THE ANTIQUITIES OF RAVENNA.

By BUNNELL LEWIS, M.A., F.S.A.

THE traveller of reflective and cultivated mind, when he visits Italy, meets with objects of interest in every corner of that beautiful country. If he contemplates the present, his generous sympathies are excited by the spectacle of a liberated and reunited people progressing in wealth,[1] art, and science, and taking their rightful place in the European community. If, on the other hand, he prefers to dwell on the memories of the past, so glorious and yet so melancholy, he finds no place more suggestive, I might even say more fascinating, than Ravenna. There nothing modern intrudes to break the spell as we indulge in a reverie, and pace its grass-grown, deserted streets. Situated on the marshy coast of the Adriatic, the town is remote from the highway of ordinary tourists, who pass through Florence to Rome and Naples ; yet, in many respects, it may vie with those well-known scenes, and, in some, it even surpasses them. There is, perhaps, scarcely a spot on the surface of the earth which offers within so small a space such varied attractions to the lover of art, or to the student of civil and eccesiastical history ; for it is a mistake to suppose that the antiquities are all of one kind—exclusively Christian—as some have rashly asserted.[2] Nor is it difficult to account for this pre-eminence. Ravenna was most flourishing during the struggle between the northern and southern nations of Europe, which ended in destroying the fabric of Roman dominion. It became the seat of empire A.D. 404, and for three centuries and a half took precedence even of the ancient capital. But

[1] The most striking proofs of this progress are presented by the new streets and buildings in the great Italian cities, and by their exhibitions of modern sculpture and painting. The number of schools recently opened is a most auspicious omen for the future of Italy.

[2] Cardinal Wiseman says, "Ravenna has only one antiquity, and that is Christian." He appears to have looked at the place with the eye of an ecclesiastic. The advocates of Christianity have frequently injured their cause by claiming too much for their Faith in the domain of art as well as in morals and theology.

the associations that gather around it extend over a much longer period. At Ravenna we think of Julius Cæsar, who made it his head-quarters before the outbreak of the civil war; of Augustus, who constructed the harbour, named from the fleet, Classis; of Arminius (Hermann), the great leader of the German nation, whose son, Thumelicus, was brought up here, perhaps as a gladiator, to amuse his conquerors.[3] When the barbarians had their revenge, Theodoric built his palace here, and his daughter, Amalasuntha, erected his mausoleum in the neighbourhood. After the victories of Belisarius, Justinian came, accompanied by the famous, or rather infamous, Theodora, the actress who ascended the imperial throne of the east, and their effigies still look down on us from the walls of San Vitale. Dante and Boccaccio are names inseparably connected with Ravenna, but the English visitor will not forget the poets of his own country, Dryden[4] and Byron, especially the latter, who is described in a tablet on the house which he occupied as "Gloria del decimo nono secolo."

It may be worth while to revert for a moment to the description of Ravenna by an ancient author. Strabo tells us that it was built upon wooden piles (ξυλοπαγῆς),[5] intersected by canals and traversed by ferries and bridges. In fact, Ravenna was the Venice of antiquity. The geographer adds that the waters of the Adriatic permeated it so thoroughly as to cleanse away all impurities, and make the place perfectly healthy. The Emperors on this account selected it for the residence and training of gladiators. A little further on Strabo speaks of Spina, near Ravenna, as being in the interior, though formerly on the sea-coast. Hence we learn that the encroachments of the land upon the Adriatic, so obvious in our own day, had begun even at a remote period. And here I beg leave to call attention to

[3] The story of Thumelicus, which Tacitus hints at, has been dramatized by a German poet under the pseudonym of Friedrich Halm. This play has been translated into English with an introduction by Professor de Vericour.

[4] Dryden has "transplanted," to use Gibbon's expressive word, into English verse, the eighth tale of the fifth day in Boccaccio's "Decamerone," but for the Italian names Nastagio degli Onesti e Traversari, he has substituted Theodore and Honoria, as better adapted to the rhythm of English poetry. A literal translation, with some account of the origin of "this goblin tale" will be found in Dryden's Works, edited by Sir Walter Scott, vol. xi.

