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A City with a View. Byzantine Monuments of Constantinople in the Fossati Sketches (Sts. Sergius and Bacchus and the Columns of Constantine and Marciano)

by SILVIA PEDONE

The main aim of the present study is to show how multifaceted the historical image of Constantinople is as a place of encounters and dialogue,¹ and how fruitful the comparison between archival data, historical contexts and monument analysis is in order to shed new light on some of the city's many faces.² Istanbul is a *place* – not simply a physical space – which is defined as such through the individual and collective gaze and imagination of those who are fascinated by it, even more so now than centuries ago, because many looked at it from an “external” perspective. At the same time, however, and just for this reason, the city is not only an observed place, but also becomes a place of observation, a privileged point of view from which to look back to one's place of origin: in short, it becomes a city “with a view”, in a double perspective, at the intersection and overlapping of different points of view, as the title of the present essay suggests.

In the historical formation of this complex stratification, the work of the Fossati brothers was certainly of considerable importance, in particular – and it is the view that I would like to privilege – with respect to the image of

Byzantine Constantinople, to the discovery, or rather the rediscovery, of a specific historical-cultural dimension, of one of its souls, which coexists with the others, but does not lose its identity.³

Upon his arrival in Constantinople in 1837, Gaspare Fossati quickly adapted to the lively international environment of the city on the Bosphorus. Through early prestigious commissions, he soon establishes friendships and conducted business with the various foreign communities in the city. In addition to the biographical information widely published by Lucia Pedrini Stanga⁴ and others before her,⁵ we are given a direct, meaningful image of the environment in which the Swiss brothers moved thanks to a sketch by their friend, the Russian artist Mikhail Ivanovich Scotti (1814–1861).⁶ Gaspare Fossati had invited him to Constantinople to decorate some rooms of the Russian embassy, together with the Venetian painter Pietro Fornari.⁷ He portrays the Fossati brothers in the living room of the Scotti house (Ill. 1), sitting bent over the table absorbed in their work and not too distracted by Madam Scotti's piano performance.⁸ Even such a casual drawing



Ill. 1 *The Fossati Brothers and Mrs Scotti*, by Mikhail I. Scotti, pencil, dated 1845 and signed bottom left. ASTi Fossati I2/912



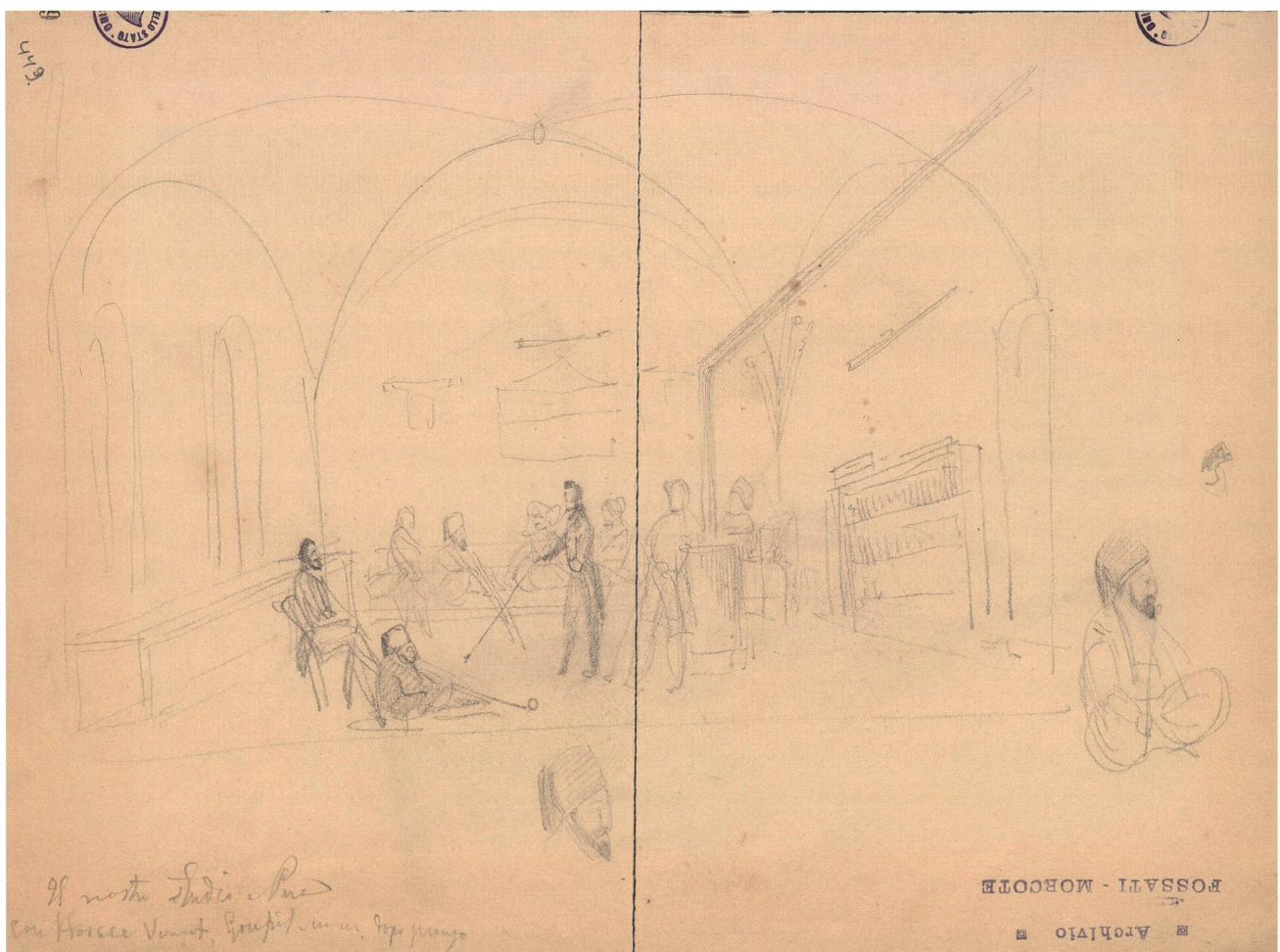
Ill. 2 *The Fossati brothers' atelier in Pera (Constantinople)*, by Mikhail I. Scotti, watercolour, dated 1844 and signed bottom right.

as this, a simple and friendly *tranche de vie*, reveals the two brothers' tireless dedication to their work. Equally eloquent in this regard is Scotti's watercolour of the Fossatis' atelier in Pera,⁹ where working tools, projects, scattered papers and memories of their distant home are in plain view. And the "picture" of their homeland, a map of Italy, is certainly not hanging on the wall by chance. Could this be an indirect allusion to their faith in the Risorgimento cause? The two brothers returned to their homeland after the unification of Italy (Ill. 2).¹⁰ The atelier was also a meeting place for friends, painters, travellers and photographers, as shown in another faint sketch (Ill. 3)¹¹ of the same room, in which the French painter Émile Jean-Horace Vernet (1789–1863) and the artist and photographer Frédéric Auguste Antoine Goupil-Fesquet (1806–1893) are portrayed. Vernet, Gaspar's friend since his stay at the French Academy in Rome,¹² was the author of *Voyage en Orient*.¹³

These were the years in which travellers, scholars, painters and archaeologists visited the city and explored its history. With the laws of Tanzimat¹⁴ and the subsequent reforms, the thirties and forties of the nineteenth

century were a turning point in the study and knowledge of the ancient and Byzantine monuments of the city.¹⁵ On November 3, 1839, the young Sultan Abdülmecid issued the famous edict of Gülhane (Hatti sherif), strongly supported by the reformist Gran Vizir Mustafa Reşid Pascià.¹⁶ Thus began a gradual, unprecedented cultural embrace of Western influences, albeit at the cost of partially abandoning deeply rooted Ottoman traditions.¹⁷

These circumstances fostered the need to discover and acquire knowledge of a place, crucial to the history of civilization, not only through ancient and modern literary sources, but above all through direct observation and empirical "measurement" of the city and its monuments.¹⁸ The collection of empirical data in turn stimulated the need to reconstruct and outline the historical and stylistic development of this civilization, and therefore to have a coherent, theoretical framework for such a picture. It was during this time that the first specialized Byzantine studies emerged. However, as can be expected, it should be noted that the Fossati seem less interested in the historical-theoretical aspects of architecture than in the possibility of a practical and tangible dialogue between historical



Ill. 3 The Fossatis' atelier in Pera (Constantinople), with Horace Vernet and Frédéric Goupil-Fesquet, by Gaspare Fossati, pencil, 1849 c.

knowledge and modern practice, between ancient and new, between contamination of different styles and traditions in the living fabric of the urban context of a millenary city.

Their exceptional restoration of a highly symbolic monument for both Byzantine and Ottoman art and culture, namely the Hagia Sophia, must be seen within that context¹⁹ (Ill. 4–5). The restoration was commissioned by the Sultan in 1847, and no work of such a relevance had been carried out on the building since restorations made in 1573 by the architect Sinan.²⁰ As Cyril Mango rightly pointed out in 1962, the work of the Fossati brothers proved to be a breakthrough in the study of Byzantine art²¹ despite the fact that they were not thoroughly versed in the history of Byzantium. Although their functional and “modern” interests were not of a primarily scholarly or academic nature, their restoration activity produced the most extensive documentation of the mosaics created in the building throughout the Byzantine millennium, from the aniconic mosaics of the 6th century and the figurative ones of the Macedonian and Comnenian eras to the great *Deesis* and *Seraphims* of the Palaeologan period. The technical requirements of their task led them to discover these extraordinary artworks beneath the plaster.

