

Venice

-Political rise and fall -

According to a legend Venice was founded on midday the 25th March 421 AD. It is certain that the last doge had to resign on 12th May 1797.

The historical arc of the city spans from its origin, in which way the town expanded her sphere of influence move by move and then lost its political importance. Nevertheless, the lagoon city remained one of the most popular tourist destinations in Europe.

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1 Settlement at the lagoon

1.1 Resort at the water



ATTILA – King of the Huns



Crown of the Langobards



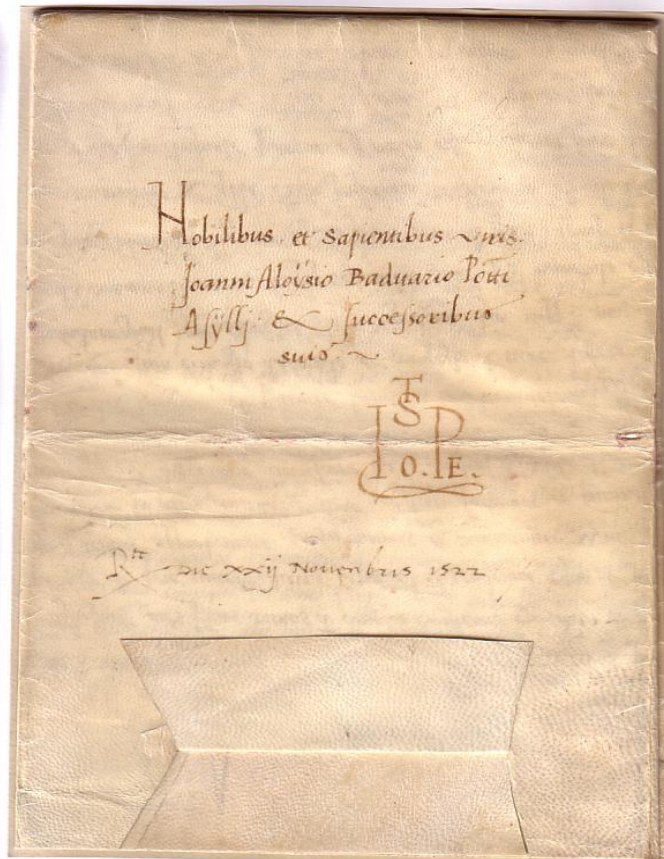
The 118 islands in the lagoon were chosen by the

Veneti in 452 AD for the first time as a shelter from the Huns. Another wave of refugees reached the islands in 568 AD to escape from the oppression of the **Lombards**. These refugees settled also in the lagoon.



1.2 First sovereigns

Venice belonged to the Byzantine Empire in 552, the state, which had developed from the eastern part of the Roman Empire. In 697 the Venetians chose their first "Duke" – named *Doge* (in Latin = *dux*; in dialect = *duce*). As Byzantine civil servants the Doges were almost absolute rulers due to the union of military and judicial powers they hold.



(1522 – Doge-letter on parchment from Antonio Grimani – 76th Doge from 1521 to 1523 - to the administrator of the town of Asolo)



60th Doge A. Cotarini
from 1369 to 1382

(the Doges-palace
in the background)



80th Doge M. Trevisani
1553 to 1554

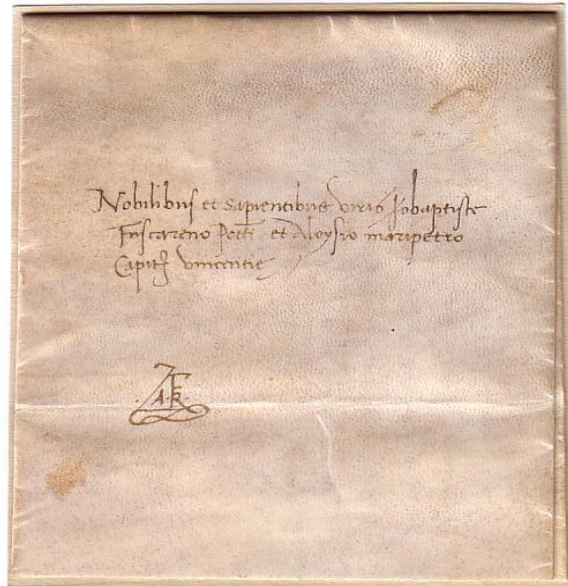
(with the typical Doges-cap -
a cap of a duke with metal
ring and a stiffened Phrygian
cap of gold brocade above)

1.2 First sovereigns

The government headquarters of the Doges became the "*Doge's-Palace*", whose construction began in 814. After having moved the residence from Malamocco to Rivoalto, the Doge *Agnello Partecipatio* let build the first wooden *Doge's-castle*.