[5] Strabo, book v., § 7, pp. 213–217, especially p. 213. ξυλοπαγὴς ὅλη καὶ διαβύτος, γεφύραις καὶ πορθμίοις δδευομένη, κ. τ. λ. The meaning given for ξυλοπαγής in Liddell and Scott's Lexicon, "joined or built of wood," will not suit this passage.

the importance of studying with care the notices of localities which we have received from the classical writers. Some of them, especially Thucydides, from whose accounts maps might even be drawn,[6] are models of clear and accurate statement, and in most cases we may derive from them very valuable suggestions. On the other hand, the neglect of them has been a fruitful source of uncertainty and error, besides causing waste of labour and money. For example, only a few years ago even the site of the temple of Diana at Ephesus was a matter of dispute,[7] but it would have been ascertained long before, if the passages in Pliny and Strabo had been studied, and excavations made in accordance with the indications they supplied.

The architecture of Ravenna presents many points of interest, but the mosaics, which come rather under the head of painting, are incomparably the most important feature, and, if I may so speak, the speciality of the place. They impress travellers by their own intrinsic merit, but they excite in him a still deeper admiration when he looks upon them as the utterances of a Faith that could not only live, but even triumph amidst the misery and desolation caused by Roman despotism and barbaric violence. Christian art had previously led, as it were, a subterranean life in the catacombs, which were decorated with wall paintings, but in the fifth and sixth centuries it emerged out of darkness and basked in the sunshine of Imperial favour; hence the utmost magnificence was lavished on the buildings consecrated to the worship of the now victorious church. Those mural paintings followed in the track of pagan antiquity; the division into compartments, the arrangement of subjects round a centre-piece, and the ornamental arabesques resembled those that may still be seen at Pompeii or in the Baths of Titus. But the mosaics showed a different style: the vast space of the apse was treated as an undivided whole, and filled by a large composition consisting of colossal figures with appropriate scenery and accessories. From the very

[6] A good instance of this commendable accuracy may be found in Thucydides, book i., chap. 46, where he describes minutely the coast of Epirus opposite Corcyra.

[7] Mr. Fergusson, in his "History of Architecture," published so late as 1865, says that all remains of this ancient temple had disappeared; *now*, we have in the British Museum parts of the sculptured columns, the cælatæ columnæ of which Pliny speaks, interesting from their beauty of execution and the subjects which they represent, and still more so as being probably the originals that suggested the bas-reliefs of Trajan's pillar at Rome, the finest monument of the kind in the world.

nature of the materials they were indeed wanting in variety and animation: however they exhibited grand outlines of gigantic forms, and their monumental solidity accorded well with the sentiment of religious reverence. When we compare the mosaics of the Romans with those of the Christians, we observe an important alteration; the former employed them chiefly for the pavements of houses;[8] the latter for the walls of their churches, so that "the art ascended in a literal as well as in a figurative sense." The mosaics of Ravenna are and will for ever remain unparalleled. The Baptistery is the best example of a richly decorated interior in the style that prevailed under the Emperors; the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, for beauty of colouring and harmony of design, surpasses every mortuary chapel: the church of S. Apollinare Nuovo sparkles with gorgeous hues from the floor almost to the ceiling, and displays on each side of the nave a four-fold series of mosaics, and amongst them friezes that deserve to be compared with the masterpieces of the Parthenon: lastly, S. Vitale contains the finest historical pictures that have survived the ravages of time, and still more merciless barbarians. We have not here that wonderful fertility of invention that characterizes the art, as well as the literature of ancient Greece, but the new ideas of the Christian religion soar above the realism of humanity into the higher region of revealed doctrine, divine interposition, and the Apocalyptic vision. The two features in these mosaics that first strike the eye even of the superficial observer, are the freshness of the colouring and the perfect state of preservation. The material employed is almost indestructible, and retains its original brightness, while the paintings of the ancients have faded on exposure to the atmosphere, as may be seen in the museum at Naples and elsewhere. Two other causes may be assigned for the

[8] It is to be regretted that in the admirably arranged museum of local antiquities opened to the public by the Corporation of the City of London, the mosaic from Bucklersbury has been placed, to save room, on the *wall*, instead of being inserted in the floor, so that an incorrect impression is produced upon the uneducated visitor. The use of mosaic for *pavements* is implied by the terms lithostrota, δαπεδα ἐν αβακίσκοις; see C. O. Müller, "Archæologie der Kunst," English translation, § 322, remark 4, "Everything here bears reference to *floors*, hence the imitations of sweepings, asaroti œci. Cf. ib. § 163, remark 6—for the later mosaics, § 212, remark 4; for mosaics in the provinces, § 262, remark 2, § 263, remark 1. Among recent works on the subject, Loriquet's "Mosaïque des Promenades à Rheims," deserves special mention. It is particularly useful as illustrating the weapons and armour of the gladiators, which are shown in numerous photographs.

