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THE MONUMENTS OF THE ADRIATIC
ITALIA REDENTA.

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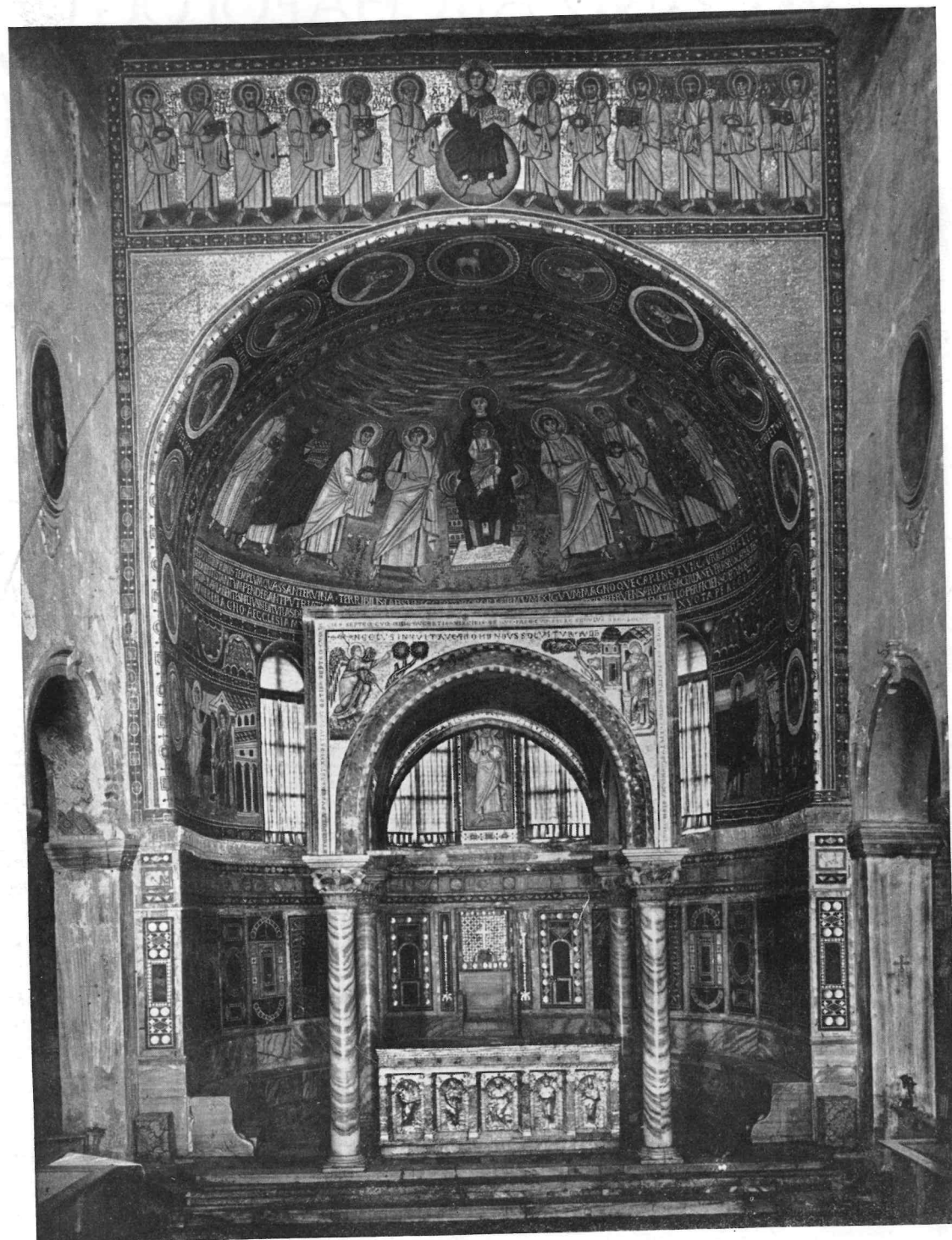
ROME and Venice, the two light-houses of Latin civilization in the Mediterranean, still illumine with the clearest of lights the monuments of this tenth region of the Italy of Augustus—*Venetia et Histria*—which has been today reunited to the mother country, after more than a century of foreign domination.

