

... I remember being not long before at work upon it [A London Life], remember in fact beginning it, in one of the wonderful faded back rooms of an old Venetian palace, a room with a pompous Tiepolo ceiling and walls of ancient pale-green damask, slightly shredded and patched, which, on the warm mornings, looked into the shade of a court where a high outer staircase, strikingly bold, yet strikingly relaxed, held together one scarce knew how; where the Gothic windows broke out, on discoloured blanks of wall, at quite arbitrary levels, and where above all the strong Venetian voice, full of history and humanity and waking perpetual echoes, seemed to say more in ten warm words, of whatever tone, than any twenty pages of one's cold pale prose. (*Preface to The Spoils of Poynton, A London Life, The Chaperon*, 1152)

Walk back towards the Campo, along the small canal, look right to the huge Palazzo Pisani, where William Wetmore Story "was still in time to see in its original place ... the splendid Paolo of the National Gallery which appears then to have been known by the charming, if slightly inconsequent, title of the Tent of Darius (*William Wetmore Story and his Friends*, 192), then turn left around the garden gate of the Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed Arti and into the Campo S. Vidal and to the **Accademia Bridge**. Stand on the bridge turning your back on the Galleries of the Accademia and look to your right: the second palace – after the Franchetti-Cavalli, Gothic but heavily restored in the 19th century – is the Barbaro (made of two buildings). Turn towards the Galleries and look across the Canal to your left: the small house near the unfinished Venier dei Leoni (Peggy Guggenheim Collection) is the **Casa Biondetti**. You can also see the Gothic **Palazzo Semitecolo**, towards the Salute. Walk down the bridge and go to the **Gallerie dell'Accademia** (see Museums, p. 63). Walking out of the Accademia, turn left into Calle Gambara, left into Calle Contarini Corfù, right over the Ponte de le Meravegie, straight ahead into Calle Toletta, right onto Fondamenta della Toletta, over Ponte Lombardo and into Campo S. Barnaba. Cross it towards the Canal, with the colorful fruit and vegetable boat moored nearby, take the first bridge on your right, Ponte dei Pugni, straight into the Rio terrà Canal and left into Campo S. Margherita. Cross the Campo to the right, towards the former church of S. Margherita with the cut-off campanile, over Ponte S. Margherita into Campo S. Pantalon. Turn right into Calle

S. Pantalon, left into Calle del Pistor and right into Calle drio la Scuola (Calle behind the Guild of S. Rocco), into Campo S. Rocco. Enter the **Scuola di San Rocco** first, then if you have time go into the church. The **Scuola** is the "temple of the

Church of Santa Maria della Carità (Accademia). *Le fabbriche, e vedute di Venetia disegnate, poste in prospettiva et intagliate da Luca Carlevarij* (Venice: 1703), plate 21.

The Church and the School of San Rocco.
J.G. Grævius, *Thesaurus antiquitatum et
historiarum Italiae* (1722), vol. IX, plate 28.

spirit" of Tintoretto, adored by Ruskin and James, which James – like Ruskin – visited at various times of the day to find the right light (morning light, afternoon light) for the paintings. The lighting is now artificial, and if you can see the paintings better, you don't have the change of natural light which was the norm in the past. However, the

restoration of the Scuola and of the paintings fortunately cancelled James's dire prophecy:

Nothing indeed can well be sadder than the great collection of Tintorets at San Rocco. Incurable blackness is settling fast upon all of them, and they frown at you across the sombre splendour of their great chambers like gaunt twilight phantoms of pictures. To our children's children Tintoret, as things are going, can hardly be more than a name; and such of them as shall miss the tragic beauty, already so dimmed and stained, of the great "Bearing of the Cross" in that temple of his spirit will live and die without knowing the largest eloquence of art (*Venice. An Early Impression*, 59-60).

Fortunately, you *will* be able to experience the stories of the *Annunciation*, the *Flight into Egypt* etc. on the first floor, and "the tragic beauty" of the huge *Crucifixion* on the second floor. The *Annunciation* (1587) was described by James during his first visit:

One of his works that has much struck me is a large *Annunciation*, immensely characteristic of this unlikeness to other painters. To the right sits the Virgin, starting back from her angelic visitant with magnificent surprise and terror. The Angel swoops down into the picture, leading a swarm of cherubs, not as in most cases where the subject is treated, as if he had come to pay her a pretty compliment but with a fury characteristic of his tremendous message (*Letters I*, 141)

What struck James immediately in the *Crucifixion* in the Sala dell'Albergo, on the second floor, was Tintoretto's ability to tell many stories in one, huge painting:

...in looking at this huge composition you look at many pictures; it has not only a multitude of figures but a wealth of episodes; and you pass from one of these to the other as if you were "doing" a gallery. Surely no single picture in the world contains more of human life; there is everything in it, including the most exquisite beauty. It is one of the

greatest things of art; it is always interesting. There are works of the artist which contain touches more exquisite, revelations of beauty more radiant, but there is no other vision of so intense a reality, an execution so splendid (*Venice*, 21-22).

