

JOLA PELLUMBI

Procurators of Saint Mark - Their Official and State Occasions Attire, 1550 - 1600

ABSTRACT

The procurators of Saint Mark were custodians of Saint Mark's Basilica and high officers from the ranks of which many Doges were elected. As such they held a very prestigious position within the Venetian social hierarchy and society. Since only members of the Venetian nobility were allowed to take up such positions, it was important for their official robes to emphasise their noble lineage and consequently their right to rule. As printed representations of the Venetian procurators in their traditional attire were circulated around Europe in the sixteenth century, viewers may have only appreciated the form of the procurators' robes and not the luxurious fabrics or distinctive colours which they employed. By reference to images and inventory material, this paper will look at the scarlet and *pavanazzo* procurators' robes and investigate their seemingly unchanging shape and form, which was part of an attempt by a strict Venetian ruling class to maintain a traditional decorum in the official dress in order to establish their high status through visual means. Additionally, this paper will also explore the procurators' robes as a symbol of wealth and power, through the investigation of the expensive materials which were used to produce such garments.

Printed images of the ruling members of Venetian nobility were published in Venice and Germany in the sixteenth century and circulated more widely throughout Europe.¹ In a period of changing fortunes for the Venetian Republic, these images familiarised Dukedoms and Republics throughout the Italian peninsula and other European states to the distinctive identities and costumes of the Doge, the procurators and other members of the *Signoria*. The seemingly unchanging nature of the state and its officials was emphasised through costume as well as through the rituals portrayed in print. But while the printed images gave contemporary viewers some insight into the pomp and ceremony of Venetian life and the dress worn by the ruling members of the nobility, they could not convey the striking colours of the Doge's and procurators' robes or the cost of the luxurious materials which were used for those robes. This was, in many ways, ironic given the fact that Venice was known for its luxury fabrics of silk and velvet. This paper will focus on the Procurators of Saint Mark, who were the highest office holders in Venice after the Doge. In the sixteenth century there were fifteen procurators and one of their primary responsibilities was managing Saint Mark's Basilica and its treasury. In fact, many Doges were elected from the ranks of the

¹ Wilson, 2009, p. 234

procurators.² This paper will attempt to expand our knowledge of their garments as perceived through the printed representations of Venice's procurators by supplementing them with details about the fabrics and materials used to make their scarlet and *pavonazzo* (a purplish-red colour) robes and the cost of those materials, based on archival sources. While ceremonial robes employed sumptuous materials such as velvet, satin, silk and damask, completed with fur trim and linings, everyday robes were often made of wool. The cost of each set of robes was significant, thus underlining the exclusivity perceived in wearing them. The paper will conclude by asking what contemporary viewers could, and couldn't learn about Venetian clothing from printed sources.



Fig. 1. Giacomo Franco, 'The Procession of the Doge and Signoria through the Piazza San Marco into the Church', in *Habiti d'Humani et Donne Venetiane* c. 1610. Engraving, © Trustees of the British Museum, London. Museum Number 1868,0822.8562

² For more on the Procurators of Saint Mark, their roles and responsibilities see Chambers, 1997

Venice was an oligarchic republic led by an elected Doge. Although long-established, Venetians had a relatively recent nobility and the introduction of the records of noble births and marriages in the *Golden Book* in 1506 and 1526 in order to facilitate the recognition of the nobility³, seems to have been a deliberate attempt to prove and maintain their status as true nobles, despite their original merchant backgrounds. Distinguishing the nobility who were allowed to enter the Venetian Senate from those citizens who were excluded was an important visual signal. Dress was one of the main mechanisms for doing so.



Fig . 2. Jacopo Tintoretto, *Procurator of Saint Mark*, 1575-85. Oil on canvas, 138.7 x 101.3 cm, The National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., Samuel H. Kress Collection 1952.5.79

³ Fortini Brown, 2004, p. 10

The image that Venice wanted to portray was so important to the Senate that for the marriage of Alfonso d'Este to Lucrezia Borgia the two ambassadors sent as representatives were made to display their new robes in front of the Senate before departing. The robes were made especially for the occasion in crimson velvet, lined with ermine which required for one of them 32 and the other 28 *braccia* of velvet to produce,⁴ which amounts to approximately 19 and 16 metres. The ambassadors bestowed the gift of a senatorial robe in the same cut, colour and material as those worn by the Venetian senators to Lucrezia Borgia and after pronouncing an oration they enveloped her with the robe which seems to have been met with hilarity from the onlookers.⁵ This state gift to such a prominent noble bride attests to the significance of the Venetian senatorial robes as luxury items due to their lavish and costly materials of crimson silk velvet and ermine fur which were highly regarded both inside and outside Venice. With respect to the expensive materials which were used to produce such garments, the case study of Procurator Vettor Grimani will be examined by looking at the significant variety of robes that were listed in an inventory after his death in 1558.