Nowhere else has the life of the past partaken, through its monuments, of the life of the present so much as in Venezia Giulia; one recognizes the very expression of the common fatherland in the buildings of Friuli and Istria, re-animated, as they are by the love and study of the newly redeemed people, because the cities through which the triumphant Italian army—like the Consular Army 177 years before Christ—passed from the Timavo to Quarnero, still preserve both the outward appearance and the spirit of Roman colonies—Aquileia, Trieste, Parenzo, Pola.

The Roman domination, which lasted five centuries, has left such records of its civilizing power that no other

government has been able to obliterate or to hide them. Only one power—Venice—was ever able to place itself beside that of Rome; and from this double sovereignty developed the character and spirit, the language, customs and art of the people and of the region. The life of ancient Rome, as told in her monuments is not taciturn and motionless here, but comes close to us, palpitating and living, returning by means of this dominion of the "Serenissima" which reanimates its aspect and spirit with the new healthy vigor of youth. This Latin civilization, which penetrates the lights and shadows of the Byzantine period, may seem to have become contaminated and to have lost itself in the forms of the Orient and in the brutality of the last Barbarian invasions, but you will find it still here on the borderland of the newer Adriatic power, which has refreshed its language, revived its art and renewed its dominion.

When in the year 991, the Doge Pietro Orseolo, set out to conquer Dal-



The interior of the basilica of Parenzo, with VI Century mosaics.



Fig. 1. The Temple of Augustus which again forms part of the Forum of the City of Pola, after the removal of obstructing houses.

matia, celebrating his victory with the famous Espousal of the Sea: "We espouse thee, O Sea, in sign of our real and everlasting dominion," there were still memorials of Rome everywhere to a great extent, as Cassiodorus, the Minister of Theodoric, boasts; "a province peopled with olive-orchards, crowned with grape-vines adorned with fertile fields, because of which it is not false to say that it is the smiling country of Ravenna, the provision-room of the royal palace; with the admirable climate it enjoys—a delicious and voluptuous resort. Nor is it an exaggeration to say it has inlets comparable to those celebrated ones of Baiae, where the surging sea imprisoning itself in cavities in the earth becomes placid like lovely pools of still water where the fish are tender and the shell-fish abundant. Many palaces, rising

proudly at a distance, seem like pearls arranged on the head of a beautiful woman, and prove in what esteem our forbears must have held this province, that they adorned it with so many edifices. A series of very beautiful islets lies parallel to the coast; they are of great utility, because they protect boats from sudden squalls and enrich the farmers and gardeners with their abundant produce. This province is an ornament to Italy, a joy to the rich, a fortune to those of modest estate."

The same army that had brought redemption to the people wished to initiate the redemption of the Roman, Byzantine and Venetian memorials in these Istrian cities scattered along the eastern coast of that *Hadria* which had defended them from the assaults of the Goths, Saracens, Lombards, Croats, and Magyars. And, in the first mil-

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Fig. 2. The Amphitheatre at Pola.

itary government set up in Venezia Giulia, there was an office of the Fine Arts which at once began the work of recovery, protection, restoration and resurrection of the buildings and works of art that Austria neither could nor would bring to light. We searched Pola for records of Rome. As Pola still presents the appearance of a flourishing Roman *municipium*, with its dignified and refined architectural style of the Augustan age, it is a crime for the Austrians to have placed a mask over the characteristically Italian face of Roman Pola—the fortified port, which Napoleon would have constructed instead at the Bocche di Cattaro.

