

## **The Carefully Folded Ham Sandwich or Tramezzini**

### **Marco Frascari\_The Library\_ The Archive\_ Vicology**

Today it is Marco, tomorrow it is Frascari

An architect's library might be said to be one in waiting. It is, and I will use a term from the Sufi poet Muhammed Al Niffari a 'promised infancy'. What does that mean?

We have a library. We have an emerging archive. What do we do with it? How do we validate it? All of us here are aware of different aspects of Marco Frascari's life, thinking, education, scholarly activities and so on. Examples of this are all around us; how much? What fragment of a life is represented here? And how would it help us as friends, educators, scholars, colleagues to know this? If we accept this, can we ask how Marco used his library. Some might immediately: clearly in a non-standard way? What does this mean? What is non-standard way? Can we help define this methodology?

(interval)

Jacques Derrida writes on page 20 of the UK edition of *Archive Fever* the following: "What is this new science of which the institutional and theoretical archive ought by rights to comprise the most private documents, sometimes secret?" This new science which is clearly an old science, from Jacques Derrida, back to Samuel Beckett, from James Joyce and back to Giambattista Vico?

I always liked Samuel Beckett's early texts when he was wavering between the scholar that he could never be, and the novelist that he wished not to be. In a book on James Joyce called *Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress*, his opening lines of his essay Danet, Bruno, Vico, Joyce are not only memorable but wonderfully wayward and precise at the same moment... *"The danger is in the neatness of identifications. The conception of Philosophy and Philology as a pair of nigger minstrels out of the Teatro dei Piccoli is soothing, like the contemplation of a carefully folded ham-sandwich."*

The contemplation of a carefully folded ham sandwich. I present here a small open narrative, in a way for Marco. It is an open plot. It begins in Campo San Stephano and ends...well I will leave it to you to decide....I show you here an image from Venice Campo San Stefano last year. The narrative is not yet clear. Mrs Philipp Starck is sitting beyond our table. The Armenian brethren are meeting to discuss current world affairs. And why the jeweller from Beirut did not pay them the money they were owed. And I am negotiating a very carefully folded ham sandwich. I would like to leave this image of this very carefully folded ham sandwich as a token for everything that has not been discovered in the work of Marco Frascari, This is the promised infancy of Al Niffari. We should already be well warned away from everything that serves the neatness of identifications.. And where do we end, where could we end...In Venice, at the entrance to the School of Architecture?



So how do we hold onto the promise of material that is suddenly made available? What is the nostalgia in content, what is the archive context and which concepts must we must brush up against only to know when to let go again? Is this an intolerable weight, an unknowable weight; the responsibility of a light history turned back by historian, critic, scholar and adventurer into wishfulfilled scenarios of historicity and sentiment? “This unknowable weight that imprints itself”, Derrida writes in *Archive Fever*, “thus does not weigh only as a negative charge. It involves the history of concept, it inflects archive desire or fever, their opening on the future, their dependency with respect to what will come, in short, all that ties knowledge and memory to the promise.”

How do we approach then the work and archive then of this architect, scholar and educator and keep the present critical paradigms away?<sup>i</sup> Marco Frascari's *modus operandi* – non-standard method - is delightfully and frustratingly, clearly part of the same deal. Maybe far from clear and linear which we should celebrate. Maybe a highly controlled subjectivism, though I doubt the highly controlled. Let us be more mischievous and, after Giambattista Vico with a nod back to Joyce and Beckett call it a Vicology. I will leave you to discuss openly with what we actually have here in this room, echoing the Sufi scholar Muhammad Al Niffari, the promise of infancy. And with that I will turn it over to Donald Kunze, to explore this unwept term Vicology and his thought on how we might understand the man and material here, and how it might echo or warn us against any archive fever or desire.

( And what does an institute get from a library, an archive. Usually, and this is well known, at the moment an institute begins the work in an archive and the unravelling of a library, exercises into the archaeology of knowledge (Foucault) can turn wayward. The library can lose its colour, its fidelity; the danger is that the archive loses its loyalty to itself. So how do we set out on what is in a way comparable with an archaeological dig. The traces , are carefully brushed, removed earth which reveals the underlayers. But in more radical terms we always seek to interpret, to burn the residual, to hijack the archive and substitute it with new stories, new fictions, critical, philosophical, metaphysical and person. )

True or false, or in between?

The tramezzino, singular is apparently a triangular sandwich constructed from two slices of soft white bread with the crusts removed. Can it be other than triangular, can it be brown bread, rye bread, other bread? There are various popular fillings: ham cheese, olives, pesto, mushrooms, tuna and prosciutto; possibly 40 to 50 variations, more. According to some, the origin of the tramezzino can be traced back to Caffè Mulassano di Piazza Castello in Turin. It was proposed and invented as an alternative to English high tea sandwiches. Tramezzino as a word was invented by Gabriele D'Annunzio as a replacement for the English word "sandwich".

I wonder why sandwich was no easy to pronounce in Italian. But the Italian neologism "Tramezzino" sounds like "in-between", with the addition of the diminutive suffix "-ino"

So a tramezzino is a carefully folded ham sandwich, when ham is used as the filler in between earth and sky.

True or false?

Roger Connah 2013

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