Procurators and State Ceremonies

The early sixteenth century diarist Marin Sanudo described the seat of a procurator of Saint Mark as the highest office in the magistrates which was reserved for 'the oldest and foremost patricians.'⁶ There were 15 procurators in the sixteenth century who were elected for life and frequently proceeded to become Doge. Being high officers of the Republic who were in charge of tending to the managing of Saint Mark and its treasury they were supposed to accompany the Doge during religious processions in Venice and by 1532 the number of procurators that had to accompany the Doge in the processions had risen to six.⁷ This attests to the importance that the Venetian ruling members placed on the spectacle of their rule and supremacy.

Despite the decline of Venetian power during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the display of wealth of the noble families had increased and the State and Church ceremonies, processions and pageants that amazed contemporary tourists had grown in magnificence and pomp.⁸

⁴ASM, Disp. Dell'invitato ferrarese ad Ercole (25 genn. 1502).

⁵ Beltrami, 1903, p. 35.

⁶ Sanudo, 1980, p. 104-105.

⁷BSM, cap. cxxix, fols 61v-2r; cap. cxxix, fol. 72r: '*essendo cresciuto el numero de ditti Procuratori se die parimente accrescer il numero de quelli dieno accompagnar Sua Sublimita et Signoria nostra siano obligati almeno sei delli Procuratori nostri videlicet dui per Procuratia, et ditti Procuratori eccentuati li septuagenarii over infermi venir debbano...*' Also Todeschini, 18th Century: '*Destinati sei Procuratori ad accompagnar il Doge quando esce di Palazzo cedono il luogo solamente alli sei superiori consiglieri à quali giustamente si compete ogni piu distinto onore, per compar essi la Serenissima Signoria: che è la figura del governo, ed il capo di tutti i corpi supremi.*'

⁸ Brown, 1887, p.350 and Muir, 1979, p. 43

This was among other things, partly due to the Venetian tradition of honouring and giving a public welcome and official *ricevimento* to important guests that visited the republic, from princes and dukes to cardinals and foreign ambassadors, in a grandiose manner that involved them riding throughout the city in the ornately decorated gondolas accompanied by members of the Senate and Venetian Patricians. The memorable entry of Henry the III of France into Venice in 1574 shortly after he had fled from Poland was one of those stately ceremonies where Venice could showcase its wealth, power and prestige in front of foreign heads and dignitaries who had come to Venice to honour the new king.⁹ Apart from showing the rightful respect to Henry the III of France, the arranging of the amazing pomp and pageantry was also Venice's way of displaying in front of the eyes of the world its own magnificence. In a manuscript in the Biblioteque Nationale de Paris that describes the event the Doge and the members of the *Signoria* have been described as:

among the many sounds of tambourines, trumpets and artillery shots which were a great marvel he was met by the Doge and the *Signoria* with great honour and after resting for a bit he picked up the pace towards Venice by climbing into the *Bucintoro* with the *Signoria*. His Majesty was on the tallest chair in between two lower chairs: one on the right where Cardinal Legato sat and one on the left where the Doge sat dressed in his golden and red mantle matched with a similar coloured *cornio ducale* or ducal hat. He was surrounded on all sides by the members of the *Signoria* dressed in red, with the captains of the cables and the officials driving and managing the *Bucintoro* dressed in red silk.¹⁰

The procurators of Saint Mark being members of the *Signoria* would have been present during such important events that took place in the city as it can be seen in Andrea Vicentino's depiction of Henry III of France's visit to Venice (Fig. 3). The procurators of Saint Mark were the 'elite of the ruling nobility'¹¹ as the seat of the procurator was the highest office, after that of the Doge, which a Venetian patrician could aspire to be elected into for life and potentially proceed to be elected Doge.¹² As such their presence at these events was strategically and politically crucial in presenting a collective façade of the ruling members of the Republic.

⁹ Molmenti, 1880, pp. 94, 98

¹⁰ BNF, vol. I, fol. 5v.

¹¹ Sansovino, 1581, fols 107v-8r '...i primi benemeriti della republica.'

