IN VENICE
and in the Veneto
WITH
HENRY JAMES

EDITED BY
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This is the most obvious and crowded and touristy walk. The enchantment of St. Mark's is perhaps difficult to perceive during the crowded daytime. Go back in the evening when most of the day-trippers are gone, or very early in the morning, or use your imagination.

Starting Point: **Riva degli Schiavoni 4161** (now Pensione Wildner) or boatstop San Zaccaria (any: the one for boats n. 20 to S. Servolo or n. 82 to Tronchetto, near the bridge of La Pietà, or the one nearer St. Mark's).

> I lodged on the Riva, 4161, *quarto piano.* The view from my window was *una bellezza;* the far-shining lagoon, the pink walls of San Giorgio, the downward curve of the Riva, the distant islands, the movement of the quay, the gondolas in profile. Here I wrote, diligently every day and finished, or virtually finished, my novel (*Notebooks,* 221).

James in fact had difficulty in finishing *Portrait of a Lady* (1881), as he later wrote in the *Preface:*

> I had rooms on the Riva Schiavoni, at the top of a house near the passage leading off to San Zaccaria; the waterside life, the wondrous lagoon spread before me, and the ceaseless human chatter of Venice came in at my windows, to which I seem to myself to have been constantly driven, in the fruitless fidget of composition, as if to see whether, out in the blue channel, the ship of some right suggestion, of some better phrase, of the next happy twist of my subject, the next true touch for my canvas, might n't come into sight.
> (...)
> There are pages of the book which, in the reading over, have seemed to make me see again the bristling curve of the wide Riva, the large colour-spots of the balconied houses and the repeated undulations of the little hunchbacked bridges, marked by the rise and drop again, with the wave, of foreshortened clicking pedestrians. The Venetian footfall and the Venetian cry – all talk there, wherever uttered, having the pitch of a call across the water – come in once more at the window, renewing one's old impression of the delighted senses and the divided, frustrated mind (*Preface,* 1070-71).

Look at the Riva and walk along the quay, past the Monumento to Vittorio Emanuele and turn right, under the Sottoportico San Zaccaria and into the Campo San Zaccaria, for a brief visit to the **Church of San Zaccaria**. Look at the beautiful painting by Giovanni Bellini, *Sacra Conversazione,* or *Madonna on the Throne with the Child Jesus, Saints and an Angel Musician* (1505) on the second altar to the left as you enter:

> So too is the Madonna of San Zaccaria, hung in a cold, dim, dreary place, ever so much too high, but so mild and serene, and so grandly disposed and accompanied, that the proper attitude for even the most critical amateur, as he looks at it, strikes one as the bended knee (*Venice,* 25-26).

Piazzetta dal Molo. Giovanni Pividor, *Souvenirs de Venise* (Venice: 1836), plate 6.

You can now see this painting quite well, although it is on the altar where James saw it (look at the carved stone cornices and the corresponding *painted* carved stone cornices in the painting). Walk back to the Riva and walk past the Hotel Jolanda-Savoia, over one bridge (Ponte del Via): to your right is the **Hotel Danieli**, where Mr. and Miss Evans (*Travelling Companions)* stayed; move on over the Ponte della Paglia into **the Piazzetta**, where Miss Tina landed in her gondola tour with the "publishing scoundrel", after admitting that her aunt had "everything" ("Oh, she has everything!" sighed Miss Tina) as regarded "papers of value" (*The Aspern Papers*):

> These words caused all my pulses to throb, for I regarded them as precious evidence. I felt them too deeply to speak, and in the interval the gondola approached the Piazzetta. After we had disembarked I asked my companion if she would rather walk round the square or go and sit before the great café; to which she replied that she would do whichever I liked best – I must only remember how little time she had. I assured her there was plenty of time to do both, and we made the circuit of the long arcades. Her spirits revived at the sight of the bright shop-windows, and she lingered and stopped, admiring or disapproving their contents, asking me what I thought of things, theorizing about prices (*The Aspern Papers,* 237).