permanence of these remarkable works,—firstly, the buildings which they adorned were consecrated to the service of religion; hence they were respected when palaces and other secular edifices were pillaged. In the same way the temple of Theseus at Athens and the Parthenon at Rome were saved by their conversion into churches. And, secondly, nothing is so fatal as prosperity to the remains of antiquity.[9] Now Ravenna received at an early period a check to its progress; from the time when the dominion of the Exarchs ceased, and the town was handed over to the Papacy, it became comparatively insignificant, the population declined, no improvements were made for purposes of trade, and the ancient structures had in many cases the great good fortune to be let alone, unprofaned by the defacing hands of modern restorers, falsely so called. The exterior of these buildings is plain, but, like the king's daughter, they are all glorious within. However, even the outside leaves on the mind of the beholder a pleasing impression which many richly decorated towers and churches fail to produce; this is due to grand and simple proportions, for the walls are only of ordinary Roman brick, relieved by a few bands of different colours. On the other hand, all the efforts of the artists were directed to beautifying the nave, and especially the tribune. This result may have arisen from a desire among the Christians to recede as far as possible from the style of a pagan temple, whose colonnades and pediments were enriched with friezes and statues, while the cella, or shrine, of the divinity was left comparatively bare. Moreover, in the fifth and sixth centuries the celebration of the Eucharist was the great object of attention and reverence, and therefore the sanctuary devoted to this solemn mystery was adorned with the most gorgeous magnificence.[1]

When we compare the Ravenna churches with those in

[9] Mr. Roach Smith, in his "Illustrations of Roman London," pp. 1–3, says, "The prosperity of towns has been the most fatal cause of the loss of their ancient configuration and monuments. Places which have not entirely outgrown their old limits, such as Nismes, Treves, Autun, York, and Chester, still present many relics of their former greatness, while, on the other hand, in Paris and London few traces are left of Roman occupation." The decline of Ravenna was partially arrested by the wise administration of the Venetians, who held it for nearly seventy years. In our own day even this desolate city has shared in the general improvement pervading the Italian peninsula; the energy of the government has at last brought to justice malefactors who had previously been shielded by secret societies.

[1] For some particulars in this account of the Early Christian Mosaics I am indebted to Kugler's "Handbook of Painting," Italian Schools, edited by Eastlake.

other parts of Italy, we cannot but be struck with the unity of design which they display. We do not see here, as at Milan, a classical façade and Gothic nave, nor Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian columns placed side by side,[2] nor incongruous entablatures destroying the perspective ; but the plan, whether on a larger or smaller scale, is carried out in the details without any important variation. We need not go far to seek a satisfactory explanation ; (1) the monuments now extant at Ravenna were erected within a short space of time, viz., about 175 years, and this period preceded the development of mediæval art ; (2) the Christian architects of Ravenna were very differently circumstanced from those at Rome ; they had not at hand a multitude of pagan temples supplying them with an almost inexhaustible abundance of quarried materials. Hence, for the most part, they built and decorated according to the ideas of their own time instead of plagiarizing and transplanting the productions of former ages.

A general survey of the remains at Ravenna would be incomplete without some mention of the campanili, which, though little noticed in the ordinary guide-books, are the most striking objects that meet the eye of the traveller as he approaches the city. They are cylindrical in form, and built of brick, with scarcely any ornament besides small round-headed windows. The one at S. Apollinare in Classe is perhaps the finest example, and is strengthened by a battering at the base, with four projections, also of brickwork[3].

We may classify the monuments of Ravenna under three epochs, viz., of Galla Placidia, A.D. 425–450 ; of Theodoric, 494–526 ; of Justinian, or the middle of the 5th century. As it is quite impossible now to traverse the whole of this spacious field, I propose to make some remarks under the following heads—the Classical, Early Christian, Byzantine, and Gothic styles.

[2] See an example of this discrepancy in Seroux D'Agincourt, "History of Art by its Monuments," part i., Architecture, pl. v. Arco della Nave di S. Paolo fuori delle mura di Roma sostenuto da due colonne differenti d'epoca e di stile.

[3] These campanili may perhaps throw some light on the origin of the Irish round towers, but I have some fear of exposing myself to the reproach cast on him, *qui litem lite resolvit*, for the date of the campanili is uncertain. Some have inferred from the silence of Agnellus, who wrote in the 9th century, that they could not have existed at that time. This argument is not quite conclusive ; however it seems to be agreed that they are subsequent to the adjoining churches.