If the legend of the Argonauts springs from remote origins, Pola begins her historical existence as a border-fortress for defense against the restless Liburnians and her monumental glory begins when Augustus extends the frontiers of Italy to the Quarnero. For five centuries, no one touched her

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crown of walls with the Capitol on the summit of the hill and fourteen gates opening toward land and sea. There still remain the Porta Gemina, Porta Ercole, and Porta Aurea which, until 1820 leaned against the arch of the Sergi, but which we have now restored to its original admirable proportions. This arch, erected by the devotion of a woman in memory of her husband and children, at the end of the street leading from the Imperial Forum to the Sinus Flanaticus was drawn about the end of 1400 by Fra Gioconda, and later Michelangelo, Battista Sangallo and Baldassera Peruzzi. Their drawings are still preserved in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence. And the fame of Roman Pola was such that the temple of Augustus, a model of architectural elegance, was also drawn by Andrea Palladio, the talented architect of Vicenza.

Moreover there was someone in the XVII century, who wished to reconstruct this little temple at Venice,

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Fig. 3. The atrium of the famous basilica of Bishop Euphrasius at Parenzo. (VI Century.)

because by means of it, a most useful school of architecture would be opened to the view of all. After we had demolished two wretched houses that hid its façade, this temple of Augustus [Fig. 1.] which Napoleon wished represented on the medal commemorating the conquest of Istria, has returned to the light of the Forum, while the arch of the Sergi invites the new citizens of Italy to pass beneath it. These two buildings, together with the three perfectly preserved gates and the ruins of the theater and amphitheater which the Emperor Vespasian built and gave to his beautiful Istrian Liberta Cenide are the most conspicuous memorials of Roman Pola. [Fig. 2.]

And in the midst of the Forum, which speaks to us of Rome, the Palazzo Pubblico rehearses in its many restorations the history and vicissitudes of the medieval and Renaissance city. Constructed in 1296 on the ruins of the Temple of Diana, a pendant to that of Augustus, it appears in a XVII century print still battlemented, with a row of pointed windows, and Romanesque and Renaissance motives in the columns, arches, pilasters, and sculptures. But we no longer see it as Dante saw this palace of the medieval tyrants and of the terrible Sergi Castropola family whose name and memorials still live even today. Too many are the ruins today, where there were still public buildings and churches and palaces when the poet guest of the Abbey of San Michelebin Monte, on one of the seven hills of Pola, fixed the frontier of Italy at the Quarnero—"che Italia chiude e i suoi termini bagna."—The sepulchres of the Roman metropolis were still in place along the road outside the Arch of the Sergi, those sarcophaguses in which, after the

year 100 Venezia placed the mortal remains of the heads of the Republic, such as the tombs of the Doges Giacomo and Lorenzo Tiepolo in the Church of Santi Giovanni and Paolo in Venice.

The Basilica of Santa Maria Formosa, built in the sixth century, is also a ruin; from it come the four columns of the Ciborium in San Marco in Venice, masterpieces of that Christian sculpture which came to its birth at Pola when, at Ravenna, the art of carving had already been lost. And the Church of San Francesco had only just been built—that jewel of Venetian Gothic Architecture, simple, severe, and nude in general effect, with the wealth of ornament only displayed on the front in the portal set into a kind of niche, entirely clothed with the most beautiful carvings, deep-cut sprays of foliage and little twisted columns. Austria dishonored it as a clothing warehouse for her navy; but it is now the Lapidario and the Museum of all the Pagan and Christian memorials of Pola. What a contrast between the character of history and that of art during this third century after the year thousand! The cities of the Istrian coast, having passed at the end of the Byzantine domination in 1209 under the patriarchs of Aquileia, shake off the unbearable yoke and swear faith to Venice. All these maritime cities have a crown of walls and towers to defend their little ports shut in between the houses and the forest of sails.

These cities are the first to give the greeting of the mother-country to the Crusaders as they go sailing back toward Venice—and among them is Parenzo, Parenzo with her marvelous basilica erected in the sixth century by Bishop Euphrasius, who lavished upon it all the treasures of Byzantine art.

