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PREFACE

Bride of the Sea : **Venice**

Venice is a place of beauty, romance, history, intrigue and enigma. Teeming with contradictions, a city without terra firma and an empire without borders, a city unique in the world. Venice is not a place but a destination; it is not only a city, but an icon.

Venice is unlike any other place in the world. Created in chaos, uncertainty and fear, Venice became the spirit of courage, defiance and purpose. Venice was born in the ruins of the Roman Empire and grew and thrived in the medieval and the Renaissance times. Venice was founded on the principles of equality, reciprocity and friendship. These were rare social values during the Middle Ages. All the outside pressures emanating from the rest of feudal Europe were totally different from Venice, and only served to fuse Venetians into one people with a single determination to protect their shared home, even if it was of only marshland and lagoons.

Venice has been known as “la Dominante”, “la Serenissima”, “Queen of the Adriatic”, “City of Water”, “City of Bridges”, “City of Canals”, “City of Masks” and “Floating City”. In actuality, Venice was one of the strongest marine powers in the history of the world and the world’s oldest and longest lasting republic.

Freedom seeking refugees from the Italian mainland, who were escaping from Goth invaders, built Venice on channels and shoals of lagoons. Venice came into existence at noon on the 25th of March 421 CE. For nearly 1700 years, a mere two to three miles of shallow water protected Venice from invaders and from the rest of the Italian peninsula’s feudalism, imperialist wars and other territorial fights. This watery sanctuary gave

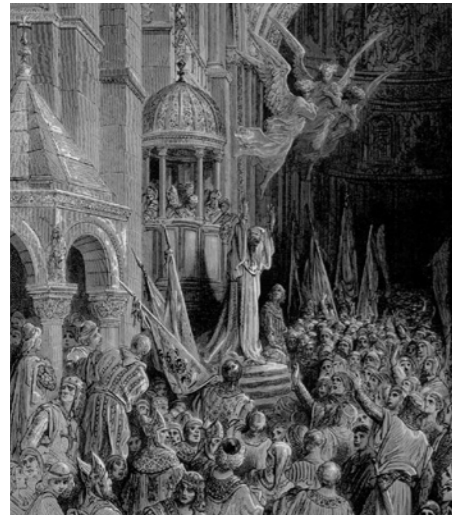
Venetians the space and the time to focus their efforts on the riches of Constantinople, the Levantine and the East.

Venice was shaped by the powers of the East and the West. It lived in the West but its gaze was always towards the East. With time, it became the mercantile empire of the Venetian Republic, the Queen of the Sea. Venetians were businessmen through and through. It was the most liberal and free state of the Middle Ages with its own unique social and political institutions. They were Venetians first and Christians afterwards. The Venetian government was the first to formally separate religion and politics in government. In this watery place, capitalism and ideology were not incompatible concepts. Venetians were not only capitalists, but also fiercely individualistic. Throughout the ages, all Venetian Doges swore to promote the “honor and profit” of Venice.

This city was built by architectural and technological innovations and filled with artistic treasures. As a result of the continuing process of enrichments stimulated by contacts with the East and the West, Venice was the perfect amalgamation of Byzantine, Gothic and Renaissance architecture. Since its founding, the Venetian lagoon has perpetually been a work in progress, a struggle between man and nature. Venetians have always been the world’s most experienced travelers and have always welcomed world travelers into their homes. It has become a melting pot for freedom and culture seekers. Despite the fall of the Republic of San Marco two hundred years ago, the vigorous and vibrant spirit of Venice is still very much alive. It has remained a city of honor, profit, history, and enchanting beauty.



Birthplace of Modern Capitalism



▲ The painting of the Venetian Doge, Enrico Dandolo preaching the Crusade.
 ▶ Eugene Delacroix, The Entry of the Crusaders into Constantinople, 1840



Venice was the world's earliest mercantile state. Modern economics tells us that a commercial market is heavily dependent on the free flow of capital. Simply, there is no trade when there is no money. However, after the fall of the Roman Empire, Europe became a world without money. For a short period before the 12th century, Venetians used Byzantine coins, (bezants, hyperpyrons), Muslim coins (Saraceni), and imperial coins from Verona.

The European monetary system changed dramatically with the political system after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The decline of the crusader kingdom in the Levant eventually led to Saladin conquering Jerusalem, which resulted in a total debasement of the Byzantine and Imperial Roman coins. Large fluctuations in the value of the coins destabilized the Venetian trade.

In 1192 A.D., the Venetian Doge, Enrico Dandolo, leader of the Fourth Crusade which sacked Constantinople in 1204 A.D., ordered a new Venetian currency.



▶ The first Venetian gold coin: the "Ducat".

Dandolo issued the first token coins since Roman times, the "Bianco" and the "Quartarolo", which contained no precious metal. He also issued the "Grosso", the first high value coin (98.5% silver content) minted in Europe in more than five centuries. The treasury of Venice followed up in 1284 CE with the minting of the first Venetian gold coin, the "Ducat", or "duke's (Doge's) coin". The Ducat contained 3.545 grams of 99.47% gold, as pure as the technology of the day allowed. The Venetian Ducat and the Florentine Florin became the international trading currencies of the time.

Venice was also one of the inventors of the modern banking system. Florentine banks started as money changers. Their main "banking" business was to do money change, the equivalent of the modern-day FX change. Venetian banks started as deposit banks. Venetians were traders. It was very cumbersome to carry and to keep exchange funds for every transaction. Therefore, sometime in the eleventh century, merchants at Rialto began to deposit their money with a money changer, and do their transactions on the money changer's ledger. All the transactions which had been done with actual coins were now executed on the money changer's ledger. The entire transaction was quick, convenient and safe.

With traders' money securely deposited, Venetian bankers

proceeded to offer credit to their best customers. From the thirteenth century, Venetian bankers began to loan money. The modern banking system was thus born. The money changers (bankers) conducted business seated on bancherius (bench). They were called "benchers", the "bankers" of today. This deposit banking system greatly increased the working capital in Venice, hence instigating the rapid growth of its economy.

Other Venetian financial innovations included a kind of modern-day Certificates of Deposits, checks, safe-deposit boxes and the "colleganza" (a form of partnership). The most profoundly influential innovation was the double-entry accounting system invented by a Franciscan mathematician, Fra Luca Pacioli, who lived in Venice between 1465 and 1475. With the double entry system, the modern Arabic numerals (the system originated in India, but Europeans learned it from the Arabs) came into common usage. Pacioli actually said he was merely describing a common practice among Venetian merchants; nevertheless, he is credited with the invention of this accounting system.

Freedom, free enterprise and the start of a modern financial banking system turned Venice into a maritime powerhouse and economic wonder. It is the birthplace of modern capitalism.



World's Most Ancient Republic



▲ Tiziano, Portrait of Doge Andrea Gritti, 1545

Venice has been a unique wonder of the world since its inception. It had no land, so it had no part in the feudal system which had played a major role in the development of most of the world's civilizations. It had almost no agriculture, so trading became the only way of survival, and money was its only barter. Its nobles came from merchant princes who cared more about profit than land. With no lands, knights or serfs, the Venetian people had a mostly egalitarian society which, at the time, was certainly unique.

The difficulty of life in the lagoon bounded all of its inhabitants with solidarity and self-discipline. Venice lived between two worlds: the land and the sea, the East and the West.