I. *The Classical.*—Considering the late period of these buildings, at first sight we might not expect to see in them many traces of this style, but so strong was the vitality of ancient art that its traditions remained long after the age of its vigorous efflorescence. We can discover it not only in the ground plan and general design, but also in minutest details. The churches of Ravenna are repetitions of Roman law-courts, with adaptations to Christian purposes. Their originals are to be found in the days of the early Emperors and even of the Republic. The Basilica Æmilia in the Roman Forum, where St. Paul may have pleaded his cause, is now known to us only in part from coins and excavations,[4] but if it still existed entire, we should see the prototype of these 6th century churches. Or, to take a later example, the basilica of Trajan was rectangular, the length being about twice the width; it consisted of a large central nave flanked by double rows of columns, with a semi-circular apse at one end.[5] Now, in S. Apollinare Nuovo, the chief features of the interior are the same, but the length is greater in proportion to the width, and there is only a single aisle on each side. The exterior was plain in both cases. And here, perhaps, we have the key to that contrast between the outside and inside of the Ravenna churches which I have already noticed; it was probably the fruit of that growing tendency to sacrifice external display to internal utility observable in the successive stages of Roman architecture.[6] If we compare the buildings of the Augustan age with those of the later Empire, the difference will be manifest. The temple at Tivoli and that near the Cloaca Maxima are both, after the Greek model, adorned with a peristyle, which is wanting in the Rotunda of the Pantheon, probably erected in the time of Septimius Severus or Aure-

[4] For the Basilica Æmilia, see Smith's "Dictionary of Classical Geography," vol. ii., p. 787, art. Roma, by Mr. Dyer, where a coin is engraved that represents two tiers of columns. This feature deserves notice as characteristic of Roman architecture, whereas the Greeks usually preferred horizontal extent to vertical elevation. Some account of the recent excavations and restorations of this building by Cavaliere Rosa is given by Mr. Freeman in "MacMillan's Magazine" for April, 1875, p. 507.

[5] The Basilica of Trajan is often called Ulpia, from the family name of this Emperor. Mr. Fergusson has a plan and restored section in his "History of Architecture," vol. i., p. 317. The denarii of Trajan enable us to form some idea of the sculptures which decorated this magnificent structure; see Cohen "Médailles Impériales," vol. ii., pl. iii., No. 319, described at p. 51; compare a fuller account of a similar coin, p. 6.

[6] The genius of the Romans aimed at the useful rather than the æsthetic; they constructed aqueducts, bridges, roads, and fortifications—in a word, they practised engineering, not architecture, considered as a fine art.

lian. At Ravenna, as we might expect, the details of construction resemble the last mentioned, in which the columns of the interior are low, and quite disproportionate to the height of the walls above them. Again, the entablature in the Pantheon is cut by the arches of the great niches, and here we see a transition to the arcuate style which superseded the horizontal.[7] Ravenna shows classical architecture in secular as well as ecclesiastical edifices. The palace of Theodoric was very extensive and magnificent, but only a small portion remains fronting the street and close to the church of S. Apollinare Nuovo; however this fragment is full of interest, as it seems, though some antiquaries have expressed a different opinion, to be an imitation of the Golden Gate in Diocletian's palace at Spalatro, which is in a comparatively good state of preservation. We should bear in mind that these two palaces were erected within an interval of two centuries, and that they are not separated by any great distance, being on opposite shores of the Adriatic. On examining the details, we find a striking similarity; in both cases there is a large central doorway with a semi-circular arch springing from the columns on either side; there is also in the upper story an arcade supported on corbels.[8] But the Mausoleum of Theodoric carries our thoughts back to a still earlier period. We can scarcely doubt that it was copied from the Mole of Hadrian, which that Gothic king must have observed during his celebrated visit to Rome. The resemblance originally was closer than it now appears, for Hadrian's Mausoleum was surrounded by a peristyle, which has long since disappeared, and fragments have been found of a similar colonnade at Ravenna.[9] This tomb reminds us by its form of the Baptistery, which was coëval with the ancient basilica. It is one of the oldest specimens of a series that continued in Italy for many cen-

[7] Fergusson, "History of Architecture," vol. i., p. 310, pl. 191, half elevation, half section of the Pantheon at Rome. D'Agincourt, part i., Architecture, pl. iii., view of the interior of a court of the palace of Diocletian at Spalatro (from Adams). 3rd century. It exhibits columns supporting arches instead of architraves, an interrupted entablature, and an entablature taking the circular form of the arch.