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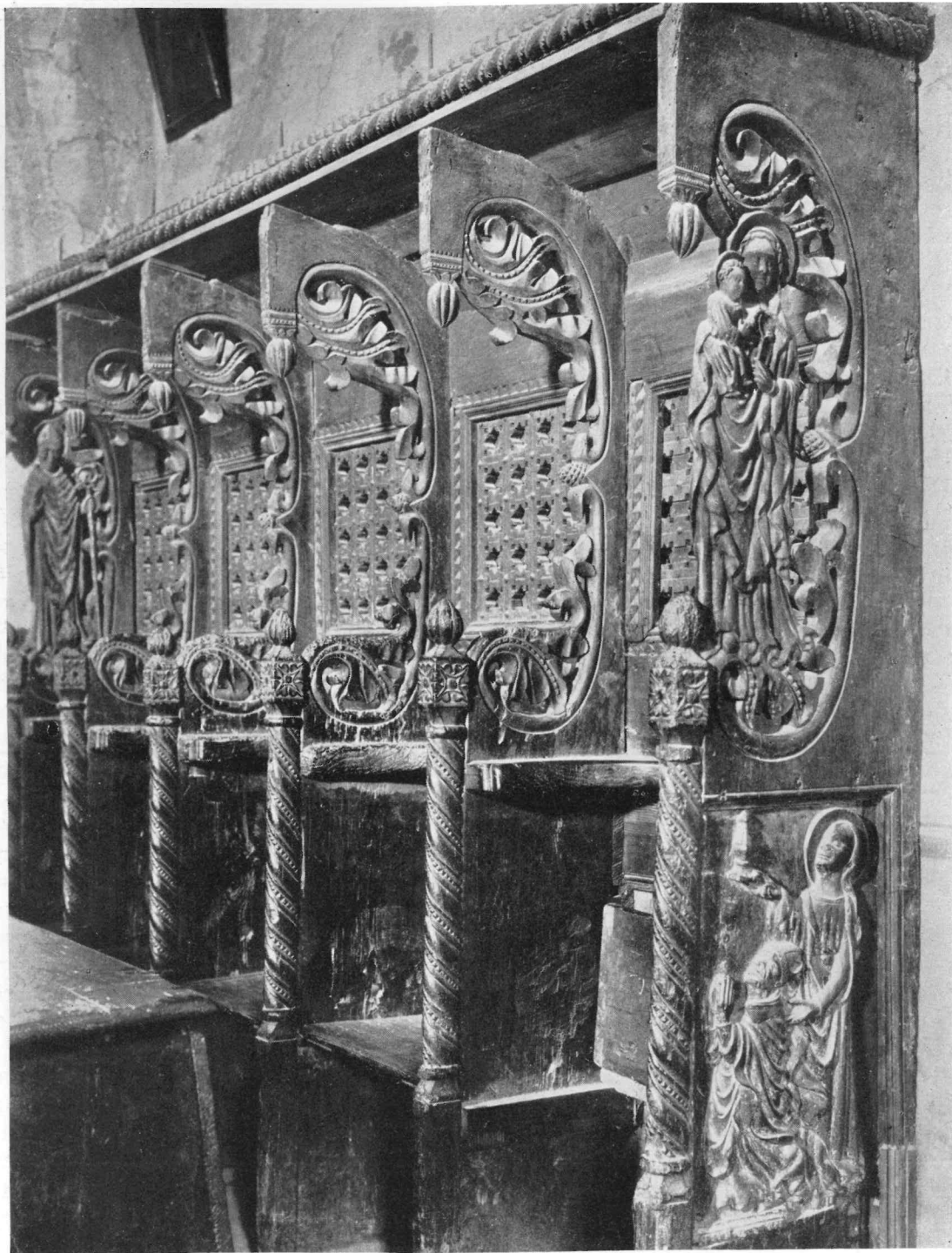


Fig. 4. Choir stalls in the basilica at Parenzo. XV Century Italian wood-carving.

