

RONNIE FERGUSON

A LINGUISTIC HISTORY OF VENICE

This is the first comprehensive study of the history, status and structures, past and present, of Venetian. It provides a contextualised account, using detailed linguistic and historical data, of the emergence of Venetian in the medieval period, of its evolving status as a written medium within the Republic of Venice, and of its enduring prestige as a spoken 'dialect' in an Italy rapidly moving towards monolingualism.

The book consists of nine chapters followed by a complete bibliography. Chapter One looks at Venetian today, mapping out a schema of its functional distribution since Italian unification. Chapter Two establishes the overall periodisation employed in the book, and locates Venetian within its Italo-



Romance environment. Chapters Three, Four and Five are dedicated to an extensive structural analysis of the language/dialect using Modern Venetian as its reference point. Chapters Six and Seven are more linear and historical.

The former locates the origins of Venetian in the complex koineisation processes generated by the settlement and early urbanisation patterns of the lagoon city, and considers its textual emergence. The latter examines the transition of Venetian from language to dialect between 1500 and 1800. Both are followed by a representative selection of commented texts with translations. Chapter Eight surveys the Venetian lexicon, while Chapter Nine assesses the contact impact of Italian on Venetian from the Middle Ages to the present.

Il primo studio completo della storia, dello status e delle strutture sincroniche e diacroniche del veneziano. Utilizzando dati linguistici e storici dettagliati il volume affronta il problema delle origini del veneziano nel medioevo, traccia la sua evoluzione in quanto lingua parlata onnipresente ma anche come lingua scritta durante la Repubblica di Venezia, e considera le modalità della perduranza di questo 'dialetto' storicamente prestigioso in un' Italia sempre più monolingue.

Ronnie Ferguson is Full Professor of Italian at the University of St Andrews, where he is also Head of the School of Modern Languages. His specialisms are historical linguistics, dialectology, the language and culture of Venice, Renaissance comedy and identity studies.

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