

## “I TURCHI AL SOLITO CRUDELI...”: IMAGES OF PAOLO ERIZZO AND THE VENETIAN HEROINES ANNA ERIZZO AND BELISANDRA MARAVIGLIA IN HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THE VISUAL ARTS

Polona VIDMAR

University of Maribor, Faculty of Arts, Koroška cesta 160, 2000 Maribor, Slovenia  
e-mail: polona.vidmar@um.si

### ABSTRACT

*The article explores depictions of the Venetian heroes Paolo and Anna Erizzo and Belisandra Maraviglia in the visual arts and their relationship with historiography and legend. The heroic stories of Paolo and Anna were rarely depicted other than in paintings and graphics with an auto-celebrative purpose. Works on this theme were deemed suitable for the promotion of private commissioners – the Erizzo family – and public commissioners – the Venetian Republic. They became exempla virtutis and were treated similarly to Christian martyrs in Venetian iconography. The legend of Belisandra Maraviglia / Alessandra Maraviglia / Arnalda di Rocas was similarly not a common topic in the visual arts. However, through its representation in the illustrated book by the French Jesuit Pierre Le Moyne, the legendary Venetian figure came to be depicted even as far as north-eastern Slovenia. In this case, it was images of ancient Victories that provided the basis for her depictions rather than images of Christian saints.*

**Key words:** Paolo Erizzo, Anna Erizzo, Belisandra Maraviglia, Andrea Celesti, Claude Vignon, Pierre Le Moyne, virtuous heroes, Baroque painting, Venetian painting

## “I TURCHI AL SOLITO CRUDELI...”: IMMAGINI DI PAOLO ERIZZO E DELLE EROINE VENEZIANE ANNA ERIZZO E BELISANDRA MARAVIGLIA NELLA STORIOGRAFIA E NELLE ARTI VISIVE

### SINTESI

*L'articolo esplora le raffigurazioni degli eroi veneziani Paolo e Anna Erizzo e Belisandra Maraviglia nelle arti visive e il loro rapporto con la storiografia e la leggenda. Le storie eroiche di Paolo e Anna sono state raramente raffigurate, se non in pittura e grafica con uno scopo auto-celebrativo. Opere su questo tema furono ritenute idonee per la promozione di committenti privati, la famiglia Erizzo, e pubblici quali la Repubblica di Venezia. Questi personaggi sono diventati exempla virtutis e sono stati trattati nell'iconografia veneziana in modo analogo ai martiri cristiani. Proprio come le loro storie, la leggenda di Belisandra Maraviglia / Alessandra Maraviglia / Arnalda di Rocas non era un tema comune nelle arti visive. Tuttavia, attraverso la sua rappresentazione nel libro illustrato del gesuita francese Pierre Le Moyne, immagini di questa leggendaria figura veneziana sono state trovate persino nel lontano nord-est della Slovenia. In questo caso, sono state le immagini di antiche vittorie a fornire la base per le sue rappresentazioni, piuttosto che immagini di santi cristiani.*

**Parole chiave:** Paolo Erizzo, Anna Erizzo, Belisandra Maraviglia, Andrea Celesti, Claude Vignon, Pierre Le Moyne, eroi virtuosi, pittura barocca, pittura veneziana

## INTRODUCTION

The Venetian virtuous heroes Paolo and Anna Erizzo did not frequently form a subject for the visual arts. However, they appear in private and public auto-celebrative Venetian artworks serving the familiar function of anti-Ottoman propaganda. Although they have already been the subject of some research (Mantovanelli, 1989, 61–69; Pilo, 2000, 110–115; Fossaluzza, 2008, 176–178), the depictions of Paolo and Anna Erizzo are still to some extent misunderstood and they remain to be published in their entirety. This article is an attempt to correct persistent errors in the understanding of depictions of Paolo Erizzo in works of Venetian public art. The second aim of the article is to present the depictions of the heroic act of Belisandra Maraviglia, which appeared in French and Central European art as a result of the illustrated book *La Galerie des Femmes Fortes* by the Jesuit Pierre Le Moyne (1602–1671), first published in Paris in 1647 (Le Moyne, 1647). The starting point for the discussion is the impact of historiographic literature and Venetian popular legends on the images of these three virtuous heroes in the visual arts. To understand this impact, a section of the paper addresses the historical context and attempts to distinguish the history from the legends and propaganda. Reference is also made to selected historiographic works as well as works by modern historians in order to explain the issue in the context of Venetian-Ottoman relations.

The symbolic meaning of the three heroes' virtuous act and a vivid description of them is provided by the Venetian historian Pompeo Molmenti in his book *La storia di Venezia nella vita privata dalle origini alla caduta della repubblica*. In the chapter *Il Tipo Estetico dell'Uomo e della Donna ecc.*, he describes not only famous Venetian beauties, but also women who distinguished themselves with their extraordinary courage and willingness to die (Molmenti, 1879, 1906). The following passage appeared in the English translation of Molmenti's book (1907): "Nevertheless we meet with examples of sublime heroism on the part of Venetian women: their legendary prototype is Anna Erizzo, daughter of Paolo Erizzo, the gallant defender of Negroponte in 1470. She was imprisoned by Mahomet II on the assurance that she would not 'lose her head'; but by a treacherous trick she was instead sawn through the middle, and so, literally, did not lose her head. Posterity desiring, perhaps, to enhance the glory of her sacrifice, invented the legend, unconfirmed by documents or by contemporary historians, that Anna was executed because she had repelled the advances of Mahomet. The story of Belisandra Maraviglia, on the other hand, is confirmed by the admiration of her contemporaries. After vigorously defending the castle of San Teodoro near Canea, she was captured by the Turks and destined for slavery; to save herself from this fate she fired the powder magazine on board the ship, and blew herself, the enemy, and over a thousand Christian slaves into the air. Examples of heroic patriotism such as these

throw a halo of glory round the women of Venice, whose stories are often a subject that elicit intermingled pity and admiration (Molmenti, 1907, 170–171).

The English translation is misleading, since in the original text Molmenti stated that it was Paolo Erizzo who had been sawn in half by the treachery of Mehmed II, whereas his daughter Anna was slain by Sultan Mehmed himself (Molmenti, 1906, 527). However, the heroic stories of Paolo and Anna Erizzo and Belisandra Maraviglia have to be seen in the historical context of the Venetian-Ottoman wars from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the case of Paolo and Anna Erizzo, this refers to the defeat of the Venetian town Negroponte/Chalcis on the island of Euboea in 1470 during the second reign of the sultan Mehmed II (1451–1481). In the case of Belisandra Maraviglia, the context is thought to be the fall of the fortress of St Theodore near Canea on the island of Crete in 1645 during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim (1640–1649), and as will be shown later, the fall of the Venetian town Nicosia on the island of Cyprus in 1570 during the reign of Sultan Selim II (1566–1574). According to the eyewitness' report, cited below, the bailo of Chalcis, Paolo Erizzo, was killed defending his city in the street fighting; however, the emotional impact and the fear brought about by the loss of Chalcis and Euboea stimulated popular fantasy (Gullino, 1993, 196). Various stories about Paolo Erizzo were invented, among them the legend of his martyr's death and the myths surrounding his exceptionally beautiful and virtuous daughter Anna, who preferred to die rather than to become the Sultan's slave. Although Molmenti stated that the existence and the story of Belisandra Maraviglia were confirmed by the admiration of her contemporaries, it will be shown that she is also a product of popular Venetian legend. Both women have much in common, although they are separated by centuries: they were captured by the Ottomans and destined for the harems of the sultans, but due to their decision to die rather than become slaves and lose their virginity, they grew into appropriate symbols of chastity. It is also important to note that both these legends are based on European stereotypes concerning the supposed cruelty and lust of the Ottomans, expressed through depictions of the persons of the sultans themselves.

The heroine Anna Erizzo appears frequently in tragedies and opera librettos from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Gullino, 2000); she was also the topic of some Venetian paintings in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. The same is true for the martyr's death of Anna's father, Paolo; however, there are no depictions of Belisandra Maraviglia's story in theatre-based productions, only in the visual arts.