The Gothic-Venetian palace we know today dates from the mid-14th century. Its construction began in 1301.
(proof of the colour-edge, 2nd printing)



(1493 – Doge's-letter from Agostino Barbarigo – 74th Doge from 1486 to 1501 to dignitaries in Vicenza; all Doge's-letters were subject to censorship of the Senate.)

Trying to let become the **Doge's reign hereditary** in 1032, the Doge had to learn his first limitation of power. They were from then on only chairmen and executive officers of the "*Signora*" = Council of senators.



The facade facing the water was built in the 14th, the one facing the Piazzetta in the 15th Century.



Senator about 1550

In 1310 in addition the **Council of the Ten** (senators) was established as the highest judicial authority. "*Dieci Inquisitori dello Stato*"

1.3 Emblems of the “Serenissima”

The striking symbol of the city is the **gondola** which glides through the 177 channels since over 1,000 years. Of the 10,000 gondolas in the 16th Century about 450 are still in use.



In 1562 the Council set appearance and texture of the gondolas.
 - black varnish,
 - length = 10.15 m,
 - width = 1.40 m



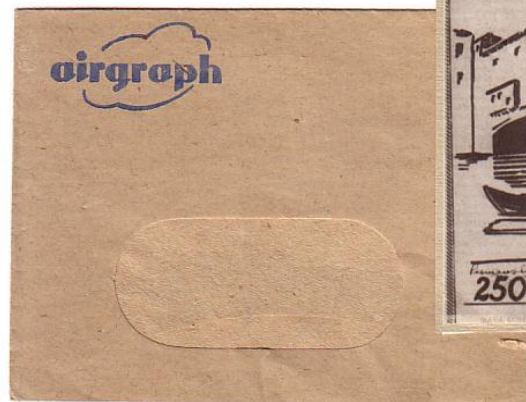
In the back of the asymmetrically shaped boat stands the **gondolier** ensuring its balance.



Forcola and Ferro, a metal beak with six tines, serves with its 20 kilo weight for the balance and a better targeting of the boat.



In addition, there are existing a variety of traditional boats with oars, moved forward in a standing position.



1.1 Emblems of the "Serenissima"

Until 827 the Venetians worshiped the holy Theodore as their patron saint.



He was one of those "holy men" who were representatives of Christian chivalry in the Christian West. Marble statue and granite pedestal are from the Far East.



VENICE - S. MARCO MOSAICS

In 828 two Venetian merchants kidnapped the bones of St. Mark from a monastery in Alexandria and brought them to Venice. The columns of the two saints stand on the Piazzetta.



The winged lion, emblem of St. mark, became a symbol, Mark himself the patron saint of the city.
(Official letters Venice - 1758 and 1770)

2 On its way to great power

2.1 Ascent to a guiding naval power

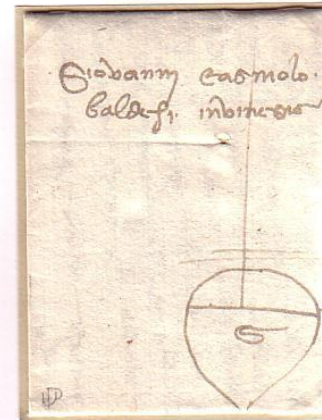


After Venice being freed from the Langobard-yoke by the coronation of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor on 25th Dec. 800,

the Veneti developed an economic hegemony in the Levant and the naval supremacy in the eastern Mediterranean.



Merchants met in the courtyard of the Doge's Palace, in order to make trades.



(1454 – letter with Merchant guild-symbol)



(1589 – packet-letter rated "4 collis" with merchant guild symbol from Venice to Modena)



Currency for the international trade was the **Gold-Histamon**, coined by Venice since 1284.