It was the whole scene that Tintoret seemed to have beheld in a flash of inspiration intense enough to stamp it ineffaceably on his perception; and it was the whole scene, complete, peculiar, individual, unprecedented that he committed to canvas with all the vehemence of his talent.

...
You get from Tintoret's work the impression that he *felt*, pictorially, the great, beautiful, terrible spectacle of human life very much as Shakespeare felt it poetically – with a heart that never ceased to beat a passionate accompaniment to every stroke of his brush (*Venice: An Early Impression*, 59).

You may also like to see the Church of San Rocco (but it is the Scuola which is the great place). Walking out of Scuola di San Rocco walk to the right and you find yourself behind the apse of the **Frari Church**: walk around it and enter the Church. On the main altar you can admire *The Assumption* by Titian, which James found a "magnificent second-rate picture", perhaps following Ruskin's dislike, when he saw it in the Accademia, where the huge painting was transferred between 1816 and 1919. What enchanted James was the (beautiful) Giovanni Bellini triptych on the main altar of the **Sacristy**, at the far end of the right transept, "the treasure of that apartment", *Virgin with Child and Angels Musicians, between Four Saints* (1488). Don't miss it:

There is not a ray in his works of debility or vagueness of conception. In vigor, breadth and richness he is a thorough Venetian. His best pictures here possess an extraordinary perfection. Everything is equal – the full deep beauty of the expression – the masterly – more than masterly firmness and purity of the drawing – and the dimmed, unfathomed lucidity and richness of colour. And then over it all the sort of pious deference has passed and hushed and smoothed and polished till the effect is of unspeakable purity. He has hardly more than one subject – the Virgin and Child, alone, or enthroned and attended

with Saints and cherubs; but you will be slow to tire of him, for long after you've had enough of his piety there is food for delight in the secret marvels of his handling (*Letters III*, September 25, 1869, 139).

How is it possible to forget one's visit to the sacristy of the Frari,

The Frari Church. *Le fabbriche, e vedute di Venetia diseguate, poste in prospettiva et intagliate da Luca Carlevarij* (Venice: 1703), plate 23.

however frequent they may have been, and the great work of John Bellini which forms the treasure of that apartment?

(...)

Nothing in Venice is more perfect than this, and we know of no work of art more complete. The picture is in three compartments: the Virgin sits in the central division with her child; two venerable saints, standing close together, occupy each of the others. It is impossible to imagine anything more finished or more ripe. It is one of those things that sum up the genius of a painter, the experience of a life, the teaching of a school. It seems painted with molten gems, which have only been clarified by time, and it is as solemn as it is gorgeous and simple as it is deep. Giovanni Bellini is more or less everywhere in Venice, and, wherever he is, almost certain to be first – first, I mean, in his own line: he paints little else than the Madonna and saints; he has not Carpaccio's care for human life at large, nor the Tintoret's nor that of the Veronese. Some of his greater pictures, however, where several figures are clustered together, have a richness of sanctity that is almost profane (*Venice*, 25).

You can go back to boatstop S. Tomà and take a vaporetto there.

Itinerary 4. The Grand Canal.

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). Board **boat n. 1 in front of Hotel Danieli**. If the boat is not crowded (which it mostly is in the summer), sit up front, or stand outside, or sit at the back in the open air and look at *both* sides of the Grand Canal, all the way down to the Station (some vaporetti do not have front seats). Quotations for this itinerary are all taken from the essay *The Grand Canal*, unless a different indication is added.

St. Mark: the Piazzetta. Francesco Zanotto, *Venezia prospettica, monumentale, storica, artistica*. (Venice: 1856), plate 4.

As the boat approaches the Grand Canal you will see on your left the **Punta della Dogana** (former customhouse) with the golden globe and the figure of Fortune on its top, and on the other side a series of hotels, just as James wrote:

The charming architectural promontory of the Dogana stretches out the most graceful of arms, balancing in its hand the gilded globe on which revolves the delightful satirical figure of a little weathercock of a woman. This Fortune, this Navigation, or whatever she is called – she surely needs no name – catches the wind in the bit of drapery of which she has divested her rotary bronze loveliness. On the other side of the Canal twinkles and glitters the long row of the happy palaces which are now expensive hotels (33-34).