## PAOLO AND ANNA ERIZZO – HISTORY AND LEGEND

The stories of the martyrdom of Paolo Erizzo and the heroic death of his daughter Anna underwent a series of modifications and adaptations in Venetian historiography,

of which only a small selection shall be cited here. Paolo and Anna Erizzo's heroic acts took place during the fall of Chalcis, when "Venice suffered almost her worst loss of the entire fifteenth century", since the city had been, after Crete, her chief naval station in the Aegean (Setton, 1978, 303). Paolo Erizzo, born in 1411 in the old Erizzo palace near San Canzian in Venice, was elected bailo ('baillie') of Chalcis in 1468 (Gullino, 1993, 194). Two years later, Sultan Mehmed II attempted to conquer the Venetian island. The Ottoman fleet was under the command of Mahmud Pasha while the land forces were led Mehmed II himself. At the end of June 1470, the Ottoman cannons began battering the city walls while the Ottoman troops scoured the island, killing all Greeks and Latins over fifteen years of age and enslaving all the others (Setton, 1978, 301). The Ottomans began their final attack on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July, entering the city the following morning. The Venetians continued fighting, culminating in a general massacre, and Mehmed II entered the devastated city on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July. Paolo Erizzo only surrendered after the Ottomans had pledged the safety of those who had taken refuge within the castle walls. The sultan, however, reneged on his promise and ordered their execution. According to the eyewitness Giacomo Rizzardo, Mehmed II "limited himself to slaughtering Paolo Erizzo and washed then his hands and his face in his blood" (Gullino, 1993, 196). Another eyewitness, Giovan Maria Angiolello (1451–ca. 1525) from Vicenza, who survived the fall of Chalcis and became a slave and servitor of sultan Mehmed II, and whose memoirs are referred to as "Historia Turchesca", states that Paolo was killed during the first onslaught, that is in the defence of the part of the town named Bourkos on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July (MacKay, 2006, 29).

As regards the historical authenticity of Anna Erizzo and Paolo Erizzo's martyrdom, it should be stressed that the eyewitnesses Rizzardo and Angiolello make no reference to either the sawing in half of Paolo Erizzo or the existence of his daughter. Although the historian Kenneth Setton quotes both eyewitnesses' reports, the martyrdom of Paolo was still so firmly anchored in historical thought in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that Setton states as a fact that Erizzo was tied between two boards and sawn in half (Setton, 1978, 302). The same is true for John Julius Norwich who writes: "The Governor, Paolo Erizzo, who had taken refuge in one of the towers, gave himself up only on the condition that he might keep his head; Mehmet, true to his promise, had his body severed at the waist instead." (Norwich, 1988, 351) Setton and Norwich are only two of the historians from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who were certain of Paolo's martyrdom; others are quoted in Gullino's article (Gullino, 2000).

The first mention of Paolo Erizzo's martyrdom by sawing in historiographic literature is most likely the one in Marcantonio Coccio Sabellico's *Historia rerum Venetarum ab urbe condita* (Sabellico, 1487/1718, 739). While this manner of death also appears in the Erizzo family chroni-

cle preserved in Marciana (Gullino, 1993, 196), it did not find its way into all 16<sup>th</sup> century historiographic works. We should mention here Francesco Sansovino's book *Gl'Anali Turcheschi overo Vite de Principi della Casa Othomana* (Sansovino, 1573). Sansovino did not describe the sawing of Paolo Erizzo, but related that all Italian youths were killed, some by impalement and, interestingly, others by sawing in half (Sansovino, 1573, 147). Sansovino also mentions Erizzo's daughter but without using her given name. He described her as a daughter of Paolo Erizzo, young and beautiful, destined for the sultan's harem on account of her beauty, and finally slain because she refused to submit to Mehmed's will (Sansovino, 1573, 147). According to Giuseppe Gullino (Gullino, 2000, 129), the oldest reference to Paolo's daughter is to be found in an anonymous annex to L. Calcondyla's book *Origine et rebus gestis Turcorum libri decem...*, published in Basel in 1556. In the annex with the title "De Nigroponti captione", the daughter of "Paulus Erico" appears without her given name, but the description of her is similar to the later one by Sansovino as the only daughter of the praetor, a chaste and beautiful virgin, who was brought to the sultan because of her beauty and killed because she didn't submit to the sultan's will (Calcondyla, 1556, 331–332).

An important step in building the Venetian legend of Paolo Erizzo's martyrdom and his daughter's heroic act was most likely taken in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, encouraged by the members of the Erizzo family, who sought to highlight their illustrious members for auto-celebrative purposes. It probably occurred somewhere between 1631 and 1646, when Francesco Erizzo was the doge of Venice (Dumler, 2001, 324–325); however, a more accurate statement about the role of Francesco Erizzo can only be made following further research. In 1647 an extensive description of the heroic acts of Paolo Erizzo and his daughter appears in the book *La Galerie des Femmes Fortes* by the French Jesuit Pierre Le Moyne (Le Moyne, 1647, 341–348). Le Moyne related the stories of the martyr's death of Paul Eri and the virtuous decision of his chaste daughter, who appears without her given name, but with the epithet "La chaste Venitienne". Relying on an earlier, but not quoted, historiographic book, Le Moyne reported that Mehmed had fallen in love with the captured daughter of Paul Eri and had promised her wealth, offering her "sceptres and crowns". The Jesuit fleshes out Anna's story with her thoughts on suicide and finally with comparisons between her fate and those of early Christian saints, between Mehmed and Nero and between the dangers of the battlefield and those of an amphitheatre (Le Moyne, 1647, 348).

Giovanni Sagredo's *Memorie storiche de Monarchi ottomani*, which had a significant impact on the European image of the Ottomans in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, is similarly extensive in its description of the stories (Sagredo, 1673, 109–112). Sagredo described Paolo Erizzo as the former bailo of Chalcis, who could have returned safely to

Venice but decided to stay in the besieged town in order to prove his courage and seize this opportunity to distinguish himself (Sagredo, 1673, 109). Erizzo roused the defenders with his speeches and his acts. After a long period of fighting, he submitted himself to the victor to save his head. But the Ottomans, "cruel as usual", sawed him into two parts under the pretence that they had promised to save his head but not his bust (Sagredo, 1673, 111–112). Before his death, Paolo Erizzo was loath to leave his beautiful daughter Anna exposed to the lust of the barbarians and asked the janissaries to kill her. They answered that they would not dishonour her but that she would be reserved for the appetites of the Sultan. Confronting him, Anna appears with the face of a victor rather than a slave. She is not prepared to submit even though the sultan has promised her own apartment, sceptres and crowns, rich clothes and gems. With a stroke of his sabre, the sultan releases her innocent soul, which rapidly rises into glory (Sagredo, 1673, 112). It was Sagredo's book that had the strongest impact on the visual arts, but it was also used as a historical source for tragedies and opera librettos (Mantovanelli, 1989, 61–66; Girardi, 2005, 45–50; Filippi, 2005, 51–66). Stefano Carli from Koper/Capodistria should also be counted as part of this group; he found inspiration for his tragedy *La Erizia* in Sagredo's book (Zilioto, 1948; Ivetic, 1998; Širok, 1999; Gullino, 2000). This outstanding

tale from Venetian history was suggested to him by his elder brother Gian Rinaldo (Zilioto, 1948, 282). Stefano Carli explicitly quoted Giovanni Sagredo as his source (Carli, 1765, 7).

As regards the historical roots of the legend of Anna Erizzo, a recent interpretation by Reinhold Mueller should also be mentioned (Mueller, 2010). Mueller pointed out that some inhabitants of Chalcis survived the massacre of July 1470 – some young boys, who had been brought up as janissaries in the Muslim faith, and women, had been able to escape by paying off their captors and began trickling back to Venice, some of them finding a home in the Venetian monasteries. Mueller describes the story of the elderly Polissena Premarin and the young and beautiful Beatrice Venier, members of the largest noble families resident in Negroponte. In the story of Beatrice Venier, who was about to hang herself by her long blond hair in order to save her virginity "from the military license of the barbarians", but was led by the miraculous intervention of the Virgin Mary to a Venetian ship, Mueller assumes a vague and tenuous connection to the story of Anna (the supposedly beautiful daughter of Paolo Erizzo). Polissena Premarin and Beatrice Venier had probably taken a vow that they would lead a life of chastity as nuns if they were saved from death and, with other survivors, they founded the San Sepolcro convent for the Observant Franciscan



**Fig. 1: Andrea Celesti: *Martyrdom of Paolo Erizzo*, private collection (Pilo, 2000, 110).  
Sl. 1: Andrea Celesti: *Mučeništvo Paola Erizza*, zasebna zbirka (Pilo, 2000, 110).**

Third Order in Venice, where they performed many miracles. Their beatification was recorded by the Franciscan hagiographers (Mueller, 2010). Although Mueller was sure of Beatrice's family name (Venier), it should be stated that Bettinelli referred to Beatrice as a member of the Renier family (Bettinelli, 1780, 127, 132).