On the right in the Piazzetta is the **Ducal Palace**, where James went several times, and where he enjoyed the light of the serene Veronese contrasting it to the tragic greatness of Tintoretto in the Scuola di S. Rocco; look at the rich rooms where "P.Veronese revels on the ceilings and Tintoret rages on the walls" (*LPB*, 58), in particular, in the Sala dell'Anticollegio, admire the *Rape of Europa* by Veronese and the *Pallas chasing away Mars and protecting Peace and Abundance,* and the *Bacchus and Ariadne,* two of the four paintings by Tintoretto (1578).
This is *The Rape of Europa* by Veronese*:*

> He [Veronese] was the happiest of painters and produced the happiest picture in the world. "The Rape of Europa" surely deserves this title; it is impossible to look at it without aching with envy. Nowhere else in art is such a temperament revealed; never did inclination and opportunity combine to express such enjoyment. The mixture of flowers and gems and brocade, of blooming flesh and shining sea and waving groves, of youth, health, movement, desire – all this is the brightest vision that ever descended upon the soul of a painter. Happy the artist who could entertain such a vision; happy the artist who could paint it as the masterpiece I here recall is painted (*Venice,* 23-24).

Ducal Palace. Antonio Quadri, *La Piazza di San Marco* (Venice: 1831), plate 3.

This is the *Pallas and Mars* by Tintoretto:

> "Pallas chasing away Mars" is, I believe, the name that is given to the picture; and it represents in fact a young woman of noble appearance administering a gentle push to a fine young man in armour, as if to tell him to keep his distance. It is of the gentleness of this push that I speak, the charming way in which she puts out her arm, with a single bracelet on it, and rests her young hand, its rosy fingers parted, on his dark breastplate. She bends her enchanting head with the effort - a head which has all the strange fairness that the Tintoret always sees in women – and the soft, living, flesh-like glow of all these members, over which the brush has scarcely paused in its course, is as pretty an example of genius as all Venice can show (*Venice,* 24).

This is again *The Rape of Europa,* followed by the *Bacchus and Ariadne* by Tintoretto, as described by the narrator of *Travelling Companions:*

> We went to the Ducal Palace, and immediately made our way to that transcendent shrine of light and grace which contains the masterpiece of Paul Veronese, and the Bacchus and Ariadne of his solemn comrade. I steeped myself with unprotesting joy in the gorgeous glow of salubrity of the radiant scene, wherein, against her bosky screen of immortal verdure, the rosy-footed, pearl-circled, nymph-flattered victim of a divine delusion rustles her lustrous satin against the ambrosial hide of bovine Jove (*Travelling Companions,* 206).

> "This, I think, is the brighter dream of the two," she [Miss Evans] answered, indicating the Bacchus and Ariadne. Miss Evans, on the whole, was perhaps right. In Tintoretto's picture there is no shimmer of drapery, no splendor of flowers and gems; nothing but the broad, bright glory of deep-toned sea and sky, and the shining purity and symmetry of deified human flesh. "What do you think," asked my companion, "of the painter of that tragedy at San Cassiano being also the painter of this dazzling idyl; of the great painter of darkness being also the great painter of light?"
> "He was also a colorist! Let us thank the great man, and be colorists too. To understand this

> Bacchus and Ariadne we ought to spend a long day on the lagoon, beyond sight of Venice. Will you come to-morrow to Torcello? (*Travelling Companions,* 207).

Maybe James was thinking of another *Bacchus and Ariadne,* when he had Mr. Brooke underline "this" Bacchus and Ariadne; maybe he was comparing it with the one by Titian in the London National Gallery, a painting he loved, and described to John La Farge as "a thing to go barefoot to see".

Stop also in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio and admire the enormous *Paradiso* (1590) by Tintoretto, which for Twain was "Saturday Night in Heaven". For James it unfolded "its somewhat smoky splendour and the wonder of its multitudinous circles".

