos Filanthropinós was perhaps a native of Constantinople, but had lived in Candia at least since 1396 and was resident in Venice from 1430 to 1436. He is recorded as *Magister artis mosaice* in the Basilica⁶.

Assuming an ever more important role in the eastern Mediterranean basin, Venice became aware of the need to free herself from her Byzantine dimension. The allegorical interpretation of the two columns in the Piazzetta San Marco, with the soldier Saint Theodore on one and the Venetian symbol of the Lion of Saint Mark on the other, has been amply studied. The manner of presenting the figures of saints for popular worship has great historical and ideological importance. On the “theatricality” of the architectural layout of the Piazzetta we can read the works of E. J. Johnson 2002; Maltezou 2005.

After the fall of Constantinople Venice, *quasi alterum Byzantium*, mistress of Crete, celebrated her Greek heritage and claimed the ability to exploit and adapt it. Numerous sixteenth-century documents bear witness to the perception that in preserving the message received from the Greeks one was not simply satisfying a personal desire to possess works of art, but doing something *ad communem hominum utilitatem* (to the common benefit of humanity). The restructuring of Byzantine rituals and the re-use of the forms of Byzantine civilisation were carried out by the Venetian aristocracy in the first centuries of the history of the lagoon city: in the insignia of power and in celebrations of public and political life

⁶ Constantoudaki-Kitromilides 2012, 571.

Byzantium was a model to imitate and perhaps to surpass (Pertusi 1976). After the fall of Constantine's city, intellectuals from many regions arrived in Venice to hear the Greek language from the mouths of the Byzantine exiles and to learn from these men's books and grammars about the monumental remains of a Hellenism different from that of the Eastern Church: the Hellenism of the pre-Christian era.

In the Piazza we can trace the thread connecting these two historical and geographical entities, Venice and Crete, in writings and other works connected with the period of Venetian rule, in the Archaeological Museum and the Marcian Library. But we should also make at least a brief reference to the extraordinary volume of Venetian cartography and to the immense body of images of Crete in the Correr Library. Being accomplished navigators and explorers the Venetians took care to reproduce on paper the physical appearance of their Cretan territory (Porfyriou 2004). See, for example, Giorgio Sideri Callopoda's [representation](#) (1550) of Candia⁷, and *Viaggi da Venetia al Santo Sepulcro* (Bianco and Poggiponsi 1500; see also Caucci von Saucken 2008). [Other noteworthy representations include](#) Francesco Basilicata's (1618) (Calabi 1994), Vincenzo Coronelli's (1650–1718), Giorgio Corner's [and](#) Marco Boschini's (Boschini 1658. See also Bevilacqua 1980, and Tonini and Lucchi 2001). [There are many other maps and images](#) (Redolfi 1986) of Crete in the [Venetian](#) public and private libraries and also one carved in stone on the façade of Santa Maria del Giglio.

A fundamental aspect of the Cretan presence in Venice is that of historical writing, beginning with Lorenzo de Monacis

⁷ The first evidence of the El Greco's presence in Venice was found in an archival document connected with Sideri Callopoda, see Panagiotakis 2002, 34–35 and n. 24–27. A facsimile of this important portolan was published in 2016 by *Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani*. [Ratti](#) and [Ratti-Vidoli](#) 1991.

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(1388–1428)⁸, who was Chancellor of Crete and one of the first Venetian historians to deal with Byzantine material. In later times we have the numerous chronicles of the Cretan War of 1645–1669 produced and published in Venice, such as the famous one by Andrea Valiero (1615–1691) (*Historia de la Guerra di Candia*, in Venetia MDCLXXI). This question deserves more space even in this rapid overview.

It is also worth mentioning briefly the **rhetoric** prose work *Candia Angustata* by Francesco Fulvio Frugoni (1620–after 1684), **written in Latin** and in **Italian** and published in 1669. **In it**, we can find some interesting information about contemporary Candia during the long-lasting siege.