Facing west, preceded by a quadriportico and the baptistry, this church lifts its mosaic incrustated façade above the atrium. [Fig. 3] The interior has three naves and two rows of columns with capitals in various styles, some almost imitating those of San Vitale at Ravenna, others those of Santa Sophia, others are in composite style. The walls of the apse are incrustated with porphyry, mother-of-pearl and serpentine taken from the near-by temple of Neptune, of which only the basement remains. The bishop's throne is in the centre of the apse, and high up, above the calote, gleams a glass tessellated mosaic with a gold ground, representing the Virgin and the Patrons, like those in the churches at Ravenna. Before the apse is the ciborium over the high altar, erected in 1277 with sixth century columns and capitals; and added to it is the superb baldachin with those marvelous mosaics, executed perhaps by the same workmen who decorated the golden fields in the atrium of San Marco. [Frontispiece and Fig. 4.]

The first signs of oggee architecture assert themselves in the XIV century—long left to the churches and cloisters. This new art issues forth to make the life of the *municipii* and the citizens beautiful and free. Moreover, the Town Halls, proclaiming the new power of Venice, raise towers and build loggia beside them, for it is now the time for public meetings and harangues.

Venetian Gothic architecture extends the use of balconies on private houses, and garlands the windows in the receding arches with bouquets of foliage, dividing them in double lights with small spiral columns. The houses at Parenzo are all a perfect joy and there is one at Pirano that has a motto expressing disdain of gossips:—*Lassa pur dir* (just let them talk.) [Fig. 5.]

Pointed-arch architecture has now in 1400 become a type of national Istrian Art. The Duomo of Muggia still preserves its façade with the great sixteen-mullioned rose window with a little Madonna set like a gem in the center. And the Cathedral at Capo d'Istria, reconstructed in 1445, has three great arches carried upon foliated capitals that support little pinnacles with saints standing in niches. The upper part, in the Lombard style, was finished in 1598. Like these of the coast, the inland cities have also received the imprint of Venice—Montona and Albona and Pisino are gems still enclosed in their Venetian setting. You find the symbol and seal of Venetian sovereignty on every hand.

The lion of St. Mark arose in the XIV century to cancel and replace the arms of the patriarchs of Aquileia; and each repeats words of Faith and Justice, like those carved on the lion of the tower at Parenzo: *Fate giustizia e daro pace al vostro paese* (Execute justice and I will give peace to your land). And, with peace, art renders the hand of the humblest workman more skilful; while the goldsmiths apply themselves to fusing and chiseling gold and silver (and the chalices, crosses and silver altarpieces in the Istrian churches number a thousand), painting issues from its humble station and decorates the churches of Capo d'Istria and Pirano with canvases and frescoes, such as those by Cima da Conegliano, Bernardo Parentino, and Vittore Carpaccio. But the wars between Venice and Austria, pestilences in 1600, and the bloody piracy of the Usocchi leave these flourishing cities of Venezia Giulia deserted and ruinous. This explains why Venice herself, after having beautified these cities with monuments, should have despoiled them of their marbles and columns.



Fig. 5. Pirano—The house that has the motto "Lassa pur dir." An example of pointed-arch architecture.