Immediately after, on the same side (left side of the Grand Canal) comes up the great mass of Longhena's **Church of the Salute**, in the Sacristy of which there is a Tintoretto which James loved; use the time during which the boat stops at the Salute to

Church of Santa Maria della Salute.
Le fabbriche, e vedute di Venetia disegnate, poste in prospettiva et intagliate da Luca Carlevarijs (Venice: 1703), plate 5.

look across at **Casa Alvisi**, which is the pink building at the left of Hotel Europa-Regina, and on the right of the Gothic Contarini. It has a sort of terrace on the right, built after James's time. This was the home of Mrs. Bronson, where James stayed in 1887. From the Salute steps you can

pick straight out of the row a dear little featureless house which, with its pale green shutters, looks straight across at the great door and through the very keyhole, as it were, of the church, and which I needn't call by a name – a pleasant American name – that every one in Venice, these many years, has had on grateful lips. It is the very friendliest house in all the wide world, and it has, as it deserves to have, the most beautiful position. It is a real *porto di mare*, as the gondoliers say – a port within a port; it sees everything that comes and goes, and takes it all in with practised eyes. Not a tint or a hint of the immense iridescence is lost upon it, and there are days of exquisite colour on which it may fancy itself the heart of the wonderful prism. We wave to it from the Salute steps, which we must decidedly leave if we wish to get on, a grateful hand across the water... (35).

Casa Alvisi is directly opposite the high, broad-based florid church of S. Maria della Salute – so directly that from the balcony over the water-entrance your eye, crossing the canal, seems to find the keyhole of the great door right in a line with it; and there was something in this position that for the time made all Venice-lovers think of the genial *padrona* as thus levying in the most convenient way the toll of curiosity and sympathy (*Casa Alvisi*, 77-78).

At the back of Casa Alvisi there was the **Palazzo Giustiniani Recanati**, where both James and Robert Browning were Mrs. Bronson's guests. The space is now taken up by a modern building.

As the boat moves on, you will see the **Abbazia di San Gregorio**, the first building to the right of the Salute (same side), where there were the Bagni Chitarin (see p. 5), and about six palaces down from it, the Gothic **Palazzo Semitecolo**, which you can identify as the first Gothic palace on the left of the Casa Salviati, which is decorated by a big mosaic. This is the place where Constance Fenimore Cooper committed suicide in 1894. Two palaces down from the Salviati, you will see the **Palazzo Dario**, recognizable by its marble-inlaid facade, with three big round marble decorations, one on each floor:

Palazzo Corner (Ca' Granda). *Memorie di alcune più celebri fabbriche e situazioni di Venezia* (Venice: 1831) plate 31.

...the delightful little Palazzo Dario, intimately familiar to English and American travellers, picks itself out in the foreshortened brightness. The Dario is covered with the loveliest little marble plates and sculptured circles; it is made up of exquisite pieces – as if there had been only enough to make it small – so that it looks, in its extreme antiquity, a good deal like a house of cards that hold together by a tenure it would be fatal to touch. An old Venetian house dies hard indeed, and I should add that this delicate thing, with submission in every feature, continues to resist the contact of generations of lodgers. It is let out in floors (it used to be let as a whole) and in how many eager hands – for it is in great requisition – under how many fleeting dispensations have we not known and loved it? People are always writing in advance to secure the Jenkins's gondolier, and as the gondola passes we see strange faces at the windows – though it's ten to one we recognise them – and the millionth artist coming forth with his traps at the watergate. The poor little Dario is one of the most flourishing booths at the fair (45-46).

This palace was the house of historian Rawdon Brown from 1838 to 1842.

In the meantime turn to the right side and you will see the enormous pile of the palace **Corner de la Ca' Granda**, built by Jacopo Sansovino (work began in 1533, and the building was not finished in 1556), still the seat of the Prefettura:

The faces at the window [of Palazzo Dario] look out at the great Sansovino – the splendid pile that is now occupied by the Prefect. I feel decidedly that I don't object as I ought to the palaces of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Their pretensions impose upon me, and the imagination peoples them more freely than it can people the interior of the prime. Was not moreover this masterpiece of Sansovino once occupied by the Venetian post-office, and thereby intimately connected with an ineffaceable first impression of the author of these remarks? He had arrived, wondering, palpitating, twenty-three years ago, after nightfall, and, the first thing on the morrow, had repaired to the post-office for his letter (46).

James clearly reacts to Ruskin's vetoes on this kind of buildings, admitting that he likes it. At the end of the passage he wondered whether he had "misdirected his emotion" in identifying this as the post-office to which he had rushed in 1869. He had. The post-office was the Palazzo Grimani, also on the Grand Canal, near Rialto, built by Sanmicheli, similar in style.

Turn your attention now again to the other side of the Canal where you will identify easily the unfinished Palazzo Venier dai Leoni, now the Peggy Guggenheim Collection: the first modest house on its right is the **Casa Biondetti**, where James lived and worked as the literary executor of Constance Fenimore Woolson's papers after her suicide in 1894; across the Rio di San Vio, the big **Palazzo Loredan** (now Cini) was the house of Don Carlos, the pretender to the throne of Spain, mentioned by James as a member of Venetian society.