Once you are outside the Ducal Palace, you can enter the **Church of St. Mark,** if there isn't a long line. The interior of the church always looked to James dimmer and darker than it does today, with its fairly recent lighting system, which is sometimes even too bright:

> Within the church, the deep brown shadow-masses, the heavy thick-tinted air, the gorgeous composite darkness, reigned in richer, quainter, more fantastic gloom than my feeble pen can reproduce the likeness of. From those rude concavities of dome and semi-dome, where the multitudinous facets of pictorial mosaic shimmer and twinkle in their own dull brightness; from the vast antiquity of innumerable marbles, incrusting the walls in roughly mated slabs, cracked and polished and triple-tinted with eternal service; from the wavy carpet of compacted stone, where a thousand once-bright fragments glimmer through the long attrition of idle feet and devoted knees; from sombre gold and mellow alabaster, from porphyry and malachite, from long dead crystal and the sparkle of undying lamps, - there proceeds a dense rich atmosphere of splendor and sanctity which transports the half-stupefied traveller to the age of a simpler and more awful faith. I wandered for half an hour beneath those reverted cups of scintillating darkness, stumbling on the great stony swells of the pavement as I gazed up at the long mosaic saints who curve gigantically with the curve of dome and ceiling. I had left Europe; I was in the East (*Travelling Companions,* 192).

On your way out have a look at the **northern side of St. Mark's** and notice here that wherever "the hand of the restorer has been laid all semblance of beauty has vanished", "giving way to large crude patches of new material which have the effect of a monstrous malady rather than of a restoration to health".

St. Mark: the Basilica. *Ventiquattro vedute principali della città di Venezia* (Milan, Florence, Venice: n.d.), plate 2.

It was against this procedure of radical restoration that Ruskin won his battle in Venice. Walk into the Piazza, to your right is **Caffé Quadri**, where James went for a second breakfast (or lunch), and some of his characters for lunch (Mr. and Miss Evans, for instance, upstairs); invest a fortune to eat ice at **Caffé Florian** (on your left as you walk out of the church, Procuratie Nuove 56-59, across from the Quadri), again like Miss Evans (and her would be fiancé) in *Travelling Companions,* like Mrs. Tramore and her daughter in *The Chaperon,* like Hyacinth Robinson in *The Princess Casamassima,* or like the narrator of *The Aspern Papers*:

> After dinner we went down into the Piazza and established ourselves at one of Florian's tables. Night had become perfect; the music was magnificent. At a neighboring table a group of young Venetian gentlemen, splendid in dress, after the manner of their kind, and glorious with the wondrous physical glory of the Italian race.
> "They only need velvet and satin and plumes," I said, "to be subjects for Titian and Paul Veronese." (*Travelling Companions,* 195)

> I sat in front of Florian's café eating ices, listening to music, talking with acquaintances: the traveller will remember how the immense cluster of tables and little chairs stretches like a promontory into the smooth lake of the Piazza. The whole place, of a summer's evening, under the stars and with all the lamps, all the voices and light footsteps on marble – the only sounds of the immense arcade that encloses it – is an open-air saloon dedicated to cooling drinks and to a still finer degustation, that of the splendid impressions received during the day (*The Aspern Papers,* 211).

Walk then through the arches at the end of the Piazza, straight into the Calle de l'Ascensione and take the first street to your right, the Frezzeria. Follow it all along turning left at its end (it continues to be called Frezzeria), cross the Ponte del Barcariol into the narrow Calle del Frutarol. Before entering the Campo San Fantin, turn right into the **Calle Minelli**, where **George Sand** lived with Doctor Pagello, who became briefly her lover, breaking up her relation with de Musset, a story that surely fascinated, and perhaps a little horrified, James:

> Madame Sand's famous Venetian year has been of lately immensely in the air – a tub of soiled linen which the muse of history, rolling her sleeves well up, has not even yet quite ceased energetically and publicly to wash. The house in question must have been the house to which the wonderful lady betook herself, when, in 1834, after the dramatic exit of Alfred de Musset, she enjoyed that remarkable period of rest and refreshment with the so long silent, the but recently rediscovered, reported, extinguished, Doctor Pagello. As an old Sandist – not exactly indeed of the *première heure,* but of the fine high noon and golden afternoon of the great career – I had been, though I confess too inactively, curious as to a few points in the topography of the eminent adventure to which I here allude; but had never got beyond the little public fact, in itself always a bit of a thrill to the Sandist, that the present Hotel Danieli had been the scene of its first remarkable stages (*Two Old Houses and Three Young Women,* 71-72).

La Fenice Theater: backside view. Giovanni Pividor, *Souvenirs de Venise* (Venice: 1836), plate 22.

James was taken to see the house by the "three young women" of the 1899 Venetian essay (identified by Marilla Battilana as the three Mocenigo sisters), but he had already dealt with the subject in 1897:

> In the meantime a great deal had happened, for their [Sand and de Musset's] union had been stormy and their security small. Madame Sand had nursed her companion in illness (a matter-of-course office, it must be owned) and her companion had railed at his nurse in health. A young physician, called in, had become a close friend of both parties, but more particularly a close friend of the lady, and it was to his tender care that on quitting the scene Musset solemnly committed her. She took up life with Pietro Pagello – the transition is startling – for the rest of her stay, and on her journey back to France he was no inconsiderable part of her luggage (*George Sand,* in *French Writers,* 744).

Walk back into the Campo San Fantin, where you will see the rebuilt **Fenice Theatre**, where James did go in spite of his declaration: "you have tried the opera and found it very bad" (*Venice,* 5). During his 1881 stay the niece of the pension owner hovered "about the premises in a velvet jacket and a pair of black kid gloves with one little white button", and a lovely oval powdered face, *because* she was a dancer at the Fenice.

La Fenice Theater. *Memorie di alcune più celebri fabbriche e situazioni di Venezia* (Venice: 1831), plate 24.

Itinerary 2. Part I. From the Riva degli Schiavoni to SS. Giovanni e Paolo

Starting point: **Riva degli Schiavoni 4161**, now Pensione Wildner or San Zaccaria boatstops (any: the one for boats n. 20 to S. Servolo or 82 to Tronchetto, near the bridge of La Pietà, or the one nearer St. Mark's). Walk away from St. Mark's, along the quay (Riva degli Schiavoni), to the bridge of La Pietà; from the top of the bridge look at the **island of San Giorgio**:

> You soon recognise that it is not only the many-twinkling lagoon you behold from a habitation on the Riva; you see a little of everything Venetian. Straight across, before my windows, rose the great pink mass of San Giorgio Maggiore, which has for an ugly Palladian church a success beyond all reason. It is a success of position, of colour, of the immense detached Campanile, tipped with a tall gold angel. I know not whether it is because San Giorgio is so grandly conspicuous, with a great deal of worn, faded-looking brickwork; but for many persons the whole place has a kind of suffusion of rosiness. Asked what may be the leading colour in the Venetian concert, we should inveterately say Pink, and yet without remembering after all that this elegant hue occurs very often. It is a faint, shimmering, airy, watery pink; the bright sea-light seems to flush with it and the pale whiteish-green lagoon and canal to drink it in. There is indeed a great deal of very evident brickwork, which is never fresh or loud in colour, but always burnt out, as it were, always exquisitely mild (*Venice,* 12).

Don't forget, some day, to take a boat to San Giorgio and look at Tintoretto's *The Last Supper* (see p. 65) and *The Fall of the Manna* (in the church, paintings which James, of course, loved).

