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Ducal display and the contested use of space in late sixteenth-century Venetian coronation festivals

van Gelder, M.

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Occasions of State

Early Modern European Festivals
and the Negotiation of Power

Edited by J.R. Mulryne,
Krista De Jonge, R.L.M. Morris
and Pieter Martens

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9 Ducal display and the contested use of space in late sixteenth-century Venetian coronation festivals

Maartje van Gelder

In April 1597, the Ducal Palace in Venice was turned completely inside out. The palace functioned as both the seat of government and the residence of the doge. Under ordinary circumstances, its offices were the domain of members of the patriciate or political elite as well as secretaries, notaries and other bureaucrats – essentially a secondary elite – drawn from the ranks of the *cittadini* (citizens). Yet on Monday, 28 April 1597, patricians and *cittadini* had to make way for ordinary Venetians, or *popolani*, a category that included everyone who had no formal political role other than that of subject.¹ That Monday, patrician magistrates handed the keys to their offices over to members of the guilds; two days later, eighty patrician judges abandoned their law courts, fleeing the noise and disturbance produced by the guilds carrying out benches that normally provided seating for more than one thousand members of the patrician Great Council. Other councils had to relocate from one end of the palace to the other so that their rooms could be used as storage space for silverware, tapestries and other furnishings.² The guilds had a week to prepare their festivities surrounding the ceremonial coronation of Dogaressa Morosina Morosini (1545–1614), wife of Doge Marino Grimani (1532–1605). (See Plates 7 and 8.)

Venice has often been described as an urban theatre, with the waters of the canals and the lagoon lending a special theatrical quality to its striking festivals and ceremonies.³ Perhaps no other festival has attracted as much

1 At the end of the sixteenth century, Venice had circa 170,000 inhabitants. The percentage of patricians was roughly 8 per cent, but the boundaries of the *cittadini* class are less clear. The vast majority of Venetians belonged to the category of the *popolani*. On the social categories in Venetian society, see Anna Bellavitis, 'Family and Society', in Eric R. Dursteler (ed.), *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400–1797* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 317–51.

2 Giovanni Rota, *Lettera nella quale si descrive l'ingresso della Serenissima Morosina Morosini Grimani Principessa di Vinetia: co' la cerimonia della Rosa benedetta, mandatala à donare dalla Santità del Nostro Signore* (Venice: Gio. Anto. Rampazetto, 1597), fol. A3v.

3 Venice, *città excelentissima: Selections from the Renaissance Diaries of Marin Sanudo*, eds Patricia H. Labalme and Laura Sanguineti White; trans. Linda L. Carroll (Baltimore: Johns

attention as that organised for Morosina Morosini's coronation on 4, 5 and 6 May 1597.⁴ It was an exceptionally extravagant affair that in many ways jarred with Venetian republican civic culture. The ducal couple used the festival's architecture and decorative programme to present what was effectively a regal image.⁵ The event impressed many thousands of spectators from Venice and beyond, while the doge made sure that printed festival books, paintings, engravings and other material objects kept its memory alive long afterwards.⁶ Both the unique character of the festival and the abundance of sources have aroused significant scholarly interest. The rich descriptions by Giovanni Rota, Dario Tuzio and Giovanni Stringa, especially, have been mined by those interested in Venetian ceremonial culture or in the figure of the dogaressa, a rare female presence in the realm of Venetian political culture.⁷ Edward Muir focused on the festival's message of ducal ambition, which clashed with the notion of the doge as an elected *primus inter pares* rather than a dynastic ruler. To Muir, the ceremony was

Hopkins University Press, 2008), p. 487; Bronwen Wilson, 'Venice, Print, and the Early Modern Icon', *Urban History* 33/1 (2006), 39. On Venetian festivals, see, for example, Margherita Azzi Visentini, 'Festival of State: The Scenography of Power in Late Renaissance and Baroque Venice', in Sarah Bonnemaison and Christine Macy (eds), *Festival Architecture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 74–128; Iain Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City: History, Memory and Myth in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007); Matteo Casini, *I gesti del principe: La festa politica a Firenze e Venezia in età rinascimentale* (Venice: Marsilio, 1996); Patricia Fortini Brown, 'Measured Friendship, Calculated Pomp: The Ceremonial Welcomes of the Venetian Republic', in Barbara Wisch and Susan Scott Munshower (eds), *'All the World's a Stage...': Art and Pageantry in the Renaissance and Early Baroque. Vol. 1 Triumphal Celebrations and the Rituals of Statecraft* (Pennsylvania, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1990), pp. 136–86; Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Lina Padoan Urban, 'Apparati scenografici nelle feste veneziane cinquecentesche', *Arte Veneta* 23 (1969), 145–55.

⁴ See, for instance, Pompeo Molmenti, *La Dogaressa di Venezia* (Turin: Roux e Favale, 1884), pp. 305–25; Muir, *Civic Ritual*, pp. 293–6; Bronwen Wilson, 'Il bel sesso e l'austero Senat: The Coronation of Dogaressa Morosina Morosini Grimani', *Renaissance Quarterly* 52/1 (1999), 73–139; Maximilian Tondro, 'Memory and Tradition: The Ephemeral Architecture for the Triumphal Entries of the Dogaressa of Venice in 1557 and 1597' (Ph.D thesis, University of Cambridge, 2002). On the dogaressa as a political figure, Holly Hurlburt, *The Dogaressa of Venice, 1200–1500: Wife and Icon* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

⁵ Muir, 'Images of Power: Art and Pageantry in Renaissance Venice', *The American Historical Review* 84/1 (1979), 47–8.

⁶ An overview of relevant sources and images can be found in Lina Padoan Urban, 'Feste ufficiali e trattenimenti privati', in Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi (eds), *Storia della cultura veneta. Il Seicento*, 2 vols (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1983), vol. 1, pp. 576–7.

⁷ Rota, *Lettera*; Dario Tuzio, *Ordine et modo tenuto nell'incoronazione della Serenissima Moresina Grimani Dogaressa di Venetia l'anno MDXCVII. adi 4 di Maggio. Con le feste, e giochi fatti, etc* (Venice: Nicolò Peri, 1597); and *Venetia città nobilissima, et singolare, descritta in XIII. libri da M. Francesco Sansovino et hora con molta diligenza corretta, emendata, e più d'un terzo di cose nuove ampliata dal M.R.D. Giovanni Stringa* (Venice: A. Salicato, 1604), fols 280r–90r and 431v–2v. For the role of the dogaressa in Venetian political ceremony, Wilson, 'Il bel sesso'.

also proof of the increasingly elitist character of Venetian sixteenth-century ritual: no fishmonger or gondolier could have understood the classical epigrams and highbrow allegories embedded in the decorative programme.⁸ In this interpretation, the main active involvement of guild members and other *popolani* was in the festival's preparations; their role as spectators during the event itself was of less importance.

Undoubtedly the doge and his wife used the festival to flaunt their ambitions with an audience of fellow patricians in mind. This chapter argues, however, that through its strategic use of space the festival also projected a message explicitly aimed at the thousands of spectators who were not part of Venice's political or cultural elite. The top-down model of festivals, ceremonies and rituals produced by an elite for a mute and largely passive audience consisting of – in Muir's words – the 'disenfranchised masses', has been replaced by one in which such events are seen as acts of communication, often conveying multiple messages, open to multiple interpretations, to multiple audiences.⁹ It is difficult, often impossible, to understand how spectators, both educated and uneducated, experienced and interpreted festivals.¹⁰ The 1597 coronation festival for Dogaressa Morosina Morosini, however, can be read as not just a statement of patrician ambition but also an *explicit* commentary on pressing social and political issues that involved the broader Venetian population.¹¹

In contrast to earlier discussions of the festival, I will focus less on the dogaressa and more on the doge. This is not to say that Morosina Morosini did not have an exceptional role in the festival and probably also in its planning. By all accounts, Marino Grimani wanted to organise a feast that would do justice to his beloved wife of almost forty years, and she was its dazzling central figure.¹² The doge, by contrast, was in visual terms almost

⁸ Muir, 'Images of Power', 51. Similarly: Padoan Urban, 'Apparati', 145, 154.