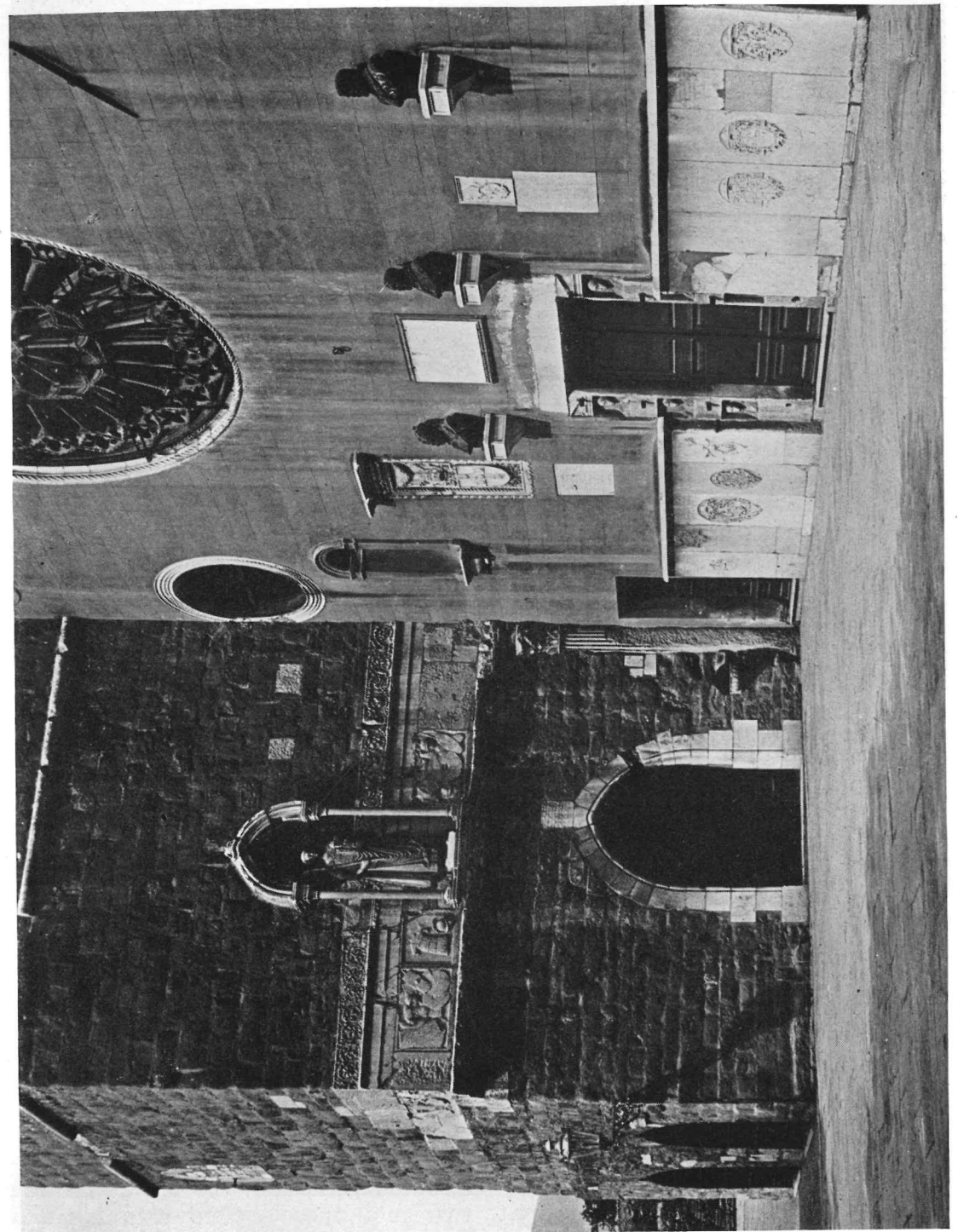


Fig. 6. Trieste—The entrance of the Basilica of St. Giusto.



Fig. 7. A detail of the pavement and mosaic in the basilica of Bishop Theodore at Aquileia.

Iacopo Sansovino, the clever architect of the library and loggetta of San Marco was charged to transport marbles from Pola to Venice; and he thought: "Even Rome would be happy to be despoiled of her marvelous marble vestment in order that Venice—*alma et sacra* like herself may adorn herself with them." So the columns from the Basilica of Santa Maria del Canneto at Pola are now on the stairway of the Library of San Marco at Venice.