¹² Chambers, 1997, p. 26

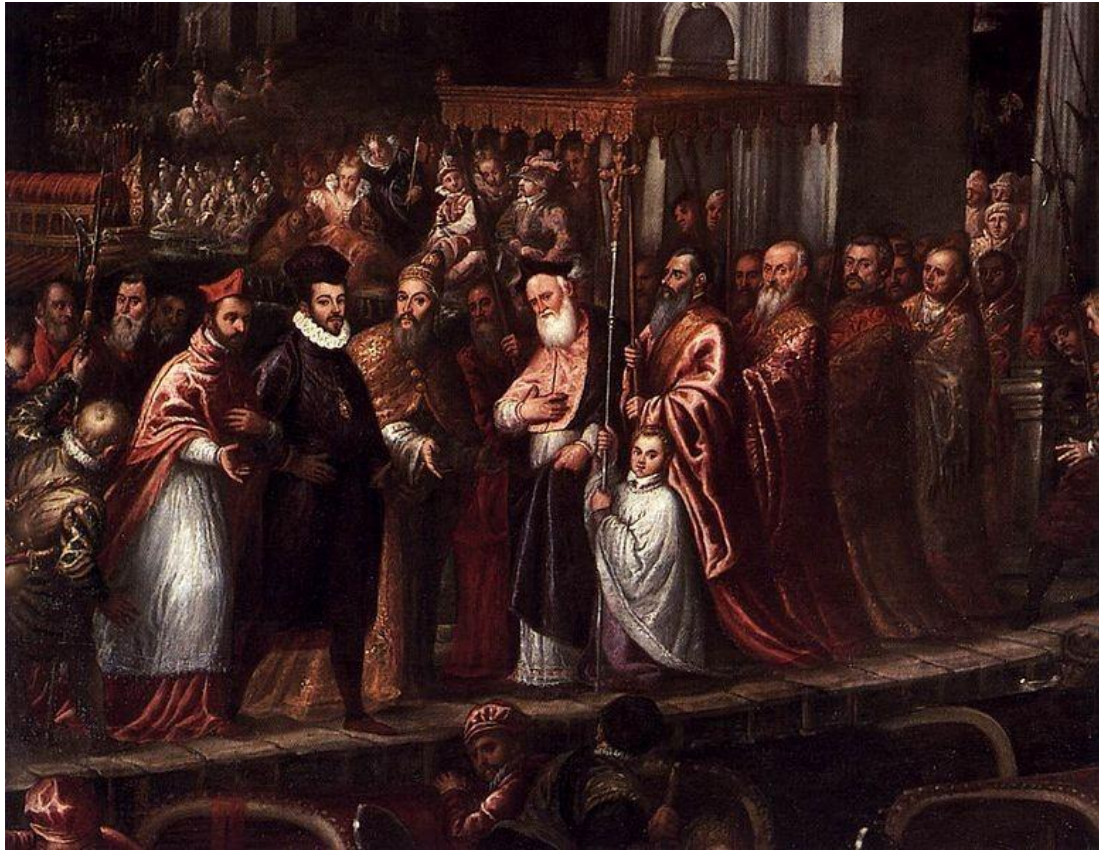


Fig 3. Andrea Vicentino, *The Doge and the Patriarch Welcoming Henri III King of France*, (Detail) 1595-1600. Oil on canvas. Palazzo Ducale, Venice

Procurators in Costume Books

However, surprisingly enough Cesare Vecellio in his costume book *Habiti Antichi et Moderni de Diverse Parti del Mondo* (1590)¹³ did not depict the garments worn by a procurator of Saint Mark. Instead he made a general mention of their clothes in the same description that he had for the garments worn by Knights and Senators stating: '...this same ample gown is still worn from time to time by men who occupy certain magistracies during the period in which they hold them, only Knights, the Procuratori and those who have been Savii Grandi and Consiglieri wear them all the time.'¹⁴ This generalisation of the procurators dress shows a lack of specific distinction in the shape and form of their attire from that of Senators and Knights. In fact Vecellio went on to say that 'among such men, pavonazzo is the colour

¹³ The translation of the title is *Antique and Modern Clothes from Various Parts of the World*.

¹⁴ Vecellio, 2008, p. 104.

usually worn,¹⁵ which attests to Vecellio's belief to the only distinction between a procurator's and a senator's attire.



Fig. 4. Cesare Vecellio, Senatori e Cavalieri in *Habiti Antichi et Moderni de Diverse Parti del Mondo* (1590)

¹⁵ Vecellio, 2008, p. 104.