⁹ See, for instance, Peter Burke, *Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and the introduction to Melissa Calaresu, Filippo de Vivo and Joan-Pau Rubiés (eds), *Exploring Cultural History: Essays in Honour of Peter Burke* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010).

¹⁰ Henry Zerner, 'Looking for the Unknowable: The Visual Experience of Renaissance Festivals', in J.R. Mulryne, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly and Margaret Shewring (eds), *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), vol. 1, pp. 93–5. For an attempt at understanding the audience's reception of rituals, see Maria José del Río Barredo, 'Rituals of the Viaticum: Dynasty and Community in Habsburg Madrid', in Melissa Calaresu, Filippo de Vivo and Joan-Pau Rubiés (eds), *Exploring Cultural History: Essays in Honour of Peter Burke* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 55–76.

¹¹ For festivals as implicit commentaries on social and economic assumptions and practices, see J.R. Mulryne, 'Introduction', in J.R. Mulryne and Elizabeth Goldring (eds), *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance: Art, Politics and Performance* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), p. 1.

¹² According to the letters of papal nuncio Antonio Maria Gratiani, Biblioteca Museo Correr – Venezia (hereafter: BMC), Codice Morosini Grimani 358, c. 247.

completely absent: in a (failed) attempt to prevent dynastic posturing, strict regulations forbade the couple from appearing side by side during the festivities. To understand fully the social and political implications of the modifications, ephemeral and permanent, made to Venetian urban space – outside and inside the Ducal Palace, on land and on water – Doge Marino Grimani deserves a more prominent role in the analysis.¹³

Although numerous scholars have examined the decorative and iconographic character of the 1597 festival, they have not looked behind the scenes. Yet the private archive of the Grimani–Morosini family holds a rich cache of financial records and cashbooks, which allows us to do just that.¹⁴ Meticulously kept by the doge himself, the many pages of expenses throw light on the planning and construction of the festival and hence on Grimani's agenda. The goal here, though, is not merely to point out a lacuna in the source material, but to argue that neglecting the financial records is symptomatic of a tendency to study the 1597 festival as an isolated event: the coronation of Morosina Morosini has become unmoored from its Venetian ceremonial counterpart, the ducal *incoronazione* of 1595 and the social and political context of the last decades of the sixteenth century. By incorporating an analysis of the family's financial records and by recontextualising the dogaressa's coronation, this chapter shows how the festival's ephemeral architecture, decorative programme and popular entertainment temporarily altered the social and political meaning of Venice's central urban and ceremonial space. The change was not uncontested, yet Grimani was able to sidestep patrician opposition by choosing an alternative, but equally central, location for one of the most spectacular elements of the festival.

Doge Grimani's coronation, 1595: chaos in place of order

Giovanni Rota wrote the most detailed and authoritative account of Dogaressa Morosina's coronation festival. He probably had access to the organisers or might have been one of the event's planners himself.¹⁵ Before starting to describe the 1597 coronation, however, Rota first takes the readers of his festival book back to the election of Doge Marino Grimani two years earlier, in April 1595. After Doge Pasquale Cicogna's death at the start of that

month, Rota tells us, the ensuing ducal election lasted a record-breaking four weeks. Among the ducal candidates was Marino Grimani, a patrician known for his charitable nature and donations of bread to the hungry. The Venetian sixteenth century was characterised by cyclical scarcity and epidemics, and in 1595 the city-state was in the grip of a famine that had started almost a decade earlier.¹⁶ Unsurprisingly, the generous Grimani was the most popular candidate among the majority of Venetians, a majority that had no formal say in the election. When finally, on 26 April, Grimani became the new doge, popular enthusiasm was overwhelming.

While ordinary Venetians hoped that Grimani would use his powers to guarantee a stable bread supply, many of his patrician peers suspected the new doge of demagoguery. In theory, Venetian doges exercised very little power in the Venetian Republic: laws and regulations circumscribed their role, reducing the dogeship to a mostly representative office. Each new doge had to take the ducal oath or *promissione*, which was adjusted and expanded before every ducal election. The *promissione* dictated, for example, that the doge was not allowed to open his own correspondence. All his verbal and written communications were closely supervised, he could not receive foreign visitors unattended or leave the city without permission and his sons could not hold office. Yet, at the same time, the doge was the symbolic representative of the Venetian state and deeply involved in the daily business of government, which meant that a strong doge did have ways to influence the political direction of the Republic.¹⁷ Grimani's fellow patricians were apprehensive of how he might employ his popularity.

What disturbed them even more was that Grimani's election was followed by an exceptional outburst of collective euphoria among ordinary Venetians, which came close to rebellious disorder. According to Rota, a pro-Grimani author, the celebrations were the biggest and most enthusiastic in Venetian history.¹⁸ The city exploded with joy: people 'as if moved to rapture by ecstasy and out of control with happiness, abandoned their homes, shops, squares and their own businesses', converging on the Ducal Palace, singing and shouting in praise of the new doge. The continuous ringing of church bells created a deafening noise, fireworks exploded and people lit bonfires on the Grand Canal and in every square and street, 'so that it seemed as if Venice was going up in flames'. A large crowd wanted to congratulate Grimani in the Ducal Palace, but its doors were kept shut as a precaution. What Rota fails to mention, but what other evidence shows, is that at that

13 Giuseppe Gullino, 'Marino Grimani', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 59 (2003). ([www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/marino-grimani_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/marino-grimani_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)).

14 Art historians have used the cashbooks to reconstruct Grimani's art patronage; see Michel Hochmann, 'Le mécénat de Marino Grimani. Tintoret, Palma le Jeune, Jacopo Bassano, Giulio le Moro et le décor du Palais Grimani; Veronése et Vittoria à San Giuseppe', *Revue de l'Art* 95 (1992), 41–51; Wladimir Timofiewitsch, 'Quellen und Forschungen zum Prunkgrab des Dogen Marino Grimani in San Giuseppe di Castello zu Venedig', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 11/1 (1963), 33–54.

15 Rota, *Lettera*, fol. [H4r]. Rota finished his description a mere ten days after the event, on 16 May 1597. On the differences between the contemporary descriptions, see Tondro, 'Memory and Tradition', pp. 68–72.

16 Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State to 1620* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), especially pp. 356–67, 544–5.

