



*Venice, a place more like an entire world than a city.*

Aldo Manuzio

*Just the beginning of a long list of things to see,  
books to read and people to meet, in the mist or under a blue sky.*

The author

Mario Anton Orefice

VENICE  
*an entire world*

Traslated by Jean Rowbottom and Alberto Moretti



MARCIANUM PRESS

## Contents

An upside-down forest	9
The Grand Canal	11
Secret stories	21
On the tracks of Palladio	27
An amphitheatre by the sea	35
The stones of Venice	39
The anchor and the dolphin	47
An entire world	55
Venice is music	59
Fine art	65
Other landscapes	69
Instructions for losing your way	81
Useful addresses	84
Events and encounters	86
Libraries	87
Museums and exhibitions	89
Theatres and cinemas	94
Bookshops	95
Bibliography	98
Map	102



Monument to  
Vittorio Emanuele II  
on Riva degli Schiavoni

### **An upside-down forest**

Venice is a huge inverted wood. When you walk through the *calli* or enter the historic buildings, imagine an immense larch forest under your feet. Millions of wooden poles were floated along the rivers from the forests of the Dolomites, Cadore and Cansiglio to provide foundations for the buildings. Other timber entered the Arsenal, the shipyard where the vessels that headed for Byzantium, the Indies and Africa were built.

In 1240 people already marvelled at this “City with the sea for a floor, the sky for a roof and flowing water for walls”, as Boncompagno da Signa wrote.

You will fall in love with the Romanesque, Gothic and Byzantine architecture adorned with sacred and profane sculptures, friezes, bas-reliefs and crests; historic buildings decorated with coats of arms, tiles, niches and paterae will delight you; the colour of the stones from the Mediterranean coast will amaze you, as will the asymmetrical arrangement of space and the ever-changing light; juggled reflections of passing clouds and sudden winter mists; an unreal and dreamlike nocturnal Venice where the only noise is your own steps and behind the windows cats curl up on sofas.