

Seaborne State? Venice and the East 1150-1550

We will explore the history of Venice with a focus on the Serenissima's relations with the Eastern Mediterranean in the late Middle Ages.

How did Venice develop from a Byzantine duchy to one of the first early modern states?

What was the role of Venetian international trade in the Eastern Mediterranean in the



making of the Venetian state? How was this trade organized? How did it overcome the barriers of religious conflict in the wake of the

crusades and relate to the Islamic world? What was the role of news and speculation in the making of a new public sphere?

Responding to these questions, we will encounter various aspects of Venetian history from political history and trade relations to questions of cultural history (religion, architecture, literature) and Venetian views of the world and views of Venice in the world.

Looking at Venice, we look at bigger questions: what is empire and how does empire relate to principalities, cities, communities and the individual, how can one rule an empire? How did modern states and their bureaucracies out of a late medieval world of waxing and waning empires? How did a city and state respond to climate change and the plague – how did Venice (how could we today?) cope with these challenges?

Themes covered

- Venice as a model and historical reality
- Climate change, plague and adaptation
- From regional to Mediterranean trade network
- Venice and the Crusades – Venice and Islam
- Vectors of expansion: army and navy
- The rise of the sedentary merchant: family-firm-network
- Actors and vectors of trade: Investors, galleys and agents
- Venice in the East: Colonies and trading diasporas
- Venetian self-representation, architecture and living culture
- Venice and the church – an uneasy relation
- News, speculation and the rise of the public sphere

- Bonus track: Venice and the Church: self-representation, architecture and religion in politics and daily life



Assessment

Individual Presentation + Supporting Material (hand-out, slides) OR source analysis OR literature review OR case study, summative, 5 minutes/1000 words, 30%

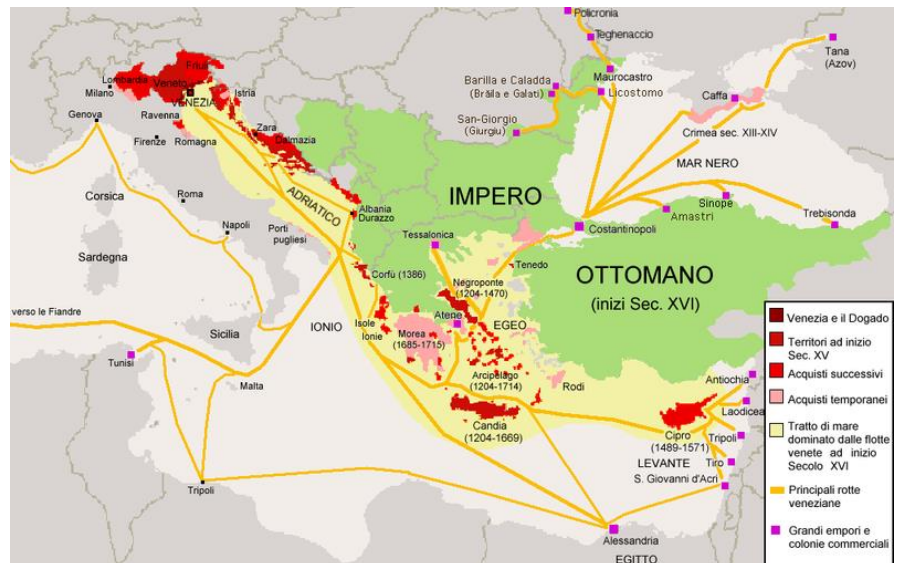
Essay, summative, 3500 words, 70%

Recommended reading

Lane, Frederic Chapin. 1973. *Venice a Maritime Republic*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press (UML eBook).

Lane, Frederic Chapin. 1944. Andrea Barbarigo, merchant of Venice (1418 - 1449). In *Johns Hopkins University studies in historical and political science* ; 62,1. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press.

Eric R. Dursteler (ed.), *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797*, Leiden 2013 (UML eBook).



Ashtor, Eliyahu. 1983. *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press (UML eBook).

Georg Christ. 2012. *Trading Conflicts. Venetian Merchants and Mamluk Officials in Late Medieval Alexandria*, Leiden: Brill.

BA thesis supervision

I am rather open-minded so don't hesitate approaching me with your ideas. I guess I can support you best in (esp. late medieval and early modern) Mediterranean history incl. Italy and the Middle East, Hanseatic League, Global history (maritime silk road), naval and military as well as business and economic history, history of knowledge management and bureaucracy.