17 Robert Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1980), pp. 109–23.

18 Rota, *Lettera*, fol. [B1v]: '... li maggiori, et li più affettuosi, che in alcun tempo si dimostrassero mai per altro Prencipe'.

point joy at Grimani's election turned to frustration and vandalism. Market stalls and government property at Rialto and San Marco were smashed to pieces, and the debris was used to feed two enormous bonfires.¹⁹ All night people continued to shout and sing in the streets, lighting fires and setting off fireworks, in a festive frenzy that bordered on the riotous.²⁰

Destructive and unchecked revelry is not usually associated with Venice: contemporaries praised the *Serenissima* ('the most serene one') for its political and social stability, while historians have argued that Venetian feasts and rituals played an important part in the popular acceptance of patrician rule.²¹ Yet patricians seem to have been conscious of, and also frequently worried about, outbursts of popular disorder.²² The day after Grimani's election, however, *popolani* fervour was brought under control by the traditional and structured ceremonies of the ducal coronation.²³ The first of three coronation stages took place in the Basilica di San Marco, where the doge was presented to the community of Venetians. The Basilica had a dual function as both the doge's private chapel and the city's most prominent church, home to the body of its patron saint. The Piazza di San Marco formed the background to the coronation's second stage, which consisted of the doge tossing coins to the crowds, a ritual known as the *sparsio*. Grimani and his male relatives threw some 1,400 ducats to the assembled people, while his wife and daughters threw another 200 ducats from the windows of the Ducal Palace. These sums went well beyond what was customary on such occasions; Grimani's own *promissione* had stipulated the distribution of only one hundred ducats.²⁴ The third and final part of the coronation took place on the *Scala dei Giganti* (Stairway of the Giants) in the courtyard of the Ducal Palace, where the doge was crowned first with the *camauro*, the white skullcap, and then with the *corno*, his embroidered crown.²⁵ (See Figure 9.1.)

19 BMC, Codice Cicogna 2479; Archivio di Stato di Venezia (hereafter: ASV), Deliberazioni, Terra, filza 135, c. 211–12.

20 According to the report by Juan de Zornoza, ambassador for Parma, Archivio di Stato di Parma, busta 615 (1579–1599) Venezia, 29 April 1595.

21 This is one of the main arguments of Muir, *Civic Ritual*. See also Robert C. Davis, *The War of the Fists: Popular Culture and Public Violence in Late Renaissance Venice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) and Florence Alazard, *Art vocal, art de gouverner: la musique, le prince et la cité en Italie du Nord 1560–1610* (Paris: Minerve, 2002).

22 Finlay, *Politics*, p. 55.

23 Andrea da Mosto, *I dogi di Venezia nella vita pubblica e vita privata* (Florence: A. Martello, 1977), pp. XXII–XXXI; Padoan Urban, 'Feste ufficiali', p. 575; Muir, *Civic Ritual*, pp. 281–2. The Gabrieli Consort & Players have reconstructed and recorded the music for Grimani's coronation mass celebrated in San Marco a day later, on 28 April 1595.

24 On *promissioni*, see Muir, *Civic Ritual*, p. 286 and Da Mosto, *I dogi*, p. XXV. For Grimani's *promissione*, see BMC, F.2409, Promissione Marino Grimani 1595.

25 Over the centuries it was the *camauro*, not the crown, that took on a sacred significance, Muir, *Civic Ritual*, pp. 281–2.

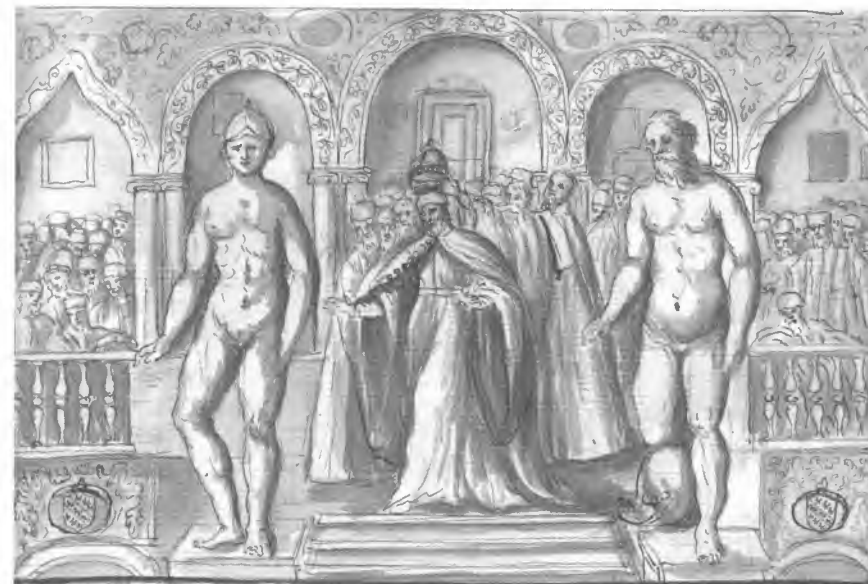


Figure 9.1 Sketch of Doge Grimani's coronation.

© Museo Correr, Venezia, Cod. Morosini-Grimani, Origine della famiglia Morosina, 270, c.65.

Traditionally, the coronation was followed by festivities that could be more or less lavish, depending on each doge's personal preferences. Grimani went all out. He spent a staggering seven thousand ducats in total, paying for the *sparsio*, but also for celebratory banquets, musicians, decorations for his family palace and, of course, charitable donations.²⁶ To put these amounts into perspective: a skilled craftsman working in the Arsenal shipyard in this period was paid the equivalent of fifty ducats per year.²⁷ The sum of roughly five hundred ducats the new doge spent on distributing bread and wine throughout the entire city was what impressed ordinary Venetians most. Their hopes for a generous head of state were fulfilled, and shouts of 'Viva, viva' greeted Grimani for months afterwards.²⁸ Yet

26 ASV, Archivio Privato Grimani-Barbarigo (hereafter: APGB), busta 33, c. 343v–6v. Also G. Giomo, 'Le spese del nobile uomo Marino Grimani nella sua elezione a doge di Venezia', *Archivio veneto* XXXIII (1887), 443–54, which is based on another version of the expenses from a separate, now lost, register.

27 Frederic C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 333. Also Brian Pullan, 'Wage-Earners and the Venetian Economy, 1550–1630', *The Economic History Review* 16/3 (1964), 407–26.

28 British Library, Add. 8581, 'Chronicle of Venice', c. 736r.

in a city-state where ducal charity was supposed to be altruistic and in conformity with traditional restrictions, such actions did not put his peers at ease.

Organising the 1597 festival

The Venetian populace fully expected the dogaressa's coronation to take place shortly after Grimani's own election; instead, the event was delayed for two years. Most scholars have attributed the delay to his patrician opponents, who were afraid that Grimani's spending power would turn the dogaressa's coronation into an unprecedented glorification of his family.²⁹ Whereas the ducal coronation was strictly circumscribed, there were hardly any regulations concerning the *incoronazione* of a dogaressa, primarily because of its rarity. The only other coronation of a dogaressa in the sixteenth century had taken place forty years earlier, in 1557, to honour Zilia Dandolo, while another hundred years separated the Dandolo coronation from the previous one.³⁰ The Republic's official ceremony books (*cerimoniali*) contained no information on dogaressa coronations, which caused the organisers in 1557 to wonder what the ceremony should actually entail.³¹ The lack of regulations allowed for a great deal of freedom, which would explain patrician nervousness about leaving the event in the hands of a popular doge, whose penchant for ostentation was matched by his spending power. Instead of consolidating Venetian social relations, the festival might have just the opposite effect.

The delay, however, seems to have been the doge's own decision. Both Rota and Tuzio stress that it was Grimani himself who kept postponing the event. His concern for the 'public good' forced him to wait until the availability of food supplies could feed not just the city itself, but also all the Italian and foreign visitors.³² Finally, in the spring of 1597, the urban warehouses were sufficiently full. Whereas the festivities organised by Grimani in 1595 had been primarily an improvised reaction to the outcome of an uncertain election, marred by unprecedented spontaneous celebrations on the streets, this time the ducal couple had had two years to plan.

On the one hand, the 1597 coronation of the dogaressa would consist of elements that echoed the ducal coronation – the dogaressa, for instance, would be presented with the *promissione*, which she would swear to uphold. On the other hand, it would incorporate elements already present in the Dandolo festival: the guilds would decorate the Ducal Palace, the dogaressa would make the symbolic *translatio* from the family palace to the Ducal Palace in the *Bucintoro* and she would entertain hundreds of patrician and *cittadini* women. But most importantly it would be an occasion of unprecedented lavishness and a demonstration of the ducal couple's political agenda.