After contemplating the lagoon, also imagine the baths which were east of San Giorgio, as represented in the painting *Ritorno dal Lido* (1884) by Ralph Curtis, the types of baths – like the Stabilimento Chitarin – which James used to go to. Walk on past the church of La Pietà (represented in Curtis's painting without its later facade), over the next bridge (Ponte del Sepolcro), look at the plaque in memory of Petrach's Venetian stay, and past the Caserma Cornoldi turn left into the Calle del Dose which will take you straight into the Campo della **Bragora** (or Bandiera e Moro). On your right is the church with two paintings by Cima da Conegliano. The first James mentions is *St. Helen and Constantine on either side of the Cross* (1502), a small painting which is on the right

Church of San Giovanni Battista in Bragora. *Venezia monumentale pittoresca*, II (Venice: 1865), plate 58.

wall, near the entrance to the Sacristy (with a *pendant* by Alvise Vivarini, *Christ Resurrected*). The second is *The Baptism of Christ* (1492-94), on the main altar:

> You renounce all hope, for instance, of approaching the magnificent Cima da Conegliano in San Giovanni in Bragora; and bethinking yourself of the immaculate purity that shines in the spirit of this master, you renounce it with chagrin and pain. Behind the high altar in that church hangs a Baptism of Christ by Cima which I believe has been more or less repainted. You make the thing out in spots, you see it has a fulness of perfection. But you turn away from it with a stiff neck and promise yourself consolation in the Academy and at the Madonna dell'Orto (*Venice,* 21).

The fact that James went to see the Cima following Ruskin's preferences appears clearly in *The Chaperon:*

> It had something to do with their going together that afternoon, without her mother, to look at certain out-of-the-way pictures as to which Mr. Ruskin had inspired her with a desire to see sincerely. Mrs. Tramore expressed the wish to stay at home, and the motive of this wish – a finer shade than any that even Ruskin had ever found a phrase for – was not translated into misrepresenting words by either the mother or the daughter. At San Giovanni in Bragora the girl and her companion came upon Mrs. Vaughan-Vesey, who, with one of her sisters, was also endeavouring to do the earnest thing. She did it to Rose, she did it to Captain Jay, as well as to Giambellini (*The Chaperon,* 847).

There is no Giovanni Bellini in the Bragora, but there is a *Madonna with Child* (1485-90), by Alvise Vivarini, across from the *St. Helen,* which might easily be taken for a Bellini. From Bragora (walking out of the church to the right, to the corner of the Campo) take the Salizzada S. Antonin (admire on your left a Gothic palace whose frescoed decoration along the windows James could not have seen: it is a very recent restoration). Walk all the way along the Salizzada to the next bridge (Ponte S. Antonin), don't go over it but turn right along the Fondamenta dei Furlani: at the end of the Fondamenta is the Scuola Dalmata or ***S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni***; admire its S. Jerome and St. Agustine on the right, and other paintings by Vittor Carpaccio:

> ...the noble St. Jerome in his study at S. Giorgio Schiavoni. This latter work is a pearl of sentiment, and I may add without being fantastic a ruby of colour. It unites the most masterly finish with a kind of

Church of San Giorgio de' Schiavoni. Francesco Zucchi, *Teatro delle fabbriche più cospicue in prospettiva, sì pubbliche, che private della città di Venezia* (Venice: 1740), plate 25.

> universal largeness of feeling, and he who has it well in his memory will never hear the name of Carpaccio without a throb of almost personal affection. Such indeed is the feeling that descends upon you in that wonderful little chapel of St. George of the Slaves, where this most personal and sociable of artists has expressed all the sweetness of his imagination. The place is small and incommodious, the pictures are out of sight and ill-lighted, the custodian is rapacious, the visitors are mutually intolerable, but the shabby little chapel is a palace of art. Mr. Ruskin has written a pamphet about it which is a real aid to enjoyment, though I can't but think the generous artist, with his keen senses and his just feeling, would have suffered to hear his eulogist declare that one of his other productions – in the Museo Civico of Palazzo Correr, a delightful portrait of two Venetian ladies with pet animals – is the "finest picture in the world." It has no need of that to be thought admirable; and what more can a painter desire? (*Venice,* 28)