I **would** like now to direct attention to the Loggetta designed by Sansovino at the base of the bell tower of San Marco. The allegory of Venice seated between the Kingdoms of Cyprus and Crete has been the subject of numerous critical analyses, though I don't know how many of the millions of visitors appreciate its ideological message. To this vast bibliography we can now add the recent study by Alfred Vincent (Vincent 2013), which begins with a glance at the ideology of power portrayed in this bas-relief.

But I cannot leave the Piazza without searching for Crete inside the Ducal Palace. I will choose just a few of the more prominent monuments to be found there. The triumphal arch in Sala dello Scrutinio is dedicated to Francesco Morosini (1619–1694), the commander who in 1669 surrendered Candia to the Ottomans after twenty years of siege. Francesco Morosini left several pieces of evidence of the importance of Crete's presence in the city. The loss of the island seemed at the time to be merely a temporary disaster, from which recovery was possible, since the same commander succeeded some years later in snatching the Peloponnese from the

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⁸ Pertusi (Mazzucchi 2004, 18–19) wrote that there are not many studies about the author, and the situation has not change a lot in the last decade.

Ottomans and regaining it as a Venetian possession until 1715. Before his death in Nafplion in 1694, Morosini was hailed in Venice as the city's great saviour. We know of course, in hindsight, that Morosini's victory over the Ottomans was ephemeral, that the destruction he wrought on the Parthenon in 1687 was a terrible loss, and that after the fall of Candia the Venetian economy never recovered, nor indeed did Venice ever regain its political and military dominance. We know the outcome, we can read about the events and interpret them in retrospect. But Morosini and his contemporaries could not have our historical perspective.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, when Venice no longer had its estates to cultivate in Crete, its merchant vessels to equip and its professional soldiers to pay to defend its overseas territories, vast accumulated fortunes were spent on palaces and celebrations. The brilliant wealth of eighteenth-century decorative art, architecture and music is owed partly to the fact that the children and grandchildren of the two post-Candia generations were no longer employed in commercial and military enterprises and so had a chance to enjoy life. Casanova is an example.

From the windows and the loggia of the Ducal Palace overlooking the harbour we can see the island of San Servolo with its monastery, now the home of the Venice International University. This island is another silent witness to the presence of Crete in the Venetian basin. The monastery is in fact the place where Catholic nuns from Crete were settled in seclusion, during the years when Venice was losing its grip on the Great Island. An interesting study by Eleni Tsourapa, (2010–11), throws light on their experience and gives us a cue to speak of the forced enclosure of noble Venetian girls in convents. Not even the young women in Venice's Levantine possessions were able to escape this rigid institution, aimed at the maintenance of family estates; not even when they had

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names clearly Greek in origin, like Margeta Gialiná, *abbadessa benedittina*.

Looking eastwards from the balcony of the Ducal Palace, towards Punta Dogana, we see the majestic dome of Santa Maria della Salute⁹. Greatly revered in Venice, with its popular annual feast-day on the 21st of November, the icon of the Madonna della Salute preserved in this church is perhaps the most tangible link in the chain joining this extraordinary city with Crete, a history formed not only out of events, ships, commerce and power, but also out of faith, interdenominational dialogue, out of the mixing of families and allegiances, an impalpable story of men and women who have shared, in the maze of Venetian alleyways as much as in the towns and villages of Crete, not only centuries of private life but also important historical events, well known to specialists **on** the subject.

Opposite the Church of the Salute stands Palazzo Barozzi, also known as Palazzo Treves dei Bonfili. On the Salute side, a little further **in** the canal, **stands** the magnificent façade of Palazzo Dario. These buildings give me the opportunity to introduce personalities connected with the history of Venice and Crete, such as Giovanni Dario (1414–1494) and Francesco Barozzi (1537–1604). I will mention Barozzi's *Description of Crete*, and also the collection of Barozzi manuscripts at Oxford in the Bodleian Library, which are more accessible than ever before thanks to the internet. On the other side of the Grand Canal from the Salute, we find the church of Santa Maria del Giglio, whose seventeenth-century façade is a monument celebrating the power of the Barbaro family. On its lower part is a topographical relief showing the fortifications of Candia.

