Serenissima Repubblica: The Art of Renaissance Venice

Lecture 1: Introduction
The progression of the session

• Lecture 1: Introduction
• Lecture 2: Society
• Lecture 3: Religion
• Lecture 4: Politics and Trade
• Lecture 5 and 6: The Art of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio (The Great Council Hall)
Introducing Renaissance Venice

• General history, geography, and politics

• Important buildings

• Use of mythological figures

• Available painting mediums
Renaissance Italy
approx. 1400 - 1600
Jacopo de Barbari, *Map of Venice*, 1500, 4’ 5” X 9’ 3”
Venetian Government

**Arengo**
Legislature consisting of all citizens

**Maggior Consiglio**
The theoretical fount of all authority. Consisting of more than 2000 members, its sessions were largely taken up by electoral duties.

**Pregadi**
A 120 member strong senate in charge of day-to-day legislation

**Council of Ten**
A 10 man strong council with authority over all government actions

**Minor Consiglio / Signoria**
Authority supervising the actions of the doge with power of veto

**Collegio**
In effect a cabinet and the executive arm of government

**Doge**
Head of state and head of all government institutions
Guardi

The Doge
Thanks the Great Council

1775
The Doge’s Palace, 1340
Saint Mark’s Basilica and the Campanile
Saint Mark’s Basilica, Interior
The collapse of the campanile in 1902
The Rialto Bridge
Jacopo de Barbari, *Map of Venice*, 1500
Jacopo de Barbari, details of *Map of Venice*, 1500
Giants’ Staircase at the Doge’s Palace
Statues of:
Mars (left)
Neptune (right)
on the Giants’ staircase
Tiepolo, *Neptune Offering Venice the Wealth of the Seas*, 1740
Tintoretto

Ariadne found by Bacchus

1576
Painting Mediums

• Fresco paint
  • Egg based or water stain
  • Used to paint on plaster to create giant murals

• Tempera paint
  • Egg based
  • Can be used well on canvas or wood

• Oil paint
  • Oil based pigments
  • Used on canvas especially, but also wood panel
  • Used in northern Europe first
  • Came to Italy approx. 1470s
Antonello da Messina

Saint Jerome in his Study

about 1475

can paint on wood
Giovanni Bellini, *Agony in the Garden*, c. 1465, Tempera on wood

Giovanni Bellini, *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*, 1487, oil on panel
Example of Fresco painting:
Michelangelo, Sistine Chapel ceiling
Senate Chamber in the Doge’s Palace decorated in oil paintings and wooden frames
Oil painting in layers
Example of tempera shading technique

Ghirlandaio, Selvaggia Sassetti, 1487–88
Tempera on wood
Bernardino Castelli

Portrait of Ludovico Manin

The Last Doge