



St Mark's: The Art and Architecture of Church and State in Venice

Ettore Vio

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The Basilica of St. Mark is the most important church in Venice, and one of the most famous churches in the world. It was built to house the body of St. Mark, which according to legend was brought to Venice from Alexandria in the year 828. Immediately adjacent and connected to the Doge's palace, which was the seat of political power in the city, it served as the Doge's chapel. This combination of political power and religious authority lies at the heart of any history of Venice. It was in support of this power and this authority that the Venetians built and decorated what is perhaps the most beautiful and magnificent church in Christendom. Shimmering mosaics, gleaming marbles, imposing sculpture and sacred icons all combined to inspire reverence and obedience. An architecture of surpassing beauty was put in the service of both church and state. This authoritative book is by an expert team of scholars, many of whom have made this field their life's work. The editor is an architect as well as proto of St. Mark's and is responsible for its preservation. Individual essays document every aspect of the physical beauty of the basilica, including its architecture, sculpture and mosaics as well as the famous objects in the treasury. The essays explain the meaning behind the images as well as the beliefs and ideas that underly the ceremonies and rituals that are performed in the basilica. More than 250 full-color photographs, with many full-page images and many double-page spreads, along with revealing details and close-ups, accompany and illuminate the text.

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