The architects then covered most of the mosaics with a new coat of plaster and paintings, especially the figurative

ones which still decorated the walls of the Santa Sofia. The plastering and the new decoration mainly affected the mosaics in the central area of the apse. The upper part of the apse was covered with a thin layer of plaster and ornamental motifs, while the bottom between the bands was painted with a fake gold mosaic.²² Before covering them, Fossati documented the mosaics in various drawings and sketches quickly annotated in notebooks and small sheets of paper.²³ The intention of the Fossati was to publish a monograph on the mosaics, but for unknown reasons the project did not materialize. Only an album of 25 lithographs was released, representing the exterior and interior of the monument before and after the restoration.²⁴

Unfortunately, this splendid volume does not contain any specific documentation on mosaics. In 1855, the Prussian architect Wilhelm Salzenberg, who stayed in Constantinople for five months just as Hagia Sophia was being restored, published a partial description of the mosaics that had been covered as well as many of the relevant drawings.²⁵ Not until 1931 was the Byzantine Institute allowed to proceed with a new restoration of the mosaics of the Hagia Sophia and not until after the building had been converted into a museum in 1935 was the work of the Fossati brothers discovered, which had ensured their preservation. Thomas Whittemore,²⁶ founder of the Byzantine Institute, brought to light some mosaics that still



Ill. 4 Inner view of Hagia Sophia, Istanbul.



Ill. 5 Inner view of Hagia Sophia Mosque, by Gaspard Fossati.



III. 6 Wooden beams replaced by Fossati, Imperial lodge, Saint Sophia, Istanbul.

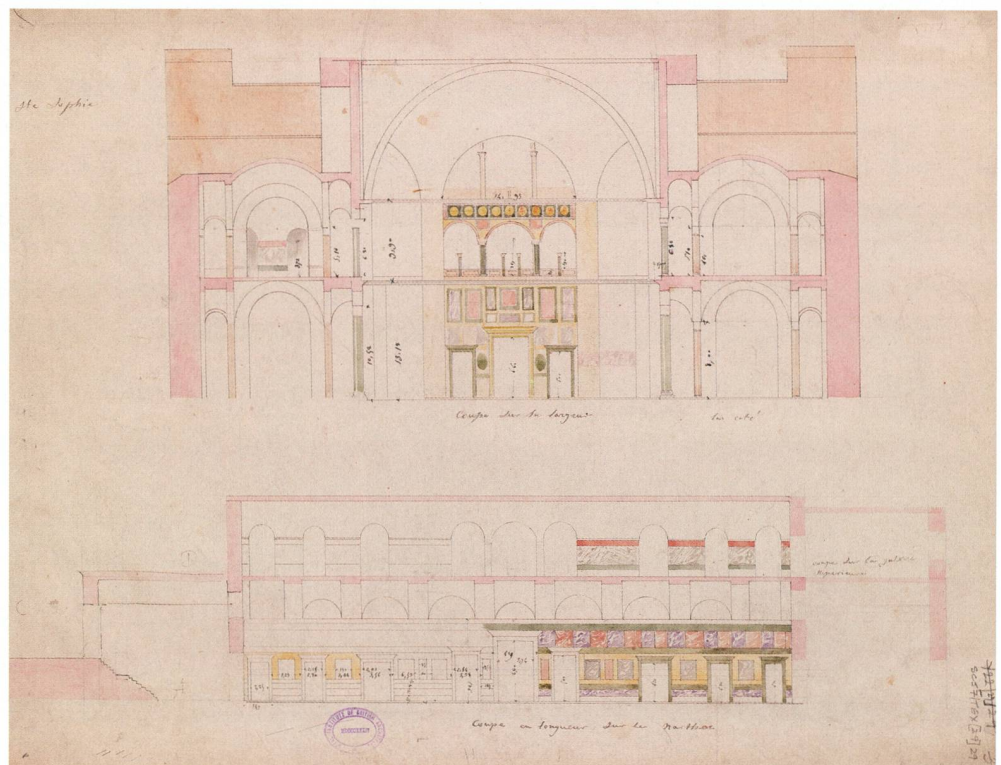


III. 7 Stucco panel replaced by Fossati, Saint Sophia, Istanbul.

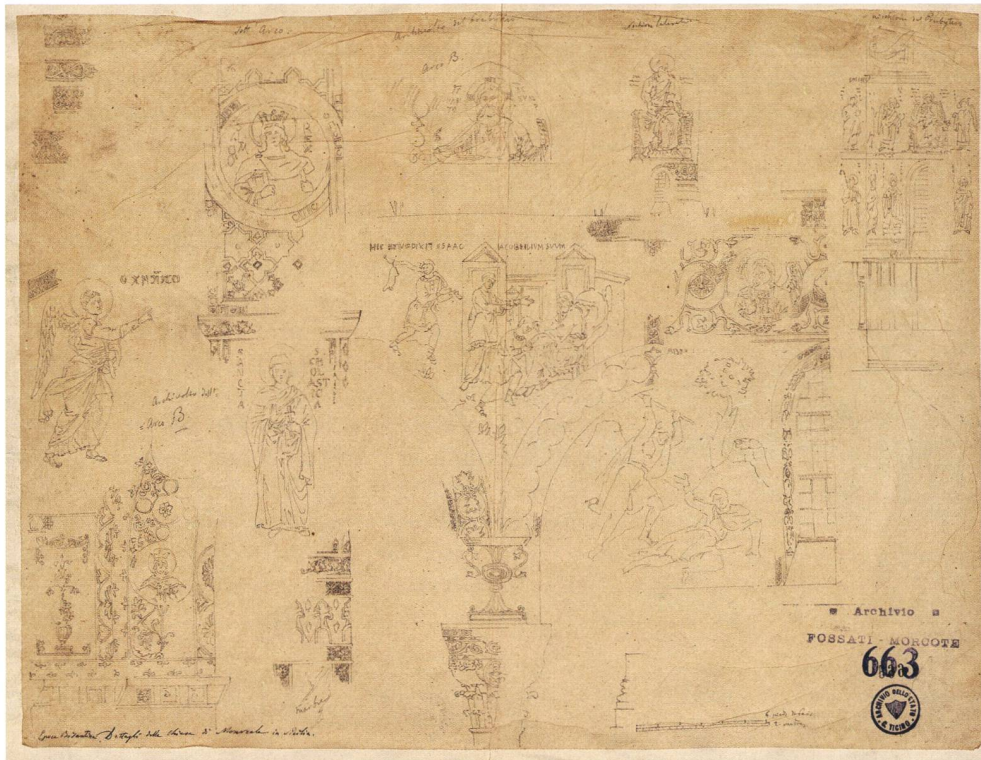
exist today, for example the one in the lunette of the imperial door, the mosaic of the southern vestibule and the imperial panels. But the careful analysis devoted to the building by the two Swiss architects was much more extensive, for instance, their study of the marble slabs or the restoration of apparently invisible details, such as carved wooden beams and stucco²⁷ (Ill. 6–7). Although there is no complete mapping that traces the Fossati brothers' interventions in the monument, modern studies of the rich decoration of the Hagia Sophia have nevertheless highlighted how extensive the work carried out on the monument was in just three years.²⁸

We can therefore say that the Fossati acquired first-hand, field knowledge of the features of Byzantine art and mosaics, as we can infer from the restoration reports delivered to the authorities and as they themselves declared in the small treatise published in Turin – not edited by Giuseppe until 1890 – entitled *Rilievi storico-artistici sull'architettura bizantina dal IV al XV fino al XXI secolo [...]*.²⁹ "Ancient Greek art," Fossati wrote, "was sufficiently known, but medieval art remained almost unknown, although medieval Greek architecture offers, artistically speaking, a number of ingenious devices and several combinations useful to modern buildings." This may also explain why, as Fossati writes, Byzantine monuments have "a clear imprint of the genius, which can be grasped at first glance."

Before the Fossati, only one other architect had obtained permission (not without difficulties) to study and measure parts of the building, even if he was never able to publish



III. 8 Elevation of the counter-façade and the eastern wall of the esonarthex of the Hagia Sophia, by Charles Felix-Marie Texier.



