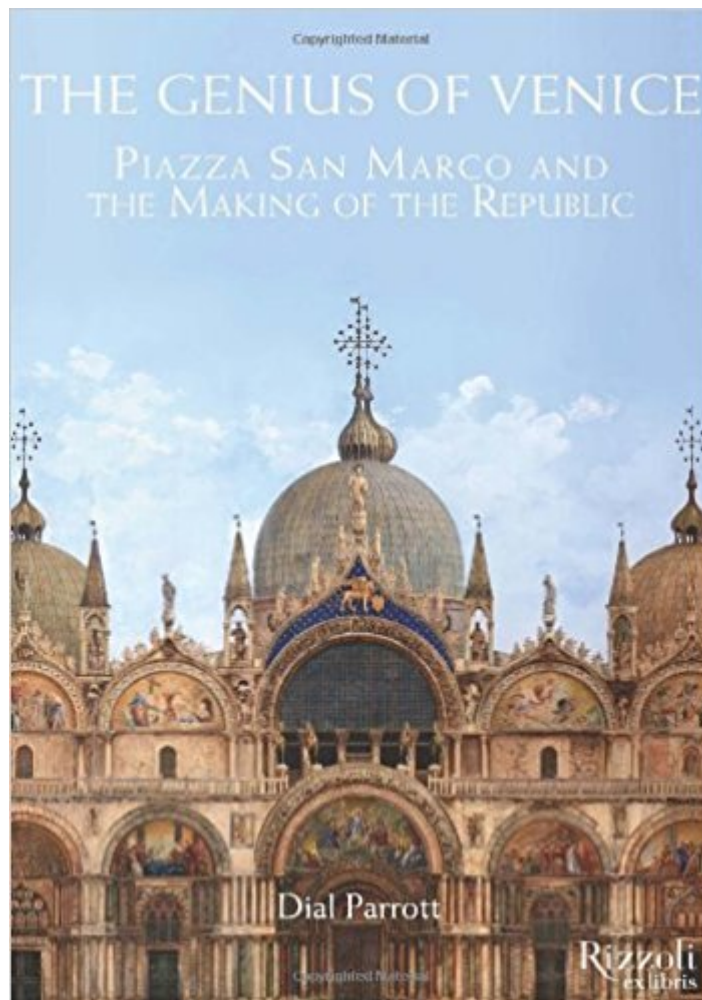


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# The Genius Of Venice: Piazza San Marco And The Making Of The Republic



## Synopsis

An ideal volume for lovers of Venice and architecture aficionados, combining in-depth history of this singular city with more than 100 color photographs and maps. Of Venice's many majestic spaces, none is as evocative and significant as the Piazza San Marco. An authoritative account of the development of the entire piazza complex, through which unfolds the history of the Republic in general, *The Genius of Venice* celebrates the city's oldest and most important architectural site. Dial Parrott's view of Venice is a heroic one. From their lagoon, the bold and calculating Venetians forged a city that stands today not merely as an attraction for millions, but as a testament to architectural genius: the epitome of what we now call New Urbanism and a shining example of Western communal art. Enhanced by more than 100 illustrations, *The Genius of Venice* presents the magnificent edifices of the piazza as, in the words of John Ruskin, the "living books of history" of this iconic urban environment.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Parrott's multifaceted, historical work allows readers to grasp the evolution of Venetian self-identity from the early Middle Ages to the Age of the Renaissance in an immediately apprehensible form. ~Gather.com" "The Genius of Venice is a brilliant book that blends the art, politics, social and cultural history of Venice through a masterful and engaging account of the development of Piazza San Marco. Dial Parrott's skillful interweaving of research from different periods and disciplines heightens the experience, as if reading several books at once, brought to life with the immediacy of a modern thriller. The Genius of Venice is an

ideal volume for lovers of Venice and architecture aficionados, featuring an in-depth history of this singular city. ~Italian Tribune~“After two decades of lengthy and thorough research and seven years of writing, Parrott successfully delivers one of those most unique books dedicated to the complex history and establishment of la Serenissima. Parrott’s presentation of Venice is interesting since he depicts Venice more from a Mediterranean point of view, than a European perspective, thus offering a different mindset of Venice’s beginnings and rise to glory. Clear and descriptive writing transports the reader to Piazza San Marco. Even if you’ve never been to Venice Parrott takes you there. Be careful, once you’re done with the book, you’ll be booking your plane ticket to Venice. ~Ambassador Magazine

Dial Parrott is a graduate of Princeton University and the University of Virginia who has worked as a journalist, teacher, and lawyer. He lives in Connecticut.