2.1 Ascent to a guiding naval power

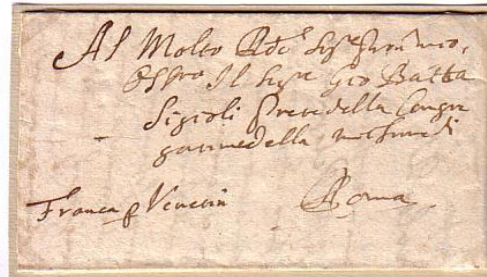
Trade would have been unthinkable without communications. One trade-route led e.g. from Venice to Hamburg.




In 1490 Maximilian I agreed to postal routes. From 1534-1627 four Taxis-postmasters resided in Venice.



(1458 – letter with embossed double-key to Angionolo Baldesi)



≤ (1701 – "Franca Venezia" m.s.
– prepaid letter from Venice to Rome)

N.  Signoria.

Serenissima

Viaggio D. *Carlo Clementi*

Lettere Bianche	-----	Num.	<i>80</i>
Piegli da Oncia N. <i>Onze</i>	-----	Num.	-----
Lettere per Strada	-----	Num.	-----
Lettere per Stati Esteri	-----	Num.	-----
Lettere Franche	-----	Num.	<i>5</i>
Lettere sù Trameffi	-----	Num.	-----
Lettere Pubbliche	-----	Num.	<i>12</i>

Adi *19* *Genaro* 1734

Venezia per Ciydal di Belun.

Stefano Taxis *Dom. Cattani*

Until 1797 the name "Serenissima Signara" was used as a place name for Venice.

(charter-list)

2.2 Open up of new trading-routes



Venice's most famous son was **Marco Polo**, who has contributed significantly to the prosperity of his native town. In addition to many new Asian insights he brought silk, porcelain and the Chinese paper money to Venice.



Together with his father Niccolò and his brother Mateo he had left in 1271 for the far east and reached China by land, where he remained until 1292.

(overprint – AMG-FFT = Allied Military Government – Free Territory Trieste; first day of usage)



His return was partly performed by sea. He crossed the South China Sea, visited the Sunda Islands, and reached Omus. Through Persia, Armonia and Trebizond he returned to his homeland as a prosperous man.

3 From "full blossom" to giving up

3.1 Venice "celebrates and builds itself to death"

Political stability and economic prosperity characterized the "early Republic". However, the high standard of living let also come up decadence. The whole city was "dressed gorgeously".



The citizens wore beautiful clothes, women precious jewelry, make ups and they scented pleasantly. In the 18th Century, the carnival was celebrated from October to February every year.



Dome of St. Mark



Palazzo D'Oro



Piazzetta

Everywhere magnificent palaces dominated, - churches, huge and imposing buildings. The Piazzetta San Marco at the Grand Canal is still considered to be the most beautiful entree of the world.



Most impressive was the view over the Canal Grande to the Piazzetta and the Campanile.

(Postal stationery 1897)

2.3 Victories and conquests



The Venetians had already in 850 the largest fleet. With their galleys they navigated the eastern Mediterranean to the Levant and operated trading there.

Which power and prestige Venice enjoyed in those days was documented among other by the meeting between **Emperor Barbarossa** and **Pope Alexander** in 1177.



In 1204 the Doge **Dandolo** led the 4th Crusade against the Byzantine Empire conquering **Constantinople** and the island of **Candia-Crete**.

In the same year **Count Baldwin of Flanders** came to the throne of the Latin Empire (*dependent to Venice*), which he ruled until 1206, assisted by the Crusaders.



Allies of the Venetians often were the Byzantines. Both maintained against the Dalmatians, Normans and pirates. In 1489, the island of **Cyprus** fell to Venice.

Already in 1380 the Venetian fleet has had a decisive victory at **Chioggia** against the trading rival for Centuries – **Genoa**.

3.2 First defeats and last victory

Due to all the pomp the Venetians failed to notice that the Ottomans represented a real danger. They were no longer accustomed to risks being imminent from abroad and so they oversaw the changed situation too late.



In 1453 **Sultan Mehmet II** gave the order to recapture Constantinople.

The defeat in the Battle of Arta by the fleet of **Barbaros Hayreddin** meant a blockade for Venice of their Eastern trading routes.



Although the combined fleets of Spain, Genoa and Venice in 1571 took the victory under **Don Juan D'Austria** against the Turks. This was the last victory of Venice.



It was a Pyrrhus- victory, as it turned out. With the discoveries of America by **Columbus** in 1492 and the sea route to East India by **Vasco da Gama** in 1498, other states extended their power at sea.