III. 9 Sheet with sketches of the mosaics of Monreale, pencil, by Gaspare Fossati.

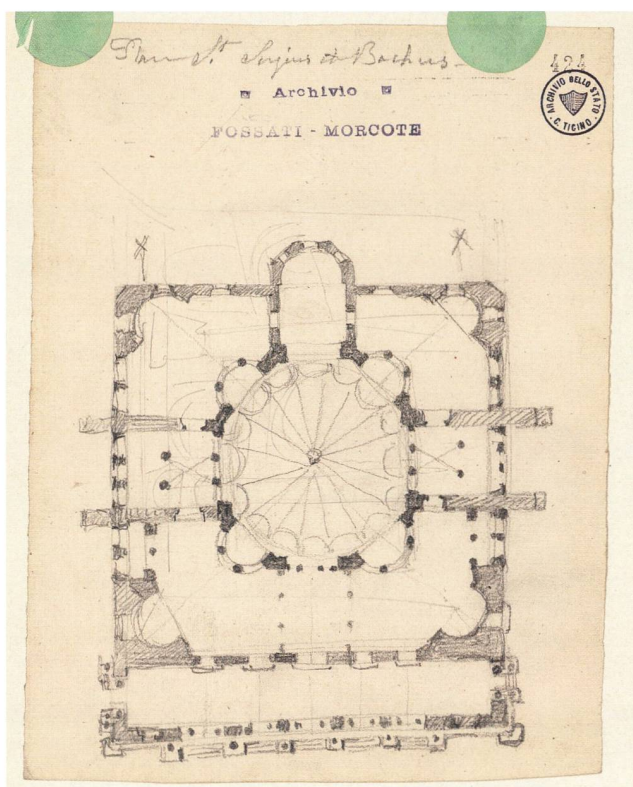
the entire documentation gathered on the monument and today preserved in London, at the Royal Institute of British Architects.³⁰ It is the French architect and archaeologist Charles Felix-Marie Texier (1802–1871) who carried out several missions in Asia Minor starting in 1833.³¹ Unlike Fossati, Texier was a learned expert on ancient sources, and his main aim was the rediscovery of an authentic Byzantine style, whose historical physiognomy was at that time still rather vague and derived above all from the knowledge of European monuments (Ill. 8).

However, we may still know too little of the Fossati brothers' knowledge of Byzantine art. The only other case

of interest in the decorative aspects of medieval Greek art is an unpublished sheet on which Gaspare drew some portions of the mosaics of Monreale³² (Ill. 9) in a precise, though schematic, manner. These are sketches probably made during the trip to Sicily undertaken shortly before his arrival in Constantinople. The sheet shows, with some precision, the biblical scenes above the arches of the central nave, the great figures of the Pantocrator in the apse and the Virgin, as well as a series of ornamental details.³³ The fascination for Byzantium did not however end with the experience of the Hagia Sophia. Among the papers of the two young architects preserved in the Bellinzona



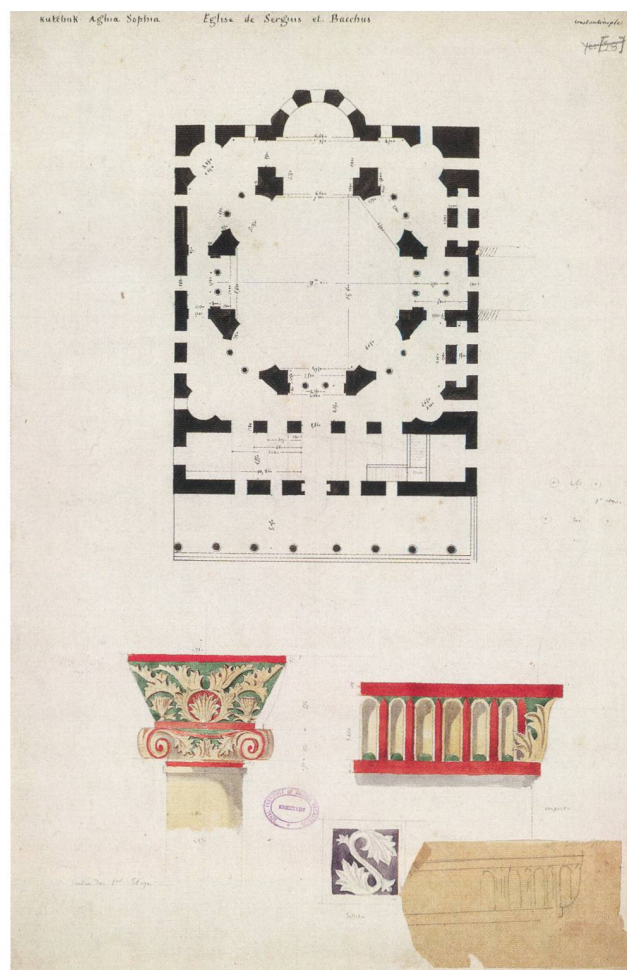
III. 10–11 Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus (Küçük Ayasofya), Istanbul.



Ill. 12 Plan of the Justinian Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus, pencil, by Gaspare Fossati.

archive, I was able to identify a small group of sketches³⁴ relating to another Byzantine building from the Justinian period, namely the church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus (Küçük Ayasofya Camii), built by Justinian in 527 (Ill. 10–11), whose central plan and double envelope reveal the architectural and decorative experimentation that reached unsurpassed peaks in the construction of the Hagia Sophia.³⁵

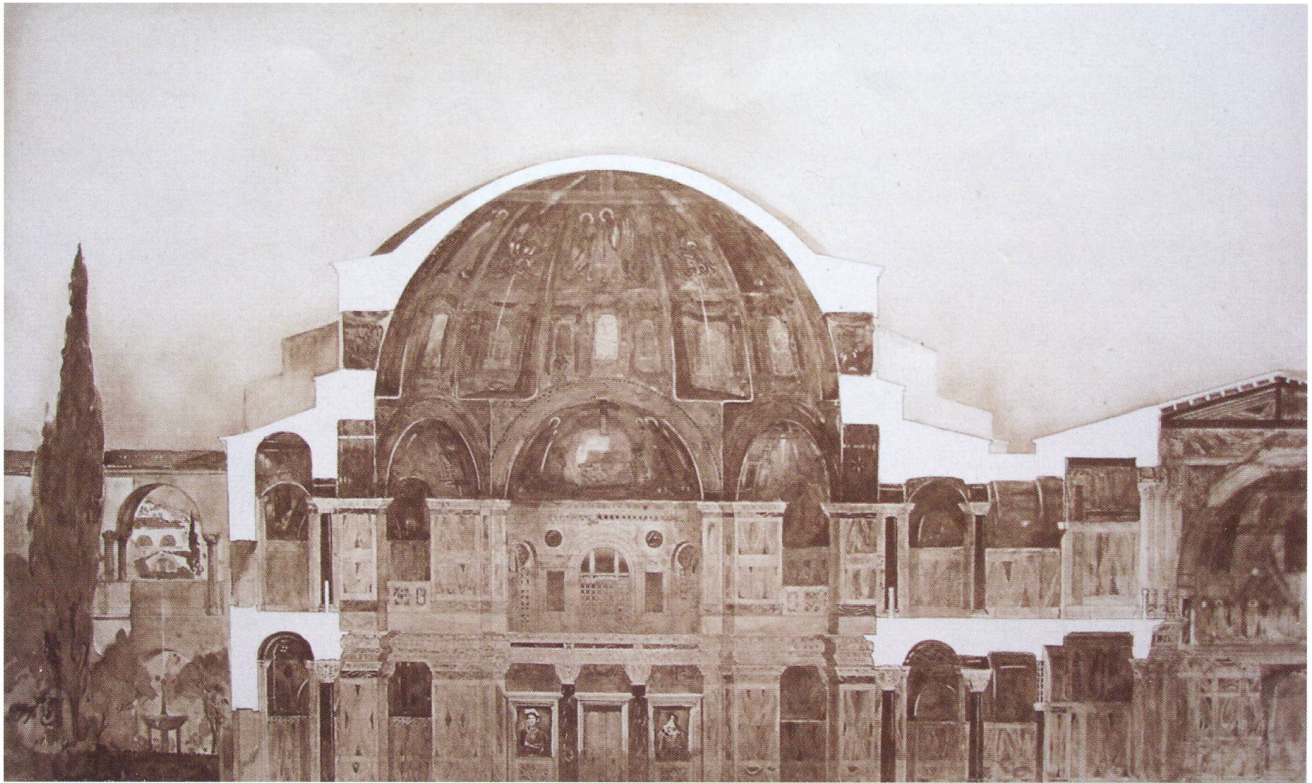
These sketches are not dated but were probably made in conjunction with the works in the Hagia Sophia and dictated by the need for comparison with another Justinian building, maybe in order to evaluate technical analogies and structural and decorative solutions. In addition to the plan of the building³⁶ (Ill. 12) – whose only precedent is the one realized a decade earlier by Charles Texier (Ill. 13)³⁷ – they made a sketch from inside the naos (Ill. 14), which frames the south-east corner of the internal octagon.³⁸ The minbar, the exedras with related galleries (women's gallery) and a portion of the dome with concave and convex segments are clearly visible. Despite the rough style of the sketch, the author does not fail to highlight some details of the Ottoman decoration, such as that between the windows of the dome and in the conchs of the exedras, or the small columns placed at the corners of the large pillars of the bema, at the level of the galleries. Particularly significant is the caption in pencil which reads: "mosque of Küçük Ayasofya, with bad blue paintings; hidden



Ill. 13 Plan of the Basilica of Saints Sergius and Bacchus and detail of an impost capital and of the frame with large pods, pencil, ink and water-color, by Charles Felix-Marie Texier.

mosaics".³⁹ This last observation – taken for granted for a long time even by many Byzantinists⁴⁰ – suggests that the Fossati brothers were specifically trying to establish an analogy with the discovery of the mosaics of the Hagia Sophia. The belief that the Ottoman plaster layer of the building could hide a Byzantine mosaic decoration is also suggested by a panel by Texier (Ill. 15), which depicts large angelic figures in the segments of the dome,⁴¹ replicated in the later reconstruction of the building published by Ebersolt and Thiers in 1913⁴² (Ill. 16). However, no trace of this decoration has ever been found in surveys of the dome carried out in modern times, although no extensive investigation has been conducted in the building.