On the other hand, a certain Anna Erizzo from Negroponte is to be found in the list of women in the harem of Mehmed II, but with no indication that she was the daughter of Paolo Erizzo (Alderson, 1956). As Gian Giuseppe Filippi pointed out, we cannot be certain that the girl was Paolo's daughter or even from the same family, since it was common for servants to take the name of the patrician of the house in which they were employed (Filippi, 2005, 59).

A full discussion of the historical roots of the legend of Anna Erizzo must be left for further research but it can be stated that in popular legend Anna Erizzo stands as, "a woman, who chose to be a martyr" (Mueller, 2010) and who became a "heroine of Venice and of Christianity" (Mueller, 2010) as well as a symbol of "feminine purity, religious constancy and catholic virtue" (Gullino, 2000, 129).

#### PAOLO AND ANNA ERIZZO IN THE VISUAL ARTS

In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, the painter Andrea Celesti (1637–1712) obtained a commission from a member of the

Erizzo family to execute an iconographical programme glorifying the 15<sup>th</sup> century heroes of the Erizzo family, with the purpose of depicting the Venetian triumphs based on their heroic acts as well as illustrating the contemporary role of the family members (Fossaluzza, 2008, 177). The artworks were commissioned for the Erizzo alla Maddalena palace, which came into family possession through the marriage of Giacomo Erizzo to Cecilia Molin in 1650 (Tassini, 1863, 251; Bordignon Favero, 1988, 22). The 1714 inventory of the palace by the painter Agostino Litterini, compiled soon after the death of Giacomo's son Battista Erizzo (1655–1712), and the descriptions of the palace from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, have provided us with information about the paintings in the room designated "portelo" or "sala del primo ordine" (main hall) in the Erizzo palace (Fossaluzza, 2008, 177). The room was equipped with two large pendant paintings (brazzi 12 per 6 = ca. 300 x 600 cm) by Andrea Celesti, depicting the Martyrdom of Paolo Erizzo whose body was sawn in half and Mehmed II who sentenced Anna Erizzo to death; above the second one hung the painting Apotheosis of Paolo Erizzo and his daughter Anna with Religion who points to Venice, also by Celesti. Agostino Litterini attributed the personifications of Justice and Peace and the lifesize portraits of Anna Erizzo and of Paolo Erizzo dressed as bailo whom a child offers laurels to the same painter. The last painting, whose author is not specified in the descriptions,



**Fig. 2: Andrea Celesti: Death of Anna Erizzo, private collection (Pilo, 2000, 110).  
Sl. 2: Andrea Celesti: Smrt Anne Erizzo, zasebna zbirka (Pilo, 2000, 110).**

depicted Niccolò Erizzo during the conquest of Navarino in 1686 (Fossaluzza, 2008, 178). Unfortunately, all the mentioned paintings are lost or at least have not been identified among preserved Venetian paintings. In 1926, both large paintings were still in their original position in the main hall of the Erizzo palace (Pilo, 2000, 113; Fossaluzza, 2008, 211), but in 1954 they were already missing or lost (Mucchi – Della Croce, 1954, 86).

Two paintings by Andrea Celesti depicting The martyrdom of Paolo Erizzo and The death of Anna Erizzo, which are smaller (110 – 180 cm) and preserved in a private collection in Mirano, are regarded differently as the bozzetti for the missing large paintings (Mucchi – Della Croce, 1954, 86; Pilo, 2000, 113) or the finished paintings (Mantovanelli, 1989, 63). They were used as *sopraporte* ('overdoors') in one of the rooms of the same Palazzo Erizzo alla Maddalena in Venice (Mantovanelli, 1989, 63; Pilo, 2000, 113; Fossaluzza, 2000, 211). According to Pilo, the bozzetti and the large paintings for the hall were commissioned by Battista Erizzo and executed in the early 1680s (Pilo, 2000, 113–114). Fossaluzza proposes a date between 1679 and 1695 (Fossaluzza, 2008, 179), because of the chronological connection of the paintings with Celesti's drawing for a ceiling in the Erizzo palace (Fossaluzza, 2008, 178), which will be discussed below.

As has already been established, Celesti's *sopraportes* depicting The martyrdom of Paolo Erizzo and The death of Anna Erizzo were inspired by the text in Sagredo's book *Memorie storiche de Monarchi ottomani* (Mantovanelli,

1989, 62; Pilo, 2000, 113). Celesti's multi-figured compositions have a strong narrative and dramatic, almost theatrical approach. Paolo Erizzo's old naked body is fastened on a wooden table in a cross-shaped position; his facial features are distorted in pain. While a group of Ottomans are performing the execution, others are watching or talking. In the left-hand corner a group of Christian slaves is sitting on the floor, turning their heads away from the terrible sight. Sultan Mehmed, sitting on a throne high above the crowd, indicates the central action with his left hand. In the background we can see dead bodies lying on the shore, the consequences of battle. Three smaller figures connect the scene in the foreground with the background, one of them probably Anna Erizzo herself. The martyrdom scene strongly resembles the contemporary depictions of the martyrdoms of the Christian saints.

In the painting of Anna Erizzo, the sultan Mehmed is shown in an active role. He has just raised his sabre in order to kill Anna. Both are placed in the middle of the composition. Anna, pale-skinned and blond-haired, is approaching the sultan with such energy that two extremely muscular men are barely able to restrain her. The scene is rich in narrative detail: a Venetian beauty is crying to the right; a young woman, very similar to a Christian saint, is portrayed dying by the sabre of an Ottoman; a weapon is lying on the floor; the Ottomans appear in their colourful costumes and turbans; there is an Ottoman fleet in the background and magnificent horses to the left. The paintings are also based on Sagredo's book,



**Fig. 3: Andrea Celesti: Paolo Erizzo abandons the ruins of the fortress of Negroponte, Martyrdom of Paolo Erizzo, Paolo Erizzo in front of Mehmed II who sentenced him to death, Paris, Musée des Beaux-Arts (Fossaluzza, 2008, 177).**

**Sl. 3: Andrea Celesti: Paolo Erizzo zapušča ruševine trdnjave Negroponte, Mučeništvo Paola Erizza, Paolo Erizzo pred Mehmedom II., ki ga obsodi na smrt, Pariz, Musée des Beaux-Arts (Fossaluzza, 2008, 177).**

as we can see from a young man with a high yellow headdress, who hurries to the sultan and Anna, bearing heaps of jewels, a sceptre and a crown.

Andrea Celesti also produced a drawing that featured scenes from the story of Paolo Erizzo, which were to be painted on the ceiling of a room in the Erizzo palace; however, the exact location or even the existence of the ceiling painting is not certain (Fossaluzza, 2008, 177). While George Knox mistakenly alleged that the ceiling painting or the preparatory drawing had been ordered by Nicolo Erizzo, son of Francesco, grandson of Nicola and Ambassador in Rome and Paris (Knox, 1989, 80–81), Giorgio Fossaluzza correctly concluded that the client had really belonged to the branch of the dynasty that owned the Erizzo alla Maddalena palace. In Fossaluzzi's opinion, this could have been Giacomo Erizzo, his sons Battista and Marcantonio or his grandsons Giusto Antonio and Marcantonio (Fossaluzza, 2008, 176, 211). The drawing (371 x 732 mm) is preserved in the Musée des Beaux Arts in Paris (Knox, 1989, 80–81). The ceiling was planned to be carried out in stucco but was possibly instead realised in a wood carving with inserted canvas paintings in the place of frescos (Fossaluzza, 2008, 176). In the centre of the elaborate drawing is the Martyrdom of Paolo Erizzo; to the left Paolo Erizzo abandons the ruins of the fortress

and to the right Paolo Erizzo in front of Sultan Mehmed II who sentences him to death. All three main images depict the story of Paolo and are based on the short passage in Sagredo's book: "L'Erizzo doppo hauer difeso per quanto gli fù permesso il di fuori, & il di dentro della Piazza, si fece forte sostenendo per qualche spatio di tempo le rouine della Città. Mà mancata la monitione da viuere, e da Guerra si rese al vincitore salua la testa. I Turchi al solito crudeli, secatolo per lo mezzo, pretesero d' hauer promesso di perdonare alla testa, mà non al busto." (Sagredo, 1673, 111–112). To the left, the armoured Paolo Erizzo steps proudly from the ruins of the fortress towards the fighting Ottomans. The streets of Negroponte are covered in dead bodies, probably also illustrating Sagredo, who describes extensively the 'cruelty of the inexorable Barbarian' after the fall of Negroponte (Sagredo, 1673, 112). In the scene on the right, the still armoured but chained Paolo Erizzo stands in front of Mehmed, who is sitting in an elaborate tent. The artist was familiar with the contemporary attire of bailos, since Paolo Erizzo wears the same kind of headdress as those in which Venetian bailos to Constantinople were portrayed; for example, Giovanni Emo by Pietro Umberti in Museo Correr in Venice (Koch, 1996, 345). The central scene depicting Paolo's martyrdom corresponds exactly to the previously mentioned sopra-