[8] Fergusson, vol. i., p. 366, engraving of the Golden Gateway at Spalatro, from Sir Gardner Wilkinson's "Dalmatia."

[9] Smith's "Dictionary of Classical Geography," vol. ii., p. 842, gives a view of the "Mole of Hadrian restored," with a *double* row of columns round it, but there may have been only a single one. For the Mausoleum of Theodoric compare Hübsch, "Die alt-christlichen Kirchen, Grabmal des Theodorich, jetzt Santa Maria Rotonda," pl. xxiv., 7–13. I am informed that this work must be read with caution, as it contains many conjectural restorations.

turies, as may be seen at Parma, Florence, Pisa, etc. They may be traced back to the circular edifices of the Romans,[1] but at the period we are now considering the transition is complete, and no vestige is left of external ornamentation; while, on the other hand, in the temple of Jupiter, a part of the palace of Diocletian, we have a low peristyle surrounding a building, which is an octagon externally and a circle internally.[2] This temple is so like the Christian baptisteries, that we might almost say it was the model from which they were copied. However the Ravennese baptistery shows the classical style more in its internal decorations than in its architectural plan. The chief subjects of the mosiacs are Christian—the apostles and the baptism of our Lord,—but the arabesques, rich, varied, and even fantastic, rival the frescoes of Pompeii, and probably give a better idea than can be obtained elsewhere of the gorgeous magnificence of the Romans under the Empire. If we descend to particulars, we again remark traces of the pagan style. In the central picture, the Jordan appears as a river god—a personification that occurs on the arch of Titus. The Christians retained for a long time symbolical representations derived from heathenism, so we find female figures of cities on coins and in other works of art; *e.g.*, in the silver toilet service of a Roman bride, belonging to the 4th or 5th century, now in the British Museum, which contains statuettes of Alexandria, Rome, Constantinople, and Antioch, each with distinctive attributes, as well as scenes taken from mythology, such as a Nereid riding on a sea-monster, the toilet of Venus, Cupids and Tritons.[3] So an early illuminated manuscript shows us the city of Gibeon as a beautiful female in an attitude of grief, lamenting the calamities that had befallen the Canaanites.[4]

[1] We may even go back to the Etruscans. *See* Mrs. Hamilton Gray, "Sepulchres of Etruria," pp. 165, 301, 464, with the engravings of the tombs at Tarquinia, Vulci, and Clusium; Dennis, "Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria," vol. i., pp. 157–159, and 393.

[2] Fergusson, vol. i., p. 312, plan and elevation of temple in Diocletian's palace at Spalatro.

[3] This celebrated treasure is inferred to have belonged to Christians, from the following inscription on the lid of a casket, SECVNDE ET PROJECTA VIVATIS IN CHRIS[TO], may you live in Christ, Secundus and Projecta. "Studied in connection with the Consular diptychs, mosaics, and paintings of the same period, this series of objects in silver is of peculiar interest to the archæologist, and especially for the illustration of architecture and costume."—"Guide to the Blacas Collection in the British Museum," pp. 24–27.

[4] D'Agincourt, "Painting," pl. xxx., No. 2. "Book of Joshua," a Greek manuscript of the 7th or 8th century. This figure is so remarkable for beauty of form

II. *Early Christian Art.*—We find at Ravenna the simplest form of symbolism, the monogram of Christ, consisting of the initial letters X P with A Ω; the artistic representation of the Good Shepherd—the events and personages of the Old Testament used as types of the New Dispensation; and lastly, an historic and realistic treatment of scenes in the life of the Redeemer. Among all the remains now extant the most beautiful is the mosaic in the mausoleum of Galla Placidia, where the Shepherd, of very youthful character, is surrounded by his flock and caressing one of them. The whole composition is admirable, and it is not too much to say that in tenderness of expression the chief figure has not been surpassed by any work of the kind, pagan or Christian, ancient or modern. The youthfulness of the Christ should be particularly noticed, as it corresponds with the antique idealism of the Catacombs that preceded the attempts at portraiture, and is what we might expect from the period of the monument—the first half of the fifth century.[5] But even in San Vitale, more than a hundred years later, the Christ seated on the globe of the world is young. These two mosaics are in harmony with the practice of the primitive Church that loved to depict her Lord, not as suffering and crucified, but working miracles and instructing disciples, or enthroned as a conqueror and a judge.[6] In San Vitale, Biblical allegories are used to express doctrines. The sacrifice of Isaac on one side of the tribune, and Melchisedec blessing bread and wine on the other, have both a relation to the Eucharist. Above, the Evangelists are seated writing the Gospels, each accompanied by his appropriate symbol, the angel, lion, ox, and eagle. In the mausoleum of Galla Placidia, we have the stags drinking at the stream, an emblem of the conversion of the heathen or of the aspi-

and expression, that we can only explain its occurrence at so late a period by referring it to some original of a better age.