Geopolitically speaking, Venice never really belonged to the church or to the emperor, just as it did not belong solely either to the land or to the sea. Trading and seafaring were the only Venetian expertise. They truly believed they could buy and sell anything to anyone as long as there was a profit. In other words, they had an amoral trading mentality, a peculiar mix of secular and religious modes of thinking. As such, they became the first state where church and state became separate.

The head of Venice was called the Doge, which came from the Latin word "dux", (a military leader), which elsewhere later became the English word "Duke". The Doge was elected for life and sometimes was called the "Serenissimo Principe" (Most Serene Prince). The Doge office was institutionalized around 700 CE. He was considered the civic, military and ecclesiastical leader of Venice. The Doge was a leader, not a lord. His position was an honored servant of Venice. The Doge's power flowed from the office and not from the officeholder. His political power was carefully checked and balanced. None of the Doge's family could be part of his office or work for the



▲ One of the Doge's symbols was "the Corno Ducale", a special hat worn by every Doge of the Venetian Republic.

government during his lifelong term. The election process of the Doge was perfected and finalized after many iterations and modifications in the 13th century. He was essentially selected by a committee from The Great Council of Venice which was selected randomly through complex elective methods. The object was to minimize individual family influence as well as to avoid any possible factionalism from political maneuvering.

The families eligible for The Great Council of Venice were listed in the Golden Book. Members in this group were referred to as "patricians". Together with the Doge, they were responsible for the policies of Venice. The government bureaucrats came from the "cittadini" (citizens), who were recorded in the Silver Book. They were crucial to the day-to-day operation of the Venetian government.

After the Doge was elected, his life was constantly under strict surveillance and scrutiny. Aside from his immediate family, he could not meet with anyone without the presence of his six-man council, which was elected every year from each of the six sestieri of Venice. The council members and the Doge together formed the "Signoria". The Doge had to furnish his own palace. Upon his death, a special commission would be established to audit his actions and his family's wealth to make sure there

were no wrongdoings during his tenure. It was clear that the Doge's power came from the office, not from the office holders.

One of the Doge's symbols was "the Corno Ducale", a special hat worn by every Doge of the Venetian Republic. The first Corno Ducale was given by badessa Agostina Morosini from the convent of San Zazzaria to Doge Pietro Tradonico in 864 CE. It was a beautiful headdress, embroidered with gold thread and adorned with 24 pearls from the sea, a large ruby and a cross formed by 28 emeralds and 12 diamonds. It was nicknamed "La Zoia", Joy or Jewel.

The design of the Doge's hat came from the Phrygian cap worn by Persian soldiers and freed Roman slaves, the freemen. It became the symbol of freedom. The French woman waving the tricolored flag in Eugene Delacroix's French Revolution painting, "Liberty Leading the People", was wearing a similar hat which symbolized renewal, progress and liberty.

The Venetian Doge and Venetian social values were ahead of their time by almost one thousand years. In Venice, tradition was replaced by reason, merit displaced birth, liberty overcame serfdom, and all men were free. This may be the very reason the Venetian Republic and political system lasted over one thousand years and became the oldest republic in the world.

▼ The French woman waving the tricolored flag in Eugen Delacroix's French Revolution painting, "Liberty Leading the People", was wearing a similar Phrygian cap which symbolized renewal, progress and liberty.



Architectural Charm: Byzantine, Goth and Renaissance Styles



▲ Gothic arches or a loggia.

Venetian architecture and landscape have always been part of its charm and magic. Venetian buildings are some of the most illustrated and photographed buildings in the world. It was already a miracle to build anything on a swamp, let alone a beautiful and enchanting labyrinth of a dreamland. Visitors have always been fascinated by Venice's two hundred churches and the beauty of the canals reflecting the diversity of its architecture. During the Renaissance, there was an amazing flourish of new developments in European architecture. Based on humanism and civic pride, architecture changed from Medieval Romanesque construction to Gothic, then to a revival of classical style during the early Renaissance. Proportional space organization was based on logic, and the form and pattern of constructions came from classical geometry rather than from an individual's intuition. During the 16th to 17th century, High Renaissance architects started to experiment with solid and spatial

Ghetto

Today, the word "ghetto" refers to an urban slum area. In the old days, the ghetto was a foundry area in Venice and was the only place where Jews in the city were allowed to live during the 16th century.



relationships. Classical harmony gave way to more free and imaginative forms. Architects of the High Renaissance became much more sure of themselves and more daring.

The Renaissance period was a time of building in Venice. Its location and physical limitations mandated that architects from the mainland must adopt new approaches in Venice. Influenced by the East, Venetian taste was also different from the rest of the Italian peninsula. The result was a new and distinctive style, the Venetian Gothic. It is a confluence of the early Gothic styles from the Italian mainland, Byzantine styles from Constantinople, and Arabian influences from Moorish Spain. The best example of Venetian Gothic is the Doge's Palace. The Church of San Marco with its signature Byzantine dome was modeled after the Church of Holy Apostles in Constantinople. Venetian Gothic is much lighter and far more intricate than its mainland counterpart. Venetian architecture, for the obvious reasons of being on the lagoon, never allowed more weight or size than was absolutely necessary. For example, in mainland Gothic cathedrals, window traceries only had to support the stained glass. In Venice, they had to support the weight of the entire building. Another example is the "portego", a Venetian-developed hallway which evolved into a long passageway opened by Gothic arches or a loggia. It is a much more efficient way to utilize limited ground floor space while still giving grandeur.



▲ The Church of San Marco with its signature Byzantine dome.



One of the most famous and influential architects was Andrea Palladio. He was born in the 16th century in Padova, which at the time was part of the Venetian Republic. The son of Pietro, an ordinary miller, Palladio started his career as a stonemason. During one of his construction jobs, a Venetian humanist scholar, Gian Giorgio Trissino, took interest in his work and became his first patron. He taught Palladio to appreciate the arts, science, and classical literature, and helped him to study Roman architecture. Taking the name from the Greek goddess of wisdom, Pallas Athene, Trissino also gave Palladio the name by which he would become known, Andrea Palladio. Palladio's favorite ancient Roman architect was Marcus Vitruvius Pollio. He studied in detail Vitruvius' first century treatise on Roman architecture, "De Architectura". Vitruvius' sense of proper proportions clearly showed up in the spatial complexity of Palladio's later works.

After Trissino's death, the powerful Barbaros family introduced Palladio to Venetian elites, so later he was able to become the "Proto della Serenissima",

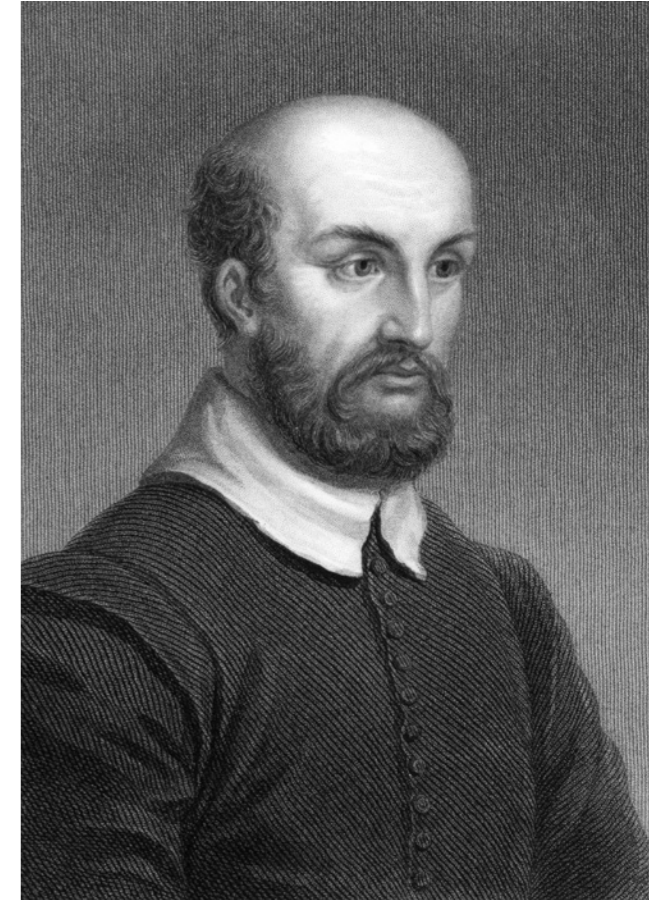
▼ The Doge's Palace - the Venetian Gothic architecture.