**Fig. 4: Antonio Guardi: Martyrdom of Paolo Erizzo, Collection Vittorio Cini (Morassi, 1975, 96).**

**Sl. 4: Antonio Guardi: Mučeništvo Paola Erizza, Zbirka Vittorio Cini (Morassi, 1975, 96).**



*Fig. 5: Antonio Guardi: Death of Anna Erizzo, Collection Vittorio Cini (Morassi, 1975, 99).  
Sl. 5: Antonio Guardi: Smrt Anne Erizzo, Zbirka Vittorio Cini (Morassi, 1975, 99).*



*Fig. 6: Francesco Montemezzano: Martyrdom of Armario Albano (later interpreted as Martyrdom of Paolo Erizzo), Hall of the Great Council, Palazzo Ducale, Venice (Mantovanelli, 1989, 69).  
Sl. 6: Francesco Montemezzano: Mučeništvo Armaria Albana (kasneje interpretirano kot Mučeništvo Paola Erizza), Dvorana Velikega sveta, Doževa palača, Benetke (Mantovanelli, 1989, 69).*

porta and the lost large painting of his martyrdom in the hall of the Erizzo palace. As Giorgio Fossaluzza pointed out, there is a question as to whether the same composition of the martyrdom appeared three times and in three different rooms of the Erizzo palace, or the central scene of the ceiling was abandoned, appearing instead in the large-dimensioned painting in the hall (Fossaluzza, 2008, 177) and additionally on the sopraporta. The three scenes from the story of Paolo Erizzo on the ceiling drawing are surrounded by eight personifications of virtues, of which six are identified by inscriptions: in the upper section History ('Storia'), a virtue without inscription, Celebrity who scribes the name of Paolo Erizzo ('Celebrità che scrive il nome di Paolo Erizzo') and Fame ('Fama'), in the lower section Fidelity ('Fedeltà'), another virtue without inscription, Love for the Fatherland ('Amore per la Patria') and Courage in martyrdom ('Coraggio nel martirio'). Above the main scene two puttos are bringing the crown and palm of martyrdom to Paolo Erizzo and beneath the main scene two puttos are holding the Erizzo coat of arms, surrounded by war trophies and flags.

Celesti's paintings in the Erizzo Palace are likely to have been the inspiration of two drawings by Antonio Guardi (1699–1760) depicting the martyrdom of Paolo Erizzo and the death of Anna Erizzo (Morassi, 1975, ill. 96 and 120; Fossaluzza, 2008, 210). Perhaps slightly less plausibly, the first may have been inspired by the drawing of Andrea Celesti for the ceiling in the same palace (Knox, 1989, 80). In the martyrdom scene, Guardi alters the poses and positions of the figures only slightly, but strengthens the composition with a more familiar arrangement of the Ottoman banner and weapon. The dark red fabric behind the sitting sultan, which forms part of a tent or a baldachin in Celesti's painting, is transformed by Guardi into a curtain, which makes sense only in a theatre setting. The drawing of the death of Anna Erizzo is executed rather less elaborately, but here Guardi also copies all the main features of Celesti's composition.

Apart from the paintings produced for a private commissioner from the Erizzo family, it is interesting that these images were supposed to be painted on the ceiling in one of the most prominent assembly rooms in Venice –



**Fig. 7: Andrea Zucchi – Silvestro Manaigo: Martyrdom of Paolo Erizzo (Mantovanelli, 1989, 69).  
Sl. 7: Andrea Zucchi – Silvestro Manaigo: Mučeništvo Paola Erizza (Mantovanelli, 1989, 69).**

in Sala del Maggior Consiglio ('Hall of the Great Council') in Palazzo Ducale. After the fire in 1577 the flat ceiling of the hall was constructed with gilded cornices sculpted in high relief, which framed a series of paintings. The canvases were dedicated to the glorification of Venice, in remembrance of the numerous military undertakings in the East or on the mainland by Venetian ground troops. A series of monochrome paintings depicts uomini illustri from Venetian history. One of them, portraying the martyrdom of a man who is being sawn in half by the Ottomans, has been recently interpreted as the martyrdom of Paolo Erizzo by Marina Stefani Mantovanelli, Giovanni Pilo, Giuseppe Gullino and Gian Giuseppe Filippi (Mantovanelli, 1989, 64; Pilo, 2000, 114; Gullino, 2000, 128; Filippi, 2005, 59). However, all of these authors have overlooked the Venetian manuscripts from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century published by Wolfgang Wolters (Wolters, 1983), describing the iconographical program of the ceiling paintings in Palazzo Ducale. From these manuscripts it is clear that the painter Francesco Montemezzano (towards 1550 – after 1600), a pupil of Paolo Veronese, actually painted Armario Albano, captain of a Venetian galley who was captured by the army of Sultan Bayezid in 1499, taken to Constantinople and sawn in half (Wolters, 1983, 315). The same theme can be found in Francesco Sansovino's detailed description of the ceiling paintings, published in Giustiniano Martinioni's *Venezia città nobilissima e sin-*

*golare* from 1663: "Monte Mezzano figurò l'esempio di Costanza, e di Religione dimostrato da Albano Armario..." (Sansovino – Martinioni, 1663, I., 358).

Only later, after the legend of Paolo Erizzo's martyrdom was developed in historiographic works and through the Erizzo family endeavours, was the depiction of Armario Albano reinterpreted as the depiction of Paolo Erizzo. This most likely took place before Andrea Celesti executed the paintings for the Erizzo family, since there are similarities in his and Montemezzano's compositions of Paolo's martyrdom. At the latest, the reinterpretation took place in the first decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A copper engraving by Andrea Zucchi (1679–1740) and Silvestro Manaigo (1670–1734), based on the mentioned painting in the Hall of the Great Council, bears the inscription "Martirio sop(ortato da Paolo Erizzo per la Fede e per la Patria segato per mez(z)o da Turchi à Negroponte l'Anno 1469. Opera di Pietro Longo nella Sala del Gran Consiglio in VENEZIA". The inscription is misleading not only in terms of the painting's theme but also regarding the painter, as it mentions Pietro Longo instead of Francesco Montemezzano. According to Mantovanelli (Mantovanelli, 1989, 64) and Pilo (Pilo, 2000, 114) a lithography based on the same painting in Palazzo Ducale, executed by the graphic artist Paolo Bergnani and the lithographer Filippini, was published in the tragedy *Anna Erizzo* by Francesco Gambarà in 1832. However it could not be verified since in the Aus-



**Fig. 8: Anonymous lithographer: Martyrdom of Paolo Erizzo (Litta, 1819–1883).**

**Sl. 8: Anonimni litograf: Mučeništvo Paola Erizza (Litta, 1819–1883).**

trian National Library and the Biblioteca statale di Cremona copies, the lithography has regrettably been torn out of the book (Gambara, 1832).<sup>1</sup> An unknown lithographer used Montemezzano's painting and Zucchi – Manaigo's engraving for his depiction of Paolo's martyrdom, which was published in Pompeo Litta's work *Famiglie celebri Italiane* (1819–1883). The lithography simplifies the depicted figures, but preserves all the essential components of the narration. In contrast to the previous compositions, the author depicts a vivid conversation between the main protagonists – Mehmed II and Paolo Erizzo. In the bottom left we can see the signature *Pietro Longo dip.* and under the lithography the inscription: "Martirio di Paolo Erizzo a Negroponte nel 1469 nella Soffitta della Sala del maggior Consiglio in Venezia". Francesco Montemezzano's painting and Zucchi-Manaigo's engraving were also visual sources for Giovanni Grevembroch's (1731–1807) drawing with watercolours "Paolo Erizzo martire" in the fifth volume of his *Gli abiti de Veneziani di quasi ogni età con diligenza raccolti e dipinti nel secolo XVIII* (Venezia, Biblioteca del Museo Correr, mss. Gradenigo-Dolfin 49, V, tav. 46; Grevembroch, 1981). In the drawing, Grevembroch copies only the central part of the composition with Paolo and three Ottomans performing the execution. Even the sultan is not present. The poses, garments and the facial expressions of the protagonists are an almost exact copy of the Zucchi-Manaigo engraving. Under the drawing is the inscription: "PAOLO ERIZZO. Dopo sostenuti li Bailazzi di Cipro, e di Tripoli si rese valoroso nel difendere Negroponte, e nel morire in servizio della Fede, e della Patria segato da Turchi, dove Anna di lui Figlia con costanza Cristiana sostenne pure il martirio l'anno MCCCCLXX." It is interesting to note the differences in the inscriptions of the lithography published by Litta and the Grevembroch's drawing. Whereas the first mentions the location of the original painting, the second is concerned about the virtuous story of Paolo and his daughter. The motive for the second inscription was probably the attitude of the commissioner of Grevembroch's drawings, since it is known that the commissioner, the Venetian patrician Pietro Gradenigo, was very interested in his fatherland's history (Concina, 2006, 182).