We can find many fragments of Veneto-Cretan history in other palace façades along the Grand Canal. The Palazzo

⁹ Mesopantitissa: See also Papadopoli 2007, 81.

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Corner della Regina (now [home of the Prada Foundation](#)) can serve as an introduction to the Corner or Cornaro clan, including the Cretan families with the surname Corner, or in Greek Kornaros: it is amusing to combine contemporary fashion with the last queen of Cyprus and the surname of *Erotokritos*' author.

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Even the seat of our university, Ca' Foscari, is an invitation to speak of Crete in Venice. Francesco Foscari (1373–1457) (Romano 2012) was Doge for thirty years over the period when the Ottomans occupied Constantinople, and retired to his palace here when he lost his position because of the exile of his son, Jacopo, to Crete in 1457. A few days later, stricken by grief, Francesco died. The palace is now profoundly altered and almost [unrecognizable](#), except in its façade, which [mostly](#) preserves its original structure. It is the seat of the Rector of our University. The drama deeply moved Lord Byron (1788–1824), who resided in the palazzo opposite Ca' Foscari during his stay in Venice, and wrote his historical tragedy, *The Two Foscari*, in Ravenna in 1821. It [was](#) used by Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) as the basis of his opera, *I due Foscari*, in 1844. The story continues to remind us of the period of Venetian domination in Crete and of the reciprocal movements of people and ideas.

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In private houses, especially those that have not undergone extensive alterations, there are certainly more Cretan treasures yet to be discovered. Just recently a study has been published on the frescoes dated to the second half of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth, featuring various places in Crete, in the Palazzo Berlandis (Pelizzari 2011), not this family's residence in Venice but the other mansion at Capriolo, a village near Bergamo. The owners of the house must have known and loved these places to want to depict them in their home. This family, coming from Bergamo and not of ancient Venetian descent, wanted to celebrate through

their pictures of Crete the glorious memory of their lineage and of its head, Giacomo Berlendis, who, in 1571, was superintendent of the fortresses on the island.

Music, poetry and theatre

I can make no more than a brief mention of the Cretan Frankiskos Leontaritis (1518–1572), whose biography was compiled by the late N. M. Panagiotakis (1990) on the basis of precious archival documents that he discovered in the 1980s and 90s. Leontaritis or Londariti was a choirmaster at San Marco and an acclaimed musician and composer of sacred music in western style.

In sixteenth-century Venice you could hear the songs and jokes of numerous soldiers of fortune, *stradioti*, mercenaries of Greek or Albanian origin in the pay of the Serenissima, who were clever and able warriors but also dashing young men given to the wildest and least refined kinds of entertainment as a result of the conditions of their life (Sala 1950–51; Concina 2004; Gramaticopulo 2011–2; Birtachas 2012 Korre 2014). These soldiers of fortune are also the protagonists in literary works. As incarnations of the stereotype of the boastful soldier, the *miles gloriosus*, well known from ancient comedy onwards, they formed a model exploited by artists and musicians. Writers parodied their way of speaking Italian, with Greek pronunciation and many Greek words; they called this jargon *greghesco*. Echoes of Crete can be heard in the *greghesche* verses of Antonio da Molino (1498?–1572?) (Einstein 1946; Coutelle 1971; Vincent 1973; Panagiotakis 1989; 1990; 1992; Lazzaroni 1977; Crimi 2011; Varzelioti 2013), known as “il Burchiella”, who as a young man was involved in trade and spent time in Corfu and Candia. Musical ensembles have been performing some of da Molino’s *greghesche* in recent years.