One potentially inflammatory element was the presentation of the Golden Rose, a personal gift from Pope Clement VIII to Morosina Morosini. In the final decades of the sixteenth century, Venetian-papal relations were increasingly strained, and an important contingent of Venetian patricians was highly suspicious of Rome. Eventually these tensions would develop into the open conflict known as the Interdict (1606–1607). Marino Grimani had always been known as an advocate of a pro-papal course.³³ Despite protests from Leonardo Donà (1536–1612), a patrician who belonged to the anti-Habsburg and anti-papal camp, and the most vocal of Grimani's opponents, a special representative of the pope presented the Rose to the dogaressa on the third day of the festival in the Basilica.³⁴

The donation of the Golden Rose was a highlight of the Grimani-Morosini festival, but the entire event was filled with numerous other ceremonies, processions and banquets.³⁵ When examining the festival's organisation, most attention has been devoted to the forty young patricians in charge of the entertainment for the nobility or to the efforts of the guilds. Traditionally, the dogaressa was the patroness of Venice's artisanal guilds, which is why they were given the task of decorating the Ducal Palace, building festival structures on the Piazza San Marco and organising a fleet of decorated boats to accompany the *Bucintoro*, the state galley transporting Morosina Morosini.³⁶ (See Plate 9.) When Grimani met with the guilds before the festival, he stressed that they should do what they could while spending as little as possible, given the difficult economic times.³⁷ Although several poorer

29 Da Mosto, *I dogi*, p. 315, suggests it was part of Grimani's *promissione*. Although the *promissione* contains no such condition, most scholars have followed Da Mosto, see Muir, *Civic Ritual*, p. 293; Hochmann, 'Le mécénat', p. 42; Casini *I gesti*, p. 302; Wilson, 'Il bel sesso', p. 83.

30 Many, but not all, sixteenth-century doges were unmarried or widowers. War and outbreaks of the plague had also prevented dogaressa coronations from taking place; see Casini, *I gesti*, pp. 290–303; Molmenti, *La Dogaressa*, pp. 278–9 and Hurlburt, *The Dogaressa*.

31 Tondro, 'Memory and Tradition', p. 66; *Venetia città nobilissima*, fols 275r–8v; Muir, *Civic Ritual*, p. 292.

32 Rota, *Lettera*, fol. [A2r–v]; Tuzio, *Ordine et modo*, p. 4.

33 Molmenti, *La dogaressa*, p. 322. BMC, Codice Morosini Grimani 358, c.243–7.

34 BMC, *Codice Morosini Grimani* 358, c. 248. For a recent and brief description of political tensions within the patriciate, Alfredo Viggiano, 'Politics and Constitution', in Eric R. Dursteler (ed.), *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400–1797* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), p. 59. As a starting point for the historiography on Donà, see Gaetano Cozzi, 'Leonardo Donà (Donati, Donato)', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 40 (1991). ([www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/leonardo-dona_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/leonardo-dona_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)).

35 For more details, see Rota, *Lettera* and Tuzio, *Ordine*.

36 Muir, *Civic Ritual*, pp. 293–4. For the role of the guilds, see especially George McClure, *The Culture of Profession in Late Renaissance Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp. 163–72.

37 *Venetia, città nobilissima*, fol. 280v.

guilds asked to be released from their obligations, guilds overall spent a considerable amount of money.³⁸

The lion's share of the festival's costs, however, was borne by the doge himself, who spent close to 6,000 ducats in the process, almost matching the cost of his own coronation. The Grimani–Morosini cashbooks show payments to Venetian retailers who provided Morosina Morosini's festive clothing, including three ducal crowns (probably one for each day) as well as clothes for her female retinue and for her two dwarfs. Grimani also paid for musicians and a series of regattas, and for the food, drink, cooks and other staff for the various banquets. He hired hundreds of additional chairs, stools and beds, while other expenses included commemorative medals with Morosina's image, gifts of money and luxury goods, fireworks and decorations.³⁹

Grimani's control was not, however, just financial. His own *cavaliere* or master of ceremonies, Salustio Gnechi, was in charge of overseeing the entire event. It was Gnechi, for instance, who allocated the rooms in the Ducal Palace to the various guilds.⁴⁰ His primary task, it emerges, was to supervise the adornment of the architectural cluster formed by the Palace, the Piazza San Marco, the Piazzetta and the Basilica di San Marco. Civic and liturgical rituals had tied these spaces together since the earliest centuries of the Venetian Republic, amalgamating them into the centre of Venice's 'devotional and political geography'.⁴¹ It was over the use of this highly charged space that the ducal couple clashed harshly with their patrician peers.

Jousting in the piazza

The dogaressa and the doge drew up plans for a grandiose jousting tournament in the Piazza San Marco, something for which they initially received permission.⁴² For centuries, tournaments had been an occasion for Europe's ruling dynasties to shine. By the late sixteenth century, tournaments had evolved from a military sport into the theatrical enactment of a joust, while continuing to form part of royal entries, coronations and weddings.⁴³ In Venice, jousts had been a standard part of festivities in the thirteenth and

fourteenth centuries. In 1253, for instance, a jousting tournament was organised in the Piazza for a ducal coronation. In contrast to jousts in dynastic states, these jousts were mostly an exercise for Venice's military forces instead of an opportunity for the local elite to show off. Although nobles of other states often ridiculed Venetian patricians for their poor horsemanship, the republican ideal will have been the main reason for their lack of engagement in equestrian pursuits.⁴⁴ The jousts' popularity with Venetian spectators and their potential for inciting rowdy behaviour, however, caused the authorities to impose stricter control at the end of the fourteenth century.⁴⁵ The last serious joust was held in Venice around 1500, but the practice continued in the cities on the *Terraferma*, which were close to Venetian military encampments.⁴⁶ Perhaps Grimani, who had served as governor of the main *Terraferma* cities, had witnessed a few of these tournaments himself.

By the time of Morosina's coronation, no joust had been held in the Piazza for almost a century. To revitalise this tradition, with its clear link to dynastic rule and military leadership, the ducal couple sought the assistance of the captain-general of Venice's infantry, the noble mercenary Giovanni Battista Bourbon del Monte (1541–1614). At the start of April 1597, Grimani sent a courier to the *Terraferma* to tell Del Monte that he was invited to take care of the joust. A patrician messenger followed in order to 'discuss the joust that is going to take place on the day of the coronation'.⁴⁷ Del Monte, as the city-state's principal commander, was to use his military expertise to organise the tournament, recruit participants and oversee the logistics, which involved importing a considerable number of horses.

'Glorifying War in a Peaceful City: Festive Representations of Combat in Baroque Siena (1590–1740)', *War in History* 11/3 (2004), 249–77 and Strong, *Art and Power*, pp. 55–6.

44 There were, however, horses and stables in the city right up to the nineteenth century; see Elizabeth Horodowich, *A Brief History of Venice: A New History of the City and Its People* (Philadelphia, PA and London: Running Press, 2009), p. 82. Also Finlay, *Politics*, 19.

45 Barber and Barker, *Tournaments*, p. 78. In 1367, it was decided that no joust or any kind of tournament could be organized without formal permission. Davis, *The War of the Fists*, p. 15. The plebeian game of the *pugni* (mock combat between *popolani*) became increasingly popular at this time, possibly as a more controllable alternative.