After a big garden, on the same side, the second palace before the bridge of the Accademia is the **Contarini dal Zaffo** (1562-1582), then Manzoni, Angaran, and at the time **Montecuccoli**, now Polignac-Decazes, the palace that Robert Browning almost bought.

Far-descended and weary, but beautiful in its crooked old age, with its lovely proportions, its delicate round arches, its carvings and disks of marble, is the haunted Montecuculi. Those who have a kindness for Venetian gossip like to remember that it was once for a few months the property of Robert Browning, who, however, never lived in it, and who died in the splendid Rezzonico (42).

Palazzo Barbaro, lithograph, Giuseppe Moro, from a drawing by Marco Moro. Giovanni Jacopo Fontana, *Venezia Monumentale. I palazzi*, Venezia, 1847.

Across from it, on the opposite side of the Grand Canal, again the second palace before the Accademia Bridge, is the **Palazzo Barbaro** (the windows of the second *piano nobile* are boarded up with planks). It is a palace made of a Gothic one, to the left,

and a later one (to the right): the big salon where James had tea was built by architect Antonio Gaspari at the end of the seventeenth century uniting the two buildings. The Palazzo Barbaro balcony provides the recurring point of view in the essay *The Grand Canal*. You can clearly discern the water entrance (to the left, near the small canal), where the Curtises's gondola would drop the Curtises, James, the Gardners, off. The Curtises bought the second *piano nobile* and the upper part of the house in 1885; the first piano nobile and the mezzanino were owned by Countess Pisani, née Evelyn van Millingen, the beautiful woman who, appearing in a box at the Fenice dressed in oriental clothes, at eighteen, conquered and married the last of the Pisani, Almorò. She had been born in Constantinople and educated in Rome. James met her when she was no longer young, and found her still fascinating and beautiful.

Behind the series of windows of the second *piano nobile*, you can imagine Milly Theale, with her "thorough make-believe of a settlement", walking among the stucco-works and the paintings of the great *cameron*:

Not yet so much as this morning had she felt herself sink into possession; gratefully glad that the warmth of the Southern summer was still in the high florid rooms, palatial chambers where hard cool pavements took reflexions in their lifelong polish, and where the sun on the stirred sea-water, flickering up through the open windows, played over the painted "subjects" in the splendid ceilings – medallions of purple and brown, of brave old melancholy colour, medals as of old reddened gold, embossed and beribboned, all toned with time and all flourished and scolloped and gilded about (a nest of white cherubs, friendly creatures of the air) and appreciated by the aid of a second tier of smaller lights, straight opening to the front (*The Wings of the Dove*, 260).

Leaving behind the Palazzo Barbaro, you will pass now under the wooden **Accademia Bridge**, which has replaced the "deplorable iron bridge" (1854) of James's time. To your left you can see the **Scuola della Carità and Accademia Galleries** (see p. 63). On the other side of the Canal, the **Palazzetto Falier**, with two covered terraces on the sides, used to be one of the houses where W. D. Howells, the author of *Venetian Life*, a book much appreciated by James, lived for a while. On the opposite side, three palaces

Palazzo Grassi. Francesco Zanotto, *Venezia prospettica, monumentale, storica, artistica*. (Venice: 1856), plate 21

down from the Accademia, you will see the two palaces **Contarini dagli Scrigni-Corfù**, those Mr. Russell Peabody wanted, according to James, to “knock into one”:

Mr. Peabody-Russell of the U.S. has just bought two Contarini palaces, and is going to “knock them into one”! I tremble for what that one will be (*LPB*, 81, Feb. 27, 1887).

Fortunately this did not happen.

Across from it the large Palazzo Grassi, in James's time a hotel. On the left side of the Grand Canal, you will see the huge pile of the **Ca' Rezzonico**, begun by Baldassarre Longhena in 1667, one of the palaces Ruskin could not stand as an example of the “Grotesque Renaissance” (after the death of Longhena in 1682, building was continued by A. Gaspari, and finished by Giorgio Massari in 1758). It was bought by Pen Browning in 1888, and decorated with his own pretty awful statues and frescoes. Pen sold it in 1906 after his divorce from his wife Fanny, whose money had bought the palace, all of it. Before the Brownings, the Rezzonico had been used as studios for painters, including John S. Sargent. Robert Browning died there on December 12, 1889. It is now the Museum of 18th century Venice.

This great seventeenth century pile, throwing itself upon the water with a peculiar florid assurance, a certain upward toss of its cornice which gives it the air of a rearing sea-horse, decorates immensely – and within, as well as without – the wide angle that it commands (42-43).

What Pen Browning has done here, through his American wife's dollars, with the splendid Palazzo Rezzonico, transcends description for the beauty, and, as Ruskin would

Ca' Rezzonico. *Venezia monumentale pittoresca* (Venice, 1865), plate 9.

say, “wisdom and rightness” of it. It is altogether royal and imperial – but “Pen” isn't kingly and the *train de vie* remains to be seen. Gondoliers ushering in friends from pensions won't fill it out (*Letters III*, 287, June 6, 1890, to Alice James).