A further rather synthetic sketch of the architectural structure reveals the interest in the elevation of the building, the system of the exedras, the structure of the trabeation and the rich sculptural decoration⁴³ (Ill. 17). Fossati made three other sketches of these elements sculpted in Proconnesse marble: a drawing of the moulded architrave⁴⁴ (Ill. 18–20), with a still classical flavour and partially



Ill. 16 Cross section of the Basilica of Saints Sergius and Bacchus according to the hypothetical reconstruction of Ebersolt and Thiers.

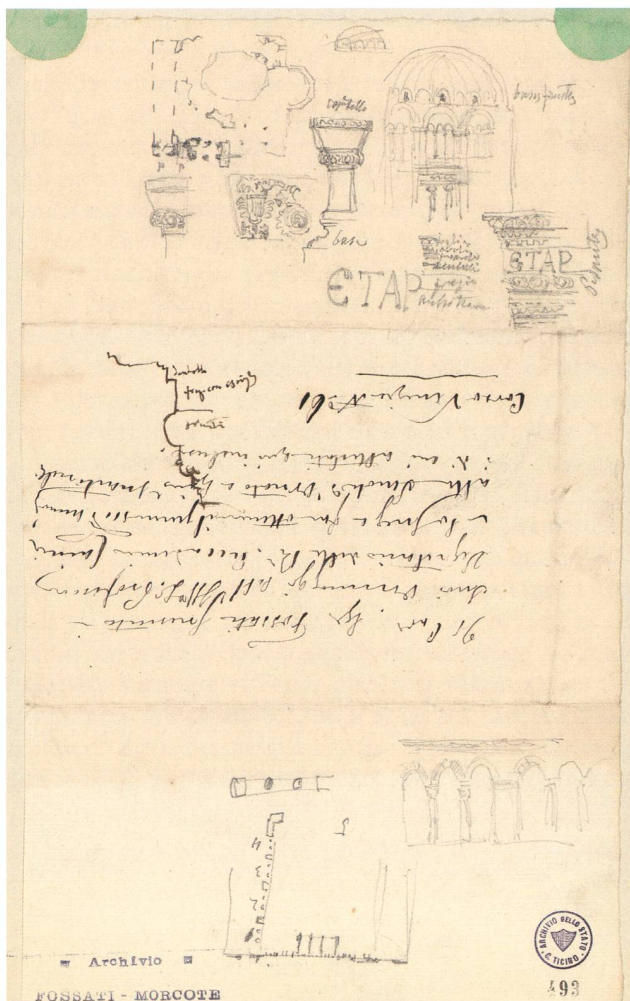
worked *à jour*, on which runs the long imperial inscription (Ill. 21), a second one of the capitals with its moulded base and a third one devoted to the structure of the so-called polylobed capital⁴⁵ (Ill. 22) with the imperial monograms of Justinian and Theodora, which would later be replicated in monumental size in the Hagia Sophia. In the drawings, Fossati does not fail to note the decoration of the ceilings of the architraves with the characteristic diamond pattern.⁴⁶ The aesthetic impact exerted by the small building of Saints Sergius and Bacchus, as an example of classical elements reinterpreted in the light of a completely new vision, had probably struck the architectural imagery of the Fossati, who remained so “disoriented” by those solutions that they were induced to date them to the 3rd century.⁴⁷

Among the pages of a small notebook, mostly dedicated to the Hagia Sophia, I was able to find a sketch which also refers to the church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus (Ill. 23). The drawing shows a W-E section of the building with the dome resting directly on the pillars of the internal octagon. The building is also recognizable by the presence of the architrave, which was later completely abandoned in the Constantinopolitan buildings, in favour of arches on columns in the first order of the basilica buildings.

The Fossati took only fleeting note of the civic monuments in the Byzantine city, at least judging by the scant documentary evidence we have. Like their French alter



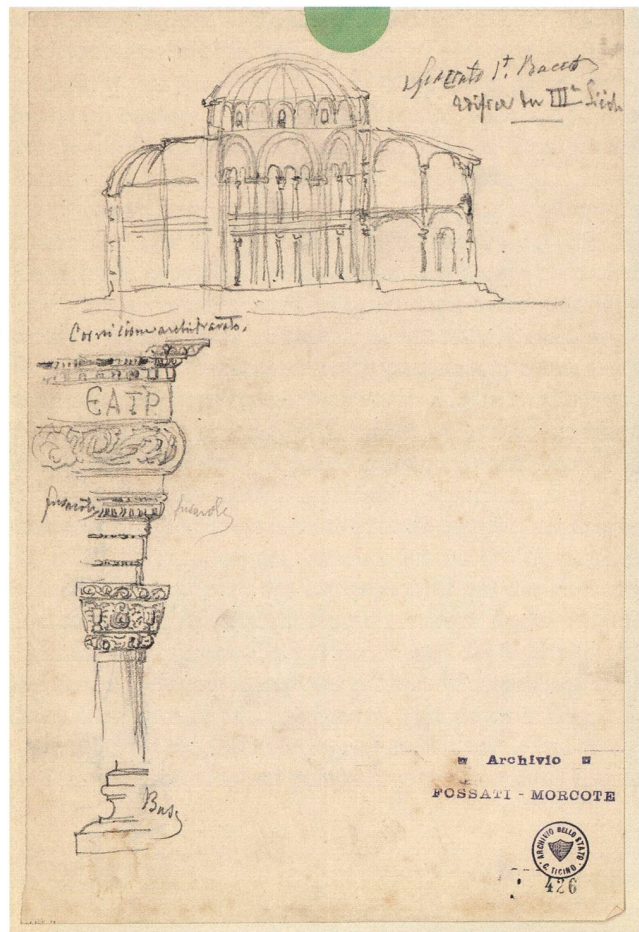
Ill. 17 Sketch of the interior towards the naos, pencil, by Fossati.



III. 18 Sketch of the plan, the elevation, and the Ionic impost capitals, pencil, by Fossati.

ego, Charles Texier, they too were struck by two of the main honorific columns still in place in the modern urban fabric of Istanbul: the porphyritic column of Constantine, better known as the “Burnt Column” (Çemberlitaş), and that of Marcian, which must have been built in the forum of the same name.⁴⁸ Their interest was perhaps linked to one of the first official commissions given to Gaspare Fossati by the Ottoman government, namely the design of two obelisks commemorating the Edict of Tanzimat (1839): one to be erected in the park of Gülhane and the second in Beyazid square. The project was never realized, for financial and political reasons, but we know its features from a drawing preserved in the Bellinzona archive,⁴⁹ and whose reference to the most famous Byzantine obelisk of the city, that of Theodosius I, was most likely not accidental.

In response to a competition published in the *Journal de Constantinople*⁵⁰ in 1866, Giuseppe Fossati presented and signed a restoration project for the column of Constantine, whose appearance was the result of historical accidents and climatic factors, such as material deterioration,



III. 19 Cross section of the Basilica of Saints Sergius and Bacchus and detail of the dome support system with base, column, capital, and entablature, pencil.

earthquakes and several fires (not least the one that broke out on 6 September 1865). Giuseppe Fossati was in Milan at the time. Despite the impossibility of integrating the project of detailed drawings of the conservatorial interventions, he drew up a report, now preserved in the Bellinzona Archives,⁵¹ in which he enclosed two sketches of the column. In the report he put the monument in historical context and presented the main interventions aimed at restoring its original appearance, with the demolition of the Ottoman consolidation elements, that is, the stone structure that hides the original marble base.

As in a sketch made a few years earlier by Texier (1833), which depicts the image of the column in its urban context (Ill. 24), Giuseppe Fossati suggested removing later constructions built in the course of time to create space for a more complete view of the monument, but also in order to “protect” it from the possible consequences of fire. He also proposed replacing or integrating the marble parts weakened by the flames and reinforcing the porphyry drums by adding metal rings and nets.

A close-up photograph of a stone inscription. The central part of the image shows the text 'ANIMATIKERPA INO' carved in a bold, blocky, sans-serif font. Above and below the text are decorative friezes. The upper frieze features a repeating pattern of stylized, rounded, shell-like or leaf-like motifs. The lower frieze consists of a series of small, rounded, bulbous shapes. The stone is light-colored and shows signs of weathering and age.

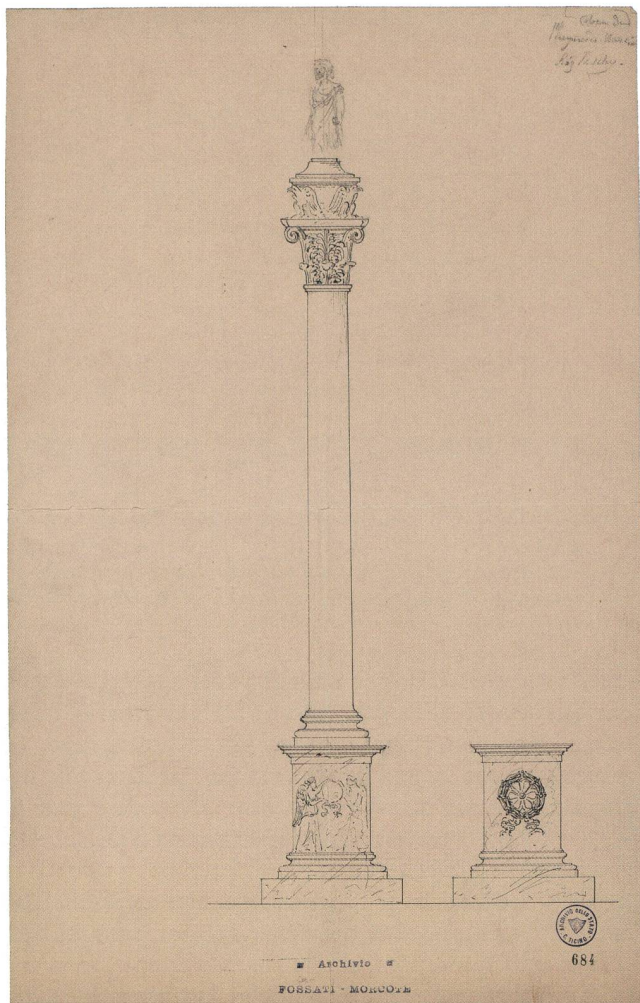
III. 24 View of the Column of Constantine in the urban context, by Charles Felix-Marie Texier.