The painting James mentions was commonly thought to represent St. Jerome in the 19th century, as the other paintings on the same side, representing St. Jerome leading the lion to his monastery and the death of St. Jerome. It is now referred to as St. Augustine. S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni does not mean "of the slaves". Schiavoni are the Dalmatians, faithful subjects of the Venetian Republic, who were partly of Slav origin. As you leave turn right, go over the bridge Ponte de la Comenda, keep going along the Fondamenta and take the third street, Calle S. Lorenzo, on your left (just before the little portico). Follow the calle S. Lorenzo to Campo S. Lorenzo, turn left into the Campo and go over the bridge of S. Lorenzo, down into the Fondamenta S. Lorenzo, first right then left into the Calle Larga S. Lorenzo, and right again under a tiny passageway into Calle Capello (this Palazzo Capello is *not* the one of the *Aspern Papers*). After the bridge turn left along the small Fondamenta S. Giovanni Laterano, at the end turn right into Calle S. Giovanni Laterano, left again along the little Fondamenta and right again taking the Ponte dell'Ospedaletto: walk straight ahead and then turn left. You are in **Campo SS. Giovanni e Paolo**, where you can stand in awe in front of the the **Bartolomeo Colleoni statue** on horseback, by Verrocchio, and think of the narrator of *The Aspern Papers,* descending from his gondola in front of the statue after wandering aimlessly to the Lido, having received the shock of Tina's revelation: he will be able to have the precious papers if they remain in the family, if the narrator marries her:

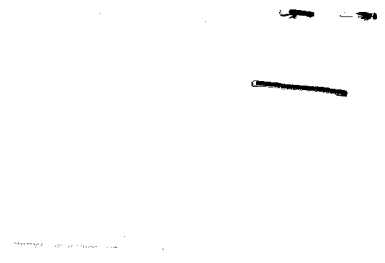
> I only know that in the afternoon, when the air was aglow with the sunset, I was standing before the church of Saints John and Paul and looking up at the small

Colleoni's momument near the Church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. Giovanni Pividor, *Souvenirs de Venise* (Venice: 1836), plate 18.

square-jawed face of Bartolommeo Colleoni, the terrible *condottiere* who sits so sturdily astride his huge bronze horse on the high pedestal on which Venetian gratitude maintains him. The statue is incomparable, the finest of all mounted figures, unless that of Marcus Aurelius, who rides benignant before the Roman Capitol, be finer; but I was not thinking of that; I only found myself staring at the triumphant captain as if he had an oracle on his lips. The western light shines into all his grimness at that hour and makes it wonderfully personal. But he continued to look far over my head, at the red immersion of another day – he had seen so many go down into the lagoon through centuries – and if he were thinking of battles and stratagems they were of a different quality from any I had to tell him of. He couldn't direct me what to do, gaze up at him as I might (*The Aspern Papers,* 295)

The fact that James did not describe at length the interior of the Gothic church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, where there is a gorgeous Giovanni Bellini altarpiece, might have to do with Ruskin's negative comments on some of the richly carved tombs of the *Dogi.*

Part II. From SS. Giovanni e Paolo to S.Cassiano.



Grimani Theater near Giovanni Grisostomo (Malibran Theater), interior view. Vincenzo Coronelli, *Singolarità di Venezia: I Palazzi* (Venice: ca. 1710).