chief architect of Venice. Palladio's works were considered the quintessence of High Renaissance calm and harmony. Unlike most of the famous builders of the time, Palladio often used less expensive materials, such as bricks covered with stucco. He was an extremely free and flexible builder. His style is now known as Palladian style and his treatise, "Quattro Libri dell'Architettura", or "The Four Books of Architecture", has become a landmark publication in architecture. The books addressed nearly every aspect of architecture and construction, from materials, decorative styles, town and country house designs, bridges, basilicas, city planning to the reconstruction of ancient Roman temples. His books are still being used by architecture students today. "Palladio and His Legacy: A Transatlantic Journey", a special exhibition by the National Building Museum in Washington D.C., was dedicated to him in 2010 and 2011.

Palladio was praised by writers like Johann von Goethe, and diplomats and thinkers like Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson's home, Monticello and the United States Capitol building are all Palladian constructions. The United States Congress even named him the "Father of American Architecture" in Congressional Resolution 259 of December 6, 2010. This was the latest testament to how Palladio had risen from a simple stonemason to one of the greatest architects the world has ever known.

Thousands and thousands of buildings in the world are exponents of Palladianism, but Palladio's personal works are only present in Venice. Today, everywhere one looks in Venice, one can see Palladian influences. Thanks to Palladio, landscape and building were conceived as belonging to and dependent on each other for the first time in Western architecture. His work served to communicate an extraordinary aesthetic quality in accordance to his clients' aspirations; there is complete harmony between the structures and the surrounding culture. This is the exact essence of Venice, which is a treasure that belongs to all humanity. It is a miracle that cannot be reworked and a dream that cannot be re-dreamt. Venice is a unique precious gem of the world.



▲ One of the most famous and influential architect, Andrea Palladio.



Feast for the Senses

The Venetian Mask

Masks are as much a symbol of Venice as the gondolas although they have a much shorter history. Traditionally, Venetians were only allowed to wear masks during the Carnival season. Venetian masks have ornate designs with gold, silver and colorful baroque decorations. There are two major types of masks, the full-face mask called the "Bauta" and the half-mask which covers the eyes is called the "Columbina". The Bauta has a strong jaw line which tilted upward, making it very difficult for the wearer to eat or drink. It is usually accompanied by a tricorne and a red or black cape. The Bauta was actually worn by 18th century Venetians when anonymity was needed for political decisions. It was invented to guarantee a direct, free and secret vote in the Venetian democracy. However, as precaution against possible violence during ballots, the wearer of the Bauta was not allowed to carry weapons. The Columbina, also known as the Columbine or Columbino, originated in the early Italian theater of the *Commedia dell'arte* in the 16th century. It was designed to disguise but not cover the beautiful faces of the actresses.

Another recognizable mask is the "Medico della Peste", or the Plague Doctor. Its long beak was devised as a sanitary precautions for doctors while they were treating plague victims. Medieval people believed plague was caused by the foul air around the victims. The "Arlecchino", or harlequin mask, is a decorated half-mask often paired with a multicolored checkered costume. Other mask that make up the Venetian mask repertoire include the "Pulcinella", or Punch mask, the "Brighella", or mischievous servant mask, the "Scaramuccia", or clown mask, the "la Ruffiana", or old woman mask, and the "Volto", the modern white mask.

One of the most important genres of music is opera. It is believed that opera started in Mantua Italy toward the end of the 16th century. The first work was Jacopo Peri's already lost work, "Dafne", inspired by an elite circle of Florentine humanists, musicians, poets and intellectuals called the "Camerata dei Bardi". It was an attempt to revive the classical Greek plays. Members of this group believed that the "chorus" part of the Greek dramas was originally sung and conceived the opera as a means to restore this tradition. The word opera means "work" in Italian and defines a composition in which poetry, dance and music are combined. This theatrical spectacle was perfect for the opulent society at a time when Italian city-states were getting increasingly secular.

Opera did not originate in the lagoon, but like many inventions, it flourished in Venice. This serene republic offered a very nurturing environment for any new development in fine art and culture. It was also at a time when Venice had lost her traditional trading advantage to the East and was looking for new sources of revenue in foreign visitors and tourists. With her Carnevale and Festa della Sensa festivals, Venice was already drawing a large number of Italian and

▼ Opera house



▲ The Carnival of Venice is famous for its distinctive masks.



▲ It is common for people to attend the Carnival wearing elaborate costumes and masks.

foreign visitors. Carnevale is a time of masks, celebrations, extravagant entertainment and the blurring of class distinctions.

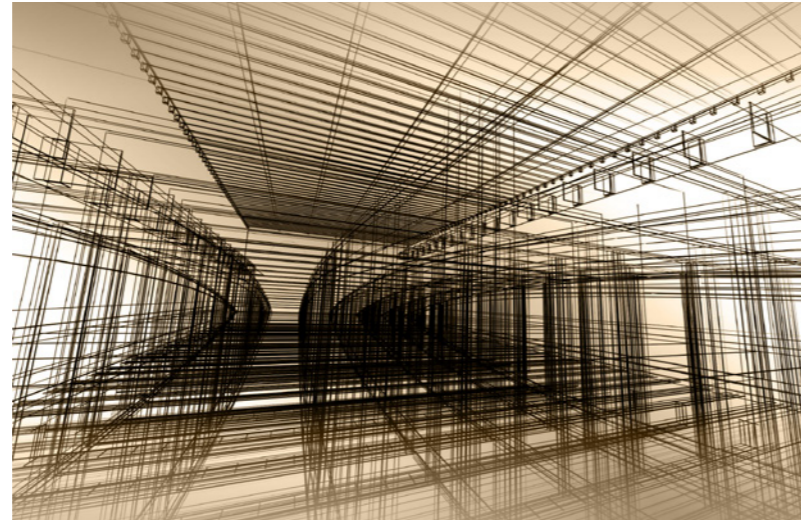
Quickly in Venice, opera was drawing large audiences from the annual carnival crowds. It became a socially diversified public art with a guaranteed demand generated by the Venetian calendar. Opera readily indulged the visitors in the latest fashion, music and drama. For tourists, the opera spectacles mirrored the magical city itself. Viewing this new opportunity, Venetian patrician families competed to invest in theaters and opera productions to increase both their status and their wealth. These were the reasons for the fast development and the breadth of Venetian opera. By the mid-17th century, Venetian audiences had seen more than 150 different productions in her nine

theaters. They ranged from the extremely aesthetic to the overly extravagant, from the classically poetic to the excessively vulgar. Nourished by these perfect conditions, opera was firmly planted in the lagoon.