46 The Venetians organized a final tournament to celebrate the end of the War of Ferrara in 1482, see M.E. Mallett and J.R. Hale, *The Military Organization of a Renaissance State: Venice, c. 1400 to 1617* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 209–10. Marino Sanudo mentions preparations for a joust to be held in 1502 by Hungarian nobles during the visit of the future queen of Hungary to Venice, *Venice, città eccellentissima*, p. 70.

47 On 7 April Grimani paid a courier forty-eight ducats to ask Del Monte to return to Venice ('per andare à ritrovar il signore da Monte per farli intendere di nostro [messaggio et] venir à Venetia'), ASV, APGB, busta 33, c.354r. Grimani also paid the expenses (155 ducats) for the patrician Nicolò Corner to find Del Monte and 'trattar dela giostra si avra da far per il zorno dela ditta incoronazione', ASV, APGB, busta 33, 355v. For the involvement of Da Monte, see also BMC, *Codice Morosini Grimani* 358, c.248.

38 Tuzio, *Ordine et modo*, p. 4. The wealthy guild of the grocers (*marzeri*) spent close to five hundred ducats. On the *marzeri* and their expenses, see Tondro, 'Memory and Tradition', p. 9. See also Muir, *Civic Ritual*, p. 294.

39 ASV, APGB, busta 33, cc. 353v–8v.

40 Rota, *Lettera*, fol. [A3r]. On 11 April 1597, Gnechi began declaring expenses made for the organization of the coronation, ASV, APGB, busta 33, c. 352v.

41 Iain Fenlon, *Piazza San Marco* (London: Profile Books, 2009), p. xvi. Sanudo, *Venice, città eccellentissima*, pp. 495 and 487.

42 BMC, *Codice Morosini Grimani* 358, c.284.

43 Richard Barber and Juliet Barker, *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (New York: Boydell Press, 1989), pp. 83–9; 167–9. See also Gregory Hanlon,

The ducal couple also engaged Venice's foremost architect, Vincenzo Scamozzi, to design a setting for 'regal' entertainment in the Piazza.⁴⁸ For years Scamozzi had worked on the renovation of the San Marco area, but his project had encountered intense opposition from certain factions within the patriciate, among them Leonardo Donà, and ended in compromise. Scamozzi knew that adapting the Piazza, the architectural space that was supposed to mirror the Republic's constitutional continuity and fundamental values, would be highly controversial.⁴⁹ Perhaps eager to mould the space at least temporarily to his vision, Scamozzi proposed to design new and innovative constructions, including a hippodrome in 'imitation of the Ancients'.⁵⁰ It could be used for Del Monte's jousting tournament, for wagon and horse races, but also for more plebeian forms of entertainment, such as the popular *caccia dei tori* (bull-baiting).⁵¹

All these plans for games in the Piazza came to nothing. Donà took steps to hinder the festivities in several ways. He first argued that the city's food supplies were simply not adequate to support the festival.⁵² When this strategy did not work, Donà claimed that attracting great numbers of people carried the risk of unseemly chaos right in the heart of the city. Popular entertainment in the Piazza could, he said, incite spectators and destabilise the social order. This last argument must have evoked memories of the riot-like scenes in the Piazza two years earlier, and those who previously had supported the plans for the joust now began to waver. The doge decided to put the matter before the Council of Ten, the college responsible for maintaining the public peace. Once he recognised that the Ten were swayed by Donà's arguments, Grimani withdrew his proposal and called off both Del Monte and the architect Scamozzi, who subsequently devoted his attention to designing the most impressively decorated boat of the festival, the *Teatro detto Il Mondo*. The doge, however, was left without a suitably impressive form of popular entertainment only days before the start of the festival.

Playing to the crowds

In the week before the festival, workers constructed stands and tribunes and placed numerous rows of benches and chairs in the San Marco area to accommodate the spectators. Yet despite these preparations, every seat and all available standing room was already filled by the early hours of 4 May. Piazza San Marco became overcrowded with masses of people, who produced a deafening noise.⁵³ Those who had been fortunate enough to find a position at the windows of the Ducal Palace or other buildings on the Piazza quickly found themselves crushed together so tightly that they could not move. Others, in search of an unobstructed view, started to climb columns, pillars, beams, ledges, rooftops and even chimneys, while daredevils clung to the bare metal fixtures in the walls or hung from the *merli*, the rooftop crenellations.⁵⁴ The painting of Morosina Morosini leaving the Grimani Palace at San Luca gives an impression of the massive audience: people are spilling from windows, balconies, *altane* (wooden terraces) and rooftops (see Plate 9). In such a *mêlée* it was easy for social distinctions to become blurred, perhaps even for disorder to get the upper hand.

Yet despite the city centre being filled to bursting, no untoward incidents occurred. Rota started his festival book with the chaotic scenes after Grimani's election, but he ended it with passages that underlined how order had prevailed during the 1597 dogaressa coronation. Although, according to him, every Venetian and an infinite number of foreigners filled the city's streets and canals, no offensive action or word created disturbances 'in the public or private places of the city'.⁵⁵ Tuzio added that the 'multitude [was] so calm and peaceful, that not a minimum of disorder took place, even if, so they say, the number of foreign people exceeded more than forty thousand'.⁵⁶

Rota ascribed the crowd's orderliness in part to God's favour but then went on to give a more mundane reason: while most of Europe suffered from dearth and shortage of food, Venice alone remained unaffected. Strategically forgetting that a decade of famine had only just ended, Rota continued, stating that in 'this month of May, especially, Venice has found herself with a great abundance of grains, which have come from far away regions', testifying to the 'singular prudence and charity of the Most Serene Republic

53 Rota, *Lettera*, fol. [A3v-A4v].

54 Rota, *Lettera*, fol. [A4r-v] and [C2r]; Tuzio, *Ordine*, pp. 15-6.

55 Rota, *Lettera*, fols [H3v-H4r]: 'con tanta frequenza di gente di varie nationi, sono passate di giorno, & di notte, le cose tutte con incredibil quiete, senza che sia seguito pur minimo motivo, non dirò de' fatti, mà nè anco di parole offensive ne' publici, ò ne'privati luoghi della Città'.

56 Tuzio, *Ordine*, pp. 20-1: 'ma quel ch' io stimo forse più, è il vedere l'istessa numerosa gente talmente quieta, & pacifica che non successe mai pur uno minimo disordine, con tutto, che si dica, che il numero della gente forastiera ascendesse à più di quarantmille'.

48 *Venetia, città nobilissima*, fol. 431v: 'Poco dopo per l'Incoronazione della Dogaressa Morosina Grimana mentre si pensava di fare del publico molte cose regie, fu dato carico al sudetto Scamozzi Architetto'.

49 For the plans for the *renovatio* of Piazza San Marco, Manfredo Tafuri, *Venice and the Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 164-96; Deborah Howard, *Venice Disputed: Marc'Antonio Barbaro and Venetian Architecture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 171-91.

50 Scamozzi proposed to construct 'fra l'altre cose (novissime a nostri tempi) un' Hippodromo, ovvero carro nella Piazza maggiore di San Marco, nel quale si potessero far giuochi di carrette, & altre corsi di cavalli, ammaestrati intorno akke Mete, ad imitatione de gli Antichi, & parimente giostre, tornei, e simiglianti cose', *Venetia, città nobilissima*, fol. 431v. See also Lina Padoan Urban, 'Teatri e "Teatri del mondo" nella Venezia del Cinquecento', *Arte Veneta* 20 (1966), 137-46.

51 During the 1557 dogaressa coronation, bull-baiting had taken place in the Piazza and in the Ducal Palace's courtyard; see Gregorio Marcello, *Ordine et progredito [sic] del trionfo fatto l'anno MCMLVII, all 19 di settembre per l'incoronazione della Serenissima Dogaressa Priola* (Venice: Marco Claseri, 1597), fol. A4r.

