

## How Venice was born - a brief outline

Here follow some informations on the history of Venice, Italy. This page has been appreciated by readers as it can answer many questions and curiosities. Plenty of books will help you learn more about the Serenissima Repubblica (as Venice was known in the past, when it was a powerful state), the Doges, Marco Polo (first European merchant to open the Silk Road), St. Mark's. The cultural journey to Venezia never ends. So let's start to explore the history of Venice: from foundations to nowadays.

- According to tradition, Venice was founded in 421 AD on April 25th, St. Mark's day, who is the patron saint of Venice.

- The most important village in the lagoon by that time is not Venice but Torcello, where in 639 the gorgeous Cathedral was built, and where many people are seeking refuge from barbarian invasions. Step by step, Venice was built on several islands of a lagoon, then linked by bridges.

- In Venice the Doges' government is established: the first historically known doge is Orso Ipato (in 726). The year 814 is the starting date of the construction of Palazzo Ducale (Doges' Palace) in what is today St. Mark's Square. The Basilica St. Mark's instead was begun in 834, but this first basilica went burnt down.

- Venice is spreading its commercial boundaries: in 1000 its fleet defeats the pirates of the Adriatic sea. Then Venice takes part to the Crusades, the war campaigns aimed to free Jerusalem. For Venice this is a business opportunity and expansion chance as well. Many works of art are taken to Venice as a booty: for instance, the four bronze horses of St. Mark's. The original bronzes can now be seen in St. Mark's museum, whilst the four horses on the Basilica's facade are perfect copies.

- The journey of the Venetian merchant Marco Polo from Venice to China is one of the most fascinating true stories of Middle Ages (1271-95). His adventure and the meeting with Gengis Khan are told in the book 'Il Milione'

- In 1348, Venice population is halved by the plague. In spite of this, Venice succeeds in becoming the leader of the 4 seapowers of Mediterranean Sea: the other ones were the Republics of Amalfi, Genoa and La Spezia

- In 1489 Venice conquers the island of Cyprus.

- In 1516 the first Ghetto in the world is founded in Venice.

- Another great plague affects Italy in 1630, and for Serenissima Repubblica this is the beginning of the decadence.

- Giacomo Casanova is not a legend: he was born in 1725 in Venice. The myth of the irresistible seductor and lover told his story in the book 'Memorie di Giacomo Casanova'.

- Teatro La Fenice was founded in 1790

- Repubblica Serenissima di Venezia, the Venetian Republic, was defeated by Napoleon in 1797 and it became a part of the Hapsburg Empire (Austria)

- Venetians attempt to free their land from the Hapsburg (1848). In 1860 the army of Giuseppe Garibaldi make it possible for Italy to become a nation under the reign of the Savoia dynasty; Venice will join Italy in 1866 after the 3rd Independence War.
- The first Biennial exhibition of Italian art is held in 1894. From that year on, the exhibits pavillions are built in the Giardini di Castello. On 30th April 1894, the I Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia (1st International Art Exhibition of the City of Venice) was opened in the presence of the Italian King and Queen, Umberto I and Margherita di Savoia. Great public acclaim (224,000 visitors).
- In 1902 the new Modern Art Gallery opens at Ca' Pesaro, thanks to a bequest from duchess Bevilacqua-La Masa
- St. Mark's square bell tower collapses in 1902: there are photos and postcards of this impressive events, and they can be bought in Venice. The bell tower had to be re-built completely, in 1912, as we see it now
- In 1910 la Biennale exhibit has one room dedicated to Klimt, a one-man show for Renoir, and a retrospective dedicated to Courbet. A work by Picasso is removed by the organizers, fearing that its novelty might shock the public. Picasso had his first work exhibited at the Biennale only in 1948. First retrospective of Modigliani; 1922
- The first edition of the Venice Film Festival is held in 1932: the first Esposizione internazionale d'arte cinematografica (International exhibition of cinematographic art) is held between 6th and 21st August on the terraces of the Hotel Excelsior. No prizes were planned but a poll was held. From 1935, the Festival becomes annual. Italy is still the Kingdom of Italy, and is governed by the Fascist party. Amongst the pre-war films that won awards were Clarence Brown's Anna Karenina, Luis Trenker's Der Kaiser von Kalifornien, Carnet du bal by Julien Duvivier and Olympia by Leni Riefenstahl.
- In 1937 the Palazzo del Cinema is inaugurated at the Lido di Venezia (it would be enlarged in 1952).
- Because of the 2nd World War (1940-45), the artistic activities are interrupted. The Art Exhibition is suspended in 1942 and resumed only in 1948. In September 1943, Cinecittà installs itself in the Giardini di Castello, using the pavilions as studios (Cinevillaggio), and remains there until April 1945. The Film Festival is suspended between 1943 and 1945
- Fortunately, during the 2nd World War (1940-45), Venice was not bombed: both sides respected the most gorgeous city on earth
- A flood in 1966 causes serious damages: water level reached 2 metres. In many churches and palaces they put a sign marking the reached water level.
- Fire at Teatro La Fenice, totally destroyed in 1996. The trial is still going on, and reconstruction was stopped several times; scheduled to re-open in 2002 (see [the story](#)), it was re-opened in 2004

## **The Doges of Venice:**

• 1st Paoluccio Anafesto (Oderzo, Treviso - Venice, unknown dates); also called Paolo Lucio Anafesto, is half a legendary character. It's said he was a nobleman, and in 697 in the ancient and important town of Eraclea he was elected as an official over the entire Venice lagoon, in charge of defending the area against the Lombards and the Slavs. The tradition tells that on this purpose he was the founder of the Venetian Arsenale and of the first fortresses in the Venice surroundings. But his existence is uncertain; maybe he was just confused with the exarch of Ravenna, Paolo, who was killed in 727.