At Trieste, however, nothing speaks of Venice. It is the Rome of Augustus that is ever present here within the towered circle of the walls with the arch Riccardo at the beginning of the street

that leads from the port up to the capitol. And, on the summit of the hills,—as in the *Urbs*—are the citadel and the Capitoline Temple, some columns from which are in the bell-tower of "San Giusto," the ancient sanctuary which contains in its complex architectural lines a treasure of memories and reflections, the whole history of the city from the time of the Romans to the adventurous Napoleonic epoch.

The Basilica of San Giusto is a delicious building, like all buildings that display evidences of an ingenious art and the succession of the ages. Constructed in the XIV century by uniting two small, more ancient, churches, and finished with stone brought from Rome

(the portal is in fact decorated with busts of the Barbi family), it was dedicated to the soldier-martyr San Giusto, whose story is told with the vivacious narrative realism of the Gothic school in the frescoes of the apse and left nave. In them dominates the figure of the saint, rather Byzantine in character, who protects and holds in close embrace an exact image of the city surrounded with walls. But the great glory of San Giusto is the mosaics; belonging to the last Latin period, still pure and virile, are the figures of the twelve Apostles; of the last Byzantine period, still very brilliant with gems and gold, are the Virgin and the Child; while in the upper calote of the apse, the martyrs San Giusto and San Servolo on either side of the Redeemer represent this art about the year 1000. It would seem in fact that all the ages have left traces of themselves in this Basilica which invoke the voices of the past in the most diverse forms of architecture and art. The Roman Temple, the primitive basilica, the Byzantine mosaics, the XIV century arch, the elongated Romanesque statue of San Giusto, the unequal columns of the Barbarian epoch, the Barocco frescoes of Quaglia are so many signs and pledges left by the ages in one solemn monument. And yet what bizarre harmony composes this ingenuous but solemn disorder! [Fig. 6]

Aquileia also leads us back to Rome. This colony—Latin by right, the most northern in Italy—has this year attained the twenty-first centenary of her foundation and has celebrated it by her reunion with the Italy of Augustus. And, while Rome donated the Capitoline wolf, we, with the help of the soldiers who fought on the Carso, have discovered the marvelous remains of the second basilica of Bishop Theodore, built in the IV century to celebrate the

idea of Christianity. The new basilica forms a pendant to the one found some years ago beneath the pavement of the present basilica which was erected by the warrior Patriarch Popone in 1200. [Figs. 7, 8.]

Both these basilicas, partly covered by later buildings, have magnificent mosaics, and reproduce the earliest conception of the Christian basilica without apse, and without altar or throne for the bishop. They form two vast sumptuous halls, each measuring 37 by 17 meters, with three naves, and frescoed walls. Perhaps Saint Ambrose presided here over the famous Council of Aquileia. If the interest of Popone's basilica is shown by the majesty and strength of the architectural lines, these two of Bishop Theodore boast the beauty of their mosaics. These mosaics, still Roman in technique and style and grandeur of conception, express and illustrate with admirable force, if not with entire perfection, the new idea of Christianity. The fresh, elegant ornaments are intertwined in prodigal variety about the Cross, which lends the artist the fundamental motive of decoration. Iconography is already rich in presenting the Christian conception, yet it still resorts to symbolism in order to exact faith, and Christian art borrows the freshest, most vivid hints and motives from the glorious traditions of pagan mosaics, that the new idea of Christ may find a rich, noble expression in these forms of a well-developed art.