52 BMC, *Codice Morosini Grimani* 358, c. 248.

towards her subjects'.⁵⁷ This was a reference to the arrival of ships carrying Northern European grain, made possible by the relaxation, under Grimani's dogeship, of some of the protectionist Venetian laws against foreign shipping. Tuzio chimed in, pointing out that during the festival 'the *piazze* were continuously abundant not just with bread, but every other type of food, such as meat, poultry and fish'.⁵⁸ By describing a city filled with orderly spectators, both Rota and Tuzio counterbalanced the images of upheaval surrounding Grimani's own coronation and, predictably, stressed Venice's reputation as the *Serenissima*. Yet it is their emphasis on the abundance of food that provides a crucial clue to an alternative reading of the festival's iconographic programme, a reading that brings to the fore the visual and spectacular message the organisers aimed at the crowds of non-elite spectators.

An iconographically literate spectator might have understood all or at least most of the allegorical references, perhaps filling in certain blanks with his or her imagination, but a far broader group must have been able to grasp recurrent visual motifs.⁵⁹ Arguably, the festival's most prominent ephemeral construction was the butchers' guild's triumphal arch on the Piazzetta.

Giacomo Franco's engraving (see Figure 9.2) captures the aquatic procession of the dogaressa and her cortege just before she entered the San Marco area through the arch.

Triumphal arches were essentially a foreign custom, something that was at odds with the Venetian egalitarian use of public space. Although self-images of prominent Venetians filled private palaces and the façades and interiors of churches, monuments of individuals did not have a place in public squares or the Piazza.⁶⁰ The first temporary arch within the Venetian urban structure had been constructed for the coronation of the dogaressa in



Figure 9.2 Giacomo Franco, *Arrival of the Bucintoro at the Molo*.

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1557.⁶¹ It was no surprise that the planners of the 1597 event adopted the arch and then turned it into a much more sumptuous construction, filled with allegories and mottoes on every level and all sides. The designers of the arch probably consulted the first edition of Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (1593).⁶² As a structure, the arch recalled the triumphal arch designed by Andrea Palladio for the entry of Henry III, king of France, in 1574, which had, however, been situated on the peripheral site of the Lido.⁶³

- 57 Rota, *Lettera*, fols [H3v–H4r]: 'non è certo punto inferiore, anzi degno d'eterna memoria, il considerare che, essendosi fin da principio dell' anno passato fatta sentire in molte parti d'Europa, la penuria, & la sterilità d'ogni sorte di biade, Vinetia, frà tante città, & provincie, sia stata, si può dir, sola senza patimento alcuno, & più tosto in questo mese di Maggio si sia ritrovata copia grandissima de' grani, fatti venire dall'estreme regioni, con essemio di songolar prudenza, & carità, di questa Serenissima Repubblica, verso li suoi sudditi, & che, nel tempo di questa solennità, vi sia stata, oltre la quantità grande di bello, & buonissimo pane, ch'era in molti luoghi pubblicamente venduto, abbondanza grandissima di carne, di pesce, & di ogn' altra sorte di vettovaglie'.
- 58 Tuzio, *Ordine*, p. 21: 'resta à dire che quello che più parmi di maggior consideratione, & degno di esemplare memoria fù questo che in tal tempo un popolo d'infinito numero, con notabile quantità di diversi forastieri di più nationi, havesse le piazze continuamente abbondanti non solamente di pane, ma di ogni altra sorte di vettovaglia, così di carni, & pollami, come di pesce.'
- 59 For an example of a contemporary iconographic reading of the permanent decorations in Piazza San Marco in the mid-sixteenth century, see David Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 126–8.
- 60 The equestrian statue of mercenary Bartolomeo Colleoni on the Campo S. Giovanni e Paolo is the exception to this rule.

- 61 On the first arch constructed in Venice, also by the butchers' guild, for the 1557 coronation, see Maximilian L.S. Tondro, 'The First Temporary Triumphal Arch in Venice (1557)', in J.R. Mulryne and Elizabeth Goldring (eds), *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance: Art, Politics and Performance* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 335–62.
- 62 Bernardo Fogari, a miniaturist, had designed the arch after consulting with the lawyer Attilio Facio, see Rota, *Lettera*, fol. C4v; *Venetia, città nobilissima*, fols 281–2. Also Muir, 'Images of Power', p. 48; McClure, *The Culture of Profession*, p. 162. For the use of Ripa's *Iconologia*, see Tondro, 'Memory and Tradition', p. 68. The use of emblem books and mythological encyclopaedias was common practice in designing European court festivals; see Strong, *Art and Power*, p. 26.
- 63 Wilson, 'Il bel sesso', p. 76.



Figure 9.3 The triumphal arch on the Piazzetta. Detail of Giacomo Franco, *Arrival of the Bucintoro at the Molo*.

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None of the depictions of the arch correspond with the detailed descriptions by Rota and Stringa, but Franco's engraving (see Figure 9.3) seems to come closest.⁶⁴ On the side facing the waterfront, the 1597 arch was decorated with two large paintings depicting classical deities. One was Neptune, a familiar figure in Venice's iconographic programme. On the Palace's *Scala dei Giganti* he was paired with Mars, the god of war (see Figure 9.1), but on the arch the designers chose a lesser-known deity:

⁶⁴ For the description of the arch, see *Venetia, città nobilissima*, fol. 281 and Rota, *Lettera*, fols C4r–D4v. The arch also figures in Andrea Vicentino's painting of Morosina's arrival at San Marco, but since he painted quickly and from memory, the representation is not very clear or detailed, Padoan Urban, 'Apparati scenografici', 152–4.

Ops, Roman goddess of abundance and fertility. Mottoes explained to the literate viewer that Neptune and Ops represented the Venetian overseas dominions and the *Terraferma*, together with the Grimani and Morosini families.⁶⁵ With her hands filled with edible plants, fruits and cereals, Ops visually represented abundance and food, a forceful message given the recent hunger years.

At the top of the arch stood a female representation of Venice, holding ears of grain in her hand; she was flanked by depictions of the virtues Justice, Clemency, Equity and Munificence. This last virtue was echoed on the other side of the arch, which looked into the Piazzetta and was dedicated primarily to the doge and his political career. Among the many personifications and symbols was a painting of a richly dressed woman distributing money with both hands to a crowd of people. She represented Grimani's work as a Procurator of Saint Mark, the second-most prestigious office in the Republic and closely linked to acts of charity, but she could also be interpreted as a reference to Grimani's personal reputation for generosity and even to his *sparsio* two years earlier.⁶⁶

During the festival, the doors of the Ducal Palace stood wide open, allowing the public to visit the offices decorated by the guilds.⁶⁷ The artisans' contributions were a combination of their own input and that of people like Gnechi, responsible for the sophisticated Latin inscriptions and thematic continuity.⁶⁸ Inside the Palace, visual and textual references to abundance cropped up throughout the decorative programme. The painters' guild, for instance, contributed a display that represented the doge's virtues, which included both Liberality and *Abbondanza*. The message of plenty, however, was nowhere as prominent as in the decorated rooms of the Grain Office. This space, which under normal circumstances housed the surveyors of Venice's provisioning programme, had been assigned to the German bakers. They celebrated the Republic's ample supplies of grain in both a highbrow and lowbrow idiom, combining quotations from Horace and other classical authors with baked decorations, such as large roses of bread.