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The famous playwrights Angelo Beolco (better known as Ruzante) (1496?–1546) (Benzoni, Galtarossa, and Favaretto 2006), Gigio Artemio Giancarli (?–before 1561)¹⁰, and Andrea Calmo (1510–1571)¹¹ also include *greghesco* passages in their multidialectal comedies, as for example in the Prologue of Calmo's *La Potione* (1552) (...*mi vegnuo dal fora, stin Criti, sto Candia*). Surviving documents of literary origin lead us to believe that there were also popular songs on the *stradioti*¹².

In the second half of the 17th century the heroic poem was replaced by the *poemetto*, with a greatly reduced number of verses. Following the fashion of the times Cristoforo Ivanovich (1620–1689) (Bellina 2000) published a *poemetto* under the title *Venetian constancy in the famous three years of Candia under siege*, included in his collection of *Poesie* printed in Venice in 1675. Poems celebrating victories over the Ottomans in Greek regions, from Lepanto to the siege of Candia, are extremely numerous. We owe a detailed list, still unsurpassed, to the nineteenth-century scholar Emmanuele Antonio Cicogna (1789–1868) in his Venetian bibliography (Cicogna 1847). This erudite [man](#) was born in the Cicogna family, which had long-standing connections with Crete. Among the poets who celebrated the victory at Lepanto in Italian was the Cretan Nikolaos Papadopoulos, the subject of a study by Panagiotakis (1979).

Before concluding, I must make a brief mention of the traces of Crete in Venetian theatre and literature. In addition to the tragedy *Fedra* by the Cretan Francesco Bozza and the poem (in Italian language) called *Most noble joust at Chaniá* (1594), by Gian Carlo Persio, both available today thanks to

¹⁰ [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gigio-artemio-giancarli_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gigio-artemio-giancarli_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)

¹¹ [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/andrea-calmo_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/andrea-calmo_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)

¹² *Di Manoli Blessi il libro delle greghesche con musiche di sopra composte da diversi autori*. Venezia: Gardano 1564.

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the edition by Cristiano Luciani (Luciani 1994), I would like to mention some literary works with a Cretan setting or on mythological themes with a Cretan connection, which have been little studied until now. *Hermete (Hermes)* by Vincenzo Giusti of Vicenza (1532–1596)¹³, published in 1608, has its action taking place in the city of Cidone (that is Chaniá); *Gli irragionevoli amori (Unreasonable loves)* by Francesco Angeloni (1587–1652)¹⁴, published in Venice in 1611, is set in Sitia and Cidone. In 1622 Giovan Battista Andreini (1576–1654) (Chichiricò 2013) published in Paris *La Centaura*, which was reprinted in Venice in 1633. It is a dramaturgical monstrosity, combining comedy, tragedy, and pastoral. Some of its scenes take place in the cities, woods and palaces of Crete. *Elpidio consolato (Elpidio consoled)* published in 1623 by Nicolò Crasso (c. 1585–1653) is a *fabula piscatoria*, a play involving fisher people, set in Crete; it is the subject of an article by Alfred Vincent (1996).

The romance *Dianea* (1635) by Giovanni Francesco Loredan (1607–1681)¹⁵ has its setting in Venetian overseas possessions; its heroine is in love with the prince of Crete Diaspe. Similarly, in the “maritime” drama *La regia pescatrice (The royal fisherwoman)* (1673) by the Veronese Giacomo Castoreo (Casentino 2013), set in Lesbos, called “Mettelin” as the author notes, the protagonist Cratilda and her lover Tersandro are noble Cretans who have fled their native land for political reasons and are forced to live disguised as fishers. Cretan themes can be found in the operas *Iphide Greca*, (1671), by Niccolò Minato (ca.1627–1698)¹⁶; *Il*

¹³ http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/vincenzo-giusti_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/

¹⁴ http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-angeloni_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/

¹⁵ http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovan-francesco-loredan_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/

¹⁶ [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/niccolo-minato_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/niccolo-minato_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)

Teseo in Creta (*Theseus in Crete*, 1672), *Teseo fra le rivali* (*Theseus between rivals*), by Aurelio Aureli¹⁷, printed by Francesco Nicolini in 1675 and, according to Leo Allatius, performed at the Sant'Angelo theatre in Venice in 1685. The play *Clorimondo, ovvero i figli sconosciuti* by Biagio de Calamo (Giacomo Badiale), from Naples, printed in 1687, is also set in Crete.

