



fig. 1 James Wilson Morrice, **The Flower Seller**, 1901, oil on panel, 13 x 15cm, Thomson Works of Art, Toronto. (Photo: Thomson Works of Art, PC0155)

JAMES WILSON MORRICE IN VENICE

The Campiello delle Ancore

The city most associated with the paintings of James Wilson Morrice (1865-1924) is Paris; it was his principle residence for most of his life and the only place where he maintained a permanent studio. Venice, however, is second to Paris in terms of the number of Morrice's urban images. Although he made only a few trips to Italy at the turn of the nineteenth century, Venice is the subject of over one hundred paintings (panels and canvases) and an almost equal number of drawings. There is much to suggest that these numbers could increase if and when more works come to light, especially from private collections here and abroad. Another factor that would provide more knowledge of Morrice's Venetian images is a reconsideration of the sites of artworks that are already in the public eye. This article will deal with one such example, a small panel (fig.1) in the Thomson Works of Art Collection in Toronto.¹ It was first reproduced as *The Flower Seller* in the monograph on Morrice by the Toronto art dealer Blair Laing, where he describes the setting: "Among the most pleasing and colourful street sights in Paris are the flower vendors' markets. This one is located in front of the elegant midtown buildings on the rue Royale, or perhaps on an avenue near the Madeleine."²

The painting, however, is identifiable as an image of Venice at first glance. The largest figure in the painting wears a long dark shawl that was a characteristic item of dress for ordinary Venetian women. The *scialle* (in Italian) or *siàl* (in Venetian) immediately situates the woman in the region of the Veneto and within her social status amongst the city's *popolani*, the largest and lowest class of Venetian citizens also known as *minore veneziana* (fig.2). Granted, the architectural setting of the women gathered near a small fruit and vegetable stand is not as obviously Venetian as the clothing. A primary clue to the location, however, is the darkened opening at the left, a perfect example of a covered passageway running beneath a Venetian building and known as a *sottoportego*. The sottoportego permits easy access from one open space to another and functions as a short cut, allowing people "to go by the hidden ways" (*andare per le sconte*), and to avoid crowded thoroughfares. They also provide for more inhabitable space above the passageway as buildings extend over the lane.

Nevertheless, the misidentification of the site as Parisian is certainly understandable. The place of the painting has little to do with the geographical settings of Morrice's better-known Venetian images, most of which display the



fig. 2 Postcard, *Venezia. Erberia* (Rialto Market), early 1900s, Photo-Studies Fred. W. Martin, Venezia. (Photo: the author)

city's most famous landmarks. The majority of his paintings and drawings indicate the Piazza San Marco, the adjoining Piazzetta and the long promenade of the Riva degli Schiavoni that extends eastwards along the waters of the Bacino di San Marco. His other favoured subjects are the large buildings or *palazzi* along the Grand Canal near the Rialto Bridge. The Thomson panel, however, is one of the few Morrice views of Venice that differs from these popular tourist sites. Instead, it records a place that was rarely mentioned in Venetian travel literature or illustrated in popular commercial photograph albums of the time: the Campiello delle Ancore.³

The Campiello delle Ancore is a small rectangular space (fig.3) located at the eastern end of the monumental Via Garibaldi in the borough or *sestiere* of Castello.⁴ It is adjacent to the Fondamenta Sant' Anna (or Ana), the street bordering the south side of the Rio Sant' Anna.⁵ The name of the campiello suggests that anchors for ship construction at the nearby Arsenale were manufactured in the immediate area centuries ago.⁶ The plain sixteenth and seventeenth-century buildings that line the campiello have little to distinguish

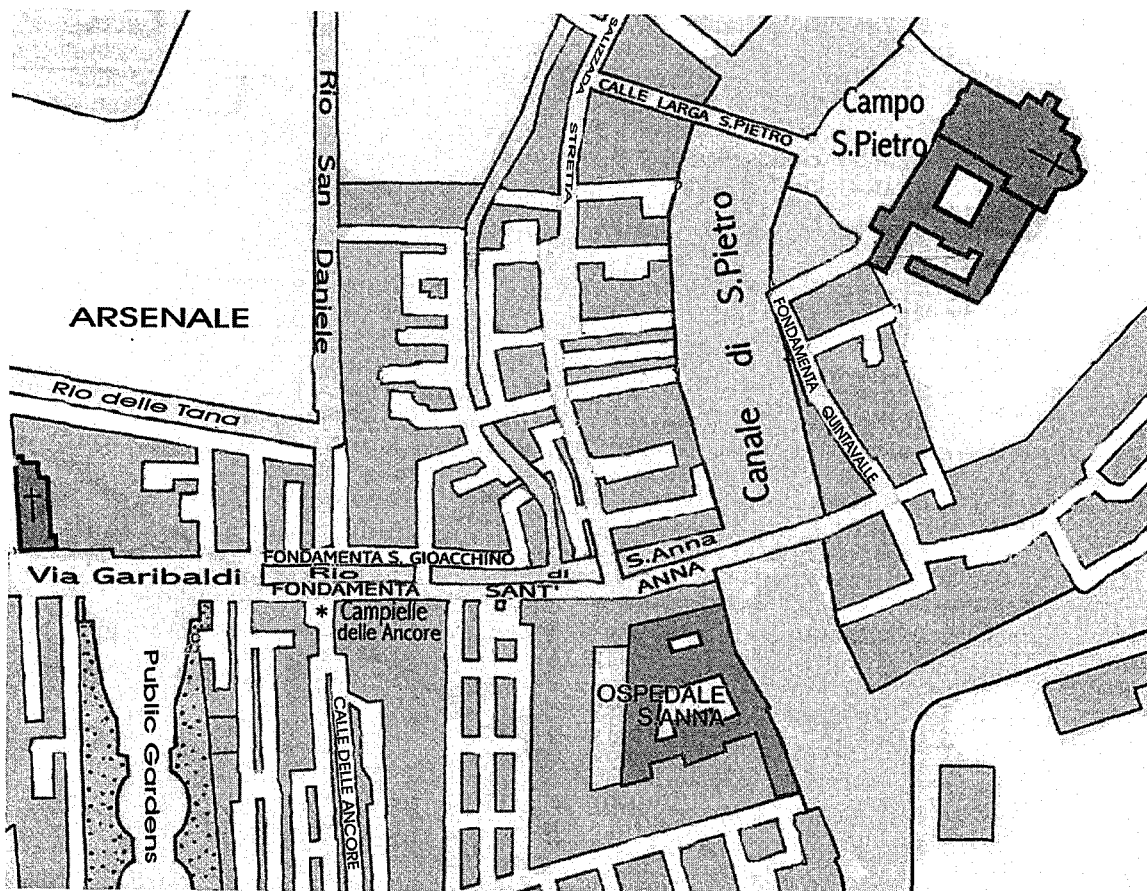


fig. 3 Map (detail) of the sestiere of Castello. (Photo: Brenda Hutchinson, Montreal)



fig. 4 F. Hopkinson Smith, *A Little Hole in the Wall of the Via Garibaldi*, in Smith, *Gondola Days* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1897).
(Photo: the author)

the site architecturally.⁷ Its deep sottoportego at the southeast corner leads to the Calle delle Ancore, one of a network of adjoining streets behind the campiello. A primary purpose of this campiello is to provide easy access to the Via Garibaldi from the tracery of those narrow calle that were home to a large number of working-class Venetians. As well, it is an unimpressive stop on the northerly route to the island of San Pietro di Castello, the location of the original basilica of Venice. It is only in relation to San Pietro that the area of the Campiello delle Ancore is ever (and rarely at that) cited in English-language travel books of the turn of the nineteenth century.⁸ The fondamenta and the rio are named after the nearby monastery founded in 1240, and the abandoned church, hospital and convent of Saint Anne, where the daughters of the sixteenth-century painter Tintoretto were educated. Separated by the Sant' Anna canal, the campiello faces the Fondamenta San Gioacchino⁹ with its eleventh-century hospital of Saints Peter and Paul. The two fondamenta join at the top of the Via Garibaldi, where the western end of the Rio Sant' Anna terminates. Small shops and cafés were popular local gathering places, particularly at the foot of the Fondamenta Sant' Anna (fig.4).

The rio,¹⁰ the fondamente and the campiello with their adjacent buildings are all that remain of the original configuration of the area. The lower part of the Sant' Anna canal, toward the Lagoon of Venice, was filled in by Napoleonic Decree in 1808 and named the Via Eugenia in honour of Napoleon's stepson Eugene de Beauharnais.¹¹ As Viceroy of Italy resident in Venice, Beauharnais oversaw the creation of this unusually wide promenade, reminiscent of Hausmann's urban vistas in Paris.¹² With the unification of Italy in 1866, the street was renamed the Via Garibaldi and remains the broadest street in Venice as well as carrying the un-Venetian (and more Italian) designation of a "via."¹³ Nearly midway along the Via Garibaldi and the Campiello delle Ancore is the grand entrance to the Public Gardens, another Napoleonic project. At the end of the Giardini Pubblici are the pavilions for the Biennale delle Arte exhibitions, held there since 1895.¹⁴ Needless to say, this description of the area surrounding the Campiello delle Ancore is not merely an excuse for a touristic guide to what is still one of the least visited areas of Venice. More to the point, it may help explain when and why Morrice strayed from his beaten path and painted one of his most unusual Venetian images.

Today the Campiello delle Ancore looks much the same as it did at the time of the Morrice panel (fig.5). Such remarkable preservation is the norm in Venice, even in this northeastern area of the sestiere of Castello which had undergone extensive change in the later nineteenth century. The accuracy of Morrice's representation of the topography of the campiello is further substantiated by an image of the site by the American illustrator, Joseph Pennell (1860-1926).¹⁵ More significantly, the Pennell provides a substantial clue to the date of the panel and suggests the circumstances that may have led to Morrice's painting the campiello. The Pennell image (fig.6) derives from his second trip to Venice during the summer and fall of 1901. He had arrived in the city from Florence in June expressly to make drawings to illustrate the two-volume travel book, *Gleanings from Venetian History*, by the American author Francis Marion Crawford.¹⁶ First published in 1905, the book would be printed in several editions by Macmillan and Co., London and the 1906 publication carried the additional title line of *Salve Venetia*. (In 1909 it was called *Venice. The Place and the People*.) Pennell's illustration, entitled simply *Campiello delle Ancore*, is in the second volume of the *Gleanings*. This volume also contains an illustration of the small gothic palazzo with its shops and bar adjoining the campiello on the Fondamenta Sant' Anna. Like most of his images for the book, there is no direct relation to the adjoining text as Pennell describes contemporary Venice while Crawford deals with its past.

The image of the campiello is also reproduced in Pennell's own *Adventures of an Illustrator. Mostly in Following his Authors in America and Europe* of 1925. Here the illustration, which is substantially larger than in the *Gleanings*, carries the longer caption *Campiello del la Ancore. A study of the real daily life of Venice*.



fig. 5 Campiello delle Ancore, 2004. (Photo: John Fox, Montreal)



fig. 6 Joseph Pennell, *Campielo delle Ancore*. In Marion Crawford, *Gleanings from Venetian History* (London: Macmillan, 1905), 190. (Photo: the author)

Pen drawing 1901.¹⁷ According to Pennell in his *Adventures of an Illustrator*, Crawford “made a list of things for me to draw, as all authors do. I did those I liked and ignored the ones I did not. Some were impossible, others ridiculous.”¹⁸ Pennell’s reprinting of the enlarged image of the campiello suggests that he, at least, considered it one of his more successful Venetian images.¹⁹ In the *Adventures*, Pennell recollects his daily routine and his working methods. He comments that he worked in the mornings and began again an hour after lunch: “if the light was right to start another subject, maybe from the caffè, if not, I walked till I found one. And so I have walked and worked all over Venice.” After choosing a view “that I had determined on the day before,” he returned to the site: “When I reached my previously chosen spot, if the light was right and I felt right, I began and if possible finished my charcoal or pastel or etching. I knew exactly what I wanted to do, but rarely knew whether I could do it and I never did it as I wished.”²⁰

It is pure speculation that James Wilson Morrice may have accompanied Joseph Pennell on one of the walks that brought him to the Campiello delle Ancore. Pennell does not mention Morrice in any of his writings on Venice and regrettably, Pennell’s letters from this trip to his wife Elizabeth Robins in London have not survived. The only known communication from Morrice is his well-documented letter to Pennell that recalls an evening spent together the previous summer on the fashionable Riva degli Schiavoni, near the Piazza San Marco.²¹ The rarity of such an undistinguished place as the Campiello delle Ancore among Morrice’s Venetian works does, however, give strong support to the premise that he discovered and then painted the campiello in the company of Pennell. The date of 1901, which is secure for the Pennell image, is also appropriate to the Morrice panel in terms of both its chronology and visual language. Little is known of Morrice’s trips to Venice (or the particular details of his entire life for that matter), and unfortunately the English-language newspaper that provided information on visitors had long ceased publication. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence of his being in Venice in the summer of 1901,²² and other Pennell images in the *Gleanings*, although generally of more notable places, also show that similar sites and viewpoints attracted both artists.²³

The similarities (and even the differences) in the renderings of the Campiello delle Ancore further suggest that the relationship between the two artists is a considerable factor in bringing Morrice to the Rio Sant’ Anna. If we accept the likelihood that Pennell introduced Morrice to the site, it is not difficult to propose how Morrice encountered the campiello, either alone or together with Pennell. As mentioned earlier, the Campiello delle Ancore is on a main route to San Pietro di Castello. Morrice painted one canvas of the island and its ancient church (Power Corporation of Canada Collection, Montreal).²⁴ A small panel showing the modest two-story buildings to the south of the church along the

San Pietro Canal at the Fondamenta de Quintavalle is also in the Thomson Works of Art collection.²⁵ As well, at least three drawings of San Pietro are to be found in the Morrice sketchbook #18 at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

The proximity of the Campiello delle Ancore to the Public Gardens leaves room for further and similar speculation. It is without question that Morrice went to the Giardini Pubblici and the *Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia* (the Biennale delle Arte) in the summer of 1901 and this visit undoubtedly encouraged him to contact its director concerning the possibilities of participating in the 1903 exhibition.²⁶ A small panel, previously entitled *Paris*, but now changed to *Venice* in the MMFA collection, suggests a view of the Giardini as do a few drawings also in their sketchbook #18. Pennell's own visit to the Esposizione Internazionale would also have been a matter of course for any foreign artist in Venice in the summer of 1901 and both Pennell and Morrice would participate in the next Biennale.²⁷

Last, but certainly not the least consideration is that Pennell and Morrice would share an interest in visiting an area frequented by James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903). As Pennell knew well, Whistler spent much of his stay of 1879-80 in quarters in the Casa Jankovitz on the (now) Riva dei Sette Martiri alongside the Lagoon at the junction of the Via Garibaldi.²⁸ Whistler is also known to have done a pastel of the entranceway of a building near the Campiello delle Ancore.²⁹ Morrice's own admiration for Whistler is clearly evident in the approach to painting in his pictures from the turn of the nineteenth century; and at this time, he even had a penchant for entitling works with the Whistlerian term "nocturne." Whatever circumstances brought Pennell and Morrice to the Fondamenta Sant' Anna, the Campiello delle Ancore provided them both with a glimpse of ordinary life in an extraordinary city.

The Morrice panel shows the site viewed from the railings enclosing the Fondamenta Sant' Anna, directly in front of the Campiello delle Ancore. Morrice excludes any indication of the lateral walls of the square and crops both the left side of the sottoportego and the right end of the facades. He also does not disclose the full height of the three-storey building. As a result, the Campiello appears to be a larger and less constricted space than in actuality, but this enhances the immediacy of the image. He also made certain changes in the scale and position of the architectural elements of the buildings. These adjustments make explicit Morrice's attention to the relationship between the architectural details and also between the buildings and the figures. Nevertheless, the panel provides an accurate representation of the degree of space that would have existed between Morrice and the main facade of the campiello. The Pennell image offers a more expansive view and the campiello itself is shown as relatively small. The differences between the two images begin with the vantagepoint of the two artists.



fig. 7 Campiello delle Ancore from the Ponte Nuovo, 2004. (Photo: John Fox, Montreal)

While Morrice painted his panel from the apron of the campiello, Pennell's drawing was made from a much greater distance, on the opposite Fondamenta San Gioacchino (fig.7). Pennell was standing on the Ponte Nuovo, the small bridge where the northerly Tana Canal empties into the Rio Sant' Anna. In contrast to Morrice, Pennell includes the railings of the Fondamenta Sant' Anna (where Morrice could have positioned himself), the set of steps leading down to the rio, and a portion of the canal itself with a vegetable *barca* propelled by a boatman. Pennell also indicates the north wall of the Campiello delle Ancore by the iron lamplight (still in place) and the name of the site is clearly written on a purposely enlarged street sign (*nizioleto*) above the sottoportego. Perhaps in order to give greater emphasis to the name of the site, Pennell eliminated the two windows above the sottoportego. Morrice includes them as well as the line of the drainpipe leading to the ground floor, but he only paints one shutter at the far left. While Pennell clearly indicates the depth of the sottoportego and even shows a pair of legs moving along the calle at far end, Morrice's passageway is a less-clarified dark space of limitless recession.

A further and more important difference between the two images is that Pennell has included almost two dozen people – adults and children – circulating through and around the Campiello. The figures show a wide variety of poses, gestures and costume; almost an encyclopedia of “Venetian types,” and reminiscent of the figures used as “stuffing” in Canaletto’s eighteenth-century vistas of Venice. Morrice’s campiello contains just five women who inhabit the space with only the slightest suggestion of movement, and with none of the bustle and activity intrinsic to the Pennell image. While Pennell intends his illustration to be “A study of the real daily life of Venice,” for Morrice it is a painting of an undisclosed narrative.

Perhaps the most obvious indication of Morrice’s intention to see the image as a self-contained painting rather than the record of a specific site, is the fact that he has obliterated the name of the campiello in his own small, dabbed nizioleto. In Whistler’s images of Venice, the identification of the place in and for itself was also of secondary interest and he rarely directly titled his work with the exact name of the site.³⁰ Certainly Morrice shared Whistler’s interest in the visual delights of the city but he rejected Whistler’s determined search for the “Venice of the Venetians.” Instead, Morrice’s paintings are glimpses of the Venice around him, wherever he happened to be at the time. As in all of Morrice’s Venetian images (as well as in much of his other work), he displays the modernist propensity for painting what is directly in front of him and whatever can be captured as a distillation of the moment. It is Venice in its ambiency rather than its actuality.

As John Lyman wrote in his superb, short biography of Morrice: “Les données de l’étude serviront moins d’esquisse que pour évoquer dans l’esprit du peintre une image plus simple et plus légère.”³¹ Morrice’s image of the campiello allows a consideration of the functions of the small works. His panels are often referred to as *pochades*, which is perhaps more indicative of their pocket size than their purpose. In the nomenclature at the turn of the nineteenth century, various terms were used to describe the intention of such small paintings but none is completely satisfying in regard to Morrice’s Venetian pictures because he seems to have followed few traditional rules. In some cases, a wood panel was sufficiently resolved to be regarded as a preparatory study for a larger canvas done later in his Paris studio, although Morrice would often make alterations to the original image. Other canvases suggest that he used several panels to produce a single image. In further instances, the panel has few details and provides only the most general impression of a specific site, often with much of the wood surface left bare. Occasionally, elements from these cursory images were integrated into canvases, but with extensive elaboration and multiple changes. This suggests that those highly simplified panels may have functioned as an *aide-memoire*, like the drawings in his little notebooks.

However, many of Morrice's Venetian wood panels are as finished as his oil canvases. While some led to larger works as mentioned, most were left as small paintings, complete and satisfying unto themselves. In order to consider fully the attention and importance that Morrice gave to these small works, it is worth recalling Muriel Ciolkowska's description of his process for painting his panels. Her recollections provide a rare insight into his working method, even if there is no evidence that he used his panel of the Campiello delle Ancore as the subject of a larger canvas:

I once had the good luck to attend the production of one of these little preparations for his bigger pictures. He spent three afternoons on a surface hardly bigger than a medium-sized envelope. He would look long at his subject, mix his tone, look again, then dab on a tiny morsel of colour, lay down his little brush, take a puff of smoke, and so on between every minute touch; for the severest precision in the sketch – precision of form and tone – was the secret of that lovely looseness and laxness in the enlargement.³²

It is not difficult to imagine Morrice near the railings of the Fondamenta Sant' Anna with his painting equipment elegantly and efficiently stowed within his specially-made, cigarbox-size carrying case. The respect for the panels that he garnered from other artists, especially for his ability to produce such complete objects out-of doors rather than in the studio, is echoed in an earlier appreciation by Ciolkowska:

One is so impressed by the balance between art and craft in Mr. Morrice's pictures that one cannot imagine them in any other form. His smallest sketch is in this sense as definite and satisfying as are many of his larger canvases. There is finality in everything he does, and this finality is not conveyed by elaboration but by the equilibrium of all those elements which make a picture as distinct from a mere painting.³³

Such "equilibrium" is key to the visual resolve of Morrice's panel of the Campiello delle Ancore. The actual architecture of the campiello provides the internal framework or more correctly, the armature of the image. His grid-like composition of the architectural elements and the spaces in-between serves as its pictorial infrastructure. The insistent frontality of the planes of the buildings and the pavement then lock it into place. But Morrice subtly adjusts both the positioning and scale of the elements of the centuries-old buildings; their paced in-and-out movement across the image lessens the tension of the grid and animates the setting. Such refinements exemplify Morrice's modernist tendency to impose a design on whatever place he paints. At the same time, however, his loose and almost flimsy touch seems to work in direct contrast to the careful composing of the image. The rhythmic displacement of Morrice's forms, his subtly shifting focus points and a sense of the casual give a redolent intensity to the quiet atmosphere of the Campiello.

The lower level of the building and the sottoportego is an arrangement of dark shapes, silhouetted against the light Istrian stone façade and the multi-hued market stall. To create a balance with the sottoportego on the left, Morrice greatly increased the width of the doorway at the right. It is his most overt change in the appearance of the façade in comparison to both the Pennell drawing and the site's actual proportions. The upper area of the building has a similar equalized interplay of large and small elements, open and closed forms, solid and void spaces. However, the division between the two stories of the building is muted by the grid of architectonic shapes. For example, Morrice deliberately shifts the position of the balcony window, giving a more defined space between it and the shuttered window to its left. He then aligns the right edge of the shutter with the side pilaster of the widened doorway below, and lowers the balcony corbels to the same level as the lintel of the sottoportego.

The plain stone pavement has an equal volume and weight to the façade wall. Echoing the colour of the building, it shapes the contour of the campiello and emphasizes its function as a forecourt. Morrice's nuanced tonal harmonies construct a continuous visual rhythm across the surface, similar to the notes on music sheets for his beloved flute. His carefully positioned touches of red provide a counterpoint to the façade's loosely brushed tones that range from luxuriant ivory-whites to elegant green-blacks. The lightly laid-on colour both divides and connects the forms as it reiterates the painting's compositional and spatial structure. Softly glimmering sunlight articulates the details of the site at the same time that it evokes of the pervasive watery atmosphere of Venice herself.

At the center of the painting is the laden fruit and vegetable stand, typical of the numerous small local market stalls scattered across Venice. However, Morrice's dappled paint merely suggests the profusion of goods on display, rather than describing the commodities brought to Venice from the islands in the Lagoon. In fact, whether there were even flowers for sale cannot be easily determined, despite the current title of the painting. The women at the produce stand are themselves elements of display, even more than the goods offered by the market seller. Their simplified shapes are carefully anchored in place and their bodies contoured by the architecture. They remain oblivious to the spectator outside their intimate domestic life with its daily ritual of shopping for food. Together they occupy a space that becomes resolutely their own. Morrice's shawl-clad women with their hair in topknots are framed by their surroundings in both the literal and figurative sense of the word. They show little evidence of motion and even the approaching figure in the sottoportego seems part of their placid group. The pacing (and spacing) between the women give a sense of both the momentary and the timeless, without anything actually happening. At the same time, the female figures gently disrupt the severity of the architectural



fig. 8 James
Wilson Morrice,
figure studies,
Morrice
Sketchbook/Carnet
16, page 7 recto,
c.1901-06, pencil,
17 x 11 cm,
Montreal Museum
of Fine Arts.
(Photo: MMFA)

setting, or perhaps more correctly, they ease the weight of Venice's overwhelming historical character.

Often treated as elegant, sweeping figures, the women in Morrice's Venetian images are individualized by their carefully positioning against and within the city.¹⁴ Regardless of their implied class as members of the *popolani*, they share the dignified gestures and noble bearing of all of his Venetian women. The British author and life-long resident of Venice, Horatio Brown, had a similar fascination with the ordinary women of the city: "Nothing can surpass the grace of these shawl-clad figures, seen down the perspective of a narrow street, or gathered in groups...in some open *campiello*."¹⁵ Morrice's own infatuation, one might say, with the silhouette of Venetian women draped in shawls is evidenced by the numerous drawings in his sketchbooks (*fig.8*) where, like the women in the *Campiello* panel, they are usually shown in profile.

The slight difference in costume of the full-length figures beside the market stall indicate the variety of shawls worn by *popolani* women. At the same time, their overlapping bodies reinforce the social bonds of their everyday lives. The position of the third figure suggests that she may be the greengrocer (who was usually female), and is by implication a working woman. Nevertheless, she is shown as no different from her customers as she is an essential part of their communal urban life. There is a similar group of these three women amongst the crowd in the Pennell image, but Morrice allows them greater physical and psychological space, uninterrupted by others. Visually and metaphorically, the seated woman at the balcony window echoes the women below as she observes their conversation. Joseph Pennell included the suggestion of a similar figure as a witness to daily life in the *Campiello*, but she is far from Morrice's active spectator. The motif of the woman in the window as emblematic of the Venetian *popolani* had also earlier caught the attention of the American author, William Dean Howells: "I believe that I had less delight in proper Objects of Interest than in the dirty neighborhoods that reeked with unwholesome winter damps below, and [who] peered curiously out with frowzy heads and beautiful eyes from the high, heavy-shuttered casements above."³⁶

Morrice's female figures have absolutely nothing in common with the sentimentalized lower-class women in many popular images of market-stalls in Venice by Italians and foreigners alike. The women in the *Campiello delle Ancore* are neither broken by poverty, nor good-time girls with smoldering looks (fig.9). Through gesture and posture, Morrice's women reveal only their outward dignified appearance. The shadowy outline of the woman in the *sottoportego* also adds to the vagueness of their identity, just as the darkness of the passageway allows only an indication of the place where they lived. Morrice's women in the *Campiello delle Ancore* create a quiet narrative of the daily life of the Venetian *popolani*, but without imposed sentiment or coded behaviour. More specifically, the *campiello* becomes a significant place for women as he removes them from the confined setting of the domestic interior or the garden, traditionally gendered spaces. Countless images of Venice show women out-of-doors, often as happy but impoverished bead-stringers or lace-markers sitting together near the entranceway to their houses. Morrice's women are beyond such stereotyping or commodification; they occupy the *campiello* in their own right and as an intrinsic part of the fabric of the city.

Essential elements in the urban design of Venice, the *campielli* and *campi* serve as meeting places as well as sites of entry and exit.³⁷ They exemplify Henri Lefebvre's concept of a social space, in a city he regards as "unique, original, [and] primordial."³⁸ The sight of Venetians standing outdoors deep in conversation, as they do in the Morrice panel, has always been an essential component of daily life in Venice. As Henry James commented in his 1882 essay "Venice": "One



fig. 9 Stefano Novo (1860-c.1930), **Fruit-Seller, Venice**, 1894, oil on canvas, size and location unknown.
(Photo: <http://imagehost.Vendio.com/bin/viewimage.x>)

may say indeed that Venice is the city of conversation; people talk all over the place because there is nothing to interfere with its being caught by the ear."³⁹ Because of the peculiar topography of Venice where the streets are occupied only by people, a *campiello* functions as much as a private space as a public sphere. The actual shape of the *Campiello delle Ancore* is an analogy of this Venetian duality, with one side open to the city and the others keeping it apart. Morrice's watchful woman in the upper window reinforces the coming together of the interior and exterior realms of the *campiello*, and erases the distinction between them.

Within this conflation of the public and the private, the *campiello* acts as a type of stage on which the action unfolds of its own accord. As Lefebvre wrote of Venice, "everyday life and its functions are coextensive with, and utterly transformed by, a theatricality as sophisticated as it is unsought, a sort of involuntary *mise-en-scène*."⁴⁰ Like a piece of theatre, the *Campiello delle Ancore* reveals the spectacle of ordinary urban culture to those passing by on the *Fondamenta Sant' Anna*. It also shows itself to those, like Pennell, who

view the scene from opposite side of the canal, where as Janson and Burklin suggest, “the result is not only a fully framed space, but also a special kind of scenic relationship” with its surroundings.⁴¹

The simplicity and self-containment of the Campiello delle Ancore panel (especially in comparison to the Pennell drawing) locates Morrice’s empathetic contemplation of the objects and subjects of the site. Both his measured distance from and proximity to life in the campiello, however, have other implications. It could perhaps position Morrice as a type of Baudelairean flâneur, the passionate observer of the crowd as John O’Brian has incisively proposed.⁴² At the same time, the open and empty foreground of the Campiello delle Ancore painting could be understood as the metaphoric space of the outsider. It can be considered as emblematic of the position of visitors to Venice, the *forestieri* (*foresti* in Venetian). They are the *stranieri*, strangers who, like Morrice, intensely embrace the city but will always remain separate and apart from its people and their millennia-old culture.

Morrice’s small panel of the Campiello delle Ancore is a quiet but resonant image of the discourse of looking and seeing. The painter “with the delicate eye” as Matisse would later describe him, provides a quiet but discerning glimpse onto the private life of a very public city. “It is Venice, a Venice gray and softly-coloured, a Venice true, of Morrice and of Morrice alone.”⁴³

SANDRA PAIKOWSKY
Department of Art History
Concordia University

Notes

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1 *Flower Seller*, Thomson Works of Art, #PC0155, purchased 1984.

2 Blair LAING, *Morrice. A Great Canadian Artist Rediscovered* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1984), 44, plate 13. There are no known drawings that relate directly to the panel. Another painting entitled *Flowerseller* (private collection, undated) is obviously an image of Paris.

3 The notorious inconsistencies in spelling of Venetian place names even today allow for such variations as dell' Ancore, del' Ancore or de le Ancore. For the sake of simplicity, I will use the most commonly accepted spelling, although the street sign currently reads "Campiello de le Ancore."

4 Contemporary social economists consider Castello as part of the "Peripheral Zone" of the city; see Robert DAVIS and Garry MARVIN, *Venice, the Tourist Maze* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 100-01.

5 A Venetian canal is usually called a *rio* (plural *rii*) and only four waterways in the city proper use the term *canale*: most important is the Grand Canal also known as the Canalazzo. The Rio Sant' Anna measures 210 by 9 metres; at the turn of the nineteenth century, it was in poor condition and in need of "urgent dredging," typical of canals in this impoverished area. See Gianpietro ZUCCHETTA, *I Rii di Venezia, la storia degli ultimi tre secoli* (Venezia: Edizioni Helvetia/foligraf, 1985), 221. The Rio Sant' Anna had originally been a major waterway and a short-cut from the Bacino San Marco to the northeastern Lagoon.

6 A street or *calle* of the same name and also an old site for anchor making is located near the Piazza San Marco.

7 For a discussion of the multifamily buildings in the adjacent *calle*, see E.R. TRINCANATO, *Venezia Minore* (Milano: Edizioni del Milione, 1948 and Venezia: Filippi Editore, rpt., n.d.), 192-94; and Paolo MARETTO, *La Casa Veneziana* (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1986), 183-84.

8 For example, it is mentioned briefly in Lonsdale and Laura RAGG, *Venice* (London: A & C Black, 1916), 12-13: "On foot one approaches [the Public Gardens] by the broadest street in Venice, the Via Garibaldi, which will lead us on to the *fondamenta* of Sant' Anna..., at the end of which a ferry takes us across to the island of [San Pietro di] Castello."

9 The street was named after the nearby Franciscan church dedicated to Saint Joachim, the father of the Virgin Mary. Anne or Anna, of course, was her mother.

10 Like many Venetian canals and streets, the name often changes *en route* and the southwestern portion of the S. Anna canal was originally called the Rio del Castello.

11 On the closing of the Sant' Anna canal, see Gianpietro ZUCCHETTA, *Un' Altra Venezia/ Another Venice. Immagini e storia degli antiche canali scomparsi/ An illustrated history of concealed Venetian canals* (Venezia: Erizzo Editrice, 1995), 138-53.

12 The architect Giannantonio Selva was responsible for the Via Eugenia and other of Napoleon's Venetian projects. Following the end of the French occupation in 1814 and during the Austrian regime, the street was called the Strada Nuova dei Giardini in reference to the adjacent Public Gardens.

13 Venetian streets have different descriptors, depending on their size and length, ranging from the wider *salizada* and *fondamenta* to the narrower *calle*, *ramo*, etc., but rarely *via*. However in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Italian guidebooks to Venice, streets were generally referred to as "*via*" perhaps so as not to confuse visitors who had little knowledge of the intricacy of Venetian urban nomenclature.

14 The original name of the Biennale was the *Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia* but later became known as the more familiar "Biennale delle Arte."

15 Joseph Pennell's lengthy career as a printmaker and author has not been the subject of extensive examination. Harriet Hunter Smart's "A Study of Joseph Pennell's illustrations for 'Gleanings from Venetian History'," Honours Dissertation, University of St. Andrews, 2003, is an important addition and I wish to thank her for making her text

available to me recently. Much of Pennell's life and work is drawn from his own publications and from biographies by his wife Elizabeth Robins Pennell, as well as catalogues of his prints. The Pennells are well known for their writings on James McNeill Whistler and their archives of Whistleriana. A lithograph portrait of Pennell, c.1908-09 by the Scottish-Canadian artist James Kerr-Lawson is in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada (#830) and elsewhere.

16 Francis Marion Crawford (1854-1909) was born in Italy, the son of the American sculptor Thomas Crawford and nephew of the poet Julia Ward Howe. After living in the United States and Europe, he returned permanently to Italy in 1883. He was the author of a number of travel books although the *Gleanings* was the only one illustrated by Pennell. A recent reprint of the *Gleanings from Venetian History* by Pavilion Press does not include all of the original Pennell illustrations.

17 The book was published by Little, Brown and Company, Boston. The caption continues: "Printed in *Gleanings from Venetian History*. Macmillan & Co." The illustration is included in Chapter XXXI, "Marion Crawford and Venice," pages 280-87. He notes that he went to Venice just prior to Crawford's arrival. Pennell had been working in Tuscany, preparing images for Maurice Hewlett's *The Road in Tuscany* (London: Macmillan, 1904). Pennell mistakenly comments that he arrived in Venice "just after the Campanile fell," although that dramatic event would not occur until a year later on 14 July 1902, when Pennell was again in Venice. Pennell had few positive things to say about Crawford, and in his *Adventures*, he noted, "I saw at once that he didn't approve of me." (p.282) A few pages later, Pennell added, "I do not think I ever saw him again. He never wrote me a word about the book." Pennell has no specific discussion of the Campiello delle Ancore in his *Adventures*.

18 Crawford wanted him to draw the places illustrated by others, such as "the Illustrissimo Ruskin." Given Pennell's relationship with Whistler and the latter's famous lawsuit against Ruskin, such a suggestion would have a particular edge.

19 The image of the Campiello delle Ancore is not, however, found among the twenty-five illustrations in Joseph PENNELL, *Venice. The City of the Sea* (London and Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis, 1913). The small book emphasizes Venice's major monuments and dramatic vistas of the Venetian lagoon.

20 PENNELL, *Adventures of an Illustrator*, 287.

21 Morrice to Pennell, 1 June 1902, Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, container 248.

22 For important discussions of Morrice in Venice, see Lucie DORAIS, "Deux moments dans la vie et l'œuvre de James Wilson Morrice," *Bulletin, The National Gallery of Canada*, 30/1977, 19-35 and David McTAVISH, *Canadian Artists in Venice 1830-1930* (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1984), 18-25, 34-35.

23 One specific example is the night image of the buildings at one end of the Rialto Bridge on the Riva del Carbon. It is the subject of Morrice's well-known *Venice at the Golden Hour* (MMFA) while the Pennell charcoal drawing is titled *Rialto at Night*.

24 *L'Église San Pietro di Castello, Venice*, oil on canvas, 61 x 81 cm, accession number 1972.6.1. Although the painting has been dated c.1904-05, I would suggest that it is earlier. The route by foot to San Pietro became more direct in 1910 with the construction of the Quintavalle bridge at end of the Fondamenta Sant' Anna.

25 The painting is entitled *Venice*, oil on wood, 24 x 33 cm, accession # PC0803.

26 According to the 1903 Biennale catalogue Morrice showed *Autumn in Paris* (#37) and *The Beach at San Malo* (#38) in Hall I of the Sale Internazionale. Neither is reproduced in the *Illustrated Catalogue*. Of the 533 participants, over half were foreign artists. Some correspondence to and from Morrice relating to his participation in the 1903 and 1905

exhibitions can be found at the Archivio Storico delle Arti Contemporanee della Biennale di Venezia.

27 The 1903 Biennale was the first time that Pennell exhibited his prints in Venice. He would participate in six more Biennales and in 1910 was given a special exhibition in the American section.

28 Recent publications on the relationship between Pennell and Whistler in Venice can be found in Eric DENKER, *Whistler and his Circle in Venice* (Washington: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 2003), Margaret F. MACDONALD, *Palaces in the Night. Whistler in Venice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), and Alistair GRIEVE, *Whistler's Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

29 Grieve suggests that the chalk and pastel *The Steps*, 1881, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, may be a view of the Rio Sant' Anna at the Campiello Correr, slightly east of the Campiello delle Ancore. Whistler's etching *The Fruit Stall*, for his "Second Venice Set" of 1886, shows a nearby calle on the Rio San Isepo.

30 Morrice generally preferred the non-descriptive title "Venice" according to the lists of paintings for exhibitions found in his sketchbooks.

31 John LYMAN, *Morrice* (Montreal: L'Arbre, 1945), 23.

32 Muriel CIOLKOWSKA, "Memories of Morrice," *Canadian Forum* VI, no.62 (November 1925): 52-53.

33 CIOLKOWSKA, "A Canadian Painter: James Wilson Morrice," *International Studio* 59 (June-September 1913): 180.

34 Morrice includes comparatively fewer men in his Venetian paintings, many of whom are generic gondoliers and boatmen. The theme of Morrice's Venetian women is the subject of my forthcoming study.

35 Horatio BROWN, *In and Around Venice* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 34.

36 W.D. Howells was the American Consul in Venice from 1861 to 1865. His reminiscence is found in: William Dean HOWELLS, *Venetian Life* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin: 1907, rev. ed.), 24. A similar motif is seen in an undated collodion print, *Woman on a Balcony* by the famous late nineteenth-century Venetian photographer, Carlo Naya.

37 For a discussion of the structural and social functioning of the Venetian campo and by extension the campiello, see Alban JANSON and Thorsten BURKLIN, *Scenes. Interaction with Architectural Space: the Campi of Venice* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2002).

38 Henri LEFEBVRE, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 37.

39 Henry JAMES, "Venice" in *Italian Hours* (London: William Heinemann, 1909), 16. This edition of the book, where his various essays on Italy were first published together, was also illustrated by Joseph Pennell.

40 LEFEBVRE, *The Production of Space*, 74.

41 JANSON and BURKLIN, *Scenes. Interaction with Architectural Space*, 102.

42 See for example, John O'BRIAN, "Morrice's Pleasures," in Nicole CLOUTIER, *James Wilson Morrice 1865-1924* (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1985), 89-97. For a recent discussion on the concept of the flâneur, see Keith TESTER, ed., *The Flâneur* (London: Routledge, 1994).

43 Louis VAUXCELLES, "The Art of J.W. Morrice," *The Canadian Magazine* XXXIV, no.2 (December 1909): 172.

JAMES WILSON MORRICE À VENISE

Le Campiello delle Ancore

James Wilson Morrice (1865-1924) n'est allé que rarement à Venise à la fin du XIX^e siècle et au début du XX^e. Pourtant cette ville ne le cède qu'à Paris pour le nombre d'images urbaines qu'il en a faites. Elle est le sujet de plus de cent peintures et d'un nombre presque égal de dessins. Cet article se propose d'examiner un panneau de la collection Thomson d'œuvres d'art, à Toronto, qui a été reproduit comme étant une vue de Paris, mais qui est en réalité une représentation du Campiello delle Ancore, dans la partie est de Venise. Le campiello, petit espace ouvert, rectangulaire, est situé au bout de la monumentale Via Garibaldi, le long du canal Sainte-Anne près de l'île de San Pietro di Castello. C'est un site inhabituel chez Morrice, ce qui pourrait expliquer qu'il ait été mal identifié.