The column of Marcian is seen in another drawing that appears to be both a projected and an ideal reconstruction (Ill. 25). Fossati suggests a hypothetical picture of the column crowned with the imperial statue, yet correctly records the design of the reliefs carved on two faces of the rectangular marble base:⁵² that is, the motif with the winged victories that support a chrismon within a clypeus and, on the other side, the chrismon with lemnisci. Equally precise is the rendering of the Corinthian capital and the upper pulvinus with the characteristic decoration with four eagles. It may be interesting to compare here the graphic and mental approach of the Swiss architects with

the more archaeologically and philologically oriented viewpoint of Texier (Ill. 26–27).

Here we are dealing with two approaches which are different in many respects, yet complementary and not necessarily incompatible. After all, if in the history of styles – according to the famous lesson of Ernst Kitzinger – “inner directed” forces are often closely intertwined with “other-directed” ones;⁵³ knowledge of the artistic and visual culture of the past can also arise from different ways of seeing, which are “directed” by different interests in the practical sphere of our lives – to use Habermas’s expression.⁵⁴ Sometimes, as we have seen, better knowledge can

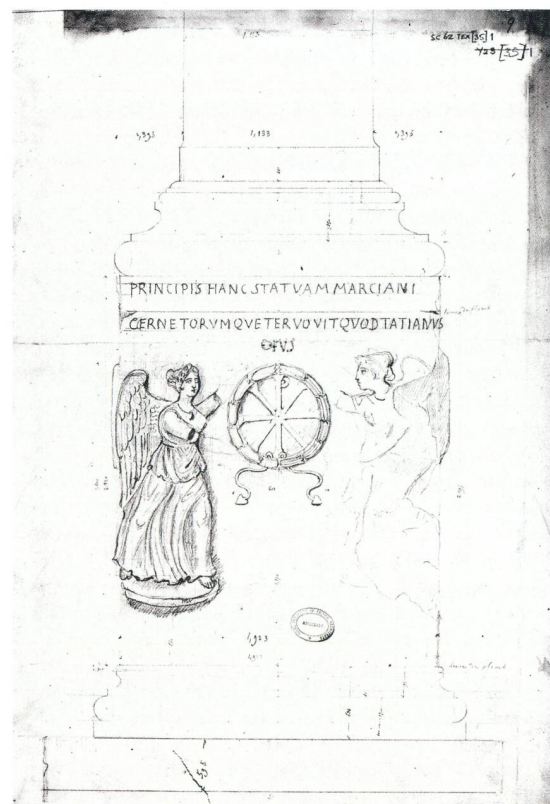
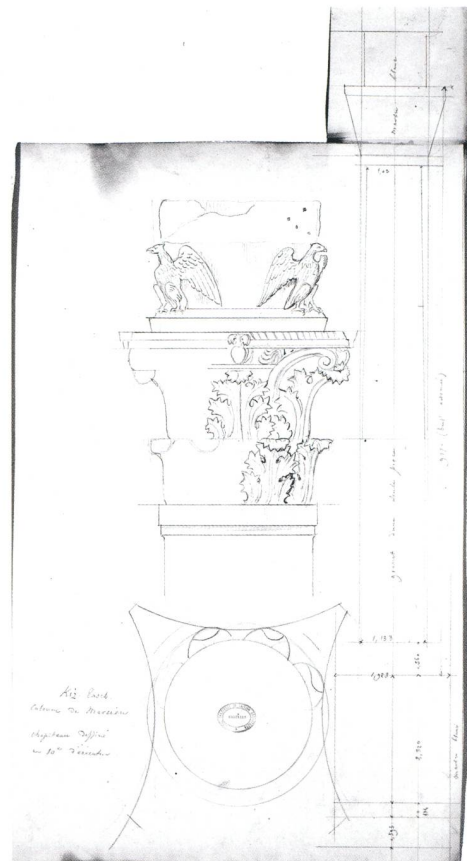


III. 25 Column of Marcian in Constantinople, by Fossati.

come even from a fortuitous coincidence, and in the end, even today, one of our interests in practical life is certainly to understand how we can – how we should – look at the legacy of the past with modern eyes, the only ones we have. Perhaps there is much to learn about this from the “view” of the Fossati brothers.

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III. 26–27 Details of the reliefs of the base of the Column of Marcian in Constantinople, by Charles Felix-Marie Texier.

- ¹ Constantinople is often defined as a “crossroads” of cultures and meetings, due to its geographical position, located between two continents and at the entrance to the Bosphorus canal, the multi-ethnic and cosmopolitan composition of its population, and the centrality in international trade policy. In the nineteenth century this role intensified, favored by notable changes and by the openness towards the different European communities, already present with the embassies in the capital of the Ottoman Empire. In the middle of the century, and even more so in the second half, the international community constituted a lively presence on the Golden Horn which favored meetings between personalities of culture, politics and art. For a historical survey, see: JEAN-FRANÇOIS SOLON, *Le turban et la stambouline. L’Empire ottoman et l’Europe, XIV^e–XX^e siècle, affrontement et fascination réciproques*, Perrin 2009, pp. 428–465; SHRINE HAMADEH, ÇİĞDEM KAFESCIOĞLU (eds.), *A companion to Early Modern Istanbul*, Leiden-Boston 2022.
- ² The following text is the result of a research presented at the conference *The Fossati Brothers. Swiss Architects from Morcote to Istanbul* (1–2 October 2021), co-organized by the Swiss Consulate, the Russian Embassy, the University of Italian Switzerland, and the Dost-I (Dominican Study Institute Istanbul), whose activities of cultural promotion and multidisciplinary dialogue made these meetings possible. I also want to thank the Italian Cultural Institute for contributing to my trip to Istanbul, and the friends and colleagues of the working group with whom we were in contact during the hard months of the lockdown preparing the conference of which this paper is a revised and expanded result.
- ³ The interest of Byzantine historiography in the work of the Fossati started quite early, especially in reference to their restoration and “safeguarding” work of the Hagia Sophia and its rich mosaic and decorative endowment. In the short period between 1847 and 1849 the two architects managed to carry out restoration, conservation and documentation works which proved essential for the subsequent recovery and scientific study made possible only after the transformation of the building into a museum in 1935 by will of Kemal Atatürk. See ANDREA PARIBENI / SILVIA PEDONE, *La Santa Sofia e il suo Museo: percorsi di lettura*, in: *Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Bizantinística*, 36, 2020, pp. 26–52.
- ⁴ On the personal and family story of the two Ticino brothers, see the numerous contributions by Lucia Pedrini Stanga, based on detailed knowledge of the archival funds of Bellinzona, Venice and Milan. LUCIA PEDRINI STANGA, *Gaspere Fossati 1809–1883. Architetto – pittore, pittore – architetto* (= exhibition catalogue), Lugano 1992; EAD., s.v. *Fossati, Gaspere*, in *DBI*, 49, Roma 1997, pp. 493–495; EAD., *Il viaggio in Italia dell’architetto G. F.*, Locarno 1997; ROSSELLA GRASSI / LUCIA PEDRINI STANGA, *La formazione di Gaspere Fossati come architetto e restauratore*, in: *Santa Sofia ad Istanbul: sei secoli di immagini e il lavoro di restauro di Gaspere Fossati (1847–49)* (= catalogo d’esposizione), ed. VOLKER HOFFMANN, Berna 1999, p. 95–121.
- ⁵ On this point see the still useful studies of TITO LACCHIA, *Due architetti ticinesi a Costantinopoli*, in: *Le vie del Mondo*, ottobre 1934; ID., *I mosaici di Santa Sofia e l’opera dei fratelli Fossati*, in: *Le vie del Mondo*, luglio 1939; ID., *I Fossati architetti del Sultano di Turchia*, Roma a. XXI, 1943; UGO DONATI, *Vedute di Roma di Gaspere Fossati 1809–1883 architetto ticinese*, Lugano 1958 (in part. pp. 17–20); SEMAVI EYICE, *Gaspere Fossati*, in: *Istanbul Ansiklopedisi*, XI, 1972, pp. 5818–5823.
- ⁶ A Russian painter of Italian origins. His father, Giovanni Battista Scotti, was also a decorative artist who moved to Russia at the invitation of the famous Italian architect Giacomo Quarenghi (Rota d’Imagna 1744–St. Petersburg 1817). He studied at the Imperial Academy of Arts (1831–1835) and trained as a painter in Russia. In the course of his life, he travelled to Italy several times, where he had contacts with Russian and Italian aristocratic and diplomatic personalities, as well as artists. In Rome he frequented the family of Count Ivan Kutaisov. He visited Constantinople in 1844–1845, where he painted numerous pictures, views, genre scenes and icons for the Russian Embassy and often met the Fossati brothers. He died in Paris in 1861. See LYUDMILA MARKINA, *Flowers for the Madonna. On the bicentenary of Mikhail Scotti’s birth*, in: *The Tretyakov Gallery Magazine*, 4, 2014 (45), see: <https://www.tretyakovgallerymagazine.com/articles/4-2014-45/flowers-madonna-bicentenary-mikhail-scotti-birth>.
- ⁷ Cf. ALDO CRIVELLI, *Artisti ticinesi in Russia*, I, Locarno 1966; ALBERTO BARRANCO DI VALDIVIESO, *Gaspere Fossati (1809–1883) un architetto ticinese nelle corti imperiali di Russia e Turchia*, in: *Il disegno di architettura*, 32, 2006, pp. 60–67.
- ⁸ The drawing is now housed in ASTi, Fondo Fossati, Velvet album 3. The signature (“Scotti”) and date (“7 del 1845 Constantinopoli”) are at the bottom left.
- ⁹ No archival evidence has so far revealed where the two brothers’ study could have been, although it is credible that they stayed in the upper area of the Pera peninsula, near the embassies and in an urban setting characterized, historically, by the presence of different European foreign communities.
- ¹⁰ ASTi, Fondo Fossati, red velvet album.
- ¹¹ ASTi, Fondo Fossati 2.1.26 VI/449. The drawing is barely sketched, but we can recognize three men dressed in Western clothing in the foreground (two sitting, and one standing) and the evanescent silhouette of a fourth figure standing on the right. On the background others figures sitting on the sofa. The caption at the bottom right allows the identification of the men depicted and the circumstance: “Our studio in Pera with Horace Vernet, Goupil after lunch”. A black and white reproduction of the sketch was published by LUCIA PEDRINI STANGA 1992 (cf. n. 3), p. 63, ill. 39.
- ¹² ISABELLA PALUMBO FOSSATI CASA, *À la recherche de Sainte-Sophie: Gaspere et Giuseppe Fossati*, in: *Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 154, N. 1, 2010, pp. 293–299 (in part. p. 293).
- ¹³ *Voyage d’Horace Vernet en Orient*, rédigé par M. Goupil Fesquet, Paris 1843.
- ¹⁴ İLBER ORTALI, *Tanzimat’ta Vilayetlerde Eski Eser Taraması*, in: *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Asiklopedisi*, 6, Istanbul 1985, pp. 1599–1603; NİYAZI BERKES, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, New York 1998, pp. 137–200; CARTER V. FINDLEY, *The Sublime Porte, 1789–1922*, Princeton 1980, pp. 151–220.
- ¹⁵ It is no coincidence that the first field research, with specific archaeological investigations, took place at the beginning of the century. The initiatives were often linked to the requests of Western travelers or to urban redevelopment works, but then turned into real archaeological investigation campaigns. However, compared to other sites in Asia Minor, Constantinople was initially less investigated from an archaeological point of view, perhaps also due to a complex and continually changing urban structure, with spontaneous stratifications that have often hidden significant places in the Byzantine history of the city. See ZAINAB BAHRANI / ZEYNEO ÇELİK / EDEM ELDEN (eds.), *Scramble for the Past. A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753–1914*, Istanbul 2011 (in part. ROBERT OUSTERHOUT, *The Rediscovery of Constantinople and the Beginnings of Byzantine Archaeology: Historiographic Survey*, ibidem, 2011, pp. 181–211). See also: ALEV KOÇAK, *The Ottoman Empire and Archaeological Excavations*, Istanbul 2011.
- ¹⁶ See note 12.
- ¹⁷ The Fossati Brothers made the most of and exploited to their advantage the tendency to adopt an European architectural and urban style with concessions to the traditional style. This cir-