Opera production, being an extremely portable art, quickly became a pan-Italian, as well as a widespread European phenomenon. Venetian opera was in every way larger than life. The cultured elite flocked from the rest of Europe to Venice as much for her music as for her more lavish masked balls. In the mid-17th century, Venice had a near monopoly on opera. During this period, Venice also built the best organs of the world. Venice had become a pleasure not only to the eyes, but also to the ears.



Living Relic



Linear perspective drawing ◀

Sfumato is a painting mode of Renaissance art ▶
invented by Leonardo da Vinci, softening and
blurring obvious boundaries in paintings.



During the Italian Renaissance, art in Europe reached its pinnacle. Many of the greatest artists in history, and an abundance of the world's cultural treasures came from that period. The Renaissance was triggered by humanism in Italian city-states, while the advancement in science gave people a different perspective on the physical world. The discovery of new technologies, new continents, and new astronomy triggered a flowering of new philosophy, literature and art. New styles of painting and sculpture emerged in the midst of changes in 14th century Italy, and reached their pinnacle in the early 16th century.

Renaissance art took its foundation from classical antiquity and transformed itself with the help of humanist philosophy. Florentine painters started to paint in three dimensional representations, and lifelike and naturalistic art appeared in the pulpits of cathedrals and baptisteries of northern Italy. Soon Renaissance artists were no longer satisfied with their linear perspective methods and naturalistic arts. The art work moved from the use of "linear perspective", made famous by Filippo Brunelleschi, Donatello and Leon Battista Alberti, to "foreshortening", a method to create an illusion of depth, to "sfumato", a term coined by Leonardo da Vinci to define a painting technique which blurred and



"The Last Judgment", the fresco by ▶
Michelangelo executed on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel.

Jacopo Bellini, Madonna and Child Blessing, 1455. ▶

softened the sharp outlines by the blending of one tone into another, to "chiaroscuro", a method of using strong contrast between light and darkness. Art changed dramatically during those few explosive centuries.

The High Renaissance period saw the development of two very different schools of art, Mannerism and the Venetian school. Mannerism artists, such as Jacopo da Pontormo, Rosso Fiorentino, Alessandro and Tintoretto, wanted to move beyond the harmonious ideals associated with Da Vinci, Raphael and the early Michelangelo. They wanted tension and instability in their compositions rather than balance and clarity. This is evident in Michelangelo's "Last Judgment" on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel.



The Venetian School of art was another distinctive and influential movement during the Renaissance. It favors color over line and harmony over contrast, a clear distinction from Mannerism. Jacopo Bellini was credited with the creation of this Venetian style of art. Bellini learned his basic techniques from Renaissance masters in Florence. When he later travelled to Bruges and was introduced to oil painting, the new medium forever changed Venetian art. Venetian artists put oil painting on canvas and transformed the rest of the art world.

Bellini's sons were also great artists. Gentile Bellini's "The Procession of the true Cross in Piazza San Marco" and "The Miracle of the True Cross at the San Lorenzo Bridge" showed the "Narrative style" of the Venetian School. These two 15th century paintings are filled with people, events and real buildings of the time rather than classical architectures or ideal forms. The focus of the Ducal Palace's paintings was on the institutions and the people of Venice. Unlike the rest of Europe at the time, Venetians were careful never to extol any single person too much. Today, these two paintings are in the Accademia Galleries in Venice.



► Gentile Bellini, The Procession of the True Cross in Piazza San Marco, 1496



▲ Medieval Mosaic Art

Two other artists, Giorgione and Titian, were also apprentices in Bellini's workshop. The Venetian style uses color to inspire and to create unity within paintings. Glowing colors, atmospheric haze, and uncluttered but interconnected figures all combine to form tranquil and majestic paintings. Venetian art is considered more sensual and poetic than the more intellectual Florentine and Roman traditions.

Renaissance art exerted great influence over later periods of art as well as literature and music. To some extent, it even affected forms of Government and our society as seen today. Renaissance

art sought to capture the experiences of the individual and the beauty and mystery of the natural world. It introduced us to the modern social values of today.

Venice has countless artworks from the Renaissance period and other great art from different periods of Venetian history. Venice not only has the largest collection of medieval mosaic art in the world, it also has the largest trove of oil paintings. Today, Venice is not only an active and vibrant city, it is equally a museum. In Venice, wherever one goes and wherever one looks, there is the beauty of art and history.



Literary Inspiration

In the second half of the 14th century, Venice produced her first famous female author, Christine de Pizan. De Pizan wrote mostly in the Middle French language and lived most of her life in Paris because her father was appointed by the court of Charles V of France. She married at the age of 15 and was widowed 10 years later. De Pizan had to write to support her two children and her mother. Her writings included ballads and romantic exploits. She also participated in literary debates of the time. She might have picked up the chivalric stories she wrote about in France, but her own individualized and humanistic approach was certainly influenced by her Venetian origin and experience.

Christine de Pizan established herself as a female intellectual and could be considered as one of the earliest feminists. Some of her writings were allegorical stories from a completely female perspective. She believed every woman should have skills in discourse as well as values in chastity and restraint. Her belief in female virtues still conformed to the common set of virtues of the Middle Ages, but like the ancient Greeks, she believed in the power of rhetoric to settle differences, and that women should assert themselves. She offered her advice to all women, including widows and even prostitutes. A Venetian woman who left her influence not only on 15th century English poetry, De Pizan also left her footprint on the male-dominated field of rhetorical discourse.



▲ Christine de Pizan

Early in the 14th century, before Christine de Pizan, there was Marco Polo, the world famous traveler and adventurer who wrote "The Book of the Marvels of the World," also known as "The Travels of Marco Polo". This caused widespread fascination in, and intrigue with Cathay among the Europeans. Contemporary with these two writers was Dante Alighieri, whose famous work, "Inferno", included Venice's Arsenal where the hellish pit of the robbers was to be found. Dante's Inferno of the Divine Comedy has become the model description for hell ever since. Another son and adventurer of Venice was Giacomo Casanova. He wrote "The Story of My Flight", or "The History of My Life", which gave detailed descriptions of the intemperance of life in 18th century Venice.

Venice, for some reason, has inspired writers of different nationalities throughout the ages. Intellectuals from every era have been unable to resist the spell of Venetian magic-- its beauty, refinement, history, and decadence, as well as its melancholy mood. A quiet solitary walk in St. Mark's Square on a misty night has sparked so many literary spirits.

In the 17th century, William Shakespeare wrote "Othello" and "The Merchant



▲ Poster for "Death in Venice" - a movie based on 20th century German novelist Thomas Mann's novella.

◀ Poster for a 1884 film "Othello" by William Shakespeare, starring Thomas. W. Keene.

of Venice". In the 18th century, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe visited Venice and wrote his "Italian Journey". Rousseau and Voltaire, both Enlightenment thinkers, thoroughly enjoyed Venice. One can see from Voltaire's most famous book, "Candide", that Venice was totally decadent. The book's Venetian protagonist, Count Pococurante, complained there were "too many women, too much art, music and literature" in Venice.

In the spring of 1818, Lord Byron rented the "piano nobile" of the Palazzo Mocenigo and became part of the magic of Venice. In the mid-1850's, John Ruskin's three-volume treatise, "The Stones of Venice", cast a long shadow on Venice and contributed to the great Gothic Revival in the 19th century.