Occasionally, new compositions of the topic were created in 19<sup>th</sup> century painting, probably stimulated by operatic performances. A highly emotional and theatrical contribution was made by the painter Cherubino Cornienti (1816–1860) with his 1842 depiction of the last farewell of Paolo to his daughter ("L'ultimo addio di Paolo Erizzo alla figlia nel momento in cui viene tratto al suplizio. Raccomanda alla medesima il di lei onore, quello della patria e del padre") (Sartori, Zatti, 1996, 41–42). Cornienti competed for the painting award of the Accademia in Venice with this work, but without success. Almost four



**Fig. 9: Giovanni Grevembroch: Paolo Erizzo martyr (Venezia, Biblioteca del Museo Correr, mss. Gradenigo-Dolfin 49, V, ill. 46).**

**Sl. 9: Giovanni Grevembroch: Mučenik Paolo Erizzo (Benetke, Biblioteca del Museo Correr, mss. Gradenigo-Dolfin 49, V, sl. 46).**

centuries after the purported martyrdom, Cornienti selected this theme with the explanation: "un fatto di storia veneta e dei più toccanti per virtù virile e pietà d'affetti" (Sartori, Zatti, 1996, 41). The figural composition is placed on a staircase, with a kneeling Anna and a heroic, naked Paolo – who has been robbed of his armour and shirt – in the centre. The composition strongly resembles a stage scene. The role of sultan Mehmed II is diminished in comparison with Celesti's works; he is standing at the extreme right of the composition and pointing towards the raised podium where the three Ottoman executioners are preparing their tools. Two janissaries in the foreground seem to be overcome by emotion and pity for the daughter; one is holding an unconscious Anna in his arms while the second is pointing to his heart. Both are looking at Me-

<sup>1</sup> A copy of Gambara's book is also preserved in the Civico museo biblioteca dell'attore del Teatro stabile di Genova, but it was not possible for me to consult it since the library staff unfortunately did not reply to my request.



**Fig. 10:** Cherubino Cornienti: *L'ultimo addio di Paolo Erizzo alla figlia nel momento in cui viene tratto al supplizio. Raccomanda alla medesima il di lei onore, quello della patria e del padre, bozzetto, Pavia, Musei Civici (Sartori, Zatti, 1996, 40).*

**Sl. 10:** Cherubino Cornienti: *Paolo Erizzo se zadnjič poslovi od hčere, preden odide v mučniško smrt. Priporoči ji čast do sebe, domovine in očeta, bozzetto, Pavia, Musei Civici (Sartori, Zatti, 1996, 40).*

hmed with disapproval. Cornienti's bozzetto for the painting makes no reference to the relationship between the sultan and his janissaries, also executed in oil on canvas and preserved in the Musei Civici in Pavia (Sartori, Zatti, 1996, 40). Apart from this emphasis on emotional content, there are only a few differences between the bozzetto and the finished painting, mostly in terms of background scenery and costumes. In both pictures, the painter has accentuated the main protagonists of the touching Venetian legend, placing them in the centre of the composition and bathing them in strong natural light.

Almost two decades later, the Lombard painter Tranquilo Cremona chose the same topic for his painting "Maometto II che indignato della resistenza di Anna Erizzo alle sue voglie è sul punto di reciderle il capo". Cremona's painting was exhibited in 1860 in Accademia di Brera in Milano, but since then its location has been unknown and no reproduction of the painting exists (Bossaglia, 1994, 95).

#### BELISANDRA MARAVIGLIA – HISTORY AND LEGEND

As Pompeo Molmenti, quoted in the introduction, was perfectly correct in mentioning the legendary existence of Anna Erizzo, one might expect that he was also right in confirming the actual existence of Belisandra Maraviglia, who was supposed to be admired by her contemporaries. However, this heroine – an example of heroic patriotism – who "... fired the powder magazine on board the ship, and blew herself, the enemy, and over a thousand Christian slaves into the air," (Molmenti, 1907, 170) also existed only in Venetian legends.

Molmenti claimed that Belisandra Maraviglia was captured by the Ottomans and destined to slavery after the fall of the castle of San Teodoro near Canea (Molmenti, 1907, 170), which fell to the Ottomans in the summer of 1645 during the Ottoman offensive on Crete. "The island fortress of St Theodore fell to them, though only after its commander, Biagio Zuliani, seeing that further resi-



**Fig. 11:** Cherubino Cornienti: *L'ultimo addio di Paolo Erizzo alla figlia nel momento in cui viene tratto al supplizio. Raccomanda alla medesima il di lei onore, quello della patria e del padre, private collection (Sartori, Zatti, 1996, 41).*

**Sl. 11:** Cherubino Cornienti: *Paolo Erizzo se zadnjič poslovi od hčere, preden odide v mučeniško smrt. Priporoči ji čast do sebe, domovine in očeta, zasebna zbirka (Sartori, Zatti, 1996, 41).*

stance was hopeless, waited until it was overrun and then set light to the powder magazine, blowing up himself, his men, the attacking Turks and the building itself in a single epic explosion which must have been clearly audible in Canea" (the capital of the island) (Norwich, 1988, 547). Obviously, before Molmenti's time, Venetian legend had transformed the commander Biaggio Zuliani into Belisandra Maraviglia and loaded the powder magazine from the fortress onto the ship that would have taken Christian slaves to Constantinople.

Another legend, reported by Giuseppe Tassini in his book *Curiosità Veneziane* in 1863, also existed. He described the story of Alessandra Maraviglia, a sister of Giovanni Maraviglia, secretary of the senate, and wife of Pietro Albino, "great chancellor" of the reign of Cyprus (Tassini, 1863, 374). According to Tassini, Alessandra was enslaved after the fall of Nicosia in 1570 with numerous other Cypriot women and boarded a ship that would sail

them to Constantinople. Before departure, she set light to the powder magazine and blew the ship she was on into the air. The fire engulfed another two ships and all the prisoners died during the explosion and the ensuing fire.

In the setting light to the ship's powder magazine after the fall of Nicosia in 1570, Tassini's book is in accordance with Giovanni Sagredo's *Memorie istoriche de' monarchi ottomani* of 1673. Sagredo describes at length the Ottoman cruelties during the siege of Nicosia as well as the rich booty and beautiful women that were loaded onto numerous ships for the pleasures of the sultan in Constantinople (Sagredo, 1673, 539–545). Sagredo also mentions the act of bravery of an enslaved Nicosian woman, but she bears another name: "Arnalda di Rocas più degna di corona, che di catena, libera d'animo, se ben schiava di corpo, vedendosi captiva con l'altre condannata à satiare dopo la crudeltà anco la libidine Ottomana; infiammatasi di generoso risentimento, accese la monitione, che con



**Fig. 12: Gilles Rousselet and Abraham Bosse after Claude Vignon: Cypriot lady (Le Moyne, 1647, 326).**

**Fig. 12: Gilles Rousselet in Abraham Bosse po Claude Vignonu: Ciprska dama (Le Moyne, 1647, 326).**

ardore più vorace de' Turchi, la Naue con tutto il bottino incenerì. Diè fuoco al Rogo dell'estinta Patria per rinasce-  
re qual Fenice alla Gloria del cielo..." (Sagredo, 1673, 545)  
The virtuous Nicosian woman is also named as Arnalda di Rocas in the 1769 text *On exceptional Women* by Elisabeth Caminer Turra (Sama, 2003, 168). In her book, Turra classifies illustrious women according to various kinds of merits, virtues and graces, beginning with women who became famous for their love of chastity or for their conjugal loyalty. In the first instance Turra mentions Arnalda di Rocas, a young Cypriot girl, who was captured in Nicosia and put on a boat bound for Constantinople. Out of fear that she was destined for a harem, she had the courage to meet death by setting fire to the gunpowder on board. According to Turra, the "Levant saw not only this example of chastity and strength. The death of the famous Venetian maiden Erizzo was even more heroic and tragic. In

vain did Mohammed II flatter and threaten her to make her cede to his brutality. She resisted so valiantly that the tyrant killed her himself..." (Sama, 2003, 168). As Molmenti did later, Turra compared the chaste Anna Erizzo with the women who set fire to the gunpowder on board the ship, although in her version the women's name was Arnalda di Rocas and her act occurred after the fall of Nicosia in 1570. In Turra's opinion, Anna Erizzo's death was more heroic and tragic than the death of Arnalda di Rocas because it was not marred by the stain of suicide.