Fig. 5. Giacomo Franco, 'One of the Procuratori of San Marco Seated, Through the Window behind Him a View of the Redentore' in *Habiti D'Huomeni et Donne Venetiane*, 1610. Engraving, © Trustees of the British Museum, London. Museum Number 1868,0822.8561

In contrast, in his costume book *Habiti D'Huomeni et Donne Venetiane* (1609)¹⁶, Giacomo Franco depicts a procurator seated in his chair wearing a long mantle with a closed collar and wide opened sleeves called *dogaline* or a *dogal* lined with fur (Fig. 5). The term a *dogal* refers to wide opened bell like sleeves¹⁷ which originally were reserved for the Doge alone. The procurator in Giacomo Franco's depiction wears a sash over his left shoulder and Franco described them as: 'The Procurators of Saint Mark, were thusly called

¹⁶ The translation of the title is *Clothing of Venetian Men and Women*.

¹⁷ Molmenti, 1880, p. 436 and Sansovino, 1594, p. 11

because of the care and administration that they have of the managing of the most venerable (Saint Mark). Time and time again they continue to wear perpetually the toga, this being the most supreme dignity in the Republic.¹⁸ More recently, Stella Mary Newton described what the procurators wore by saying that 'exceptional in their dress were the nine procurators.'¹⁹ While the *pavonazzo* or a purplish-red colour of the procurators' dress must have been striking, the shape and form of their attire seems to have been exactly like that of any distinguished high officer in the Venetian Republic and not particularly exceptional in its own right.

Procession Engravings

In an engraving dated from 1556-69, Mateo Pagan depicts the Procurators of Saint Mark together with other members of the *Signoria* in procession after the Doge among various figures that accompany him during Palm Sunday in Saint Mark's square (Fig. 6). This formal arrangement of the participants would have been followed for other processions throughout the city.²⁰ The various figures in the Pagan engraving are named at the bottom of each figure in order to distinguish them by their profession and to show their respective place within the hierarchy of the procession and ultimately the Venetian social hierarchy. This image shows that the participants of the procession are not defined by their names, but rather by the role that they have in the Venetian society.

Sanudo described the procurators in procession as taking precedence over everyone including the sons of the Prince and others and while among themselves they follow an age sequence, when they walk with the *Signoria* each procurator is paired with a Councillor of the Doge.²¹ This arrangement attests not only to the importance of procurators in the Venetian social hierarchy and their place in society, but also to their high status as officers who may one day become Doge.

¹⁸ Franco, 1609, p. 11: '*I Procuratori di S. Marco, cosi detti dalla cura et amministrazione che hanno dell'entrate di quell' augustissimo. Tempio vestono perpetuamente la toga, essendo questa dignita suprema nella Republica.*'

¹⁹ Newton, 1988, p. 22.

²⁰ For a more detailed account on the hierarchy, the role of the processions in Venice and their social significance see Muir, 1981

²¹ Sanudo, 1980, p. 104 to 105.

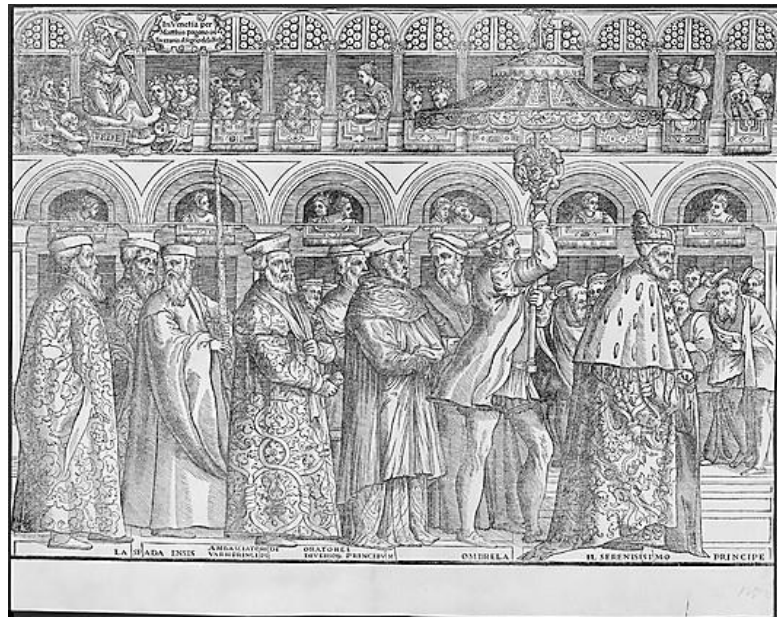


Fig. 6. Mateo Pagan, (Detail showing the Doge) *Procession of the Doge in Venice*, 1556-61, Woodcut on eight sheets, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949, Accession Number 49.95.139(a-h)