[5] Good copies of this and other mosaics at Rome and Ravenna may be seen in the galleries and courts at South Kensington. In many cases they are almost perfect fac-similes, reproducing the colour and size of the originals. The Museum possesses so many specimens of mosaic work, engravings, photographs, and books relating to the subject, that it may be justly regarded as a school for the study of this branch of art.

[6] The avoidance of painful scenes, such as crucifixion and martyrdom, seems derived from the mild and genial spirit of antiquity, which exhibited the gods of the pagan mythology as actively engaged or enjoying sublime repose; so in painted vases and engraved gems, Jupiter hurls his thunderbolt at the Titans, and Neptune pursues them with his trident; in the frieze of the Theseium, the immortals look down from their seats on the combats of heroes and giants; in the Parthenon, the Olympian deities enthroned, calmly survey the procession that brings offerings to Minerva, the patroness of Athens.

rations of the soul after God.[7] In San Apollinare Nuovo, the crowns carried by the procession of Saints indicate their martyrdom, and illustrate an early inscription that contains the phrase *martyrio coronatus*.[8] In San Vitale, also in the Baptistery, peacocks are introduced as accessories, signifying, by their rainbow hues, celestial bliss; but another reason may also be given for the adoption of this type; the peacock, on coins and other monuments, denoted the apotheosis of the Roman Empress, as the eagle did that of the Emperor. One of the most frequent and beautiful symbols that attract our attention is the foliage of the vine. It may doubtless be traced to the parable of our Lord, who thus expressed his union with his disciples, but I think it may be partly accounted for by reference to Bacchanalian subjects, which the Christians imitated. So we see the vintage in the mosaics of Santa Costanza at Rome of the fourth century, when the heathen influence was, of course, stronger than at a later period.[9] The sheep, often twelve in number, represent the apostles, or the faithful, and issue from the cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem at opposite sides of the picture. The interposition of the Almighty is indicated by a hand of disproportionate size, which occurs also on the coins of Constantine, and in the illuminations of Greek manuscripts.[1] Of this there are many instances in the Book of Joshua preserved in the Vatican, where it may also be observed that the Jewish hero is distinguished by the nimbus, like a Christian saint. Paradise is denoted by four rivers below the feet of the Saviour, just as in the Roman mosaics.

Lastly, we may consider the ecclesiastical decorations of Ravenna as exponents of a change of doctrine. Whereas in the Catacombs the Virgin either does not appear at all, or occupies a subordinate position, here, she is herself an object

[7] Von Quast, "Die altchristlichen Bauwerke zu Ravenna." The coloured plates iii.–v. are devoted to the church of SS. Nazario e Celso, the modern name of the mortuary chapel of Galla Placidia. Besides the subject mentioned in the text, they show various details of the mosaics on a large scale, e.g., vine leaves, and gold stars on a dark-blue ground.

[8] The names of the saints are inscribed over their heads, thus: †SCA·AGNES·†SCA·AGATHE. Between each pair is a palm-tree, in which the colour of the dates contrasts well with the green foliage.

[9] The vintage occurs frequently in the sculpture as well as in the mosaics of the early Christians. Those who have visited the Vatican will remember it in the bas-reliefs that adorn the porphyry sarcophagus of Constantia.

[1] A coin lately found near Woodbridge Suffolk, represents the deification of Constantine the Great. "The Emperor stands in a chariot, and extends his arm to grasp a *celestial hand*, which is raising him to the skies." See my paper in the "Archæological Journal," vol. xxviii., p. 36.

of reverence, like the Divine Child raises her hand in the attitude of benediction, and with Him receives the gifts of the adoring Magi.[2]