As for the fall of the fortress of St Theodore, the historical context of the fall of Nicosia should also be briefly mentioned. The Ottomans, under the command of Lala Mustafa Pasha, had taken Nicosia on 9 September 1570 after a siege of forty-five days. "The fall of Nicosia was a shock to the Venetians such as they had rarely known since Mehmed the Conqueror had wrested Negroponte from them a century earlier" (Setton, 1984, 995). After the fall, soldiers were allowed a three-day period of rape and plunder, followed by atrocities, such as massacres, quarterings, impalements, desecration of churches and violation of the youth of both sexes. The extent of the looting of Nicosia was unusual. "Nicosia was a rich city, generously endowed with treasures ecclesiastical and secular, western and Byzantine. It was a full week before all the gold and silver, the precious stones and enamelled reliquaries, the jewelled vestments, the velvets and brocades had been loaded on to the carts and trundled away – the richest spoils to fall into Turkish hands since the capture of Constantinople itself, well over a century before." (Norwich, 1988, 476)

A heroine who set light to a powder magazine on board a ship taking the vast Nicosia treasure and Christian slaves to Constantinople appeared in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century in the 47 book of the *Historia sui temporis* by French statesman and historiographer Jacques Auguste de Thou (Thuanus; 1553–1617). De Thou describes briefly the heroic act of a Cypriot lady blowing up the ship boarded with many precious vestments and captured nobles ("... multa pretiosa veste, ac multis primae nobilitatis..."), that Mustapha wanted to give as a present to the sultan (De Thou, 1606, II, 598). De Thou doesn't mention the name of the lady, calling her simply a noble matron ("nobili matrona"). De Thou's writings inspired the French Jesuit Pierre Le Moyne to employ the story of the Nicosian heroine in his book *La Galerie des Femmes Fortes* (Le Moyne, 1647). Le Moyne quotes De Thou as his source, but expands the brief passage of the previous writer into an extensive and colourful narrative, rich in metaphors and comparisons from ancient history and the legends of the saints. The heroine appears without a name: neither as Alessandra or Belisandra Maraviglia nor as Arnalda di Rocas, but simply as a Cypriot lady ('vne Dame de Chipre') or a victorious captive ('la captive victorieuse'). Pierre Le Moyne's book presents twenty virtuous women exemplifying female power and weakness as well as the limits of female ac-

tion (Baumgärtel, 1995, 173; Vidmar, 2011, 237–255). The book functions as a compendium of five heroines of four cultures: Jewish, Barbarian, Roman and Christian. Each of the twenty chapters begins with the story of the heroine followed by a sonnet and a eulogy. It continues with a 'moral reflexion', an extensive 'moral question', and a comparison with another heroine or two heroines who shared the virtue of the one selected. The story of the Cypriot lady is reported with much more detail than the later descriptions by Sagredo, Turra, Molmenti and Tassini. Le Moyne describes extensively how the Cypriot lady, accompanied by an angel and inspired by God, secretly followed the guard into the powder magazine and set alight a barrel of gunpowder. Le Moyne tries to convince the reader of the joy of the four hundred liberated innocent souls, who rose with the fire and smoke from that grand 'holocaust' and applauded their 'Liberatrice' during their ascent (Le Moyne, 1947, 330). He was also well-informed about the extensive booty captured in Nicosia and, probably also from De Thou, knew the name of the Ottoman commander Mustafa (actually Lala Mustafa Pasha), whom he accused of vanity and avarice. According to Le Moyne, the luxurious booty was gathered on the ships along with Christian slaves by Mustafa himself, who wanted to send them as present to Sultan Selim and his sultanas as sign of his victory and personal wealth (Le Moyne, 1647, 331). As a comparison to the tale of the Cypriot lady, Le Moyne describes the story of the chaste Venetian girl – the daughter of Paolo Erizzo. She triumphs over 'Mahomet & du Ser-rail' during the fall of Negroponte like the Cypriot lady triumphed over 'Mustafa & de la Porte' during the fall of Nicosia (Le Moyne, 1647, 342).

**BELISANDRA / ALESSANDRA MARAVIGLIA  
RESPECTIVELY ARNALDA DA ROCAS IN THE  
VISUAL ARTS**

Le Moyne's book is illustrated with a frontispiece and twenty copper engravings with etched background scenes depicting the heroines. The engravings with heroines were executed by Abraham Bosse and Gilles Rousselet after the inventions of Claude Vignon (Pacht Bassani, 1992, 437–447; Baumgärtel, 1995, 170; Lothe, 2008). The heroines are depicted prominently, occupying the foreground; while the scenes of their heroic acts are depicted on a much smaller scale in the background. Each depiction carries an inscription with a short description of the virtuous act. On page 326 of Le Moyne's book we find "Vne Dame de Chipre, met le feu aux Galeres des Turcs chargées du butin de Nicosie, et par la hardiesse de sa mort deffuit vne Armée victorieuse; et venge le sac et la seruitude de sa Patrie." The Cypriot lady is depicted with a burning torch in her right hand and broken chains on her left wrist. In the background, on the right-hand side, are the fortified walls of Nicosia and the burning ships in its harbour. Lala Mustafa Pasha and his soldiers as well as the



**Fig. 13: Franz Steinpichler (?): *The Cypriot lady*, Ptuj Regional Museum (Vidmar, 2005, 99).**

**Sl. 13: Franz Steinpichler (?): *Ciprska dama*, Pokrajinski muzej Ptuj (Vidmar, 2005, 99).**

parents of the enslaved Christians have gathered to observe the burning ships. We can assume that no previous depictions of the Cypriot lady existed that Claude Vignon could have used as his iconographic source; therefore, he had to invent her image. His composition features a beautiful young lady with long curly hair, dressed in a kind of oriental attire and adorned with pearls and jewels. To indicate her heroism through visual means, Vignon uses the well-known image of ancient Victory Goddesses. In the place of wings, the Cypriot lady has slightly raised arms encased in wide sleeves. With her Victory-like appearance, her energetic walk and confidently raised eyes, the depicted lady is an excellent illustration of Le Moyne's "the victorious captive".

According to Pierre-Jean Mariette, who wrote his memoirs around 1740–1770, the series of twenty engravings of virtuous women by Rousselet and Bosse was very successful and the paintings based on them could be found in more than one castle (Chennevières, Montaignon, 1858–1859, 57). Unfortunately, during my researches of French paintings based on the series of virtuous women, no (preserved) depiction of the Cypriot lady was to be found. Patrick Ramade mentions her depiction

in half-figure in a medallion on a goblet by Jacques II Laudin, the enamel painter working in Limoges, of which all trace was lost after it was sold at Adda sale in Palais Galliera in Paris on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1965, item 161 (Ramade, 1980, 21, 26).