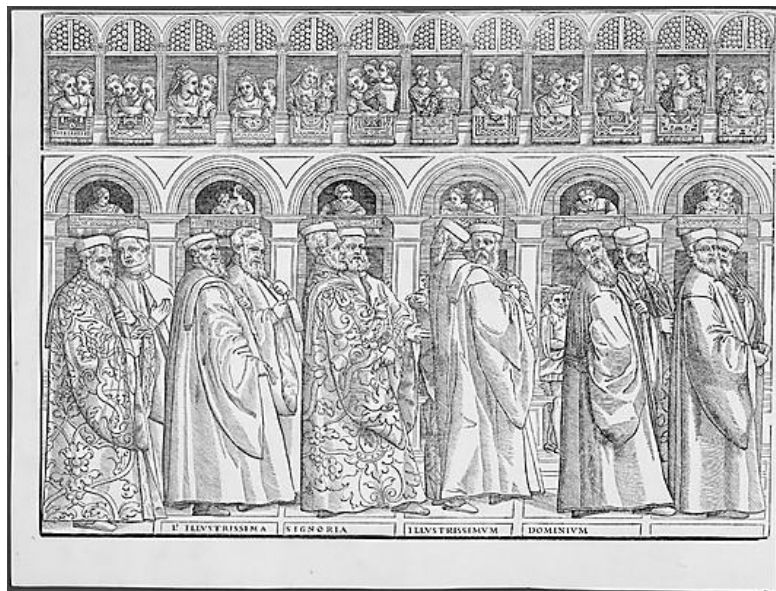


Fig. 7. Mateo Pagan, (Detail showing the Signoria in Procession) *Procession of the Doge in Venice*, 1556-61, Woodcut on eight sheets, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949, Accession Number 49.95.139(a-h)

While the order of the procession in the Pagan engraving follows the pattern stated by Sanudo, the procurators are not distinguished specifically at the bottom label, but are grouped together under the heading of *Illustrissima Signoria* or Illustrious Members of the Body of Government. Judging by the image of a procurator that Giacomo Franco provides (Fig. 5) and the image of a Councillor of the Doge that Vecellio shows (Fig. 8) it seems that the procurators attire has a pattern in the textile, while the textile worn by the councillor seems plain and free of any pattern.



Fig. 8. Cesare Vecellio, *Councillor of the Doge in Habiti Antichi e Moderni*, 1598

As such it is easier to distinguish the procurators from the councillors in the Pagan engraving as they walk together two by two. A sample of the Venetian Senatorial sash in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art of around 1500 (Fig. 9) is similar in pattern to the sash of the procurator's outfit in the Correr Museum in Venice.



Fig. 9. (Detail) Venetian Senatorial Rank Stole, ca. 1500. Silk, pile-on-pile velvet weave, 166.37 x 21.59 cm, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Dennis C. Stanfill (M.79.86)

The seventeenth-century procurator's attire at the Museum Correr is made out of crimson velvet that has large patterns formed out of the *pile on pile* technique where the velvet is being cut at two different heights in order to create a relief effect. The pattern of the *stola* or sash is fashioned out of a pomegranate flower enclosed by a leafy frame, encircled by friar's knots and crowns. The crown is usually very prominent and it can be easily seen in various portraits of procurators and more clearly than the rest of the pattern.



Fig. 10. Procurator's Attire, Museum Correr, Venice



Fig. 11. Leandro da Ponte Bassano, *Portrait of a Procurator of Saint Mark*, sixteenth century Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

This pattern is very visible in Bassano's *Portrait of a Procurator of Saint Mark* (sixteenth century) at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (Fig. 11) where the sitter wears a sash over his left shoulder that clearly shows the crown and friar's knots pattern. This kind of pattern seems to have been closely associated with Venetian senators and procurators in the latter half of the sixteenth century. In later centuries this patterned velvet does not appear to be used for the robe *a ducal* any longer, but it was still used in the sash which was worn over the shoulder.



Fig. 12. Jost Amman, *Procession of the Doge to the Bucintoro on Ascension Day*, Zurich, ca. 1565. Woodcut; third state, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949, Accession Number 49.95.5

For contemporary Venetians the attire worn by the various participants in the procession would have been easily read and the various members would have been recognised by their profession in the same manner we can today distinguish a policeman's from a soldier's uniform. Foreign visitors to Venice would also have recognised the various members of the *Signoria* the same way a tourist in London is able to recognise a Queen's guard attire. Because printed images of the dress of a Venetian Doge, procurator and senator being the primary dignitaries of the Republic would have travelled widely within Europe, they would have been most likely recognisable in a procession due to their dress. An example of the circulating prints is Jost Amman's print