From Campo SS. Giovanni e Paolo take the Fondamenta Dandolo, go over the Ponte Rosso, into Calle delle Erbe, over the bridge at its end (Ponte delle Erbe), left along the Fondamenta delle Erbe, over the next bridge and into Campo S. Marina; cross it sideways to the right, walk under the sottoportico into Calle Scaleta, walk all along the calle and over the bridge (Ponte Marco Polo) and you are at the back of the **Teatro Malibran**; keep going under the sottoportico into the Corte del Milion and again under the sottoportico del Teatro, on your right, to the front of the theatre, where James refused to go with the Gardners one sweltering evening to hear the opera *Maometto II,* by the Maestro Lorenzi-Fabris, with a libretto by Taddeo Wiel, as he wrote to Mrs. Curtis on July 10, 1892:

> They went (Mrs. Jack and her three friends and Mr. Jack) last night to a première at the Malibran – an opera with libretto by Viel, who had sent boxes and other blandishments. They roasted, I believe, all the more that they frantically applauded – while I met the wandering airs on the lagoon (*Letters III,* 390).

Walk a few steps away from the theatre and you are at the **San Giovanni Crisostomo Church.** Here you can admire the *St. Jerome, St. Christopher and St. Augustine* (1513) by Giovanni Bellini (first chapel on the right) and the *St. John Chrisostomos and the Saints Augustine, John the Baptist, Liberal, Mary Magdalene, Agnes and Catherine* (1509-1511) by Sebastiano dal Piombo, on the main altar:

> There is another noble John Bellini, one of the very few in which there is no Virgin, at San Giovanni Crisostomo – a St. Jerome, in a red dress, sitting aloft upon the rocks and with a landscape of extraordinary purity behind him. The absence of the peculiarly erect Madonna makes it an interesting surprise among the works of the painter and gives it a somewhat less strenuous air. But it has brilliant beauty and the St. Jerome is a delightful old personage.
> The same church contains another great picture for which the haunter of these places must find a shrine apart in his memory; one of the most interesting things he will have seen, if not the most brilliant. Nothing appeals more to him than the three figures of Venetian ladies which occupy the foreground of a smallish canvas of Sebastian del Piombo, placed over the high altar of San Giovanni Crisostomo. Sebastian was a Venetian by birth, but few of his productions are to be seen in his native place; few indeed are to be seen anywhere.

Church of San Giovanni Grisostomo.
Venezia monumentale pittoresca
(Venice: 1865), plate 50.

The picture represents the patron-saint of the church, accompanied by other saints and by the wordly votaries I have mentioned. These ladies stand together on the left, holding in their hands little white caskets; two of them are in profile, but the foremost turns her face to the spectator.This face and figure are almost unique among the beautiful things of Venice, and they leave the susceptible observer with the impression of having made, or rather having missed, a strange, a dangerous, but a most valuable acquaintance. The lady, who is superbly handsome, is the typical Venetian of the sixteenth century, and she remains for the mind the perfect flower of that society. Never was there a greater air of breeding, a deeper expression of tranquil superiority. She walks a goddess – as if she trod without sinking the waves of the Adriatic. It is impossible to conceive a more perfect expression of the aristocratic spirit either in its pride or in its benignity. This magnificent creature is so strong and secure that she is gentle, and so quiet that in comparison all minor assumptions of calmness suggest only a vulgar alarm. But for all this there are depths of possible disorder in her light-coloured eye (*Venice,* 26-27).

If the caskets are not really white, the one in the middle is now visibly a golden vessel, James's description is, as usual, fascinating: look at the lady, who might be Caterina Contarini Morosini, who commissioned the painting, and was buried with her son and husband in this church. Think also of James's similar wonderful imagining of the life of the young man represented in Titian's *Ritratto virile (Portrait of a Man)* in the Pitti at Florence.