The search for paintings in Central Europe proved more successful. The paintings based on the series of virtuous women appear in the following castles: Český Krumlov in the Czech Republic with eleven preserved easel paintings; Červený Kameň in Slovakia with a fresco; and Vurberk in Slovenia with two well-preserved easel paintings (Vidmar, 2011). The only depiction of the Cypriot lady is preserved in Slovenia and is attributed to the painter Franz Steinpichler, who had a workshop in Graz, Austria. The painting (186,5 x 149 cm) is part of a large series of almost one hundred preserved paintings, supposedly commissioned by Christina Crescencia Countess of Herberstein (1658–1737), who owned Vurberk Castle from 1677 until 1737 with her husband Alexander Count Leslie (?–1683) (Vidmar, 2005). It is not the only painting from Vurberk connected with the Ottomans, since the preserved series contains another 47 paintings with Ottoman motives, the so-called turqueries (Ciglencčki, 1999). We cannot be sure if the commissioner of the painting possessed the whole book of Pierre Le Moyne or only the engravings of virtuous women, since it is possible that the series was also distributed as separate leaves, independent of the book (Join-Lambert, Préaud, 2004, 243). Consequently, doubt remains as to whether the commissioner was acquainted with the whole heroic story of the Cypriot lady as narrated by Pierre Le Moyne or only with the shorter version of the engraving inscription quoted above. Even in that case, however, we can state that a commissioner in Styria wilfully decided to have a depiction of a Cypriot lady who set fire to Ottoman ships in Nicosia in her/his castle. The Venetian legend of the Nicosian heroine reached today's North-East Slovenia not from Venice but indirectly through the writings of the

French historiographer Jacques De Thou and the illustrated book by Pierre Le Moyne. Contrary to the legendary death of the Cypriot lady in the explosion of the ship, it can be noted as a curiosum that the Count of Leslie, the presumed commissioner of the painting, lost his life when an Ottoman mine exploded during the siege of Vienna on the 8<sup>th</sup> August 1683.

## CONCLUSION

The heroic story of Paolo Erizzo and his daughter Anna appears rarely in Venetian painting and graphics from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, except in those with an auto-celebrative purpose. Works on this theme were deemed suitable for the promotion of private commissioners – the Erizzo family – and public commissioners – the Venetian Republic. The historical content of these pieces, based on the heroic defence of the Venetian town Chalcis by Paolo Erizzo, was developed simultaneously in Venetian legend and historiographic books, such as Giovanni Segredo's *Memorie istoriche de Monarchi ottomani*, to the extent that the existence of Anna Erizzo came to seem entirely factual and the martyrdom of Paolo Erizzo a historically certain event. Both of them, the courageous defender who was sawn in half by the Ottomans, and the young and beautiful heroine who chose death rather than become a slave in the harem of Sultan Mehmed II, became *exempla virtutis* and were treated like Christian martyrs in Venetian iconography. The legend of Belisandra Maraviglia / Alessandra Maraviglia / Arnalda di Rocas was also not a common topic in the visual arts, but by means of the illustrated book by the Jesuit Pierre Le Moyne, who chose the brave Nicosian lady as one of the twenty most virtuous women of four religions, the legendary Venetian legendary figure came to be depicted even as far as north-eastern Slovenia. In this case, it was images of ancient Victories that provided the basis for her depiction rather than images of Christian saints.

## "I TURCHI AL SOLITO CRUDELI..." – PODOBE PAOLA ERIZZA IN BENEŠKIH JUNAKINJ ANNE ERIZZO IN BELISANDRE MARAVIGLIA V HISTORIOGRAFIJI IN LIKOVNI UMETNOSTI

Polona VIDMAR

Univerza v Mariboru, Filozofska fakulteta, Koroška cesta 160, 2000 Maribor, Slovenija  
e-mail: polona.vidmar@um.si

### POVZETEK

*Junaški zgodbi branitelja beneškega mesta Negroponte na otoku Evboja med osmanskim obleganjem leta 1470 in njegove legendarne hčere Anne nista bili pogosta tema v likovni umetnosti, vendar ju zasledimo v beneškem slikarstvu in grafiki od 17. do 19. stoletja. Upodobitve junaštva Paola Erizza in njegove mučeniške smrti, ki se v historiografskih delih pojavlja od druge polovice 16. stoletja, so naročali člani rodbine Erizzo z namenom samopoveščevanja rodbine, po navedbah v literaturi pa naj bi bila njegova zgodba upodobljena tudi na stropu Dvorane*

Velikega sveta v doževi palači med slikami, ki so poveljevale uspehe Beneške republike. V prispevku so te navedbe popravljene, razloženi pa so tudi vzroki, ki so pripeljali do napačne identifikacije slike v doževi palači, ki pravzaprav upodablja Armaria Albana in je delo Francesca Montemezzana. V prispevku je problematiziran odnos med besedilom in podobo, pri čemer je izpostavljeno, da so likovni umetniki upodabljali navedbe iz hagiografskih del (Francesco Sansovino, Giovanni Sagredo etc.), v katerih so zgodovinske okoliščine preinterpretirane in dopolnjene z beneškimi legendami. Likovni umetniki so pri upodobitvah Paola, ki naj bi ga Osmani prežagali na dvoje, ter mlade in lepe Anne, ki je raje izbrala smrt, kakor da bi izgubila nedolžnost in postala sužnja v haremu sultana Mehmeda II., izhajali iz svetniških upodobitev. Kot likovni vir za oba beneška exempla virtutis so se jim zdele najbolj primerne upodobitve mučeniških smrti krščanskih svetnikov, kar je pri Paolovih upodobitvah posledica napačno ali namerno napačno razumljene Montemezzanove slike v doževi palači. V prispevku so navedeni tudi redki primeri upodobitev iz 19. stoletja, v katerih niso več v ospredju pro-krščanski in anti-osmanski motivi v kontekstu beneško-osmanskih konfliktov zgodnjega novega veka, pač pa pridejo do izraza vplivi iz sočasnih dramskih in opernih uprizoritev. Med prvimi je junaško dejanje Anne Erizzo dramatiziral koprski grof Stefano Carli v tragediji *La Erizia* (1763); pomembno temo iz domače zgodovine mu je predlagal brat Gian Rinaldo.

V drugem delu prispevka je obravnavana zgodba Belisandre Maraviglia / Alessandre Maraviglia / Rinalde di Rocas, ki naj bi jo Osmani zajeli med obleganjem beneškega mesta Nikozija na Cipru leta 1570. Potem ko naj bi jo z drugimi kristjani in bogatim bojnim plenom vkrcali na ladje in poslali kot darilo sultanu Selimu II. v Konstantinopol, je po legendah in navedbah v historiografskih delih zanetila skladišče smodnika na ladji in z epsko eksplozijo osvobodila krščanske duše suženjstva ter preprečila lakomne namene osmanskega poveljnika Mustafe, da bi se z bogatim darilom prikupil sultanu. Dejanje je v beneški literaturi sčasoma preraslo v simbol herojskega patriotizma, že v začetku 17. stoletja pa ga je opisal francoski državnik in historiograf Jacques Auguste De Thou. Iz njegove knjige ga je prevzel jezuit Pierre Le Moyne in ciprsko damo leta 1647 vključil v svoj kompendij dvajsetih krepostnih in močnih žensk. Prispevek tudi v primeru Belisandre Maraviglia analizira odnos med Le Moynovim besedilom in podobo junakinje, ki jo je za ilustracijo knjige pripravil Claude Vignon. Vignon se v svoji invenciji ni oprl na svetniške podobe, pač pa je junakinjo upodobil na način, ki naj spodbudi gledalčeve asociacije na antične boginje Zmage. Bakrorezi iz Le Moynove knjige so bili uporabljeni kot likovni vir za slikarska dela v Franciji, na Češkem in v Sloveniji, vendar je upodobitev beneške junakinje ohranjena le z gradu Vurberk v severovzhodni Sloveniji.

**Ključne besede:** Paolo Erizzo, Anna Erizzo, Belisandra Maraviglia, Andrea Celesti, Claude Vignon, Pierre Le Moyne, krepostni junaki, baročno slikarstvo, beneško slikarstvo

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Alderson, A. D. (1956):** *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

**Baumgärtel, B. (1995):** Pierre Le Moyne, *La Galerie des Femmes Fortes*, Paris A. de Sommerville 1947. In: Baumgärtel, B., Neysters, S. (eds.): *Die Galerie der starken Frauen, Regentinnen, Salondamen*. München - Berlin, Klinkhardt & Biermann, 170–174.

**Bettinelli, G. (1780):** *Dizionario storico-portatile di tutte le venete patrizie famiglie*. Venezia, Giuseppe Bettinelli.

**Bordignon Favero, E. (1988):** *Palazzo Erizzo alla Maddalena in Venezia*, Arte e storia, Accademia Patavina di Scienze Lettere ed Arti, Collana accademica, 9. Padova, Erredici.