Venice lost its status as Europe's biggest commercial metropolis. It began the inexorable decline of the city. At the beginning of the 18th Century the Venetians state coffers were empty.

3.3 Among changing foreign rulers - France

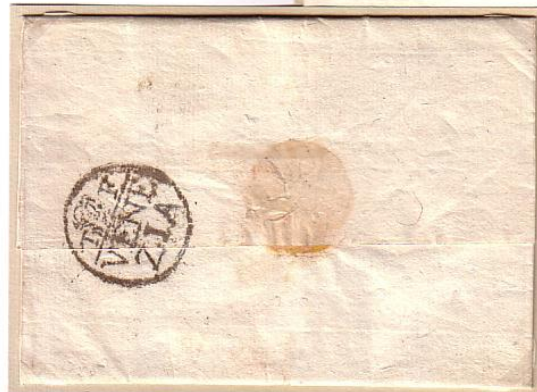
Weakened politically and economically the last Doge was forced to abdicate in 1797 and the Council dissolved the republic. Thus the troops of Napoleon were able to march into Venice without resistance on 6th May the same year.



As a political demonstration, he let transport the "Bronze Horses of San Marco", Venice had stolen in 1204 in Constantinople, to Paris and put them up at the "Place du Carrousel" as a prey.



"I will be an "Attila" to Venice", Napoleon should have said.



Original design of the handstamp (1795 – Venice to Bergamo)

(1797 – Venice to Vicenza;
Emblem eradicated

Thus he even let eradicate the St.
Mark-Lion from the handstamp.

3.3 Among changing foreign rulers - Austria

By the Peace of Campo Formio of 17th October 1797, the territories of Venice were divided up between Austria and the Cisalpine Republic.



(1803 - Vienna to Verona with Venice handstamp in transit
IMP / REG. VFF / DI POSTA / IN VENEZ / P. TRANSITO)



However, Emperor Franz I of Austria got these areas initially for administration purposes only.



Instead of St. Mark's lion the **double-headed eagle** moved in as the Austrian imperial reign mark.



(1841- Embossing handstamp of the City Council on official letter, showing the Austrian double-headed eagle)

3.3 Among changing foreign rulers - France



After the victory of Napoleon in the "Battle of the Three Emperors" at Austerlitz on 12th Dec. 1805 Venice fell again under the "protection" of France due to the Peace Treaty of Bratislava in which Austria had to disclaim his Italian possessions.



(1807 – Ship letter to Bolzano with laurel-crowned handstamp – VENEZIA /D'Adriatico; 2nd French occupation



Napoleon crowned himself in Milan (1805) to King of Upper Italy.

⚡ (1808 – the French representation documented by m.s. *service militaire* and COMMISSARIO DI GUERRA)



(1808 – "VENEZIA" in Latin script (1805-15); official letter to Marseille via MILANO / LT (1803-15)

3.3 Among changing foreign rulers – Austria – Lombard/Venetia



The Congress of Vienna in 1815 adjudicated the Kingdom of Lombard-Venetia to Austria. Henceforth Venice was under control of a "police state".

(1818 – VENEZIA to Bologna with informing-handstamp – REGNA LOMBARDO VENETO)



After a revolution against the "police state" a new Venetian Republic was proclaimed on 22nd March 1848 by D. Manin.

(The Kreuzer-currency was not valid in L-V.; the letter slipped through unnoticed.)



This republic was a short-dated one. It followed the reoccupation by Field Marshal Josef Graf von Radetzky immediately.

(1857 – VENEZIA COL VAPORE – ship letter to Trieste with correct Centesimi-currency)

3.4 "Admission" into the kingdom of Italy

When Napoleon III intervened in favor of Piedmont-Sardinia in Italy, the Austrians were beaten and after the peace of Villafranca from 11th July 1859 initially had to cede the Lombardy to Italy.



After the "German War" in 1866 Austria lost Venetia as well.



In a referendum in Veneto of 22nd Oct. 1866, the people decided to connect Venice with the Kingdom of Italy. King Victor Emanuel II, entered on 7th November same year into Venice. Venice became the provincial capital with the local handstamp number "196".



Only "Venezia Giulia" and "Trentino" still remained Austrian territories, but these also were to surrender to Italy after the First World War. Thus closes the final chapter of a former independent and prosperous city.