Less than three decades after Byron, Robert Browning and his wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, visited Venice and stayed for the rest of their lives.

Henry James and Ernest Hemingway also joined the ranks of Venetian literary ghosts. Like Hemingway, 20th century German novelist Thomas Mann loved Venice's Lido Island and used it as the setting in his famous novella, "Death in Venice". His melancholy story overlooked the grey Adriatic Sea and symbolized the lazy Venetian summer during the Belle Epoque period. Cole Porter's music, together with a glass of Venetian spritz became the mood and spirit that so many of the Jazz Era's international jet-setters sought. D.H. Lawrence described Venice as the "holiday-place of all holiday-places" in his "Lady Chatterley's Lover".

Finally, in 20th century writer Italo Calvino's wonderful book, "Le Citta Invisibili" (Invisible Cities), each of the cities he depicted is, in reality, a description of a different aspect of this extravagant and theatrical beauty called Venice.



Legacy of Venetian Glass

Glass is one of the most commonly used construction and decorative materials in the world today. However, not too long ago, glass was very rare and precious, and was only used in the most luxurious circumstances. It is not clear when humans first discovered glass. However, during the Stone Age, people started to use obsidian, a type of volcanic glass, and tektites, glass from extraterrestrial or other origin, to produce sharp cutting tools such as knives and arrowheads, as well as jewelry and money.

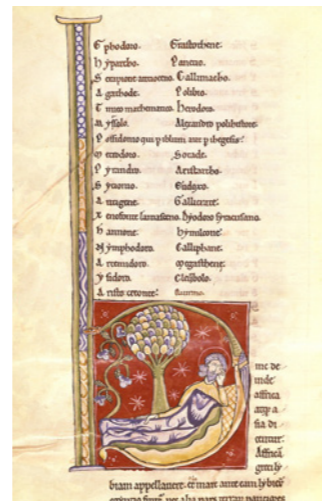
The 1st century Roman philosopher and writer, Pliny the Elder, suggested in his book, "Naturalis Historie", that Phoenician traders were the first to stumble upon glassmaking around 5,000 BCE at the site of the Belus River, known today as the Na'aman River. Archaeological evidence suggests that the first "true glass" was made in the coastal area of northern Syria, Mesopotamia or Ancient Egypt around 3500 BCE. The first glass vessels, on the other hand, were made about 1500 BCE in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Glass, in any case, has a long history of over 5,000 years.

During the late Bronze age, there was a rapid growth in glass making technology.

Arsenal

The modern word "arsenal" means a storage for weapons or munitions and has its origins in the Venetian word "arsenale", which means large shipyard or large wharf. Venetians had one of the strongest fleets in the 15th and 16th century. However, "arsenale" was borrowed from the Arabic word "dar as-sina'ah", which means workshop.

- ▼ Nowadays, glass is one of the most commonly used construction and decorative materials in the world.
- ▲ "Naturalis Historie" by Roman philosopher and writer, Pliny the Elder.



By the 15th century BCE, extensive glass production was carried out in Western Asia, Egypt and Crete. The Egyptians were among the first to use glass in their art and culture. Extensive glass manufacturing in Egypt started with the Eighteenth Dynasty of the New Kingdom at around 1550 BCE, the earliest examples being three vases bearing the name Pharaoh Thutmose III. Large quantities of colored glass ingots, ubiquitous beads and glass vessels were found in the Palestinian and Egyptian areas around the New Kingdom period. Then during the Late Bronze Age, technical progress, including glass manufacturing, suddenly came to a halt around the Mediterranean area. This sudden stop of development is theorized by some as caused by sudden climate change.

Development and glassmaking picked up again in the 9th century BCE when the first colorless glass was discovered. The first glassmaking manual existed as far back as 650 BCE in the cuneiform tablets in the library of the Assyrian King, Ashurbanipal. In Egypt, glassmaking was reintroduced around 300 BCE in Ptolemaic Alexandria.

After the invention of the blowpipe by Syrian craftsmen in the 1st century BCE, the glass blowing technique was discovered in the Babylonian region. Suddenly glass vessels became as cost competitive as pottery vessels and the fast growth of glass usage occurred. Although Roman glass production developed from Hellenistic technology, glass as a household material was



► Herculaneum, Neptune and Salacia, wall mosaic in House Number 22.



▲ ▼ Pharaoh Thutmose III and the vases bearing his name

as ubiquitous in Rome by the first century as plastic is to us today. By 100 CE, Romans began to use glass for architectural purposes. Glass showed up in the windows of the most luxurious villas in Pompeii and Herculaneum. Glass mosaic tiles also became popular. Alexandria was the glass making center in the eastern Roman world glass, and as one of the most important trade items beyond the Roman world, was found as far away as China.

Unfortunately, Roman glassmaking did not continue after the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century. The Islamic world picked up where Rome had left off and became a major glass producer. By the 8th century, the Persian chemist Geber had close to 50 glass-making recipes in his book, "The Book of the Hidden Pearl." European glassmaking did not really start again until the end of the Medieval period. However, on the island of Torcello near Venice, archaeologists have unearthed 7th to 8th century glass objects, bearing witness to the transition of glass making from the Roman world to Venice.





▼ Murano produced the largest proportion of Venetian glass.

Venice became a major glass manufacturing center in Europe in the 13th century. During the Fourth Crusade of 1204 CE, Venetian war galleys and the rest of the European Crusaders sacked Constantinople and took away countless riches from the Byzantine Empire. The Venetians took away more than gold and jewels; they took many of the best Byzantine craftsmen, including glass makers who had acquired the latest techniques from the Islamic world. When Constantinople finally fell to the Ottoman conquerors in 1453, more glass makers departed for Venice. Venetian glass was unique because local Venetian quartz pebbles were almost pure silica and Venice had a virtual monopoly on the importation of the Levant's soda ash, another critical glass making raw material. During the 13th century, Venetian craftsmen perfected sheet glass making, a technique invented in Germany. The Crown glass process was used until the mid-19th century. Murano also developed many other glass making techniques which enabled this Venetian island to become a center of the lucrative export trade in dinnerware and mirrors.

In 1291, all Venetian glass making foundries were ordered to move to Murano due to the fire hazard glass production posed to the city's mostly wooden buildings. "Cristallo", colorless glass, or Venetian crystal, was invented by Angelo Barovier on the island, and Murano produced the largest proportion of Venetian glass. Murano's glassmakers became Venice's most prominent citizens. They were allowed to wear swords, had immunity from some prosecutions by the state and were allowed to marry into the most affluent

families. However, to guard Venice's glass making secrets, they were not allowed to leave the Republic. Anyone who left was hunted down by state assassins.

Despite the Venetian authorities' seemingly water tight control, glass making technology eventually spread throughout Europe. Facing difficult competition from Bohemia, the Anglo-Saxon world and France, around 1700 Murano glassmakers developed a new type of chandelier called "ciocca", translated as a "bouquet of flowers". This design was inspired by an original architectural concept: the internal space is left almost empty and all the polychrome floral decorations are spread around the central support, distanced by the length of the arms, which enabled the enormous chandeliers to look and feel extremely light, but still with a triumphant posture. This design immediately became immensely popular with European royalty and high society who wanted it for their large palaces and theaters. One of the most famous producers was Giuseppe Briati who made a chandelier for the noble Venetian Rezzonico

► Murano glassmakers developed a new type of chandelier called "ciocca", translated as a "bouquet of flowers".