**Bossaglia, R. (1994):** *Tranquilo Cremona*. Catalogo ragionato. Milano, Federico Motta.

**Carli, S. (1765):** *La Erizia*. Tragedia nuova del conte Stefano Carli. Dedicata alli Signori De Voltaire, e Rousseau. Venezia.

**Chalcondyla, L. (1556):** *De origine et rebus gestis Turcorum libri decem...* Basileae, Ioannes Oporinus.

**Chennevières, Ph., Montaignon, A. (1858–1859):** *Abeceario de P.-J. Mariette et autres notes inédites de cet amateur sur les arts et les artistes*, vol. V. Paris, Dumoulin.

**Ciglenečki, M. (1999):** *Vurberške slike iz 17. stoletja v ptujskem muzeju*. In: Jaki, B. (ed.): *Razprave iz evropske umetnosti*. Za Ksenijo Rozman. Ljubljana, Narodna galerija, 57–86.

**Concina, E. (2006):** *Venezia e Istanbul*. Incontri, confronti e scambi. Udine, Forum.

**De Thou, J.A. (1606):** *Historiarvm sui temporis*, vol. II. Parisiis, Ambrosius et Hieronymus Drovart.

**Dumler, H. (2001):** *Venedig und die Dogen*. Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

**Filippi, G. G. (2005):** *Mehmed II Al-Fatih e la Battaglia di Negroponte*. In: Girardi, M. (ed.): *Maometto Secondo, La Fenice prima dell'Opera 2004–2005*, 4. Venezia, Edizioni del Teatro La Fenice di Venezia, 51–66.

**Fossaluzza, G. (2008):** *Da Andrea Celesti ad Antonio Arrigoni: disegni, precisazioni e proposte*. Radovi instituta za povijest umjetnosti, 32. Zagreb, 167–224.

**Gambara, F. (1832):** *Anna Erizzo*, tragedia. Brescia, Gio. Giuseppe Simoncelli.

**Girardi, M. (2005):** La battaglia di Negroponte raccontata da Giovanni Sagredo. In: Girardi, M. (ed.): *Maometto Secondo, La Fenice prima dell'Opera 2004–2005*, 4. Venezia, Edizioni del Teatro La Fenice di Venezia, 45–50.

**Grevembroch, G. (1981):** Gli abiti de Veneziani di quasi ogni età con diligenza raccolti e dipinti nel secolo XVIII (introduzione di Giovanni Mariacher). Venezia, Filippi.

**Gullino, G. (1993):** Erizzo Paolo. Dizionario biografico degli Italiani, XLIII. Roma, Treccani, 194–197.

**Gullino, G. (2000):** Un'eroina mai esistita: Anna Erizzo (1470). Archivio Veneto, 190. Venezia, 127–134.

**Ivetic, E. (1998):** Stefano Carli, intellettuale di periferia. Note per una ricerca sulla nobiltà Capodistriana del Settecento. Atti e Memorie della Società Istriana di archeologia e Storia Patria, 46. Trieste, 215–253.

**Join-Lambert, S., Préaud, M. (eds.) (2004):** Abraham Bosse, savant graveur. Tours, vers 1604–1676. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France – Musée des Beaux-Arts Tours.

**Knox, G. (1989):** Forum: The cavaliere Celesti and the Decorations of Ca' Erizzo alla Maddalena. Drawing, 9, 4, November-December. New York, 80–81.

**Koch, U. (1996):** Venezianische Maskerade. Porträts kaiserlicher Botschafter, Gesandter und Kavaliere im 18. Jahrhundert. Weltkunst, 66, 4, München, 344–346.

**Le Moyne, P. (1647):** La Galerie des Femmes Fortes. Paris, Antoine de Sommaville.

**Litta, P. (1819–1883):** Famiglie celebri Italiane. Milano, Emilio Giusti et al.

**Lothe, J. (2008):** L'oeuvre gravé d'Abraham Bosse, graveur parisien du XVIIe siècle. Catalogue général avec les reproductions de 451 estampes. Paris, Commission des Travaux Historiques.

**MacKay, P. A. (2006):** Giovan-Maria Angiolello, Memoir; <http://angiolello.net/ANG-trans.pdf> (15. 07. 2011).

**Mantovanelli, M. S. (1989):** Paolo Erizzo a Negroponte: un episodio della lotta tra Venezia e Maometto II; due dipinti del Seicento e fonti storiche e letterarie. In: Grube, E. J. (ed.): *Venezia e l'Oriente vicino*, Atti del Primo Simposio Internazionale sull'arte veneziana e l'arte islamica (Venezia, 9–12 dicembre 1986). Venezia, L'Altra Riva, 61–69.

**Molmenti, P. (1879; 1906):** La storia di Venezia nella vita privata dalle origini alla caduta della repubblica, IV. edizione interamente rifatta, parte seconda: Lo splendore. Bergamo, Istituto Italiano d'arti grafiche.

**Molmenti, P. (1907):** Venice: Its Individual Growth From the Earliest Beginnings To The Fall Of The Republic, vol. II. Cambridge (USA), The University Press.

**Morassi, A. (1975):** Guardi. Tutti i disegni di Antonio, Francesco e Giacomo Guardi. Venezia, Alfieri.

**Mucchi, A. M., Della Croce, C. (1954):** Il pittore Andrea Celesti. Milano, Silvana editoriale d'arte.

**Mueller, R. (2010):** War and Beatitude: The Fall of Negroponte to the Ottomans in 1470 and Female Sanctity

in Venice (summary of the lecture, held in the Gennadius Library at The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2010); <http://www.ascsa.edu.gr/index.php/gennadius/eventDetails/lecture-by-reinhold-mueller/> (15. 7. 2011.)

**Norwich, J. J. (1988; 1977, 1981):** A history of Venice. London, Penguin Books.

**Pacht Bassani, P. (1992):** Claude Vignon 1593–1670. Paris, Arthena.

**Pilo, G. M. (2000):** Andrea Celesti (Venezia 1637 – Toscolano (?) 1712). In: Esposito, M. (ed.): *Civiltà e cultura di villa tra '700 e '800 a Mirano e nella terraferma veneziana*. Venezia, Marsilio, 110–115.

**Ramade, P. (1980):** Une source d'inspiration du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle: la galerie des femmes fortes, de Claude Vignon. Bulletin des amies du Musée de Rennes, 4. Rennes, 19–26.

**Sabellico, M.C. (1487/1718):** Historia rerum Venetarum ab urbe condita. In: *Degl'istorici delle cose veneziane*, I quali hanno scritto per Pubblico Decreto, Tomo Primo, che comprende le istorie veneziane latinamente scritte da Marcantonio Coccio Sabellico. Venezia, Lovisa.

**Sagredo, G. (1673):** Memorie istoriche de Monarchi ottomani di Giovanni Sagredo Cavaliere. Venezia, Combi & LaNoù.

**Sama, C. M. (2003):** Elisabetta Caminer Turra. Selected writings of an eighteenth-century Venetian women of letters, edited and translated by Catherine M. Sama. Chicago - London, The University of Chicago Press.

**Sansovino, F. (1573):** Gl'Annali Turcheschi ovvero Vite de Principi della Casa Othomana. Venezia, Alaris.

**Sartori, A., Zatti, S. (eds.) (1996):** Cherubino Cornienti, pittore (1816 – 1860). Vigevano, Diakronia.

**Setton, K. M. (1978):** The Papacy and the Levant 1204–1571, 2. Philadelphia, The American Philosophical Society.

**Tassini, G. (1970, 1863):** Curiosità Veneziane, ovvero origini delle denominazioni stradali di Venezia. Venezia, Filippi.

**Vidmar, P. (2005):** Courage, power, beauty and luxury: The Vurberk gallery of 17th century paintings. In: Ölçer, N., Çağman, F., Vidmar, P. (eds.): *Image of the Turks in the 17th century Europe*. Istanbul, Sabanci University - Sakip Sabanci Museum, 78–113.

**Vidmar, P. (2011):** La Galerie des Femmes Fortes – Paintings of Virtuous Women in the Castles Český Krumlov and Vurberk. Umění, 59. Praha, 237–255.

**Wolters, W. (1983):** Der Bilderschmuck des Dogenpalastes. Untersuchungen zur Selbstdarstellung der Republik Venedig im 16. Jahrhundert. Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag.

**Ziliotto, B. (1948):** Del conte Stefano Carli e anche di Carlo Goldoni. Archeografo Triestino, IV, vol. 14–15. Trieste, 273–298.