James had initially declared that Pen had filled the Rezzonico with “hideous luxuries”. On the same side of the Grand Canal, two buildings away from the Rezzonico, the Gothic Brandolin (also the residence of Howells) is followed by two Gothic palaces. The second, on the Rio Nuovo, is the just-restored **Ca' Foscari**, now the seat of the University of Venice:

There is a more formal greatness in the high square Gothic Foscari, just below it [the Ca' Rezzonico], one of the noblest creations of the fifteenth century, a masterpiece of symmetry and majesty. Dedicated to-day to official uses – it is the property of the State – it looks conscious of the consideration it enjoys, and is one of the few great houses within our range whose old age strikes us as robust and painless. It is visibly “kept up”; perhaps it is kept up too much; perhaps I am wrong in thinking so well of it. These doubts and fears course rapidly through my mind – I am easily their victim when it is a question of architecture – as they are apt to-day, in Italy, almost anywhere, in the presence of the beautiful, of the desecrated or the neglected. We feel at such moments as if the eye of Mr. Ruskin were upon us; we grow nervous and lose our confidence (43).

Ca' Foscari was sold to the Comune (municipality), not to the state, in 1845. It became the Scuola Superiore di Commercio in 1868, located from 1870 in this palace. After the curve of the Grand Canal, on the right, you will see the **Palazzi Mocenigo**, with a plaque to commemorate Byron's Venetian stay:

It was not dull, we imagine, for Lord Byron, who lived in the midst of the three Mocenigo palaces, where the writing-table is still shown at which he gave the rein to his passions (48).

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

You then proceed further towards Rialto, leaving behind the Gothic **Palazzo Garzoni**, practically across from the S. Tomà boatstop, where the antique-dealer Richetti used to have his shop: James may have gone there with Mrs. Gardner. It is, for the time being, the place where this pamphlet came out of, the Department of American Studies of the University of Venice, Ca' Foscari.

On the way to Rialto, to your left, with one side on the Rio di S. Polo and one on the Grand Canal, is **Palazzo Cappello**, in James's time the house where Sir Henry Austen Layard, the diplomat and discoverer of Niniveh, and his wife Enid Guest Layard, lived, with a wonderful collection of paintings, including the *Mahomet II* by Gentile Bellini, now at the National Gallery in London. James was taken for tea to Lady Layard's by Mrs. Curtis, for instance on June 22, 1907, as Lady Layard wrote in her diary. She had met James at the Princess of Montenegro's, in Venice, on June 1, 1887, and had seen him again in London.

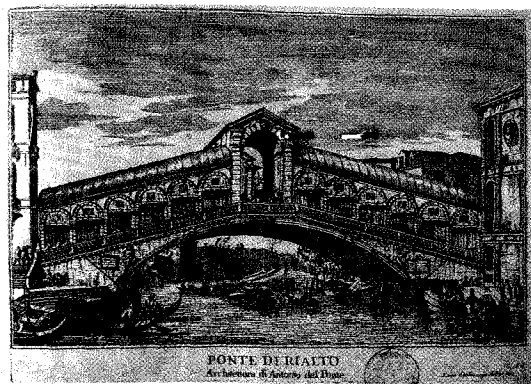
Before getting to the Rialto bridge, you can see the huge **Palazzo Grimani**, at the time the post-office James misremembered; three buildings down from it, immediately behind the no. 1 vaporetto boatstop Rialto, on the right, the **Palazzo Loredan** is still the Municipio, as in James's time:

For other observers it [the perspective from the Accademia to Rialto] is sufficiently enlivened by so delightful a creation as the Palazzo Loredan, once a masterpiece and at present the Municipio, not to speak of a variety of other immemorial bits whose beauty still has a degree of freshness. Some of the most touching relics of early Venice are here – for it was here she precariously clustered – peeping out of a submersion more pitiless than the sea. As we approach the Rialto indeed the picture falls off and a comparative commonness suffuses it. There is a wide paved walk on either side of the Canal, on which the waterman – and who in Venice is not a waterman? – is prone to seek repose. I speak of the summer days – it is summer Venice that is the visible Venice. The big tarry barges are drawn up at the *fondamenta*, and the bare-legged boatmen in faded blue cotton, lie asleep on the hot stones (48).

