



## Christian Andreas Doppler

(Salzburg, 1803 - Venice, 1853)

To think of philosophy is to inquire about death. This legacy of the Greeks may have been in my subconscious when I decided to embark. Now, the ship pointed its bow to the open sea. Surrounded by marble palaces it plied narrow canals heading north of the city, in search of San Michele, the island of the dead. Myriads of birds launched to fly in a frenzied turmoil, chasing the pace of life without fear of death. Thus, the inhabitants of this place, apprentices of the birds, ignore the green wetlands growing on the walls of this floating city, where to avoid disappearing is what reveals their fight against the shapeless sea god fragmenting it. In Venice the executioner lies at her feet. The ship was a spirited black horse with its head pointing to infinity. It rocked, encouraging the ultimate dream of abstracted passengers in an empty time. Only the sound of water that no longer clung to the front was audible, seething in an ebullient roar from behind. The Adriatic Sea stretched ahead towards San Michele, the last persistence before oblivion. The arm of the sea had turned into an interminable scenario devoid of paths and details. Against the horizon the pietra rosata walls gradually became clear extending broadly to the sides of the entrance, flanked by two towers separated by three semi-circular arches. Behind that edge time lost imagination.

*San Michele does not possess the sadness of cemeteries. Its inhabitants do not look dead, but strollers resting from existence. In the concavity offered by the horseshoe pantheon that led at the back into the chapel of the island, a hole opened on a plot of land between*

*two dilapidated and decrepit walls at right angles attracted my attention. It would seem detached from any human wandering. On one of them I inadvertently found the funeral plate (Photograph) of Christian Andreas Doppler's niche (Salzburg, 1803 - Venice, 1853). Inevitably I recalled the "Doppler effect". It was a mirage deposited into my consciousness which I perceived as an intimate vibration tied to the magic of the imperishable. His poor health led him to the field of physics and mathematics, proving the difference of hearing a sound while at the same time being the observer of a moving source. This finding presented in Prague in 1842 immortalized him through his persistence to publish it in at least fifty articles. To test his theory he used a locomotive where he placed a group of musicians and told them to play the same musical note while another group of musicians at the train station, recorded the musical note heard as the train approached and moved away before them. He died in Venice while trying to recover from a lung disease at 49 years of age.*

Between two rows of cypresses, their canopies almost hauled by the wind, I started back on that indefinite time in which the dead still seem alive. Christian Doppler was lying on clay suspected eternal and forgotten as death. Death is here a fortuitous disguise. The being has its true identity after it. Finally life is never held, it just happens.

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