Procession of the Doge to the Bucintoro on Ascension Day with a View of Venice (1565) (Fig. 12) which is a copy after Giovanni Andrea Vavassore's image that shows a procession similar to the Pagan engraving only from a different point of view and without naming the various figures, but with a detailed explanation in German at the bottom of the print about the procession. Furthermore, in the sixteenth-century Europe and especially in Venice and Germany there was a growing trend of printing engravings of maps of well-known countries and cities surrounded with images of the inhabitants of those places in their native costumes.²²



Fig. 13. Jost Amman, (Detail with the Doge and the Signoria in Procession), *Procession of the Doge to the Bucintoro on Ascension Day*, Zurich, ca. 1565. Woodcut; third state, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949, Accession Number 49.95.5

²² See footnote 1. For a more in depth analysis on the connection between engravings of maps with traditional costumes see Wilson, 2005

Venice was a popular choice with engravings of a bird's eye view of the lagoon surrounded with images of the Doge and the *Signoria* in their official garments. An example of this is the image of *Venetia* in *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* at the British Museum (Fig. 14) which would have been widely circulated in Europe making the various dress and attire worn by Venetian high officials recognisable to contemporary foreign viewers in form and shape, but without giving much detail about the sumptuous materials used to make these garments.

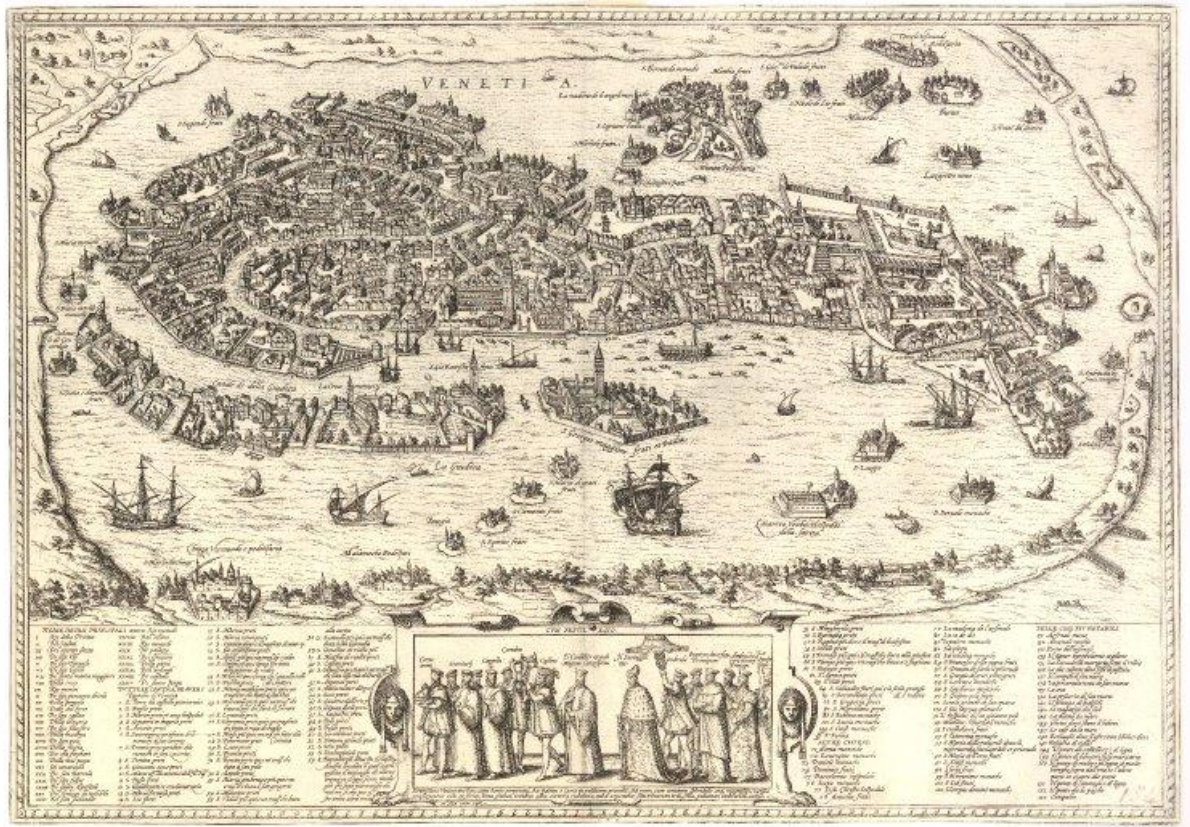


Fig. 14. Anonymous, *Venetia in Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*, Italy, 1545-1600. Etching © Trustees of the British Museum, London. Museum Number 1947,0319.26.167