James identifies correctly the **Rialto** (Rivo alto: high bank) as the oldest part of the original city. You continue to the bridge:

The Bridge of Rialto is a name to conjure with, but, honestly speaking, it is scarcely the gem of the composition. There are of

The Rialto Bridge. *Le fabbriche, e vedute di Venetia disegnate, poste in prospettiva et intagliate da Luca Carlevarij* (Venice: 1703), plate 55.



course two ways of taking it – from the water or from the upper passage, where its small shops and booths abound in Venetian character; but it mainly counts as a feature of the Canal when seen from the gondola or even from the awful *vaporetto*. The great curve of its single arch is much to be commended, especially when, coming from the direction of the railway-station, you see it frame with its sharp compass-line the perfect picture, the reach of the Canal on the other side. But the backs of the little shops make from the water a graceless collective hump, and the inside view is the diverting one. The big arch of the bridge – like the arches of all the bridges – is the waterman's friend in wet weather. The gondolas, when it rains, huddle beside the peopled barges, and the young ladies from the hotels, vaguely fidgeting, complain of the communication of insect life (49).

Past the bridge, on your left, you will see the **fruit and vegetable market**, and if it is early morning you will see what James decried:

The produce of the islands is discharged there, and the fishmongers announce their presence. All one's senses indeed are vigorously attacked; the whole place is violently hot and bright, all odorous and noisy (49).

Past the bridge and the markets, the next huge palace on your left, past the big **Corner (or Cornaro) della Regina** (la "regina" being Catharine, Queen of Cyprus), before you get to the San Stae boatstop, is the **Ca' Pesaro**, traditionally attributed to Baldassarre Longhena, now the Museum of Modern Art. James liked it, in spite of Ruskin:

I have even a timid kindness for the huge Pesaro, far down the Canal, whose main reproach, more even than the coarseness of its forms, is its swaggering size, its want of consideration for the general picture, which the early examples so reverently respect. The Pesaro is as far out of the frame as a modern hotel, and the Cornaro, close to it, oversteps almost equally the modesty of art. One more thing they and their kindred do, I must add, for which, unfortunately, we can patronise them less. They make even the most elaborate material civilisation of the present day seem woefully shrunken and *bourgeois*, for they simply – I allude to the biggest palaces – can't be lived in as they were intended to be. The modern tenant may take in all the magazines, but he bends not the bow of Achilles. He occupies the place, but he doesn't fill it, and he has guests from the neighbouring inns with ulsters and Baedekers (47).

On the other side the **Ca' d'Oro** is next to boatstop Ca' d'Oro, just as James wrote:

As we go further down we see it [the vaporetto] stopping exactly beneath the glorious windows of the Ca' d'Oro. It has chosen its position well, and who shall gainsay it for having put itself under the protection of the most romantic façade in Europe? The companionship of these objects is a symbol; it expresses supremely the present and the future of Venice. Perfect, in its prime, was the marble Ca' d'Oro, with the noble recesses of its *loggie*, but even then it probably never "met a want", like the successful *vaporetto* (50).

View of the Fondaco de Turchi.
Il gran teatro di Venezia (Venice,
D. Lovisa, 1717), plate 19.

The vaporetti started plying the Grand Canal in 1881. The rest of the trip James described as follows, pausing at the **Vendramin-Calergi**, where the grandson of Charles X of France, the duke of Chambord, lived, and where Richard Wagner died in 1883:

The rest of the course is a reduced magnificence, in spite of interesting bits, of the battered pomp of the Pesaro and the Cornaro, of the recurrent memories of royalty in exile which cluster about the Palazzo Vendramin Calergi, once the residence of the Comte de Chambord (51).

On the other side the **Fondaco dei Turchi**, "which rears a staring renovated front", actually disfigured by the nineteenth century restorations, was then used to house part of the Correr Collection (now in the Correr Museum in Piazza San Marco):

Even we ourselves, in the irresistible contagion, are going so fast now that we have only time to note in how clever and costly a fashion the Museo Civico, the old Fondaco dei Turchi, has been reconstructed and restored. It is a glare of white marble without and a series of showy majestic halls within, where a thousand curious mementos and relics of old Venice are gathered and classified (50).

As the boat proceeds past S. Stae, the **Rio di Cannaregio** flows from the right into the Canal Grande, and you will see the apse of the **church of S. Geremia** and observe:

... that we are passing the mouth of the populous Canareggio, next widest of the waterways, where the race of Shylock abides, and at the corner of which the big colourless church of San Geremia stands gracefully enough on guard (51).