▼ Chandelier at Chatsworth House

family. The renowned Rezzonico Chandelier is still hung in their palace, "Ca` Rezzonico", on the Grand Canal. It is now the paradigm of Murano chandeliers and one of the best examples of Venice's ability to face challenges and adapt to the world.

After 800 years, Venetian glass is still pouring out of Murano furnaces every day to meet the demands from Europe and the rest of the world. Like everything else in Venice, Venetian glass carries with it beauty, history, spirit and vitality. It also has a touch of archaic tradition, but like all of the living traditions, it is changing and adapting to the world of the 21st century, yet still with a little romantic caress of "antica".



Venetian Patron Saint – the Winged Lion



The Winged Lion is the symbol of Venice.

The Venetian Gondola

Everything in Venice has some symbolism attached to it. The most famous Venetian icon, the gondola, is no exception. Although the origin of the word “gondola” has never been determined, the specifications of its color (black), its size (35’6” long, 4’6” wide, with one side 10 inches longer than the other) and its required shape have been in existence since the 16th century. The “S” shaped metal prow illustrates the “S” curve of the Grand Canal. The six prongs in the back represent Venice’s six sestier, or districts, and the prong that faces the back symbolizes Giudecca, an important large island that is part of the Dorsoduro sestiere. The shape on the top of the six prongs depicts the Venetian Doge’s hat, the “corno ducale”, and the arch between the doge’s symbol and the six prongs symbolizes the Rialto bridge, the center of commerce in Venice since ancient times.

Every city in Italy has many stories. In Venice, they are more than stories; they are legends. Let us begin with the symbol of Venice, the Winged Lion. Today, the Lion is an iconic symbol of the West, in a similar way that the Dragon symbolizes the East. So it was in the medieval times in Venice. While Venice is situated in the West, it has deep relations with the East. On the “Molo”, or the front door of Venice, are two massive granite columns which were brought back from the East in the 12th century. Each column is topped by a Patron Saint of Venice from two different periods of the city’s history. Facing the Molo to the left is St. Theodore from Asia Minor, also known as St. Theodore of Amasea, or St. Theodore of Tiro. The word Tiro literally means soldier or new recruit. St. Theodore was the early Patron Saint of Venice when it was fighting for its own survival, and when trade and commerce brought Venice closer to the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire) than to the Holy See in Rome.

St. Theodore was a 3rd century Roman soldier who was not willing to worship pagan deities and was therefore condemned to death. The statue of St. Theodore on top of the column of Venice has an alligator/dragon underfoot. According

to legend, St. Theodore armed himself with the sign of the cross and slew a dragon, symbolizing his power to vanquish evil. Venice also holds the relic of another famous dragon-slaying saint, St. George, in Saint Mark’s Basilica. At the time, St. George was actually the Patron Saint of Venice’s arch enemies, Genova and Milan. These legends and facts demonstrate the importance of the Dragon in Venetian history. There was another interesting story regarding a mysterious dragon living in the depths of the Venetian lagoon. It feared no one except the gondoliers as the gondolier’s oar posed a threat. Gondo/Gende/Gente means “warrior” in German dialect. As legend has it, the mists which envelop the lagoon are precipitations of the dragon’s breath.

The Winged Lion on top of the second granite column on the Molo is the symbol of another Patron Saint of Venice, St. Mark,

one of the four Evangelists of the Christian faith. Venice needed St. Mark for its own national identity and to lend the republic legitimacy to the rest of Europe. The story of how St. Mark’s relics came to Venice had developed into an entire genre of literature in the Middle Ages. To Christians, the Furta Sacra (holy theft) was not a robbery but a rescue. In 829 CE, two Venetian merchants were conducting illegal business in Alexandria, Egypt. In fact, all business done with Muslims at the time was illegal because of a decree from Emperor Leo the Fifth. These two Venetian merchants, with the help of a Greek priest and a monk from the church of San Marco in Alexandria, stole St. Mark’s relics and brought them back to Venice. They were able to fool the Muslim guards by hiding the relics in a large basket filled with raw pork.



► It was said that a mysterious dragon lived in the depths of the Venetian lagoon. It feared no one except the gondoliers as the gondolier’s oar posed a threat.



When the relics of St. Mark arrived in Venice, a grand ceremony took place. The first church of San Marco was built attached to the Doge Palace exactly as it still is today. The Church of San Marco was probably the first stone church built in Venice. It was modeled after the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople. This first church of San Marco was unfortunately destroyed by fire in 976 CE and the relics of St. Mark were also lost. However, when this new church was rebuilt, St. Mark's body was miraculously rediscovered in a pillar. The relics have been protecting the church ever since.

St. Mark became the special patron of the Doge and, by extension, the Republic of Venice. The Winged Lion became the coat of arms on the flag of Venice. In order to complete the story, Venetians claimed that when St. Mark was traveling between Rome and Aquileia, he docked at Rialto to rest and an angel



▼ The Winged Lion on top of the second granite column on the Molo is the symbol of another Patron Saint of Venice, St. Mark.



came down from heaven and proclaimed : "Pax tibi, Marce, evangelista meus. Hic requiescat corpus tuum." (Peace be with you, Mark, my evangelist. Here shall your body rest.)

The Doge Enrico Dandolo waving the flag of the Winged Lion on the shore of Constantinople after sacking it during the 1204 Fourth Crusade was one of the most enduring pictures of the Middle Ages. From the canvas of Tintoretto to the pages of Edward

Gibbon's "The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", the Winged Lion has continued to be the symbol of Venice. Today, every September, "The Golden Lion Award" is awarded to the best film of the Venetian Film Festival.

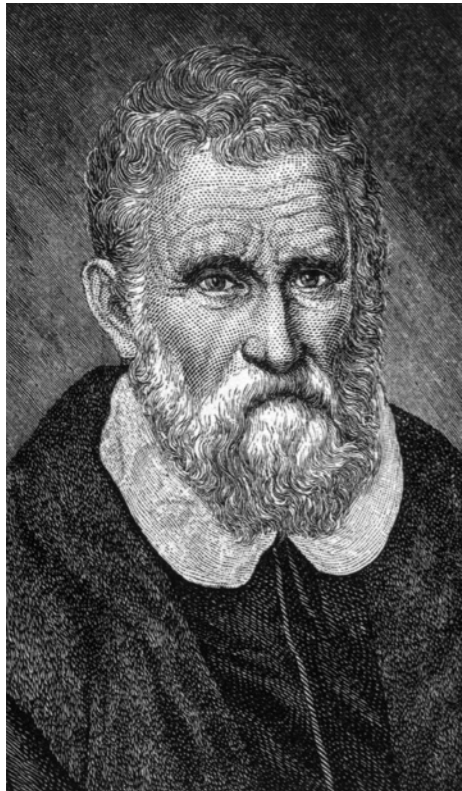


◀ The painting of the Doge Enrico Dandolo waving the flag of the Winged Lion on the shore of Constantinople after sacking it during the 1204 Fourth Crusade.

▼ Gondo/Gende/Gente means "warrior" in German dialect.



Marco Polo Explores the East



▼ Portrait of Marco Polo

Marco Polo probably is the most well-known Venetian in the world as well as the most famous European who has ever travelled the Silk Road. He also single-handedly raised 14th century Europeans' interest in Cathay. However, he certainly was not the first European to make the long and brutal journey to the East.