III. *Byzantine influence.*—For nearly 200 years Ravenna was the capital of the Exarchs, from their commencement under Justinian, A.D. 554, to the extinction of the series by the Lombard conquest in the middle of the eighth century. When we consider the close political ties between Constantinople and Ravenna, and that the former city, having escaped the attacks of the barbarians, retained its art traditions by an unbroken succession, we naturally expect to find vestiges of Byzantine influence in the Italian dependency. The church of San Vitale, which belongs to the reign of Justinian, is very different from the others at Ravenna. Instead of being rectangular, it is an octagon surmounted by a cupola. Some have explained its construction as an imitation of the so-called temple of Minerva Medica at Rome; but, firstly, this building is a decagon in plan, and secondly, the circumstances of the foundation of San Vitale point rather to an Oriental origin. Ecclesius, whose portrait and name appear in the apse, is said to have begun its erection after his return from Constantinople, and Eusebius describes a similar church at Antioch. If we compare the section of San Vitale with that of S^ta^ Sophia, the resemblance is apparent; but the former is almost identical with the lesser S^ta^ Sophia in "the arrangement of the piers of the dome, of the galleries and of the pillars that support them."[3] The details are derived from Constantinople quite as much as the leading architectural features. The grand mosaics of the tribune, in which the gold ground indicates transition to Byzantine style, are interesting, not only because they contain faithful portraits of Justinian and Theodora, but because they show us the rich dress and overloaded orna-

[2] Kugler's "Handbook of Painting," Italian Schools, ed. Eastlake, vol. i., p. 39; see also pp. 16 and 27. A contemporary writer, describing the paintings in the Catacombs, has assumed a female figure to be the Madonna; the earlier antiquaries would have called it *a woman praying.*

[3] If any one will take the trouble to examine the photograph of the mosque of Santa Sophia at South Kensington, he will not fail to perceive the source from which the architect and decorators of the Ravennese church derived their inspiration. The construction of the dome is peculiar, but not unique. It consists of rows of terra-cotta vases arranged in a spiral, the point of each being placed in the mouth of the one immediately beneath it: the upper part of the cupola is composed of small tubes of terra cotta. D'Agincourt, "Architecture," pl. lxxi., No. 54. Other examples are given from the circus of Caracalla and the church of S. Sebastian, Rome, ib. Nos. 49–51. Compare pl. xxiii., Nos, 3–6.

ment that prevailed at the court of the eastern Empire, illustrating on a large scale the coins and manuscripts where we have the same costume in miniature. Again, the capitals of the pillars, which are varied and beautiful, diverge widely from the classical type. Instead of the hollow curve of the Corinthian order with projecting acanthus leaves, we find convex or straight lines, and the foliage laid flat on the surface. In these respects and in the insertion of monograms, the Byzantine influence may be traced. The cupola here may owe its origin to the architecture of pagan Rome; but its preservation is probably due to the Christian symbolism of the Greeks, who saw in it the best representation of overarching heaven.[4] Another example may be found on the same coast a little further south: the cathedral of Ancona on the site of the temple of Venus ("Ante domum Veneris quam Dorica sustinet Ancon")[5] is enriched with Greek marbles for its mural decorations, and its plan may be briefly described as a cupola on a Greek cross. Under this head we may mention also the ivory carvings, superior in execution to the consular diptychs; of these the chair of Archbishop Maximian is the finest specimen known. The arabesques, in which lions, stags, and peacocks are figured, evince a lively appreciation of natural beauty. In front, and under the monogram of the saint,[6] our Saviour appears in the midst of the evangelists—the other subjects are taken from the history of Joseph, and from the life of Christ. Ravenna is a link, not only between Pagan and Christian times, but also between the east and west of our continent; as it derived much from Constantinople, so it imparted to Aix-la-Chapelle the design of its cathedral and the columns that adorned the palace of Charlemagne.

IV. *Gothic Style.*—I have reserved this for the last place,

[4] Wornum, "Analysis of Ornament," p. 67.

[5] Juvenal, Sat. iv., v. 40. A glance at the photographic view of Ancona shows the propriety of Juvenal's word *sustinet* (holds up), for the cathedral crowns a lofty hill on a promontory. It also shows the correctness of the Greek name Ἀγκών, an elbow, the port being in the form of an arm when bent. This is the device on the coins of Ancona, electrotypes of which can be obtained from Mr. Ready, of the British Museum. A comparison of the magnificent Arch of Trajan at this place (little known, but far superior in its proportions to that of Titus at Rome) with the churches at Ravenna furnishes a striking illustration of the change which had taken place in architectural style. The former has the horizontal entablature—the latter arches springing from columns.