From this art are born the symbols of faith; the cock struggling with the tortoise, the goat, the nest of doves, the ornamental garlands of grape-vines and birds in colored enamel all expressed with unwonted freshness and vibrating energy. This basilica, in which the mosaic is an apostrophe to Bishop

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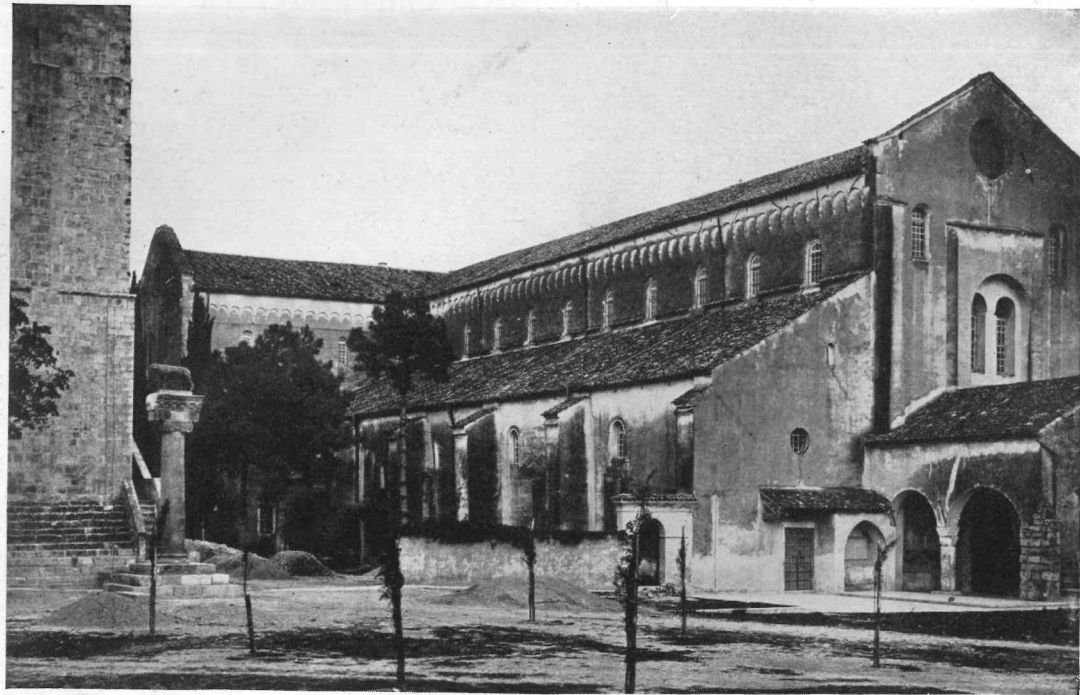


Fig. 8. Aquileia—The Basilica of the Patriarch Popone.

Theodore, was perhaps a school for catechumens, if not, indeed, the actual residence of the Bishop. This mosaic is certainly one of the largest, richest and best preserved of early Christian art. The work of excavation, executed by the Italian army, has been followed by a permanent system of preservation; and the whole mosaic has been protected by a flat cement arch which forms a complete canopy over it.

At Grado, the outermost island of the Venetian Lagune, the younger sister of Aquileia who received and preserved her memorials for four hundred years, transmitting them to Venice—at Grado also, an excavation I myself made, has given us a beautiful mosaic pavement belonging to a sixth century structure of Bishop Elia, the builder of the basilica. This new mosaic, on which is inscribed: *Servus Jesu Christi Helias Episcopus sanctae Aquileiensis Ecclesiae*

tibi serviens fecit, formed the pavement of a *diaconium*, a kind of sacristy in which the Bishop received. It has a beautiful ornamental motive designed in circles, and displays a representation of the *cathedra episcopalis* and the names and titles of the donors, who did the work at their own expense. This mosaic is to form the pavement of a room in the Treasury at Grado, one of the richest in the world, containing examples of fifth century goldsmith's art.

So, this whole region of Venezia Giulia, sacred to the Italy of Augustus, has now returned to New Italy with all her monuments and all the memorials of ancient splendor and greatness; it returns to form part of the artistic and archaeological patrimony of the nation. And for its history, art and natural beauty it merits the interest, study and love of all the world that loves beauty—the beauty of Rome and Venice. *Rome, Italy.*

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