WATERCRAFT

By SANDY ROBERTSON

A **watercraft** or **waterborne vessel** is any vehicle designed for travel across or through water bodies, such as boat, ship, hovercraft, submersible or submarine. This vessel has implements which are designed to move it in an arbitary direction through a body of water.

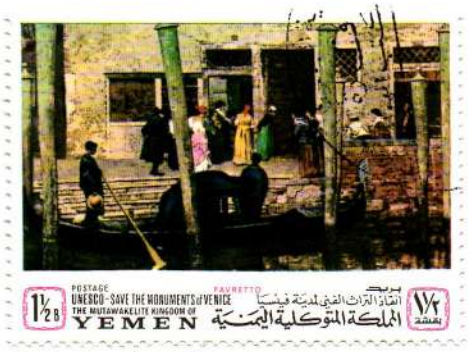
GONDOLA

A traditional, flat-Bottomed narrow boat with a raised point at both ends used on canals in Venice. It is typically propelled by a gondolier, who is at the back end and who uses a rowing oar, which is not fastened to the hull, in a sculling manner, and which also acts as the rudder.

The Gondola has existed in Venice since the 11th century, being first mentioned by name in 1094. Today's Gondola is up to 11 m long and 1.6 m wide, with a mass of 350 kg. They are made of 280 hand-made pieces using 8 types of wood (lime, oak, mahogany, walnut, cherry, fir, larch and elm).

Painting by **Nicolai Darascu**
(18 February 1883 – 14 August 1959)

Painting by **Giovanni Antonio Canal**
(18 October 1697 – 19 April 1768)
aka **Canaletto**



Painting by **Giacomo Favretto**
(11 August 1849 – 12 June 1887)

The iron prow-head of the Gondola, called "fero da prorà" or "dolfin", is needed to balance the weight of the gondolier at the stern and has a shape symbolic of the twists in the Canal Grande. Under the main blade there is a kind of comb with 6 teeth or prongs pointing forward (standing for the 6 districts of Venice). A kind of tooth juts out backwards toward the centre of the gondola symbolises the island of Giudecca. The curved top signifies the Doge's cap.

The origin of the word "gondola" has never been satisfactorily established, despite many theories.