[6] This monogram is difficult to decipher, but it is elucidated by the name in full, MAXIMIANVS, over the head of the archbishop, in the grand mosaic of S. Vitale, representing Justinian surrounded by courtiers and ecclesiastical dignitaries, and attended by his German body-guard.

because it prevailed after the Roman and Byzantine, but we must bear in mind that the remains of the Goths at Ravenna belong to a period antecedent to Justinian and the Exarchs. The northern invaders held Italy about sixty years, A.D. 476–539, from the reign of Odoacer to the siege and conquest of Ravenna by Belisarius. This interval is distinguished by the great name of Theodoric;[7] in his palace and Mausoleum we may still see how the barbarians modified the architecture which they inherited from the Romans. The façade of the former is adorned with columns resting on a *shelf* in a manner of which, as far as I know, the classical style presents no example. The roof of the latter consists of a single block of Istrian marble, 36 feet in diameter, and about 200 tons in weight. It therefore obviously resembles the cap-stones of the cromlechs or dolmens reared by the Celts and Teutons, which were probably the tombs of traditional heroes.[8] Just below this roof the wall is encircled by a band of square panels, in which an ornament is introduced that looks like a series of pincers, reminding us of the pointed arch—the most striking characteristic of the Gothic style. This pattern is repeated on a small scale in the armour supposed to have belonged to Odoacer, and now preserved in the local museum. Another remarkable feature is the dovetailing of the stones in the lower storey, which was doubtless intended to give greater strength to the building. The construction is just the same as has been used in modern times, for instance, in Eddystone Lighthouse.[9]

Those who wish to pursue this subject further will find it

[7] Theodoric is entitled to the respect of posterity, because he gave rest and prosperity to Italy, and taught the great lesson of religious toleration to contending sects.

[8] This structure deserves the special attention of the pre-historic archæologist, as it combines with the outline and general design of a classical building the most remarkable feature of the primæval monuments in the north of Europe. In the size of the covering stone it far surpasses them, for twenty tons are spoken of as a great weight for the cap-stone of a dolmen; see Mr. Lukis's pamphlet on "Rude Stone Monuments," p. 11, 1875. The original purpose of these dolmens or cromlechs is expressed by the German words Urgräber (ancient graves), Hunengräber (giants' graves): Worsaae, quoted by Mr. Lukis, ib. p. 24. Antiquaries have found great difficulty in explaining by what mechanical means these huge masses were raised and placed over the vertical supports; but in the case of Theodoric's tomb, the question can be easily answered. Round the enormous block, in the shape of an inverted saucer, which forms the roof, there are twelve perforated projections, and these doubtless were used as handles in lifting it to its place.

[9] Compare Smeaton's "Description of Eddystone Lighthouse," folio: pl. 10, plans of the rock .... showing the six foundation courses; pl. 11, plans of all the different courses from the top of the rock to the top of the balcony floor.

copiously treated by the authors quoted in the notes, of whose writings I have made free use in compiling this memoir. The following have also been consulted with advantage :—Murray's "Handbook for North Italy." Mr. Young's paper in the "Proceedings of the Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society for the Session 1873–1874." Mr. Parker, "On the Mosaics of Rome and Ravenna." Mr. Freeman's article, "The Goths at Ravenna," "British Quarterly Review," October, 1872. Lübke, "Grundriss der Kunstgeschichte," vol. i. pp. 234–236, 258, 262–264. Fabri, "Le sagre memorie di Ravenna Antica," Venice, 1664. Ciampini, "Vetera Monumenta in quibus præcipue Musiva opera illustrantur," Roma, 1747. Hope, "On Architecture." Gally Knight, "The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Italy ; "—See especially plates 6–11. W. Salzenberg, "Baudenkmäler von Constantinopel," with very fine coloured plates of the Mosaics in Santa Sophia. "An account of the Mausoleum of Theodoric at Ravenna," by Mr. Sydney Smirke, in "Archæologia," vol. xxiii., pp. 323–326. Muratori, "Rerum Italicarum Scriptores," vols. i. and ii.

I have not on the present occasion brought to light any monuments hitherto unedited, nor have I even proposed any new interpretation of those previously known—my task has been humbler, but, I hope, not altogether fruitless, if I have excited in others, favoured with more abundant leisure and better qualified by professional studies, a desire to investigate these relics of ancient art, which, like rocks in the ocean, stand out amidst a chaos of barbarism and desolation, and invite a liberal curiosity by their facility of access,[1] intrinsic merit, and wonderful preservation.

[1] Ravenna can be reached from Bologna in less than three hours ; the traveller proceeding from Turin or Milan to Brindisi need only make a détour of an hour and a half, leaving the main line at Castelbolognese. Many persons have been deterred from seeing Ravenna by fear of malaria ; but though both the air and the water have still the same bad reputation as in the days of Martial, I can testify, from personal experience, that this city may be visited with impunity even in the "Septembribus horis," so much dreaded by the English tourist.