The myth of Ariadne deserves a special mention. It was continually presented in its numerous variations on the Venetian stage, even before it was taken up by Monteverdi. It was performed at Giuseppe Boniventi's Giustiniano Theatre at San Moisè in 1719 with a libretto by Angelo Schiatti. The abandonment of Ariadne echoed round the Venetian theatre not as a distant, exotic myth, but as the memory of a land once possessed and now lost. *Arianna* by Benedetto Marcello (1686–1739), with a libretto by Vincenzo Cassani (1677–1732) was first performed in 1726, at the Casino dei Nobili Accademici. The opera of the same title by Pietro Pariati (1665–1733), with music by Nicola Porpora (1686–1766), was later adapted for the *Ariadne in Crete* (1733) by Georg Friedrich Händel (1685–1759). It appeared on the Venetian stage in 1727 at the Grimani theatre at San Giovanni Grisostomo. Arianna in those texts and music was the personification of Crete. Just as Arianna had been seduced and abandoned by Theseus, so now Crete had been abandoned by the Venetians: the ruin of Ariadne and her pain represent the defeat of Venice in the Aegean.

During the 18th century another “Cretan” opera, *Belmira a Creta*, had its première in 1729. It had a libretto by Girolamo Giusti (1709–1786), whose text was also set to music by Antonio Vivaldi. The action takes place in a kind of utopian Crete. We could also mention: *Arianna e Teseo* (*Ariadne and Theseus*, 1739), by Pietro Chiarini (1717–1765); *Giove di*

¹⁷ [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/aurelio-aureli_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/aurelio-aureli_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)

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Creta (The Cretan Zeus), performed at the San Cassiano theatre in 1776; the “ballo eroico” *Minosse* (1782) by Luigi Marescalchi (1745–1810); *I sacrifici di Creta (The Cretan sacrifices)*, 1792), with a libretto by Mattia Buttarini (1752–1817)¹⁸ and music by Pietro Winter (1754–1825); and a further *Teseo in Creta* (Udine 1749) by Salvator Rosa (1615–1673).

In 1785, when Venice was about to lose her autonomy, Giovanni Pindemonte (1751–1812)¹⁹ staged his tragedy *I coloni di Creta (The settlers in Crete)*, at the San Giovanni Grisostomo theatre. With its action at the time of the Cretan revolt against Venetian rule, the so-called “Rebellion of Saint Titus” in 1363–64²⁰ the work provoked an uproar. The representatives of the Greek community in Venice made a successful representation to the Council of Ten to have the performances suspended. The incident was the subject of a study more than forty years ago by Nikos Moschonàs, and more recently by Franca Barricelli.²¹ It deserves a special mention in this paper because it shows that, despite all the processes of integration and assimilation, there was still some lack of understanding between Venetians and Cretans. In reviving a historical incident of the mid-fourteenth century more than a hundred years after the end of Venetian rule in Crete, more was involved than to give a simple historical account of the facts. Maybe Pindemonte was transferring a

¹⁸ [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mattia-giovanni-paolo-butturini_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mattia-giovanni-paolo-butturini_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)

¹⁹ [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-pindemonte_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-pindemonte_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)

²⁰ Petrarch in his *Senili* describes to Pietro de Bononia (Pietro da Miglio) in 1364, the joust held at San Marco to celebrate the victory over rebels in Crete; and in another to Luchino del Verme he congratulate him for the victory in Crete (Quaquarelli 2011).