The bakers had given pride of place to a painting of Ceres, the daughter of Ops and goddess of agriculture and crops. Ceres, according to the description by Giovanni Stringa, was depicted as the Goddess of Grain, crowned with a garland made out of ears of wheat. In her left hand she held a horn

⁶⁵ On the importance of (written and spoken) mottoes, see Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 25–6. On the *Scala dei Giganti* Mars and Neptune symbolized Venice's authority over land and sea.

⁶⁶ Rota, *Lettera*, fol. [D3v]. The Procurators managed the execution of wills and bequests made by Venice's inhabitants to the *Procuratoria di San Marco*, distributing alms and allocating cheap housing.

⁶⁷ McClure, *The Culture of Profession*, p. 160.

⁶⁸ Tondro, 'Memory and Tradition', p. 128.

of plenty, filled with sheaves of wheat, while her right hand carried more sheaves. His depiction of Ceres and her attributes followed to the letter Cesare Ripa's description of Abundance 'in forma di Matrona'.⁶⁹ Ripa, for whom Ceres symbolised a Golden Age immune from scarcity, in turn based his description on representations of Annona, the Roman personification of the grain supply.⁷⁰ A motto under the Venetian painting read '*Hilarius flavescent*' ('More cheerfully they become golden'), a reference to the flourishing of the crops under the goddess's, and by extension the ducal couple's, protection.⁷¹ These classical references would have been deciphered by only a select few, perhaps even only by those familiar with Ripa's recent publication. But for those not versed in Latin, mythology or iconography, the entire display still carried a clear visual message of abundance.⁷²

That same message of plenty was broadcast by the alternative entertainment the doge and his event planners had scrambled to put together for the festival's final day after Donà's intervention had led to the cancellation of the tournament in the Piazza. The cashbooks show that on 1 May, just three days before the festival started, Grimani engaged a group of Dutch sailors to perform a *naumachia* or mock naval battle. These sailors had arrived a couple of days before with a convoy of ships from the Dutch provinces of Holland and Zeeland, carrying grain to feed the Venetians.⁷³ Amid all the other preparations, Grimani ordered silk liveries and matching hats for the sailors, in the colours of the Grimani family (pink and white). He had wood sent to the Dutch ships to modify the sloops for the *naumachia*, and he ordered painters to paint the boats in a suitable colour for the games.⁷⁴

Giacomo Franco has depicted the aquatic joust or '*giochi navali*' behind Scamozzi's floating *Teatro detto Il Mondo* (see Figure 9.4). In his engraving, the boats carry flags with heraldic lilies, which were part of the Morosini family's coat of arms.⁷⁵

On 6 May, the doge and dogaressa, seated separately on two different balconies of the Palace, got ready to watch the aquatic games. It was one of the festival's biggest attractions, drawing throngs of spectators. People



Figure 9.4 Giacomo Franco, *Il nobilissimo teatro*.

© Museo Correr, Venezia, Cod. Moresini-Grimani, Origine della famiglia Moresina, 270, c. 65.

watched from the waterfront, others from aboard the innumerable boats. The Dutch – '*huomini pratici, & arditi nel mare*', according to Rota⁷⁶ – came rowing in from the island of Giudecca, opposite the San Marco area, and saluted the ducal couple with a deafening volley of cannon shots. They then performed their *naumachia* with some twenty sloops: four men rowed each sloop, while a fifth stood on a platform with a long *bastone* (lance), as Franco's engraving shows. Two boats fought duels in tournament-style until only one man was left standing, to the amusement and applause of the crowd.⁷⁷ All the chroniclers commented on the *naumachia*, praising the quality of the boats, the skill of the northern sailors and the foreignness of their games, which also included two men on different boats pulling apart live eels and geese. The doge personally handed out prizes to the sailors,

⁷⁶ Rota, *Lettera*, fol. [H1v].

⁷⁷ Tuzio, *Ordine*, pp. 19–20. Such games were a standard part of Dutch festivals; see J. ter Gouw, *De volksvermaken* (Haarlem: Bohn, 1871). See for instance those organized for Maria de Medici's visit to the Dutch Republic in 1638, J. Puget de la Serre, *Histoire de l'entrée de la reine mère du roy tres-chrestien dans les Provinces Unies des Pays-Bas* (London: Jean Raworth, George Thomason and Octavian Pullen, 1639), fols Q2r–3v.

⁶⁹ Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia, ovvero descrittioni dell'imagini universali: cavate dall'antichità et da altri luoghi* (Rome: per gli eredi di Gio. Gigliotti, 1593), fols A1v–2v.

⁷⁰ Barbetta Stanley Spaeth, *The Roman Goddess of Ceres* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), p. 26.

⁷¹ Rota, *Lettera*, fol. F4v; Tuzio, *Ordine*, pp. 9–10. According to McClure, this motto does not have a classical origin; McClure, *The Culture of Profession*, p. 326.

⁷² See Zerner, 'Looking for the Unknowable', for a similar argument.

⁷³ Van Gelder, *Trading Places: The Netherlandish Merchants in Early Modern Venice* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), pp. 41–66.

⁷⁴ On the colours, see Giovanni Nicolò Doglioni, *Historia venetiana scritta brevemente* (Venice: Damiano Zenaro, 1598), p. 1032. The *naumachia* cost Grimani between 100 and 150 ducats, ASV, APGB, busta 33, cc. 354r, 354v, 355r.

⁷⁵ A few Dutch sloops are also present in Franco's engraving of the *Bucintoro* arriving at the arch (see Figure 9.2).

amid loud applause of the spectators.⁷⁸ Yet folded into the amusement was a clear message: the sailors of the foreign grain ships, dressed in the ducal couple's colours, pledged their services to the doge, thus guaranteeing the Venetian people a well-provisioned city during his reign.

From ephemeral to permanent

The day after the festival, a satisfied Doge Grimani walked the short distance from his residence to the council chambers on the other side of the Ducal Palace to thank the guilds for their efforts. After he left, guild members started dismantling all the ephemeral decorations and other temporary structures.⁷⁹ With the Palace back in order again, the doge undertook an additional step to consolidate the memory of both his wife's and his own coronation, commissioning paintings and probably also Rota's festival booklet. Two years later, in 1599, he ordered the construction of a funerary monument for himself and the dogaressa in the peripheral church of San Giuseppe in Castello.⁸⁰ At first glance his choice of San Giuseppe makes little sense: it was quite a distance from the Grimani Palace and an out-of-the-way place for a doge to be buried. Most doges preferred the imposing church of San Giovanni and Paolo, which became the *locus* for increasingly personalised ducal funeral monuments.⁸¹ San Giuseppe, by contrast, attracted little patrician patronage.⁸² Charitable initiatives, however, had long linked the Grimani family to this particular part of Castello. Also, the church had been the site of frequent papal visits and appears to have been associated with popular religious devotion.⁸³ All these aspects fit into Grimani's political profile.

With no other families vying for its space, Grimani set out to turn San Giuseppe into the most personalised church interior in the whole of Venice. Already in the 1580s he had dedicated the chapel of the high altar to his deceased father.⁸⁴ But it was the funerary tomb for himself and his wife that radically changed the inside of the church: to accommodate the construction

of the wall-filling monument, which dwarfs all other memorials, the northern doorway had to be moved (Figure 9.5).⁸⁵

The doge himself closely supervised the design and building, and the monument was finished within his lifetime, which was highly unusual. Once again, the costs were enormous: the entire structure, finished in 1604, cost 5,865 ducats.⁸⁶ It effectively turned San Giuseppe into a Grimani pantheon.

