



Itinerary 1. Around St. Mark's and to the Fenice Theatre.

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).