²¹ Moschonàs 1970; Barricelli 2003; Stouraiti 2007; http://www.eens-congress.eu/?main_page=1&main_lang=de&eensCongress_cmd=showPaper&eensCongress_id=294#_ftn1.

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situation relevant to his own time to a distant historical context; maybe relations with the Greek community, which was potentially attracted by Russian imperial propaganda regarding the Mediterranean, had become a problem for the local nobility, which had become aware of its own weakness and now saw foreigners, and especially non-Catholics, as possible enemies of the state. Although the work was probably never performed again in Venice, it enjoyed some literary success and was reprinted frequently, in 1801, 1804, 1807, 1827 and 1821.

In the **nineteenth** century the independent history of the Serenissima had come to an end. There remained only traces of its ancient glories. For example, the writer Giustina Renier Michiel (1755–1832) describes in great detail how the feast of *The Recovery of Candia* was celebrated (Renier Michiel 1829). But as in the course of the nineteenth century the political, economic, commercial and cultural situation of the city was transformed, the memory of Crete gradually faded. Even the Greek Venetian publishers, who had continued to reprint *Erotòkritos* up to 1848, finally stopped producing books for the Greeks. Athens was now the capital of the new Greek kingdom, Crete was not yet part of it, and Venice was no longer a rich land where Greeks could do business and make their fortunes. In 1848 in his collection of Venetian popular songs Angelo Dalmedico (1817-1896) informs us that in Venice at this time the expression “to be a Cretan” meant “to be broke” (Dalmedico 1848, 185). The revolutionary spirit of Felice Cavallotti (1842–1898), of Venetian descent, who was killed in a duel by the editor-in-chief of the *Gazzettino*, **the Greek-Venetian** Ferruccio Macola (1861-1910), came to the fore in 1891, when he wrote his *Discorso improvvisato per gli insorti di Candia (Improvised discourse on the Cretan insurgents)*. But this was an isolated work. By now the

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relationship between Venice and Crete was quite distant and the traces of each in the other, though still visible and substantial, had been integrated and assimilated.

The final reference to Crete in Venice that I want to mention is a tribute to the discovery of Minoan civilization. The Catalan artist Mariano Fortuny (1871–1949), who had settled in Venice, created a marvellous series of so-called *Knossos scarves*, based on the forms of decoration recently discovered in Crete thanks to the excavations of Kalokairinos, Evans and Halbherr. The volume by Irene Caloi (2011), *Modernità minoica a Palazzo Fortuny*, is an interesting contribution to the study of these early twentieth-century designs.

The Venetian presence in Crete has been the subject of research and publications for many decades, and David Holton, to whom I offer this paper, has been one of its indefatigable proponents. Studies on the Cretan presence in Venice have been much less extensive. It has been difficult for a provincial entity like Crete to make space for itself in the capital, and difficult to attract proper attention in such a variegated and many-faceted context. And yet without a study of the traces of Crete in Venice the study of Venetian influence on the island remains incomplete.

Here in Venice we need to rediscover the presence of Crete, with its language, literature and culture during the period of Venetian rule, in order to restore these wedges of history and culture in a context ever more polluted and mistreated. If we can restore our awareness of history, through Venice's multiethnic and multilingual dimension over the centuries, our pact with the future may not yet be lost. Otherwise, the great ships, the huge cruiser lines, will disgorge nothing but ignorant tourists, and sooner or later if this madness is not stopped we could find the Salute, the

Liana Giannakopoulou 6/1/y 17:03

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Marcian, the Ducal Palace or even the Basilica of Saint Mark destroyed for ever.

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Commenta [2]: Ετυμ. C. Schiavon

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Commenta [5]: Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere e Arti

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Commenta [7]: Is this how you want it spelled?

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Commenta [8]: So the author writes the title

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Eliminato: G. K. Varzelioti and K. G. Tsiknakis, eds.

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Formattato: Inglese (Regno Unito)

Liana Giannakopoulou 6/1/y 17:40

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