The monument was shaped like a triumphal arch, and although this was a fashionable form, its shape, proportions and symbolisms recall the ephemeral arch of 1597.⁸⁷ Each level of the monument celebrates the doge's glory, from the sculpture group representing the theological virtues Charity, Hope and Love on the pediment, the octagonal relief of the kneeling doge and dogaressa before the Virgin Mary, to the reclining images of the doge and dogaressa on their sarcophagi and other, smaller elements. The funerary monument's iconographic suggestion that Grimani was divinely elected as doge as a reward for his virtues is exceptional within the Venetian context.⁸⁸

The doge made sure that representations of the coronations formed a conspicuous part of the impressive monument, at an easily visible height. On 18 November 1601, he ordered two bronze depictions of 'the coronations of his Serenity and the Most Serene Dogaressa' with the sculptor Cesare Gropo, indicating the precise measurements of the reliefs and the figures in them.

The two reliefs, seen here in Figures 9.6 and 9.7, represent Grimani's own crowning and Morosina receiving the Golden Rose in the Basilica. One and a half years later the reliefs were finished and transported to San Giuseppe, to be installed directly below the doge's and dogaressa's sarcophagi and thus perpetually link one coronation to the other, clearly visible to parishioners and other visitors to the church. A satisfied Grimani paid 460 ducats for the bronze reliefs, donating additional sums of drinking money (three ducats *per beverazo*) to the sculptor and his workers.⁸⁹ By the time the entire monument in San Giuseppe was finished, there was little left of the Grimani-Morosini fortunes. Having no male heirs, the couple had felt no need to

78 Tuzio, *Ordine*, p. 20.

79 Rota, *Lettera*, fol. [H3r].

80 Timofewitsch, 'Quellen und Forschungen', p. 54. Jan Simane, *Grabmonumente der Dogen. Venezianische Sepulkralkunst im Cinquecento* (Sigmaringen: J. Thorbecke, 1993), especially pp. 107–39.

81 On medieval ducal funeral monuments, see Debra Pincus, *The Tombs of the Doges* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

82 Stephen Holt, 'Paolo Veronese and his Patrons' (PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 1991), pp. 153–4. The San Giuseppe belonged to the convent of Augustinian nuns.

83 On the Grimani family's ties to Castello, see Antonio Foscari and Manfredo Tafuri, 'Sebastiano da Lugano, i Grimani e Jacopo Sansovino, artisti e committenti nella chiesa di Sant'Antonio di Castello', *Arte Veneta* (1982), 100–23; Holt, 'Paolo Veronese', p. 154.

84 Thomas Martin, 'Grimani Patronage in S. Giuseppe di Castello: Veronese, Vittoria and Smeraldi', *The Burlington Magazine* 133/1065 (1991), 831.

85 For the specifics on the monument's construction, see Timofewitsch, 'Quellen und Forschungen'.

86 Andrea da Mosto, *I dogi di Venezia con particolare riguardo alle loro tombe* (Venice: Ferd. Ongania, 1939), pp. 201–6.

87 Wilson, 'Il bel sesso', pp. 85–6; Muir, *Civic Ritual*, p. 295. On the arch as a fashionable choice for funerary monuments, see Kathryn B. Hiesinger, 'The Fregoso Monument: A Study in Sixteenth-Century Tomb Monuments and Catholic Reform', *The Burlington Magazine* 118/878 (1976), 287. Holt, 'Paolo Veronese', pp. 161–2.

88 Simane suggests a closer connection to the papal tombs of Sixtus V and Pius V in the Sistine chapel, Simane, *Grabmonumente*, pp. 115–6. A similar theme, of Grimani being divinely elected by Saint Mark instead of by his patrician peers, was one of the themes in Morosina's coronation festival, Muir, 'Images of Power', 47–8.

89 See Timofewitsch, 'Quellen und Forschungen', p. 44.



Figure 9.5 Funeral monument for Doge Marino Grimani and Dogaressa Morosina Morosini Grimani in San Giuseppe di Castello.

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Figure 9.6 Cesare Gropo, *Doge Marino Grimani's coronation*, bronze relief on the Grimani funeral monument in San Giuseppe di Castello, below the doge's sarcophagus.

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preserve the family fortune, investing instead in munificence, feasts, art and architecture, both ephemeral and permanent.⁹⁰ The dynastic ambition projected through the 1597 coronation's imagery was always more rhetorical than actual.

⁹⁰ ASV, Notarile – Testamenti, b.1249/I, c.181r – v. The costs of the dowries for the couple's daughters had been significant, but a major expense had also been the construction of the Grimani family palace.



Figure 9.7 Cesare Gropo, *Dogaressa Morosina Morosini Grimani receives the Golden Rose*, bronze relief on the Grimani funeral monument in San Giuseppe di Castello, below the dogressa's sarcophagus.

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Conclusion

For most spectators, the festival for the dogressa's coronation had been the feast of a lifetime. The celebrations in 1595 had already demonstrated both Grimani's spending power and the extent of his popular support, and despite patrician opposition, the 1597 festival only confirmed his ambitions. The display of personal power took full advantage of Venice's terrestrial and aquatic space, something most prominently displayed in Grimani's decision to organise the alternative joust on the *Bacino*, in defiance of

Donà's successful efforts to cancel the tournament in the Piazza. The 1597 coronation transmitted different messages to different audiences: it gave patrician women an uncommonly central role in state ritual, and it flaunted Grimani's political ambitions by celebrating the ducal couple in an almost regal style, a theme effectively continued on the funerary monument in San Giuseppe. But the festival also carried a message intended for a much broader public, namely that in a period of frequent famines the city and its people were in the safe hands of a 'father of the poor', the generous and benevolent doge.

Instead of the collective responsibility of the ruling elite, the festival communicated that Grimani himself was in charge of the steady supply of bread and grain. This contentious message was transmitted through the use of symbols of abundance woven into the festival architecture and the decorations in the palace, later repeated on the funerary monument. The display by the German bakers – including the fact that after years of empty bread shops there was sufficient grain and bread to spare for decorative purposes – recalled the Venetians' hopes at Grimani's election and emphasised the contrast between the previous decade of dearth and the abundance of the present. This was forcefully underlined by the Dutch sailors' participation in the event. One unforeseen outcome was that patrician irritation resulted in the formal prohibition of future dogressa coronations.⁹¹ Ironically, this only further emphasised the singular character of the 1597 coronation festival.

Although it is impossible to reconstruct exactly how the public experienced the festival, the memory of the two coronations proved persistent. Grimani adroitly shaped that memory by engaging authors and artists to produce a range of festival books, paintings, coins and engravings, which recorded the iconic elements of his wife's coronation in their urban setting, such as the triumphal arch on the Piazzetta, the aquatic games on the *Bacino* and the ceremony of the Golden Rose in the Basilica. In an additional challenge to Venetian ideas about the use of public space, Grimani turned the peripheral church of San Giuseppe in Castello into a family memorial, accessible to all and with the two coronations forming the central theme of the oversized funerary monument. Again, it is not possible to determine to what extent these objects, artefacts and narratives shaped and mediated the memory of these events. It is clear, however, that ordinary Venetians remembered and passed on the memory of Grimani munificence. In 1612, six years after Grimani's death, a crowd of Venetians taunted his successor, the parsimonious Leonardo Donà, by hailing him with shouts of 'Viva, viva Doge Grimani, *padre dei poveri*'.⁹²

91 Molmenti, *La Dogaressa*, pp. 340–41. Despite this decision, Doge Silvestro Valier organized a coronation for his wife Elisabetta in 1694.

92 Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Ms. It VII, 1818 (9436), c.88v: 'li fanciulli, et anco quasi tutto il popolo li dettero una ramanzina gagliarda, gridando ad alta voce "Viva, viva il Doge Grimani, Padre dei Poveri".'

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