cumstance allowed them to be fashionable professionals in the multicultural and multiethnic society of a city like Constantinople. See: GERTRAUD HEINRICH, *Die Fossati-Entwürfe zu Theaterbauten: Materialien zur Architekturgeschichte Istanbul im 19. Jahrhundert*, München 1989; ALAIN BORIE / PIERRE PINON / STÉPHANE YERASIMOS, *L'occidentalisation d'Istanbul au XIX^{ème} siècle*, Rapport de recherche, Ministère de l'Équipement et du Logement, Bureau de la Recherche Architecturale, Paris 1989; *Architettura e architetti italiani ad Istanbul tra il XIX e il XX secolo*, Atti del Convegno organizzato dall'Istituto Francese di Studi Anatolici, Istituto Italiano di Cultura, in collaborazione con la Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi, Istanbul, 27–28 novembre 1995; PAOLO GIRARDELLI, *Gaspere Fossati in Turchia (1837–1859), continuità, contaminazioni, trasformazioni*, in *Quaderni di storia dell'architettura e restauro*, 18 (1997), pp. 9–18; AFİFE BATUR, *Gaspere e Giuseppe Fossati*, in *Presenze italiane a Istanbul / Istanbul'daki İtalyan İzi*, Istanbul 2008, pp. 34–43; MARIA LUIGIA FOBELLI, *Santa Sofia di Costantinopoli, Gaspere Fossati e i due committenti*, in: *Medioevo: i committenti*, ed. ARTURO CARLO QUINTAVALLE, Milano 2011 (I convegni di Parma 13), pp. 730–740; EAD., *I fratelli Fossati tra modernizzazione e orientalismo*, in: *Forme e storia. Scritti di arte medievale e moderna per Francesco Gandolfo*, ed. in WALTER ANGELELLI / FRANCESCA POMARICI, Roma 2011, pp. 573–586; AKYÜREK GÖKSUN, *Political ideas and their architectural visibility*, in: *Italian architects and builders in the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey*, ed. PAOLO GIRARDELLI / EZIO Godoli, Cambridge 2017, pp. 45–61.

¹⁸ SILVIA PEDONE, *A Critical Approach to the Byzantine Art in the First Half of 19th Century. The case of Ch. F.-M. Texier*, in: International Conference of Young Specialists «Actual Problems of Theory and History of Art», I (Moscow, 1–5 December 2010), St. Petersburg 2011, pp. 92–100.

¹⁹ CYRIL MANGO, *The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul*, Washington D.C. 1962; ID., *The lost mosaics of St. Sophia, Constantinople*, in: Actes du XII^e Congrès international d'études byzantines, 3, Beograd 1964, pp. 227–233; URS PESCHLOW, Prefazione alla riedizione di GASPARE FOSSATI, *Die Hagia Sophia nach dem Tafelwerk von 1852*, Dortmund 1980; ROWLAND J. MAINSTONE, *Saint Sophia. Architecture, Structure, and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church*, London 1988; NATALIA B. TETERIATNIKOV, *Mosaics of Hagia Sophia, Istanbul the Fossati restoration and the work of the Byzantine Institute*, Washington, DC 1998 (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.); SABINE SCHLÜTER, *Gaspere Fossatis Restaurierung der Hagia Sophia in Istanbul 1847–49*, Diss., Bern 1999 (Neue Berner Schriften zur Kunst 3), i cui risultati sono poi sfociati nel saggio EAD., *Gaspere Fossatis Restaurierung der Hagia Sophia in Istanbul 1847–49*, in: *Die Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. Bilder aus sechs Jahrhunderten und Gaspere Fossatis Restaurierung der Jahre 1847–49*, ed. VOLKER HOFFMANN, Bern 1999, pp. 139–148 [tr. it. *Santa Sofia ad Istanbul. Sei secoli di immagini e il lavoro di restauro di Gaspere Fossati (1847–1849)*, Berna 1999]; ROBERT NELSON, *Hagia Sophia, 1850–1950*, Chicago 2004; SEMA DOĞAN, *Aya Sofya ve Fossati kardeşler (1847–1858)*, Istanbul 2011; ISABELLA PALUMBO FOSSATI CASA, *À la recherche de Sainte-Sophie*, in: *L'Orientalisme, les Orientalistes et l'empire ottoman de la fin du XVIII^e siècle à la fin du XX^e siècle*, Actes du colloque international réuni à Paris, les 12 et 13 février 2010 au Palais de l'Institut de France, ed. S. BASCH / H. MEUNIER-CHUVIN, Paris 2011, pp. 137–143; GABRIELLA LINI, *Les Frères Fossati, Sainte-Sophie de Constantinople, 1847–1849: les travaux de restauration des frères Fossati*, in: *Byzance en Suisse*, sous la direction de MARIELE MARTINIANI-REBER, Genève 2015, pp. 545–565; NATALIA B. TETERIATNIKOV, *Justinianic mosaics of Hagia Sophia and their aftermath*, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington D.C. 2017 (Dumbarton Oaks studies, 47). More recently, on Byzantine historiography, see BEATRICE DASKAS, *Aya Sofia Kibir Giamy Scheriffy: The Fossati Brothers, the Ottoman Capital and the “Superb Imperial Mosque of Hagia Sophia*, in: *From Istanbul to Byzantium 1800–1955. Paths to*

Rediscovery / Istanbul'dan Bizans'a Yeniden Kesfin Yolları 1800–1955 (= exhibition catalogue), Istanbul 2021, pp. 21–39.

