



# The Venetian Empire: A Sea Voyage

*Jan Morris*

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## **The Venetian Empire: A Sea Voyage** Jan Morris

For six centuries the Republic of Venice was a maritime empire, its sovereign power extending throughout much of the eastern Mediterranean – an empire of coasts, islands and isolated fortresses by which, as Wordsworth wrote, the mercantile Venetians 'held the gorgeous east in fee'.

Jan Morris reconstructs the whole of this glittering dominion in the form of a sea-voyage, travelling along the historic Venetian trade routes from Venice itself to Greece, Crete and Cyprus. It is a traveller's book, geographically arranged but wandering at will from the past to the present, evoking not only contemporary landscapes and sensations but also the characters, the emotions and the tumultuous events of the past. The first such work ever written about the Venetian 'Stato da Mar', it is an invaluable historical companion for visitors to Venice itself and for travellers through the lands the Doges once ruled.

## **The Venetian Empire: A Sea Voyage Details**

Date : Published January 4th 1990 by Penguin (first published January 1st 1980)

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Author : Jan Morris

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## From Reader Review The Venetian Empire: A Sea Voyage for online ebook

### Walk says

A friend recommended this book before we did a Mediterranean cruise. I'm so glad I found it on Kendall. It is fantastic! The book details not only the city of Venice but it's long history dominating the Mediterranean. It's really a history of the eastern Mediterranean and the importance of Venice. The book is very readable and enjoyable, sometimes forget your reading history.

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### Stephen says

One of the best travel authors out there

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### Deb says

Very informative but got to be depressing with the amount of life disregarded, tortured, and killed during various conquests of land.

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### Walthea says

Read for Book Club - A great way to escape from an Irish January! I enjoy reading history and learn so much from this book.

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### Paolo Zanelli says

Interesting at times but below Jan Morris usual standards

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### Christopher Donaghue says

While a fascinating book on topics of history far, far too often overlooked, I found that this books had a number of shortcomings which I found challenging to overlook.

Number one, for me at least, is the lack of footnotes/sources. I LOVE bibliographies - one book opens the door to hundreds more, exponentiating the experience and the knowledge to be gained. However, this book had only a small bibliography and none of the many and interesting statements of historical fact were sourced, leaving one to guess wherefrom they might have originated.

Secondly, what genre is this book, anyway? Is it a history, a geography, a travelogue, even at times it feels

like a novel?! She alternates between the past and the present in the space of a few words that one is dizzied by the temporal variety.

And, lastly, the book is a tease. So little is said about so many extremely fascinating occurrences, and with no sources given, one has no idea where to look to find more information thereabout.

Thus, while it was a fascinating book, it does suffer from some serious drawbacks and so I am left to give it a rating of three stars. Still, for a 3-star book, it is filled with much that is interesting - especially on my current phase/fascination with Italy and the Renaissance.

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### **Annette says**

Very interesting history presented in imaginative language. If you're looking for a chronological history, this isn't it. However, if you want to read an evocative account of the Venetian empire, you'll probably enjoy this book.

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### **James says**

I love Jan Morris, having been blown away by two quite different projects of hers: the first, her epic 3-volume evocation of the British Empire which summons up the complexity and hugeness of the thing in a series of detailed vignettes; the second, her single-volume meditations on individual cities, most notably Oxford and, famously, Venice.

If I found this book a little disappointing it is because it falls in between the two: the Venetian Empire was a somewhat piecemeal and scattered thing, with no great narrative (the Venetians were losing territories in one place while gaining them in another) to tie its disparate locations together; the book proceeds as a sequence of sketches of Crete, Cyprus, the Aegean islands, etc. which are useful in themselves (travelling in these parts, you often come across things which the guidebooks label 'Venetian' without expanding further) but don't add up to a satisfying book overall. Another problem is the Venetians' extreme flexibility when it came to ethics, which allows Morris a good few opportunities for sarcasm, but which gets in the way of any kind of sympathy or admiration for them. Without a strong master narrative or emotional engagement, Morris' purple passages drift rather aimlessly.

Not but what there isn't some good stuff in here, but it's hardly major Morris.

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### **Lynne says**

This book tied in well with my favorite Dorothy Dunnett series and even the new Zen Masterpiece Theatre series in which the detective is Venetian. Though Morris drifts around the Mediterranean, musing on Venice's various conquests and influence, I thought she searched a bit too hard to find traces of Venetian culture and architecture everywhere. I did learn a lot about Istanbul, the Greek islands, and the cities of former Yugoslavia and want even more to visit Turkey now!

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### **Alex says**

Well I thought that this was a travel book that talked about the history of the Venetian Empire. No, this is a history book that travels around to the different places that were important to Venetian history. Then tells the historical story. So instead of getting the story in a series of time -based events, it tells the story going to different places geographically and then telling the important story (or stories) that happened in those places. Often the author imagines sailing up to a port in the 15th or 16th century during the time important events occurred. It was a very nice perspective on writing a historical novel. I liked it.

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### **Geni says**

This travelogue of sorts tells the history of the Venetian empire until its fall in the late 1700s. It is beautifully written but the gore got to me. I am so glad we are "civilized" today.

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### **Roisin says**

Jan Morris goes on a journey around Venice and takes the reader delightfully with her. If you have an interest in Venice, this is a fabulous book about the different islands, weaving history and tales of notables and visitors, to keep the reader engaged. A fantastic book and must for those interested in travel or Venice.

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### **Marilyn says**

I expected this book to be more about Venice itself. Apparently I don't know the meaning of the word "empire". Having said that, I did learn a lot about the Venetians and skipped over the parts of their conquests. I may have to go back someday and read the whole book.

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### **Chris says**

I had no idea how extensive the Venetian Empire was - wish I'd read this before visiting Venice, but still a great read.

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### **Michael Romo says**

This History/Travelogue of the Venetian Empire was essential to put me in the correct frame of mind for my visit to Venice and subsequent Mediterranean cruise. I loved imaging the galleys of the Empire plying the sea and arriving to cities and towns the we visited on our cruise.

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