Procurator Vettor Grimani

According to the Todeschini Manuscript at the Marciana Library in Venice, the procurators being different from any other citizen of any age and rank were specifically adorned with the *veste ducale* or the dress in the ducal shape.²³ Procurator Vettor Grimani had various robes noted down as *ducale*

²³ BMVb: 'A differenza di qualunque altro cittadino d'ogni età, e d'ogni grado li Procuratori di San Marco furono decorate colla Veste Ducale.'

or a *ducal* in his final inventory made in the family palace at Santa Maria Formosa after his death in 1558. He became a Procurator of Saint Mark (*de Supra*)²⁴ in 1522²⁵ through a payment of 8000 ducats²⁶ and was one of the so called procurators created *per danari* or for money rather than *per meriti* or through merit. The procurators *per danari* were usually created when the Republic needed funds because Venice was at war and needed more money to deal with the various war related expenses.²⁷

This class of procurators were particularly wealthy and as the name *per danari* insinuates, they acquired the prestigious position of procurator due to their generous donations rather than merit. Their wealth and status is particularly noticeable in the numerous robes a *ducal* that they possessed. As the name denotes these particular robes were made in the same style or cut as the Doge's attire and required large amounts of cloth to produce due to their immense open bell like sleeves and the material used was usually of a very expensive kind and with the most expensive dyes of the crimson or *pavonazzo* colours. Furthermore these robes were lined with expensive furs of ermine, sable and marten among many others which added to the cost of each of these garments.

Among many other types of clothes in Vettor Grimani's house inventory there were also several a *ducal*:

In the golden room

A robe a *ducal* of violet velvet with no lining

Two robes a *ducal* of red damask lined with silk, one used and the other new

A robe of woollen cloth: a *ducal* with no lining

A robe of black woollen *ducal*

...

In a trunk

A robe of red velvet lined with marten a *ducal*

A robe of black velvet a *ducal* lined with various furs

...

In another trunk

A robe *ducal* of *pavonazzo* wool lined with various furs

A similar robe lined with *dossi*

²⁴ Procurators were divided into *Procuratori de Supra*, who managed the church and treasury of Saint Mark among other testamentary trust duties, *Procuratori de Citra* who tended to the testamentary trusts closer to the canal in San Marco, Castello and Cannaregio and *Procuratori de Ultra* who dealt with testamentary trusts on the far side of the canal in Dorsoduro, San Polo and Santa Croce. For more on the roles of these procurators see Sanudo, 1980, pp. 104-5 and Da Mosto, 1937, pp. 25-7

²⁵ BMVa, fol. 10.

²⁶ BMVb, fol. 26

²⁷ For more on Procurators *per danari* and *per meriti* see Chambers 1997, pp. 43-61

Another similar in black lined with various furs

...

In another trunk

A *ducal* robe of *pavonazzo* wool lined with silk²⁸



Fig. 15. Procurator Vettor Grimani's Palace in Santa Maria Formosa, Venice

The list of Vettor Grimani's robes *a ducal* shows that he owned among many other types of robes, eleven dresses *a ducal* three of which were of *pavonazzo* colour which is the colour most associated with the robes of the procurators. These three robes are made of wool and lined with various furs or with silk and were presumably the ones that were used for everyday wear as they are of a sturdier material. Other robes *a ducal* made of black wool lined with various furs were also presumably used more for everyday wear. The other dresses *a ducal* were made out of red damask lined with silk and red velvet lined with marten, which attests to the use of the most luxurious

²⁸ ASV, Notarile, Busta 8119 (Atti, V. Maffei), fol. 360-1: '*nella camera d'oro: Una vesta a ducal de veludo violeto ugnola, due veste a ducal de damasco cremesin fodra de ormesin, l'una usada et l'altra nova, una vesta de zambeloto pano: a ducal...In una cassa: Una vesta de veludo cremesin fodra de martori ducal fodra de vari. In un altra cassa: Una vesta ducal de panno pavonazzo fodra de vari, due veste simile fodra de dossi, una simile negra fodra de vari...In un altra cassa: Una vesta ducal de panno pavonazzo fodra de ormesin...*'

materials for his robes a *dogal* in the most expensive colour. Seeing that the finer materials for the robes a *dogal* are in the colour red, it might be the case that during processions the procurators wore the red coloured robes as opposed to the *pavonazzo* ones which seem to be made out of wool in the majority of cases. The Republic during the ceremonies wanted all the members of the Signoria in their finery which included materials such as velvet, satin, silk and damask, while the *pavonazzo* woollen robes were perhaps used during their daily tasks rather than to dazzle in pageantry. The robes that were lined with furs would have been customarily worn in winter in order to shield the procurators from the cold and humidity of the lagoon while the single lined robes would have been used during the warmer months of the year.