The earliest recorded person from the West who travelled on the silk road to China was a self-proclaimed ambassador from "Dagin" in 166 CE. "Dagin" is the ancient Chinese name for the Roman Empire. However, since this ambassador's gifts to the Han Emperor were typical southeastern Asian products such as ivories and rhinoceros horns, Chinese historians believed he was a fraud who just wanted to gain trade permits from the Han border guards.

The next several recorded travelers from the West to the East were envoys from Pope Innocent IV to the Great Khan of the Mongol Empire. These envoys were dispatched after the Mongols defeated the combined European forces of Poles, Czechs, Germans and Crusader Knights in the 1241 Battle of Legnica. Their mission was to negotiate a stop to the Mongol invasion of Europe and to seek a Mongol alliance against the Islamic threat in the Holy Land. Four separate emissaries were sent: three in 1245 and one in 1253. The first three were a Franciscan monk, Giovanni da Pian del Carpine from Magione, Italy; a Dominican friar, Ascelin of Lombardy; and a French Dominican missionary, Andre de Longjumeau. The 4th envoy was a Flemish Franciscan missionary, William of Rubruck, who was also ordered by King Louis IX of France to convert the Tartars to Christianity. William returned to the Crusader State of Tripoli on August 15, 1255. He presented a clear and precise report of 40

chapters to Louis IX. It was a masterpiece of medieval geographical literature. However, this book was not published until 1839, so it was not really known to the public at the time. Marco Polo's book, "Book of the Marvels of the World" (or "The Travels of Marco Polo"), on the other hand, was published in 1300 CE and became an instant best seller in Europe.

Marco Polo was from a Venetian merchant family who did business in Constantinople. Another source claimed the Polos were of noble origin from the coast of Dalmatia. In 1261, Venice's arch enemy, the Genoese, helped Michael VIII Palaiologos conquer Constantinople and burned down the Venetian quarter in the city. Niccolo Polo, the father of Marco Polo, and his brother, Maffeo, escaped to Crimea where they formerly did business. On account of a local civil war, they decided to detour to the east. In Bukhara, a city in modern Uzbekistan, the Polos met the ambassador from the Great Khan. This Mongol ambassador persuaded the Polos to journey eastward with him and the Polos agreed. In 1266, they travelled to Da Du, present-day Beijing, capital of the Yuan dynasty set up by the Mongols. They met the Great Kublai Khan who asked the Polos to bring his personal letter back to Pope Clement IV, asking for 100 learned Christians acquainted with the Seven Arts and oil from the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The Polos agreed and made their way home, armed with the Khan's golden travel

tablet inscribed with this decree in both Chinese and Mongolian: "By the strength of the eternal Heaven, holy be the Khan's name. Let him that pay him not reverence be killed". This homeward journey took more than three years. When they arrived in the Levant, Pope Clement IV had already died in 1268 and there was a long "sede vacate" before the successful election of the next pope. On the suggestion of Theobald Visconti, then the papal legate to the realm of Egypt, they went home first and they arrived in Venice in 1269.

In 1271, the 17-year-old Marco Polo set out with his father Niccolo and his uncle Maffeo on a journey back to the Far East, bringing with them valuable gifts from the new pope, Gregory X. They first sailed to Acre and rode camels to the Persian port of Hormuz. Originally the Polos wanted to sail to China; when they realized that the boats were not really seaworthy, they decided to travel overland. During the eastward trip, they climbed across "the highest place in the world, the Pamir Mountains", introducing for the first time this name to the West. They also went around the Taklamakan desert and crossed the Gobi desert. The Polos entered China through the city of Dunhuang, the ending point of the Silk Road and home of the famous Mogao Caves. In May 1275, the Polos finally arrived in Kublai Khan's old capital and summer residence, Shang-tu, and presented him with the





▼ The route map of Marco Polo's journey to the East.

sacred oil from Jerusalem and papal letters. Marco Polo was already 21 years old.

Marco Polo knew four languages. His family had a great deal of knowledge of two worlds and the east-west travel route. These were all useful to Kublai Khan, who appointed Marco to the Privy Council and made him the tax inspector of Yangzhou, a city on the Grand Canal of China, for three years. Marco traveled extensively throughout the Yuan kingdom, as far south as Burma and the Bay of Bengal. He fell in love with the city of Hangzhou which had many canals like his home, Venice. Marco Polo was in the Yuan court for 17 years when the Polos started to worry about the health of the aging Kublai Khan. They were afraid that he might die soon and they would not be able to go home with the enormous wealth that they had accumulated in China. Finally, they had Kublai Khan's consent to escort the wedding party of a Mongol princess to Persia.

It took the Polos two years to sail from the South China Sea to Sumatra and the Indian Ocean, and then crossing the Arabian Sea to Hormuz. In Persia, they learned of the death of Kublai Khan, but they were still protected by Kublai Khan's golden travel tablet. From Hormuz, they continued their sea journey home via Constantinople and reached home in the winter of 1295.



Three years after he returned home, Marco Polo joined the Venetian battle against their enemy, Genoa. He was captured and spent a year in a Genoese prison where he and his cellmate, Rustichello of Pisa, together wrote the famous book of his travels. This book became one of the most popular books in Medieval Europe. However, it was nicknamed "Il Milione", The Million Lies, and Marco Polo was known as Marco Milione because no one believed his tales. Many subsequent Chinese historians have also dismissed Marco Polo's book as fiction because the Polo's name never appeared in the Annals of the Empire (Yuan Shih) where visits of many less important foreigners were recorded. Marco Polo never learned Chinese. He never mentioned chopsticks in his book, nor did he mention the Great Wall of China. Nevertheless, his book was read a century later by explorers such as Christopher Columbus and Henry the

Navigator with much interest.

Was Marco Polo ever in Cathay? No one will know for sure, but his stories about "stones that burn like logs", "stones called jasper and chalcedony", clothing made from a "fabric which would not burn", people drinking "mare milk", and "paper currency" are still being read. He was not a historian, but he wrote about the Great Khan's court life, the rise of the Mongol empire and life on the Steppe. Some of his accounts are still used by modern historians to further their understanding of the historical events and local cultures of the time. His book is still one of the greatest travel books ever written. In Marco Polo's own words: "No other man, Christian or Saracen, Mongol or Pagan, has explored so much of the world as Messer Marco, son of Messer Niccolo Polo, great and noble citizen of the city of Venice."



► Illustrations from "The Travels of Marco Polo"



Italy's Renowned Casanova



◀ Portrait of Giovanni Giacomo Casanova

Casanova, the infamous 18th century Venetian womanizer and adventurer, epitomized Venice as the "Pleasure Capital" of the world. Venice, a must stop on the European "Grand Tour" of the nobility and landed gentry, was not only a haunt for pleasure but also a destination in the quest for the cultural legacy of classical antiquity and the Renaissance. Any eighteenth century man who could not speak with knowledge of Venice, Rome, or Paris was simply no gentleman. There was even a special name for the traveling Englishman in Italy. They were called "the milordi".

Casanova earned his law degree from the University of Padua where he also learned to gamble, a pastime which became a lifelong passion. Ironically, Casanova was expected to become an ecclesiastical lawyer and he even studied moral philosophy!

When he was a teenager, Casanova lived in the Palazzo Malipiero, a grandiose palazzo where he learned about fine food and fine wines as well as how to conduct himself in high society. His carnal knowledge of the opposite sex was initiated by two sisters, Nanetta and Maria Savorgnan, when they were 14 and 16 years of age, respectively. Casanova claimed his lifetime pursuit of women was rooted in this early encounter.