Walk out of the main door of the church and turn left along the Salizzada San Canciano toward Rialto, over one bridge (Ponte dell'Olio); after the Salizzada del Fondaco dei Tedeschi (now the Post Office) you will find yourself in Campo S. Bartolomeo where the statue of Goldoni was celebrated by Browning in a sonnet on its inauguration. You are now in **the Rialto area**, where Merton Densher vaguely had rooms, just like James's friend Herbert Pratt.
Walk over the Rialto Bridge, and keep going straight ahead, to the Campo de le Beccarie, leaving to your right the fish market; walk over the bridge de le Beccarie into Calle de le Beccarie, then turn left into Calle dei Boteri and right into Calle del Cristo and into the Campo **S. Cassiano**. Enter the church and look at Tintoretto's *Crucifixion* on the right as you enter from the side door. On September 25 1869, James wrote to his

brother about this painting, defining it "the greatest of all", comparing it to the better known huge painting in the Scuola di San Rocco, and referring William to the description given by Ruskin. In *Travelling Companions* he used the painting to emphasize the different reactions of the two young people, describing it however at length. One can find James's own poetics in the description of this painting:

> The little boy arrived with the sacristan and his key, and we were ushered into the presence of Tintoretto's Crucifixion. This great picture is one of the greatest of the Venetian school. Tintoretto, the travelled reader will remember, has painted two masterpieces on this tremendous theme. The larger and more complex work is at the Scuola di San Rocco; the one of which I speak is small, simple, and sublime. It occupies the left side of the narrow choir of the shabby little church which we had entered, and is remarkable as being, with two or three exceptions, the best preserved work of its incomparable author. Never, in the whole range of art, I imagine, has so powerful an effect been produced by means so simple and select; never has the intelligent choice of means to an effect been pursued with such a refinement of perfection. The picture offers to our sight the very central essence of the great tragedy which it depicts. There is no swooning Madonna, no consoling Magdalene, no mockery of contrast, no cruelty of assembled host. We behold the silent summit of Calvary. To the right are the three crosses, that of the Saviour foremost. A ladder pitched against it supports a turbaned executioner, who bends downward to receive the sponge offered him by a comrade. Above the crest of the hill the helmets and spears of a line of soldiery complete the grimness of the scene. The reality of the picture is beyond all words: it is hard to say which is more impressive, the naked horror of the fact represented, or the sensible power of the artist (*Travelling Companions,* 205-6).

Walk back towards Rialto and take a boat either on the same side of the Grand Canal (S. Silvestro) or on the other side (Rialto boatstop).

Itinerary 3. From the Palazzo Barbaro to the Scuola di S. Rocco.

Palazzo Barbaro and adjoining palaces. Antonio Quadri. *Il Canal Grande di Venezia* (Venice: 1828).

Starting point: the **Palazzo Barbaro**'s land entrance, Fondamenta Barbaro 2840, just off Campo S. Stefano (nearest boatstops: S. Angelo or S. M. del Giglio). The land-entrance is at the south end of the Campo S. Stefano, at the end of a small quay, Fondamenta Barbaro, with a cul-de-sac canal, Rio de l'Orso, flowing into the Grand Canal. Look at the Gothic Portal which Ruskin (and James) loved and look up at the corner window on the highest floor: it is the window of the "divine old library" where Mrs. Gardner put a bed for James in 1892 and through which James could hear the voices of the children playing in the Campo, exactly as one does now:

> If in the absence of its masters you have happened to have it [the Palazzo Barbaro] to yourself for twenty-four hours you will never forget the charm of its haunted stillness, late on the summer afternoon for instance, when the call of playing children comes in behind from the campo, nor the way the old ghosts seemed to pass on tip-toe on the marble floors *(The Grand Canal,* 39).

On his 1887 visit James had written:

> I have been paying a long visit - long for me, who likes less and less as I grow older, to stay with people - to the Daniel Curtises, formerly of Boston but who have been living here for years and are the owners of this magnificent old palace – all marble and frescoes and portraits of Doges – a delightful habitation for hot weather (*Letters II*, June 16, 1887,188).

The references to this palace are too many even to try and select a few. The palace was to be James's favorite abode, and the inspiration for the Palazzo Leporelli, the splendid palace where Milly Theale lived what life she had left to live in *The Wings of the Dove.* Even its courtyard, with the grounded gondola, is full of charm, and its wonderful exterior staircase was described by James in one of his *Prefaces*: