

Architecture Studio: Studio X in Venice, Summer 2008

Summer 2008, CMU, Arch #48-505, M/T/W/Th 2:00-5:00
Class Website: see www.cmu.edu/blackboard

Instructor Kai Gutschow
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Coordinator: Jennifer Lucchino

(3/22/09)

Project 1: UNDERSTANDING THE VENETIAN URBAN FABRIC

MINDSET: This opening series of urban analysis exercises for your summer studio is intended to help you get ready to design a building in Venice. In tandem with Diane Shaw's history walks, as well as investigations with Gerard Damiani of "vertical surfaces" (facades), of Carlo Scarpa with Jeremy Ficca, and of the Austrian intervention with Francesca Torello, this opening analysis work should help familiarize you with the City of Venice and its history, its most well-known architectural monuments and anonymous background buildings, the grand public spaces and the maze of connecting streets, waterways, and bridges. This array of elements weaves together into what I will call the "urban fabric" of the Venetian cityscape. It is, above all, this "fabric," alongside a few iconic spaces and places, which has shaped the imagination, fascination, and intellectual curiosity of architects and travelers for centuries: it's why you are here. It is a richly textured fabric, layered with history and culture, unmatched in its intensity of character, unique in its historical integrity, and profound in its richness of detail. Our goal is to understand (and teach each other) at a deeper level the composition of this urban fabric, how signature monuments, background buildings, open campi, narrow paths, and waterways combine to form cohesive environments, or fabric.

PROJECT 1a: ANALYZING URBAN NETWORKS, CAMPI & BUILDING GROUPS:

Each student will be assigned in groups (three persons each) to study and analyze one of the following linked pieces of Venetian urban fabric (see attached maps):

1. Campo San Rocco & S.M. Gloriosa Frari:

The massive building complex & associated institutions. The analysis should include the Campo, Convento and Scuola S. Rocco, the gothic Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari church, the Archivio di Stato, and surrounding squares, streets, and waterways. (Kuhns, Graycar, Bodhidatta)

2. Campo Santa Margherita:

The large, open residential square. The analysis should include the grand Campo Santa Margherita and the buildings that define it, south to the church, Scuola, former convent, and campo of the Carmini, and north to the church and Campo S. Pantalon. (Kozar, Choi, Roig)

3. Campo San Samuele & Traghetto to Ca'Rezzonico:

Life and the Palazzi across the Grand Canal. The analysis should include the streets leading up to the Campo San Samuele, the Palazzo Grassi (and its recent alterations), and the neighboring ensemble of palazzi that face each other across the canal, the traghetto, the alley to the Campo S. Barnaba, and the network of streets behind the Ca'Rezzonico. (Lui, Caranante, Liu)

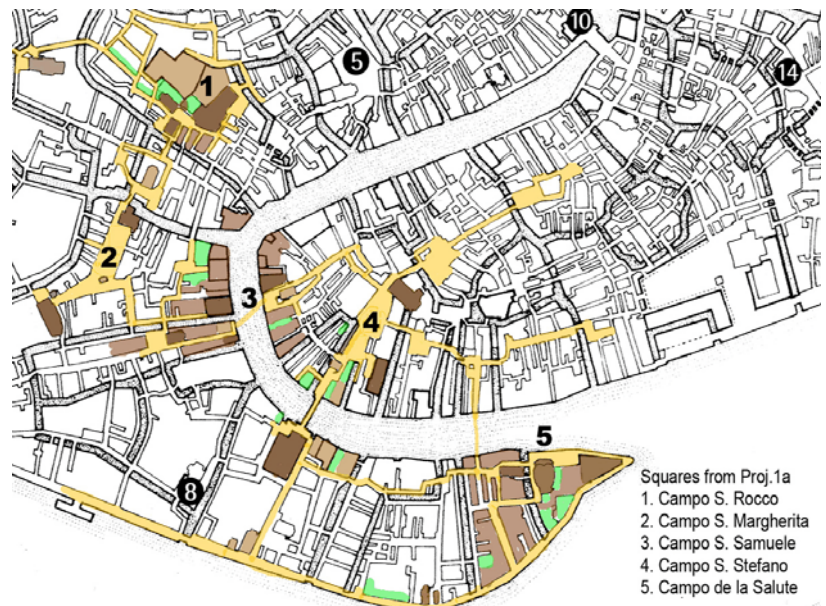
4. Campo Santo Stefano and Neighboring Squares:

The necklace of urban squares. The analysis should include the sequence of well-defined spaces, links, and buildings that define the Campo S. Stefano, south to the Accademia, and north to the Campo S. Angelo and beyond. (Harari, Yankowski, Thianthai)

5. Campo de la Salute & Fondamente Zatterre:

The prow and outer edge of Venice. The analysis should include the Campo de la Salute, and the associated church, Dogana di Mare spaces (inaccessible because of construction) and the seminary that define the traditional entry to the Grand Canal, as well as the Zatterre and the spaces that connect up to the Salute, and help define the watery edge of Venice. (Connell, Couch, Sethiwan)

Your charge is to truly understand (and teach the rest of the group) the architectural, historical, urban, and cultural significance of the rich urban network of squares, streets, buildings and waterways that compose your assigned piece of Venetian urban fabric over the course of the next two weeks.



What is unique about each element in your overall ensemble? What makes your network of elements unique in Venice? What aspects are typical to Venice? What ideas and lessons can we draw from your analysis to help us design a new building somewhere else in Venice?

In order to do this, you and your team should collaboratively research, document, and analyze all aspects of your site. Attempt to locate ALL possible resources about your piece of urban fabric, including on the internet, in guidebooks, in bookstores and libraries, in museums and in paintings, through interviews, personal experiences, and careful observation at all times of the day. The more information, names, and references you can find, the better, even if obscure, or possibly unrelated to the easily observable architecture. You should work both as individuals, and as a team. Each student should record as much as possible in their own sketchbook, in the form of sketches, written notes, etc. Some work (such as measuring the square) can best be done as a team. In addition to the accumulation of notes in your own sketchbook, several specific drawings will be assigned to each student, and the group as a whole.

READINGS: For a general introduction to Venice, you should read the excerpt from Kostof's A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals. Also take a close look at the handouts provided on the first day of studio, and also all available on Blackboard. Read carefully the Leupen article on analysis, and look closely at the "Architectural Elements / Taxonomy" handout, and the "Square Morphology" handout. Finally, read the Pallasmaa article "City Sense" for an attitude about experiencing the inter-related complexity of cities.

DRAWINGS: For Tue. June 3, please complete the following 2 drawings, a first draft in your sketchbooks, and then freehand, in pencil, on the attached A4 pieces of paper, to produce an A3 size drawing for each (that's the metric equivalent of an 11x17 page)

Project 1a, PLAN 1: Nolli-type Figure Ground PLAN of your fabric

As a group, visually measure and sketch your site as accurately as you can. Start with a general sketch-plan from observation. Then compare this to an existing plan of your network (see maps, as well as the "Venice Canal Floor Plans" and "Venice Campi Fig.-Ground" files on Blackboard). Then measure some of the key components of your site with a long tape measure, and note down these crucial measurements. Also scout out and measure the adjoining public interior spaces, as in the famous Nolli Plan of 1748 that revolutionized our understanding of Rome.

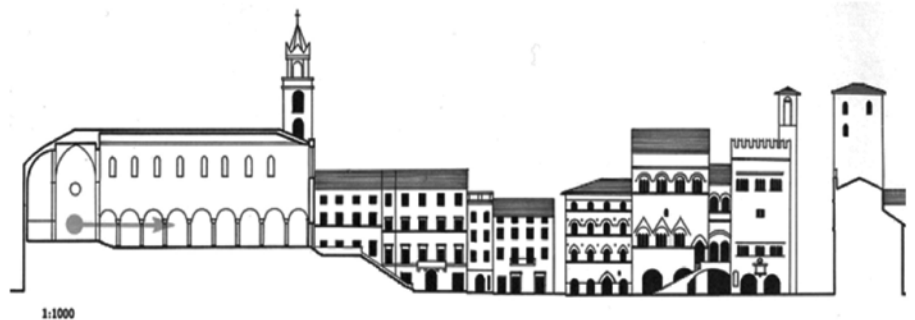
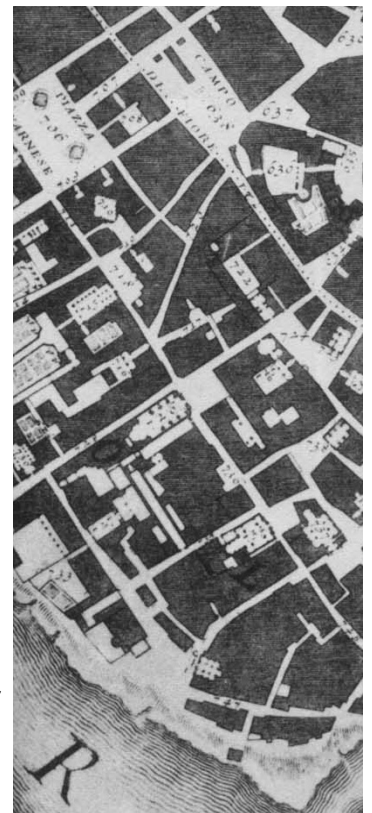
After your group has measured the site, each student should create their own freehand "NOLLI MAP" of their swatch of urban fabric. Use your sketchbook at first, create as large a plan as will fit. Then transfer the results to separate sheets to result in an A3 sized plan

Project 1a, SITE SECTION 1: Nolli-type SITE SECTION of your fabric

As a group, identify three important site sections of your site that include both a section through one of the significant buildings in your site and a significant part of the outdoor space. Choose three especially significant sections that together will give a full understanding of your site.

Each student should then individually draw one of these sections, first in your own sketchbook, and then after conferring with your teammates, on a larger scale to fill two A4 pieces of paper (attached). Be sure to articulate the groundline, and the cut sections of the building strongly, much like the Nolli Plan.

Every student should bring both drawings to studio class in the afternoon on Tue. June 3.