²⁰ SEMAVİ EYİCE, *Ayasofya*, 3, Istanbul 1984; GÜLRÜ NECİPOĞLU, *The life of an Imperial Monument after Byzantium*, in: *Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the Present*, eds. ROBERT MARK / AHMET S. ÇAKMAK, Cambridge 1992, pp. 195–225.

²¹ MANGO 1962 (cf. n. 15).

²² The renovated building was inaugurated on 13 July 1849. The results of the restoration work were published in *Aya Sofya as recently restored by order of H.M. the Sultan Abdul Medjid from the original drawings by Chevalier Gaspard Fossati*, Lithographed by Louis Haghe Esq., London, published August 14th, 1852.

²³ The impressive documentation today preserved in the Bellinzone Archives is carefully studied only starting from the 1930s and then published in the pivotal monograph by CYRIL MANGO (cf. n. 15). The study and publication of the entire Fossati archival fund is currently underway.

²⁴ *Aya Sofia* 1852 (cf. n. 19).

²⁵ WILHELM SALZENBERG, *Alt-Christliche Baudenkmale von Constantinopel vom V. bis XII. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1854. Having learned of Fossati's restorations in the Hagia Sophia, the Prussian king Friedrich Wilhelm IV sent the architect Wilhelm Salzenberg to make detailed drawings of the mosaics and decorations of the church as inspiration for the new imperial buildings. On the rivalry between the two Swiss brothers and the German architect, see: ROBERT NELSON 2004 (cf. n. 21), pp. 33–36.

²⁶ THOMAS WHITTEMORE, *The mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul. The imperial portraits of the South Gallery*, Boston 1942.

²⁷ From 2011 to 2013 I took part in a research team led by Alessandra Guiglia Guidobaldi and Claudia Barsanti, and I was able to closely examine the wooden coverings of the beams from the Justinian era. Through visual analysis (and thanks to the already published results of the Carbon 14 test) it was possible to establish that only those in the so-called Imperial loggia, in the gallery above the narthex, can be dated to the Middle Byzantine period (10th–11th century). Most of those present in the building, both on the ground floor and in the galleries, are instead the result of the skillful nineteenth-century imitation of the Fossati, who recreated the Byzantine vegetal decorations with a more schematic and symmetrical style. The research results are published in: ALESSANDRA GUIGLIA / CLAUDIA BARSANTI, *Istanbul Ayasofyası'nın Dekorasyonlarının Az Bilinen Yönleri / Aspetti meno noti della decorazione della Santa Sofia di Costantinopoli*, in: *Arkeoloji ve Sanat*, 2012, 139: Ocak-Nisan, pp. 191–201; CLAUDIA BARSANTI / ALESSANDRA GUIGLIA, *Alcune riflessioni sulle travi lignee scolpite della Santa Sofia a Costantinopoli e sui restauri dei fratelli Fossati*, in: *L'officina dello sguardo. Scritti in onore di Maria Andaloro*, eds. GIULIA BORDI et al., Roma 2014, vol. 1. I luoghi dell'arte, pp. 71–284; ALESSANDRA GUIGLIA / CLAUDIA BARSANTI, *Sapienza Istanbul'da: Ayasofya Projesi / Sapienza in Istanbul: The Hagia Sophia Project*, in: *Picuring a Lost Empire: An Italian Lens on Byzantine Art in Anatolia 1960–2000*, eds. LIVIA BEVILACQUA / GIOVANNI GASBARRI, Istanbul 2018, pp. 67–82.

²⁸ Although mosaic sketches and reliefs are the best-known materials, it should still be considered that the Fossati also recorded precious reliefs of decorative and ornamental details. It is worth mentioning at least the vast work on marble reliefs, see MAURO DELLA VALLE, *I restauri ottocenteschi dei marmi e una prima affermazione del gusto neo-bizantino*, in: ALESSANDRA GUIGLIA GUIDOBALDI / CLAUDIA BARSANTI, *Santa Sofia di Costantinopoli. L'arredo marmoreo della Grande Chiesa giustinianea*, Roma 2004, pp. 739–792.

²⁹ GIUSEPPE FOSSATI, *Rilievi Storico-Artistici sull'Architettura Bizantina dal IV al XV fino al XXI secolo, ovvero Notizie intorno alle scoperte fatte in Santa Sofia a Costantinopoli dagli architetti Giuseppe e Gaspere Fossati, durante i lavori di restauro al grandioso monumento da essi compiuti dal maggio 1847 al luglio 1849*, Milan 1890.

³⁰ Before Texier, the Swedish officer Cornelius Loos (1686–1738)

was allowed to design the interiors of the Hagia Sophia (1710–1711). However, despite the richness of his documentation, his plates cannot be considered architectural reliefs in the strictly “modern” sense, based on the proportions and measurements of the parts of the monument. On Loos see the recent book by KARIN ADAHL, with contributions by GÜNSEL RENDA, NURHAN ATASOY (eds.), *Cornelius Loos in the Ottoman World: Drawings for the King of Sweden, 1710–1711, Istanbul 2019*.

³¹ On the French architect and archaeologist and his work, see: SILVIA PEDONE 2011 (cf. n. 17); EAD., s.v. *Texier, Charles Felix-Marie*, in: *Personenlexikon zur Christlichen Archäologie. Forscher und Persönlichkeiten vom 16. bis 21. Jahrhundert*, eds. STEFAN HEID / MARTIN DENNERT, Regensburg 2012, II, pp. 1277–1278; EAD., *I monumenti di Costantinopoli della prima età bizantina nei disegni di Charles Texier (1802–1871)*, in: *Episcopus, civitas territorium*, Atti del XV Congresso Internazionale di Archeologia Cristiana (Toledo, 8–12 September 2008), eds. SILVIA CRESCI / JORGE LOPEZ QUIROGA / OLOF BRANDT / CARMELO PAPPALARDO, Roma 2013 (Studi di Antichità Cristiane, LXV), II, pp. 1591–1602; EAD., «*Souvenirs d'une grandeur qui ne s'efface pas*». *La Santa Sofia di Giustiniano in alcuni disegni di Charles Texier*, in: *Vie per Bisanzio*, VII Congresso Nazionale dell'Associazione Italiana di Studi Bizantini (Venezia, 25–28 novembre 2009), eds. ANTONIO RIGO / ANDREA BABUIN / MICHELE TRIZIO, Bari 2013, vol. II, pp. 939–962.

³² ASTi Fossati 663. The caption drawn in ink reads: “Epoca bizantina. Dettagli della chiesa di Monreale in Sicilia”.

³³ The entire sheet is occupied by sketches and ornamental details. The precise location is indicated next to some mosaic details. From above we read: “sott’arco” with the depiction of King Solomon, followed by “archivolto del presbiterio” with Christ Pantocrator, “nicchione laterale” with Saint Peter, “nicchione nel presbiterio”, “archivolto dell’arco B”. Finally, Saint Scholastica and a detail of one of the Corinthian capitals can be recognized.

³⁴ The group of sketches found among the Fossati papers and presented here for the first time in a coherent way, consist of 8 sheets and cards, all in pencil. Some are more detailed, while others are quick sketches.

³⁵ On the church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus, see CYRIL MANGO, *The church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus at Constantinople and the alleged tradition of octagonal palatine churches*, in: *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik*, Vienna 1972 (21), pp. 189–193; ROBERTA GUADALUPI, *La Chiesa dei SS. Sergio e Bacco a Costantinopoli*, Venezia 1975; THOMAS F. MATHEWS, *The Byzantine Churches of Istanbul: A Photographic Survey*, University Park 1976; WOLFGANG MÜLLER-WIENER, *Bildlexikon Zur Topographie Istanbul: Byzantion, Konstantinopolis, Istanbul bis zum Beginn d. 17 Jh*, Tübingen 1977, pp. 177–183; ANNA VIGNOLI, *Note sull’architettura delle chiese dei Santi Sergio e Bacco a Costantinopoli. Ipotesi per la ricostruzione della struttura dell’avancorpo scomparso*, in: *StClOr XXVIII*, 1978, pp. 69–86; IRFAN SHAHÎD, *The Church of Sts Sergios and Bakhos in Constantinople: Some New Perspectives*, in: *Byzantium State and Society, In Memory of Nikos Oikonomides*, eds. ANNA AVRAMEA / ANGELIKI LAIOU / E. CHRISOS, Athens 2003, pp. 467–480; THOMAS F. MATHEW, *The palace church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople*, in: *Archaeology in Architecture. Studies in Honor of Cecil L. Striker*, eds. JUDSON J. EMERICK / DEBORAH M. DELIYANNIS, Mainz am Rhein 2005, pp. 137–141; JAN KOSTENEC, *South façade of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus (Küçük Ayasofya Camii) in Istanbul*, in: *Boreas*, 28–29, 2005–2006, pp. 105–114; BRIAN CROKE, *Justinian, Theodora, and the church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus*, in: *DOP*, 60, 2006 (2007), pp. 25–63; JONATHAN BARDILL, *The Date, Dedication, and Design of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople*, in: *Journal of Late Antiquity*, 2017, 10 (1), pp. 62–130. The Byzantine building was changed in a mosque under Beyazit II by the chief eunuch of the harem, Hüseyin Efendi, cf. SULEYMAN KIRIMTAYI, *Converted Byzantine Churches in Istanbul. Their Transformation into Mosques and Masjid*, Istanbul 2001, pp. 20–24.