From an inventory and auction list of Salustio Gnechi, Cavalier of the Doge in 1599 there can be seen estimates of the costs of his robes a *dogal* which are:

A robe a *ducal* of red Damask lined with silk estimated at 30 Ducats
Another robe of red wool with no lining estimated at 20 Ducats
Another a *ducal* of *pavonazzo* wool (old) without lining estimated at 16 Ducats.²⁹

These estimates show how expensive a robe a *ducal* can be especially if it is made out of red Damask and silk. Thirty ducats were a great amount of money at the time and if these procurators were not wealthy patricians they would not have been able to afford such robes. The annual salary for procurators was around 100 Lire de Grossi which amounted to 48 Ducats.³⁰ This was more of a token salary for the prestigious post rather than an amount that could suffice to maintain their expenses or indeed their expensive official wardrobe, as it would have allowed them to purchase only two robes a *ducal* at most. These prices and the amount of robes a *ducal* in the wardrobes show that Procurator Vettor Grimani was very wealthy. Furthermore, being a procurator created *per danari* he was wealthy enough to buy his own way into the prestigious post of procurator, which as a seat in its own right could not afford him many luxuries. It was only because of a deep need to prove their noble lineage and a desire to be among the ruling members of the nobility that these patricians sought to become procurators,

²⁹ ASVa, Giudizi di Petizion, Busta 341/6, no. 92, fol. 5: 'Una vesta ducale de Damasco cremesin fodra de ormesin stimada [...] D 30 g- Un altra vesta de panno scarlato de sfodra D 20 g- Un altra ducali de panno pavonazzo vecchio de sfodra D 20 g-'

³⁰ BMVb, 18th Century, vol II, fol. 568-9: 'Non ostante pero che in tale deliberazione abbia avuto in vista il Senato solamente li Procuratori della procuratoria de Supra; e che esser dovessero intangibili li Salarii delli Procuratori delle altre due Procuratie, tutti non ostante indifferentemente essigono adesso lo stesso Salario di Lire cento di Grossi all'anno che formano Ducati quaranta otto...'

while their financial security, as it always had, rested with their mercantile activities.

Conclusion

While the images of the Venetian procurators made their way around Europe through printed representations, contemporary foreign viewers may have only appreciated the form and cut of their robes and not the colour or the luxurious fabrics employed in those robes. First and foremost, the procurators' attire was intended to be a symbol of wealth, power and nobility within the Venetian Republic. The importance of these office-holders was communicated through the striking crimson and *pavanazzo* colour of their robes and the expensive materials which were used to produce such garments, including velvet, satin, wool and silk lined with various precious furs. Their attire served to separate and distinguish them among other members of nobility and the Venetian citizens. This could not have been perceived entirely by contemporary viewers through the images on print alone as they do not convey the precious materials and luscious colours used for such garments. This paper has sought to add depth to the printed images of Venetian procurators by examining archival sources, which in turn reveal the cost of the garments and the fact that different materials were used for the robes to enable their owners to wear official robes in any season. Both the printed representations of procurators' robes and the robes themselves helped to convey the power and stability of the Venetian ruling class, and it is notable that these garments remained relatively unchanged as a general shape, form and colour throughout the sixteenth century. However, this image of stability did not reflect the political fortunes of the Venetian Republic, as the overall power and influence of the Venetian Republic and its hold over its overseas territories began to decline in the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries.³¹ As a final note, it is an interesting fact that the office of procurator was one of the few positions to survive the fall of the Republic at the end of the eighteenth century and it is a post that still continues to exist today, under the title of First Procurator of Saint Mark. The seven procurators today are in charge of managing the historic preservation of Saint Mark's Basilica.³²

Biographical Statement

Jola Pellumbi began her studies in art history at the University of Western Australia and completed an MA in Cultural and Intellectual History 1300-1650 at the Warburg Institute, University of London in 2008. She has worked at Sotheby's Institute of Art, Bonhams and the Wallace Collection in London. She is currently completing her PhD in History at King's College London with a thesis titled Mapping Fashion in Early Modern Venice, 1550-1680.

³¹ Brown, 1887, p. 350 and Casarini, 1823, pp. 30-1. For a more detailed account on the decline of the Venetian economy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries see Pullan, 1968

³² Basilica di San Marco, 2004.

Abbreviations Used Throughout

ASM = Archivio di Stato, Modena

ASV = Archivio di Stato, Venice

BMV = Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice

BNF = Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

NAL = National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

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