Quarantine

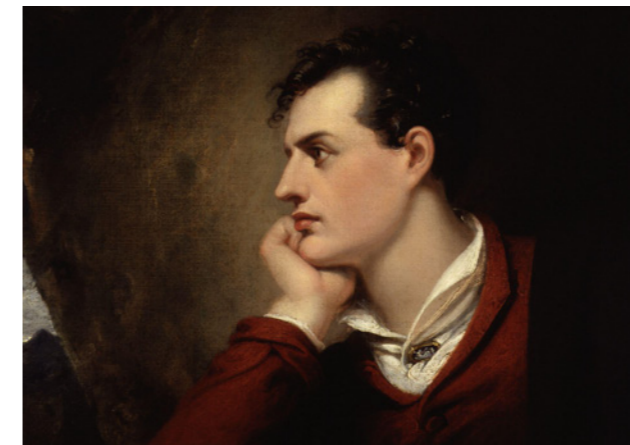
"Quarantine" is an enforced isolation employed to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. It came from the Italian word "quaranta", which literally means forty days, the period ships were required to wait at anchor outside of Venice before the crews were allowed ashore during the Black Plague of the 14th century.



Casanova worked for a powerful cardinal in Rome. He took the blame for the cardinal's personal love affairs. He also composed love letters for yet another cardinal. These experiences might be the causes of his immoral lifestyle later on.

Casanova traveled across Europe as a violinist and a gambler and he became a Mason, which allowed him to meet some of the most powerful and interesting people of the time, such as Madame de Pompadour, Rousseau and Benjamin Franklin. He even had a career as a magician and an alchemist. In Venice and every city he visited, he had liaisons with innumerable ladies as well as many encounters with the law. He simultaneously moved from one sexual conquest to another and from coffeehouses to salons, talking about love and romance and ideas of the Enlightenment. Casanova once proclaimed, "Cultivating whatever gave pleasure to my senses was always the chief business of my life." In the eighteenth century, Venice was a city of opulence and decadence. It was the Las Vegas of its day.

In Venice, Casanova was accused of and arrested for crimes against religion. He was put into the notorious Venetian prison



▼ Portrait of Lord Byron



▼ Bridge of Sighs

in the Doge's Palace, "The Leads", where he became the only prisoner to ever escape. He later made amends with the Venetian state and became an official spy for the Venetian Inquisitors of State. Giacomo Casanova, also known as Chevalier de Seingalt, established his infamous reputation as one of the "greatest lovers" of the 18th century. His life was full of excitement which included duels, elaborate cons, espionage and diplomatic missions. Casanova ended up as a librarian in Bohemia's Chateau of Dux where he wrote his autobiography, "Histoire de Ma Vie" (History of my Life), which became the most authentic source of European social life of the 18th century.

In the nineteenth century, another world famous womanizer, Lord Byron, chose Venice as the place for his self-imposed exile. Byron was one of the greatest English poets in the Romantic movement. He amused himself as did Casanova in the Venetian salons, coffeehouses and opera houses. His escapades, especially with married women, might have even exceeded Casanova's. It was Lord Byron who coined the name "the Bridge of Sighs", but he had only seen it from the outside while Casanova had walked on the inside. Lord Byron and Casanova together helped to give Venice its infamous reputation as the land of Don Juan.



Films in Venice: Summertime



Poster for "Summertime" ◀

Le persiane

The term "Venetian Blinds", contrary to its name, is not from Venice. It may have originated in Persia, since the Italian term is "le persiane" and the French, "les persiennes". The word may even have its origin in ancient Egypt where similar things made out of Nile reeds had been found. The Chinese also used strips of bamboo to block out light long before the blinds were used in Venice

"Summertime", also known as "Summer Madness", is an award-winning bittersweet romantic motion picture directed by David Lean in 1955. The movie, set in Venice, is about a middle aged unmarried American woman, Jane Hudson (played by Katharine Hepburn) and a dashing Venetian antique shop owner, Renato de Rossi (played by Rossano Brazzi). Jane falls in love with Renato over the purchase of a red glass goblet. The red antique glass goblet represents Jane's own hidden passion, which can only be appreciated by a connoisseur



▼ Piazza San Marco



▼ In "Summertime", Jane falls in love with Renato over the purchase of a red glass goblet.

like Renato. It also symbolizes the Holy Grail which Jane has been seeking all her life.

Attending a music concert in Piazza San Marco, Jane chooses to wear a simple gardenia instead of an orchid, hinting that her love affair in Venice is going to be sweet but short-lived. Jane falls passionately in love with Renato even after she finds out that he is married and already a father. However, Jane is unwilling to stay in this relationship which she believes is destined to fail. She decides to leave both Renato and Venice. In a dramatic final scene, Renato runs after Jane's departing train as it pulls out of the station. He wants to give Jane a gift of a gardenia but to no avail. Like the sweet tropical gardenia, Jane realizes that she has no place in Venice.



Venice, Pax Tibi

Venice: The Eternal City of Water

Venice, a unique romantic water world without cars, has been mesmerizing the world for more than one thousand years. It is a city of reason, freedom and profit and yet it is also a place of culture and traditions. It attracts lovers, intellectuals and fun seekers alike. It leads the world with its social values and democratic political system by more than one millennium. Venice is also a place of art, music and museums as well as extravagance and decadence. Its narrow alleys and canals wind through beautiful and sumptuous old palaces and jewel-like basilicas and churches. It is a city of opposites and extremes but strangely in perfect harmony. Venice is still the most enchanting vacation destiny of the world.

Great and noble citizens of Venice and visitors, "Fun et beatitudo, cum sit tibi" (Fun and happiness be with you). Last but not least, "Pax tibi, San Marco." (Peace be with you, St. Mark.)



Palazzo Venart

HOTEL VENEZIA

Palazzo Bacchini delle Palme-Palazzo Venart Hotel

Palazzo Bacchini delle Palme (PBdP) is in Santa Croce, Venice, the same district where the famous Chiesa di San Stae is located. The garden in front of PBdP commands a view of Canal Grande in the city. Two Gothic-style wings of PBdP are respectively Palazzo Priuli-Bon, an exhibition venue today, and Duodo palazzo, a private residence. Not far away there's also the Palazzo Mocenigo, from the sixteenth century, now owned by the Municipality of Venice. The palazzo was designed as the Museum and Study Centre of the History of Fabrics and Costumes. During La Biennale di Venezia 2013, PBdP was transformed into an exhibition center featuring United Cultural Nations, a surrealist work created by Chinese artist Mi Qiu.

In 2016, LDC Hotels & Resorts is going to complete its remodeling of PBdP, which was renamed as Palazzo Venart Hotel, and the remodeling included complete restoration of the frescos inside the building. The frescos are very similar to those in the renowned Palazzo Grassi created by Italian painter and sculptor Michelangelo Morlaiter. On the cover of this booklet, Venetians merrily partying are vividly depicted by the figures on the balcony in the fresco by a valuable marble stairway at the hotel.

The Palazzo Venart Hotel keeps a record of the changing history of the Venetian palace over the centuries. Its corridor ceilings, wall decors, and highly valuable murals are expected to let hotel guests enjoy a brand new experience of an enchanting ancient capital. The garden of Palazzo Venart Hotel keeps part of the early buildings of the premises, and features some relic sculptures and art decors from Altino, making the hotel one of a kind in Venice with a strong ambience of history.



Palazzo Venart

HOTEL VENEZIA



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