³⁶ ASTi, Fondo Fossati, 424. The drawing, in pencil, traces, correcting the irregularities, the characteristic double envelope plan (a rectangular plan with octagonal naos and exedra) of the building, the polygonal apse and the narthex. The characteristic umbrella-shaped dome is also marked on the plan with the triangular (concave and convex) portions which also characterize the building from the outside. At the top, the caption in pencil reads: “Plan St. Sergius et Bacchus”.

³⁷ SILVIA PEDONE 2013 (cf. n. 30), p. 1675, 1680, fig. 7.

³⁸ ASTi, Fondo Fossati, 189.

³⁹ Top right: “Moschea di Cuchuk (sic!) aya Sofia / con cattivi dipinti bleu / nascosti i mosaici”. A second caption, bottom right, reads: “Antica chiesa greca d’Agius Serghios / Kutchuk Aya Sofia Costantinopoli”.

⁴⁰ ALEXANDER VAN MILLIGEN, *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople. Their history and Architecture*, London 1912, pp. 62–79, in part. pp. 75–76. The belief that a mosaic decoration was present in the building is based on the words of Procopius: “Indeed each equally outshines the sun by the gleam of its stones, and each is equally adorned throughout with an abundance of gold and teems with offerings” (Procopius, *Buildings*, Loeb Classical Library edition, VII, Cambridge-London 1940, I, IV, 5, pp. 44–45) and on the relevance of mosaics in the main monuments erected by Justinian and contemporary to the church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus (e.g. San Vitale, the Hagia Sophia, the Sinai Basilica).

⁴¹ SILVIA PEDONE 2013 (cf. n. 30), p. 1681, fig. 8.

⁴² JEAN EBERSOLT / ADOLPHE THIERS, *Les églises de Constantinople*, Paris 1913. This work is illustrated by particularly interesting architectural tables. I would like to point out that in those same years Tito Lacchia, biographer of Fossati and himself an architect and skilled designer, created some splendid tables with the architectural reliefs of the Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople, perhaps taking inspiration from the study of Fossati’s sketches. These drawings, still unpublished and owned by Lacchia’s heirs, were examined by LUCA ORLANDI *Dal Piemonte al Bosforo: l’esperienza dell’architetto Tito Lacchia in Turchia*, in A. CENGİZKAN (ed.), *Architetti, progettisti e scultori italiani in Turchia / I primi cinquant’anni della Repubblica e della città (1923–1973) / Türkiye’deki İtalyan mimarlar, tasarımcılar ve heykeltıraşlar / Cumhuriyetin ilk elli yılı ve kent (1923–1973)*, Istanbul (in press).

⁴³ This sketch is the roughest of the drawings dedicated to the monument. It is a view taken from the entrance towards the naos: it depicts the two columns that support the entablature and which mark the entrance to the central space covered by the large dome. The mihrab and the minbar are clearly distinguishable, as are the portions of the dome onto which the alternating windows open. Below, the caption in pencil reads: “Kutçuk Aya Sofia S.t Sergius et St. Bacchus”.

⁴⁴ ASTi, Fondo Fossati, 493, 426, 189 verso. The three sketches are among the most interesting and reveal the interest in the sculptural decoration of the building. Particular attention is paid to the impost capitals and the creative plastic solutions adopted by the anonymous Byzantine stonemasons. The entablature/capital/column/base sequence reproduced in two different sketches reveals the academic approach that prefers the presentation of the entire classical architectural order. All three sketches are commented on by short pencil notes. On sheet 493, the following sentence was added in ink, perhaps at a later time: “Il Cav. G. Fossati presenta suoi omaggi all’Ill.º S.º Professore Segretario della R. Accademia [...] d’ornato i di cui attributi qui inclusi. Corso Venezia N. 61”.

⁴⁵ ASTi, Fondo Fossati, 580.

⁴⁶ Cf. ASNU BILBAN YALÇIN, *I soffitti decorati degli architravi delle finestre*, in: ALESSANDRA GUIGLIA GUIDOBALDI / CLAUDIA BARSANTI 2004 (cf. n. 27), pp. 233–289, in part. il paragrafo dedicato a *I soffitti della trabeazione dei Santi Sergio e Bacco*, pp. 265–272.

- ⁴⁷ The incorrect dating to the 3rd century noted on the sheet 426 is suggested in consideration of the marked classicism of the architrave. For an analysis of the sculpture of the Justinian age see CLAUDIA BARSANTI / ANDREA PARIBENI, *La scultura in funzione architettonica a Costantinopoli tra V e VI secolo: aspetti tecnici, tipologici e stilistici*, in: *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia*, Ser. NS, 16, 2018, pp. 23–72 (in part. pp. 41–44).
- ⁴⁸ SILVIA PEDONE 2013 (cf. n. 30), p. 952, figs. 16–17.
- ⁴⁹ The drawing depicts the elevation and plan of the Hatt-Cheriff monument in Gulhane park, and is dated 1840, according to Fossati's ink caption at the top right. See LUCIA PEDRINI STANGA 1992 (cf. n. 3), p. 97, ill. 33.
- ⁵⁰ SABINE SCHLÜTER 1999 (cf. n. 21), pp. 180–191.
- ⁵¹ LACCHIA 1943 (cf. n. 4), pp. 86–95.
- ⁵² ASTi, Fondo Fossati, 684, ink and pencil. Top right: "Colonne de L'Emperor Marcian – Kiz taschy".
- ⁵³ ERNST KITZINGER, *Byzantine Art in the Making. Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art 3rd–7th Century.*, London 1977, p. 125.
- ⁵⁴ JURGEN HABERMAS, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, London 1978, p. 174.

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SUMMARY

When Giuseppe Fossati published a brochure in 1890 titled *Rilievi storico-artistici sull'architettura bizantina*, forty-one years had already passed since the restoration of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (1847–1849). The endeavour had established the international reputation of the two brothers from Ticino, Switzerland, as a result of which they received further important commissions, both public and private, in the city of Constantinople. To date, Gaspare and Giuseppe Fossati's contribution to Byzantine studies seemed limited to their restoration of the great Justinian church. However, analysis of unpublished sketches preserved in the Fossati Archive in Bellinzona indicates a broader interest in Byzantine art. In particular, this article examines sketches and plans the brothers made of the church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus as well as the columns of Constantine and Marcian.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Als Giuseppe Fossati 1890 eine Broschüre mit dem Titel *Rilievi storico-artistici sull'architettura bizantina* veröffentlichte, waren seit den Restaurierungsarbeiten an der Hagia Sophia in Konstantinopel (1847–1849) bereits einundvierzig Jahre vergangen. Diese Arbeiten verschafften den beiden Tessiner Brüdern eine enorme Sichtbarkeit auf internationaler Ebene und ermöglichten es ihnen, weitere wichtige (öffentliche und private) Aufträge in der Stadt Konstantinopel zu erhalten. Schien sich der Beitrag von Gaspare und Giuseppe Fossati zur Byzantinistik bisher auf die Restaurierungsarbeiten an der grossen Justinianskirche zu beschränken, so konnte dank der Analyse einiger unveröffentlichter Skizzen aus dem Fossati-Archiv in Bellinzona ein breiteres Interesse an dem byzantinischen Kunstphänomen aufgezeigt werden. In diesem Artikel werden insbesondere die grafischen Studien untersucht, die die Fossati der Kirche der Heiligen Sergius und Bacchus sowie den Ehrensäulen von Konstantin und Marcianus widmeten.

RÉSUMÉ

Lorsque Giuseppe Fossati publia en 1890 une brochure intitulée *Rilievi storico-artistici sull'architettura bizantina*, quarante-et-un ans s'étaient déjà écoulés depuis les travaux de restauration réalisés dans la basilique Sainte-Sophie de Constantinople (1847–1849). Ces travaux, qui avaient conféré une énorme visibilité aux deux frères tessinois sur le plan international, leur ont permis de recevoir d'autres importants mandats (publics et privés) dans la ville de Constantinople. Si jusqu'ici la contribution de Gaspare et Giuseppe Fossati aux études byzantines semblait se limiter aux travaux de restauration de la grande église justinienne, l'analyse de quelques croquis inédits conservés aux Archives Fossati de Bellinzona a révélé un intérêt plus marqué pour le phénomène artistique byzantin. Le présent article examine en particulier les études graphiques que les frères Fossati ont consacrées à l'église des Saints Serge-et-Bacchus et aux colonnes honorifiques de Constantin et Marcien.

RIASSUNTO

Quando nel 1890 Giuseppe Fossati pubblicò un opuscolo dal titolo *Rilievi storico-artistici sull'architettura bizantina*, erano trascorsi quarantuno anni dai lavori di restauro condotti nella Santa Sofia di Costantinopoli (1847–1849). Lavori che diedero enorme visibilità ai due fratelli ticinesi a livello internazionale e che permisero loro di ricevere ulteriori importanti committenze (pubbliche e private) nella città di Costantinopoli. Se fino a oggi il contributo di Gaspare e Giuseppe Fossati agli studi bizantini sembrava esaurirsi nei lavori di restauro della grande chiesa giustiniana, grazie all'analisi di alcuni schizzi inediti conservati presso l'Archivio Fossati di Bellinzona, è stato possibile evidenziare un interesse più diffuso per il fenomeno artistico bizantino. Il presente articolo esamina in particolare gli studi grafici che i Fossati dedicarono alla chiesa dei SS. Sergio e Bacco, e alle colonne onorarie di Costantino e Marciano.