The boat is now approaching the **Bridge of the Scalzi** (1934), now a stone one, an Austrian iron one from 1858 in James's time. The **Church of the Scalzi** will appear to your right, behind the boatstop Ferrovia, and the **Church of San Simeone Profeta** across from it. The Church of the Scalzi was built on a plan by Longhena (1654) and continued by Giuseppe Sardi (1672-1678):

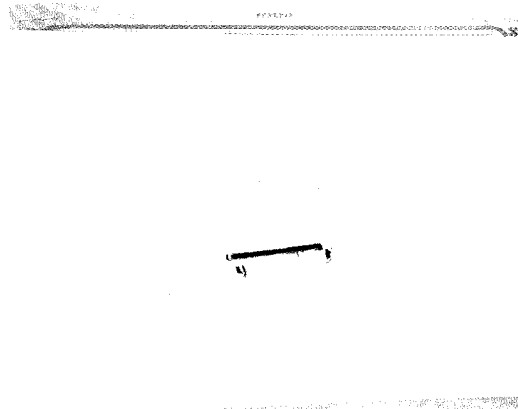
The rococo church of the Scalzi is here, all marble and malachite, all a cold, hard glitter and a costly, curly ugliness, and here too, opposite, on the top of its high steps, is San Simeone

Profeta, I won't say immortalised, but unblushingly misrepresented, by the perfidious Canaletto. I shall not stay to unravel the mystery of this prosaic painter's malpractices; he falsified without fancy, and as he apparently transposed at will the objects he reproduced, one is never sure of the particular view that may have constituted his subject. It would look exactly like such and such a place if almost everything were not different. San Simeone Profeta appears to hang there upon the wall; but it is on the wrong side of the Canal and the other elements fail to correspond (51-52).

James did not ever really get to like the eighteenth century, including Canaletto, and, even if he does mention the interior of the Scalzi, which he obviously did not like, he seems not to have even looked at the huge Tiepolo ceiling, which had not yet been destroyed by a bomb (1915) in his time.

The rest of the Grand Canal is not even mentioned by James, as the terminal of Piazzale Roma did not exist.

Itinerary 5. From San Marcuola to the Madonna dell'Orto and the Ghetto.



Madonna dell'Orto church. *Venezia monumentale pittoresca* (Venice, 1865), plate 11.

You can interrupt itinerary 4 at **boatstop San Marcuola**. Walk straight ahead from the boatstop, turn left along the side of the church and right into Rio Terrà del Cristo, continue straight ahead into the Rio Terrà Favretti, over the Ponte Ca' Loredan, right onto the Fondamenta degli Ormesini, and take the first street to your left, Calle del Forno. Walk all the way down to the Ponte del Forno, turn right on the Fondamenta della Sensa, take the first street to your left, Calle Loredan, continue over the

Ponte Loredan, and you will see the big church of **Madonna dell'Orto**. In the Church admire the various paintings by Tintoretto which James loved, in particular the *Presentation of the Virgin* (1552):

To compare his [Tintoretto's] *Presentation of the Virgin*, at the Madonna dell'Orto, with Titian's at the Academy, or his [Tintoretto's] *Annunciation with Titian's close at hand*, is to measure the essential difference between observation and imagination (*Venice: An Early Impression*, 59).

The other famous works by Tintoretto in the church are the *Adoration of the Golden Calf* and *The Day of Doom*, and on the organ doors *The Martyrdom of St. Christopher* and *The Apparition of the Cross*.

On the way out of the church you can walk to **the Ghetto**, "where the race of Shylock abides", and then take one of the boats circling the city at Rio di Cannaregio. The Ghetto was a very poor area of the city, where poor non-Jewish people started living at the end of the 1860s because of low rents. It was one of the area unfrequented by wealthy people.

Itinerary 6. From the Station to the Palazzo Cappello in Rio Marin.

This is the walk to the **Palazzo Soranzo Cappello in Rio Marin** (end of the 16th, beginning of the 17th century), the palace that James "had more or less in mind", as he wrote to photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn in 1906, when Coburn was to take pictures for the New York Edition of James's novels. The Palazzo Cappello in James's time was where Constance Fletcher (1858-1938) lived, "at periods (with her infirm old mother and her mother's second husband, Eugene Benson)". Miss Fletcher was the author of a very successful novel, *Kismet, a Nile Novel* (1877), published with the pseudonym George Fleming. Her mother had eloped when Constance was nine, with her and her brother's tutor, a painter, Eugene Benson (1839-1908). Constance had gone with them. Benson exhibited several times at the Venice Biennale. You can either walk through labyrinthine alleys from **Rialto or boatstop S.Stae**, or find your way easily from the station boatstop, both jamesian routes:

Your best way to get to the Rio Marin will be to obtain guidance, for a few coppers, from some alert Venetian street-boy (or of course you can go, romantically, in a gondola). But the extremely tortuous and complicated walk – taking Piazza San Marco as a starting point – will show you so much, so many bits and odds and ends, such a revel of Venetian picturesqueness, that I advise you doing it on foot as much as possible. You go almost as if you were going to the Station to come out at the end of the bridge opposite the same. Now that I think of it indeed your best way, for shortness, will be to go by Vaporetto, or little steamboat, which plies every few minutes on the Grand Canal, straight to the Stazione, and there crossing the big contiguous iron bridge, walk to the Rio Marin in three or four minutes. It is the old faded, battered-looking, and quite homely and plain (as things go in Venice) old Palazzino on the right of the small Canal, a little way along, as you enter it by the end of the Canal towards the Station. It has a garden behind it, and I think, though I am not sure, some bit of a garden-wall beside it; it doesn't moreover bathe its steps, if I remember right, directly in the Canal, but has a small paved Riva or footway in front of it, and *then* water-steps down from this little quay (*Letters, IV, 426-7*).