The Genius of Venice is one of those unique combinations of great depth of information and knowledge, passed on to the reader in an exciting narrative of this very unique place. From the theft of the body of St. Mark to the building of great churches and palaces in one of the earliest recycling efforts ever, history comes alive in the tales of battles, flight from the Hun, perseverance, religion, royalty and architecture. This book will make you want to visit this one-of-a-kind city, where the genius of the founders is evident on every canal and piazza even today.

I have read a lot of books on Venetian history and architecture and many of the ones cited by this author. I am not sure where he got all of his information for this book. I found his writing style to be highly opinionated and sometimes downright whiny. The book starts out happily enough. But obviously, Mr. Parrott doesn’t like much that was built after the late 1400’s and he makes no qualms telling us about it. (I, too marvel at San Marco and the Palazzo Ducale; but in the beautiful Venetian scheme of things, Palladio has his place, too!) Nor is he happy with the state of affairs in Venice after that time, in general. If the reader can sift through it, there are a lot of interesting details on Venetian history to be had in this book. And the author does defend Venetian "conservatism" in architecture compared to the traditional view of Florentine and Roman Renaissance styles (more "progressive").

In the middle of the journey of his life the author woke from a semi-delirious state to find himself in

Venice. Unlike the usual traveller who wanders around besotted by the beauty of the place, he has spent more than thirty years analyzing the city's extraordinary visual impact and accounting for its historical uniqueness among Italian cities. Venice's sparkling light and watery reflections are misleading--it has always been a closed-in city of secrets and dark byways. This book seeks to illuminate the Venetian labyrinth by following a thread that leads outward from the architectural history of Piazza San Marco toward Constantinople and backward toward Rome whence came the first fugitives seeking safety in the lagoon. The intriguing chapter headings ("The Theft of St. Mark," "Warning from a Dying Doge," "The Turkish Vise and Other Calamities," "By the Skin of Her Teeth") and easy almost conversational style do not affect the reader's confidence in the scholarship that has organized such a vast amount of information. Too bad the abundance of gorgeous illustrations and heavy glossy paper stock make it impractical to carry this book with you on your next visit to Venice, or even to Istanbul.

Don't be intimidated by the footnotes (over 50 pages): you don't need to be an historian to enjoy "The Genius of Venice." Dial Parrott has transformed what could be a dry and academic history of the political and architectural genesis of Venice into a captivating story which made me eager to turn the next page. Exhaustively researched, his hypothesis is conveyed with equanimity, humanity, and humor. The illustrations are impressive and the author's argument is compelling. It stirs up a desire to explore the ancient city, guided by his intellectual analysis. Think outside the history box and savor "The Genius of Venice." Linda Ernst, January 2014

This is a brilliant way of looking at Venice and even world history. The focus on a unique and beautiful location that played a key role in the history of both East and West, national unification in Europe and is today a major tourism site makes perfect sense. This is not a short book nor is it inexpensive but it is worth every penny and every minute of your time.

Those of us who have for many years studied in Venice welcome this important new book. This book by Mr. Parrott is enlightening even for the enlightened. The author's foundation of research covering the sociological-political forces over 1000 years of history. Mr. Parrott's writing style is fast-paced, gripping, at times poetic but most importantly lucid. Further, most of the photographs illustrating the book are those taken by the author. These photographs are indeed individual works of art as compositions using a great knowledge of light and color capturing the spaces and shadows

only seen in this city of dreams. Nicholas King is the former Director of the Art Department of The Barnes Foundation and was associated with The Barnes Foundation from 1973 to 1999.

Excellent book. Learned more about the history of the world as well as Venice

For general interest readers and even for people (like me) who have spent time in Venice, this book is overwhelming in its layered historical and art-historical approach to St. Mark's Square, the Basilica and the Doge's Palace. It is easy to agree with Dial Parrott and other scholars that the interior of the Basilica is one of the greatest works of Medieval art anywhere. The evidence is documented in the many sharply photographed, full-color plates included in this 358 page, relatively small print text. There are also fine plates in black and white that show interesting architectural models of the Basilica at major points in its development. At the outset the historical information on the growth of the island republic is fascinating...but things go on and on. I've had plenty of education, including courses in urban planning, art history and art appreciation and I have visited St Mark's Square and the Basilica more than once over the years but I still have been unable to read even this fine text for very long in one sitting. The level of detailed information here exceeds my interest. That this is primarily intended for a specialist audience is also attested to by 40 pages of densely written chapter end notes and a useful index that allows following a particular subject through to other sections of the book. I have to think that this could well be the definitive book on this historic space and its development.

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