L'œuvre de Morrice est une représentation exacte du campiello et de son long passage couvert qui mène au réseau de rues plus loin. Le panneau a sans doute été peint en 1901 et pourrait avoir été réalisé à la suite d'une visite du site en compagnie de l'illustrateur américain Joseph Pennell (1860-1926). La rare présence d'un site aussi peu remarquable que le Campiello delle Ancore dans la production vénitienne de Morrice apporte un solide appui à l'hypothèse que ce panneau aurait été peint en compagnie de Pennell ou, du moins, à sa suggestion. La représentation du campiello par Pennell aurait été faite au cours de l'été ou au début de l'automne 1901, pour illustrer le livre en deux volumes de Francis Marion Crawford, *Gleanings from Venetian History* (1905). Pennell a reproduit l'illustration dans son propre livre *Adventures of an Illustrator* (1925), dont la légende donne 1901 comme date du dessin original à la plume. Morrice a aussi fait des peintures et des dessins de sites proches du Campiello delle Ancore, comme des vues de San Pietro di Castello et des jardins publics contigus à la Via Garibaldi, où se tenaient les expositions de la Biennale des arts. (Morrice a participé aux Biennales de 1903 et de 1905.) Le campiello est aussi situé dans un quartier fréquenté par James McNeil Whistler, artiste auquel Pennell et Morrice s'intéressaient beaucoup. Ces considérations peuvent expliquer quand et pourquoi Morrice s'est écarté de ses trajets habituels autour de la place Saint Marc et du pont du Rialto.

L'image du Campiello delle Ancore par Morrice diffère de celle de Pennell en ce qu'il ne montre pas les murs latéraux des immeubles ni la pleine hauteur des façades. Il l'a peinte près des garde-fous qui longent le canal, alors que le dessin de Pennell a été fait du côté opposé du Rio Sant' Anna. Pennell inclut de nombreux «types vénitiens», alors que Morrice ne montre que cinq femmes, figures emblématiques des *popolani*, la plus nombreuse et la plus basse classe de citoyens de Venise. Tandis que Pennell voulait que ses illustrations soient «une étude de la vie quotidienne authentique à Venise», Morrice a produit un tableau complet en lui-même, plutôt que l'illustration d'un site particulier. Ses panneaux ont longtemps été admirés pour la précision de leur méthode et leur résolution picturale, et il a été particulièrement louangé pour son habileté à produire des œuvres si complètes en travaillant en plein air.

C'est l'architecture même du campiello qui fournit l'armature de l'image. Morrice utilise une composition en grille des éléments architecturaux et des espaces comme infrastructure picturale du panneau. Il ajuste subtilement l'échelle et la position de certains aspects des immeubles des XVI^e et XVII^e siècle, ce qui illustre sa tendance moderniste à imposer un plan aux lieux qu'il peint, quels qu'ils soient. La couleur, délicatement appliquée, divise et relie à la fois les formes en répétant la structure compositionnelle et spatiale. En même temps, sa touche lâche et presque légère semble en contraste direct avec la composition soignée de l'image. La lumière douce et miroitante, en articulant les détails du site, évoque l'atmosphère aqueuse de Venise elle-même. Le subtil déplacement des formes architecturales, les points d'intérêt changeants et une impression de naturel ajoutent un air de proximité au caractère placide et modeste du Campiello delle Ancore.

Les femmes autour de l'étalage de fruits et légumes et la figure féminine assise à la fenêtre-balcon sont elles-mêmes des objets d'exposition, mais elles demeurent indifférentes au monde extérieur à leur vie domestique quotidienne. L'environnement architectural encadre la dignité de leurs gestes et la noblesse de leur attitude, mettant en valeur leurs liens avec la ville et entre elles. L'élégante silhouette de leurs châles, accessoire vestimentaire habituel des femmes *popolani*, est le signe principal de leur identité et a un lien de parenté avec les nombreux dessins délicats qui remplissent les carnets de Morrice. Les figures féminines de Morrice n'ont rien en commun avec le sentimentalisme des femmes des classes inférieures de tant d'images de Venise que produisaient, à l'époque, aussi bien les Italiens que les étrangers. Morrice fait sortir les femmes des lieux féminins traditionnels, l'intérieur ou le jardin, et fait du campiello un lieu où elles existent à part entière et font partie du tissu de la ville.

Le Campiello delle Ancore sert de lieu de rencontre, ce qui illustre le concept d'Henri Lefebvre qui voit l'espace social urbain comme «unique, original [et] primordial». À cause de la topographie particulière de Venise, où les rues ne

sont occupées que par les gens, le campiello sert d'espace aussi bien privé que public. La forme même du campiello est une analogie de cette dualité vénitienne, avec un côté ouvert sur la ville et les autres qui l'en séparent. La spectatrice que Morrice a représentée à sa fenêtre, renforce la rencontre du monde intérieur et du monde extérieur du campiello et efface leurs différences.

Le caractère simple et complet en soi du panneau du Campiello delle Ancore (surtout si on le compare au dessin de Pennell) situe la contemplation empathique des objets et des sujets du site par Morrice. Il place aussi Morrice comme une sorte de flâneur à la Baudelaire, observateur actif de la foule. En même temps, le premier plan ouvert et vide du campiello pourrait être compris comme l'espace métaphorique de l'étranger. Il peut être perçu comme le symbole de la place des visiteurs de Venise, qu'on appelle les *forestieri*. Ce sont des *stranieri*, des étrangers qui, comme Morrice, aiment la ville intensément mais qui resteront toujours en dehors, séparés de ses habitants et de leur culture millénaire.

Le petit panneau de Venise peint par Morrice est une image calme mais expressive du discours sur le «regarder» et le «voir». Sa représentation du Campiello delle Ancore donne un aperçu doux et pénétrant de la vie privée d'une ville très publique.

Traduction : Élise Bonnette