James remembered exactly the position of the fondamenta and the riva of the palace. Of course the station bridge is now a stone one, not an iron bridge. If you decide to follow James's instructions, going on foot, and starting perhaps from Rialto rather than San Marco, just follow the signs and arrows to "Ferrovia" (Railway station), always following the arrows to the right when the sign has arrows pointing both to the right and the left. If you decide to take the easier way, from the vaporetto stop of the Station: cross the Grand Canal bridge (Ponte degli Scalzi), walk straight ahead into the Calle Longa, then left into Calle Bergama and over the iron bridge (Ponte Bergama), and you will find yourself on the Fondamenta dei Garzoti, facing the **Palazzo Cappello**, now not at all dilapidated, but the restored seat of the offices of the Sovrintendenza ai Beni Artistici del Veneto. You will see it there:

View of the Palazzo Soranzo-Cappello
seen from the water. Vincenzo Coronelli,
Singolarità di Venezia. I Palazzi
(Venice: ca. 1710), plate 176.

The gondola stopped, the old palace was there; it was a house of the class which in Venice carries even in extreme dilapidation the dignified name. "How charming! It's grey and pink!" my companion exclaimed; and that is the most comprehensive description of it. It was not particularly old, only two or three centuries; and it had an air not so much of decay as of quiet discouragement, as if it had rather missed its career. But its wide front, with a stone balcony from end to end of the *piano nobile* or most important floor, was architectural enough, with the aid of various pilasters and arches; and the stucco with which in the intervals it had long ago been endued was rosy in the April afternoon. It overlooked a clean, melancholy, rather lonely canal, which had a narrow *riva* or convenient footway on either side (*The Aspern Papers*, 169).

The garden can be seen on the right of the palazzo, and at the back; in James's time it used to be much, much bigger, stretching all the way to the Church of San Simeon Grando. The 20th century housing project by the famous architect Giuseppe Samonà has taken up quite a lot of the garden. Walk back to Rialto or take a boat at the Station.

View of the Palazzo Soranzo-Cappello
seen from the garden. Vincenzo Coronelli,
Singolarità di Venezia. I Palazzi
(Venice: ca. 1710), plate 176.

TRIPS: To the Islands.

Itinerary 7. To the Lido.

Starting point: any boat (n.1, 82, 51) from the Riva degli Schiavoni.

As we mentioned the Lido changed enormously even in James's lifetime. From the early 80s bathing facilities started to become popular, and in the course of the 90s, and later, the whole of the Lido was totally built up. In his first 1869 visit James enjoyed it as a kind of solitary Newport. People used to go to the Lido in a gondola: Browning did so regularly in the Curtises' gondola, the Evanses of *Travelling Companions* also did so, and of course the distraught narrator of *The Aspern Papers* does so towards the end of the story:

At last, I became conscious that we were near the Lido, far up, on the right hand, as you turn your back to Venice, and I made him put me ashore. I wanted to walk, to move, to shed some of my bewilderment. I crossed the narrow strip and got to the sea-beach – I took my way toward Malamocco. But presently I flung myself down again on the warm sand, in the breeze, on the coarse, dry grass (*The Aspern Papers*, 292-3).

You will not be put ashore near Malamocco, taking any boat from Riva degli Schiavoni. You will land at S. M. Elisabetta, from which a no longer "rough lane" – but rather a "third rate boulevard" – takes you to the sea: at the far end you will find beaches both to the right (the Des Bains of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, the Excelsior further on), and to the left (less elegant but perfectly pleasant). The Lido has practically lost its identity as an island of sand dunes and orchards: a little of this can still be found near Malamocco (bus or bike), where there is also a lovely church and a small village:

Along a narrow line in the middle of the island are market-gardens and breeze-twisted orchards, and a hint of hedges and lanes and inland greenery (*Travelling Companions*, 200).

James found it spoiled after his first visit:

You go to the Lido, though the Lido has been spoiled. When I first saw it, in 1869, it was a very natural place, and there was but a rough lane across the little island from the landing-place to the beach. There was a bathing-place in those days, and a restaurant, which was very bad, but where in the warm evening your dinner didn't much matter as you sat letting it cool on the wooden terrace that stretched out into the sea. To-day the Lido is a part of united Italy and has been made the victim of villanous improvements. A little cockney village has sprung up on its rural bosom and a third-rate boulevard leads from Santa Elisabetta to the Adriatic. There are bitumen walks and gas-lamps, lodging-houses, shops and a *teatro diurno* (*Venice*, 28).