- 2nd Marcello Fegalliano
- 3rd Orso Ipato
- 4th Teodato Ipato
- 5th Galla Gaulo
- 6th Domenico Menegario
- 7th Maurizio Galbajo
- 8th Giovanni Galbajo
- 9th Obelerio Antenoreo
- 10th Angelo Partecipazio
- 11th Giustiniano Partecipazio
- 12th Giovanni Partecipazio
- 13th Pietro Fradonico
- 14th Orso Partecipazio I
- 15th Giovanni Partecipazio II
- 16th Pietro Candiano I
- 17th Pietro Tribuno
- 18th Orso Partecipazio II
- 19th Pietro Candiano II
- 20th Pietro Partecipazio
- 21st Pietro Candiano III
- 22nd Pietro Candiano IV
- 23rd Pietro Orseolo
- 24th Vitale Candiano
- 25th Tribuno Memmo
- 26th Pietro Orseolo II
- 27th Oto Orseolo
- 28th Pietro Centronico
- 29th Domenico Trabanico
- 30th Domenici Contarini
- 31st Domenico Selvo
- 32nd Vitale Falier
- 33rd Vitale Michiel
- 34th Ordelafo Faliero
- 35th Domenico Michiel

- 36th Pietro Polani
- 37th Domenico Morosini
- 38th Vitale Michiel II
- 39th Sebastiano Ziani
- 40th Orio Mastro Pietro
- 41st Enrico Dandolo
- 42nd Pietro Ziani
- 43rd Giacompo Tiepolo
- 44th Marin Morosini
- 45th Renier Zen
- 46th Lorenzo Tiepolo
- 47th Giacompo Contarini
- 48th Giovanni Dandolo
- 49th Pietro Gradenigo
- 50th Marin Zordi
- 51st Giovanni Soranzo
- 52nd Francesco Dandolo
- 53rd Bortolomeo Gradenigo
- 54th Andrea Dandolo
- 55th Marino Faliero
- 56th Giovanni Gradenig
- 57th Giovanni Delfino
- 58th Lorenzo Celsi
- 59th Marco Cornaro
- 60th Andrea Contarini
- 61st Michele Morosini
- 62nd Antonio Veniero
- 63rd Michele Steno
- 64th Tommaso Mocenigo
- 65th Francesco Foscari
- 66th Pasqual Malipiero
- 67th Cristoforo Moro
- 68th Nicolo' Tron
- 69th Nicolo' Marcello
- 70th Pietro Mocenigo
- 71st Andrea Vendramin
- 72nd Giovanni Mocenigo
- 73rd Marco Barbarigo
- 74th Agostino Barbarigo
- 75th Leonardo Loredano
- 76th Antonio Grimani
- 77th Andrea Gritti
- 78th Pietro Lando

- 79th Francesco Donato
- 80th Marc'Antonio Trevisan
- 81st Francesco Veniero
- 82nd Lorenzo Priuli
- 83rd Girolamo Priuli
- 84th Pietro Loredano
- 85th Alvise Mocenigo
- 86th Sebastiano Venier
- 87th Nicolo' Da Ponte
- 88th Pasquale Cicogna
- 89th Marin Grimani
- 90th Leonardo' Dona'
- 91st Marc'Antonio Memmo
- 92nd Giovanni Bembo
- 93rd Nicolo' Dona'
- 94th Antonio Priuli
- 95th Francesco Contarini
- 96th Giovanni Cornaro
- 97th Nicolo' Contarini
- 98th Francesco Erizzo
- 99th Francesco Molin
- 100th Carlo Contarini
- 101st Francesco Cornaro
- 102nd Bertuccio Valerio
- 103rd Giovanni Pesaro
- 104th Domenico Contarini
- 105th Nicolo' Sagredo
- 106th Luigi Contarini
- 107th Marc'Antonio Giustiniano
- 108th Francesco Morosini
- 109th Silvestro Valier
- 110th Luigi Mocenigo
- 111th Giovanni Corner
- 112th Alvise Sebastiano Mocenigo
- 113th Carlo Ruzzini (Venice, 11 November 1653 – 5 January 1735)

served Venice for over 30 years as Diplomat and Statesman before becoming being elected the 113th Doge. He had been sent as Ambassador to Madrid in 1691, later in the Hague(1706), to the Turkish Court (1707) and in Vienna. He was Venice's Ambassador Extraordinary at other important international negotiations such as at Utrecht in 1712, and Passarowitz (south of Belgrade) at the end of the last of the wars between Venice and Turkey (1714-1718). In 1732 after the death of Alvise III Sebastiano Mocenigo, who had beaten hoimm at the elections, he was elected with 40 votes out of 41 and died 3 years later. During

his reign he kept Venice out of further conflicts.

- 114th Luigi Pisani
- 115th Pietro Grimani
- 116th Francesco Loredano
- 117th Marco Foscarini
- 118th Alvise Mocenigo
- 119th Paolo Renier
- 120th Lodovico Manin