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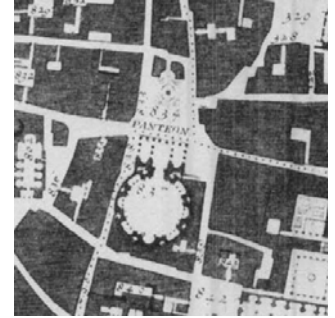
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Project 1: URBAN FABRIC: ANALYSIS & TYPOLOGY

PROJECT 1a Cont'd.: ANALYZING URBAN NETWORKS, CAMPI & BUILDING GROUPS:

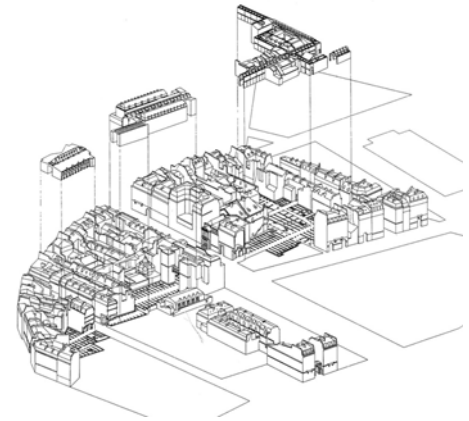
Continue researching your site, as a group, and individually. Look for more, and different kinds of sources than you used last night. Continue to work on, refine, and revise your Nolli-type plan and section of your urban fabric so they become bigger, bolder, clearer, more accurate, and more informative. You should do several drafts of this drawing before the "mid-review" next Monday.



PROJECT 1b: URBAN AND ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

In addition to the figure-ground plan and the site-section, you should begin to create other kinds of analytical drawings to "explain" and understand your site more profoundly. To do this, you will need to have more time on the site, and obtain more resources from which to draw your analysis. Equally important, is to begin to investigate different kinds of analysis, and different kinds of analytical drawings, so that you can choose the most powerful analysis for your particular site and themes.

READINGS: For this reason, read again the Leupen article on analysis that was assigned yesterday (see handout, and Blackboard). In addition, please read the articles available in the "Readings" section of Blackboard: 1) Von Meiss, "Elements of Architecture," on the distinction between "fabric" and "object"; 2) Kevin Lynch, "Image of the City," for a very particular way of doing analysis of cities (note the terms imageability and legibility, and the 5 elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes, landmarks); and 3) read quickly the in-depth urban analysis of the Campo Santa Formosa for a way of applying the Lynch analysis method to Venice. **Be prepared to discuss all of these readings during studio tomorrow**

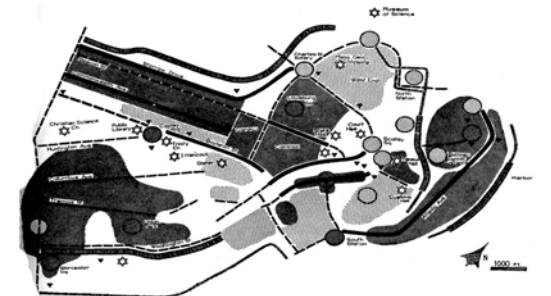
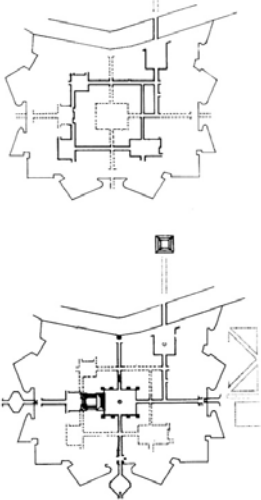


DRAWINGS: For tomorrow, based on your readings of Leupen, Von Meiss, Lynch, and on Campo Formosa, as well as some of the examples of analysis drawings provided in the handout on Monday, begin to formulate some analytical drawings of your site in your sketchbook. Consider doing a Lynch-type analysis on your fabric. Identify the relationship of "objects" in your fabric, as outlined by Von Meiss. Propose three different analytical drawings according to the criteria of Leupen: reduction, addition, and demontage. Consider creating other kinds of analysis drawings that explain your site.



Then create at least three different analysis drawings on A4 paper (either transfer them from your sketchbook ideas, or xerox them straight from the sketchbook). We will discuss these proposals for analysis drawings in studio tomorrow, and then you will be asked to revise at least one of them for a more final analysis drawing.

We will continue to explore different kinds of analytical drawings during the next two weeks, including in our explorations of Palladio during next weeks field trips to the Giudecca, to some of his villas, and to Vicenza.



PROJECT 1c: URBAN ELEMENTS: MORPHOLOGY & TYPOLOGY

In conjunction with your urban fabric analysis (Projs. 1a & 1b), and with Diane Shaw's "scavenger hunt" through Venice to locate examples of specific *family names*, *architects*, and *historical themes*, every student will be assigned to find, keep a look out for, and compile an analytical inventory of specific *architectural elements* according to the list below.

Assignment: Locate and inventory in your sketchbook as many examples of your assigned urban and architectural "element" as you can; and help your classmates locate examples of their elements. Then sort and group your examples into themes or types, creating a "morphology" or "typology" or "themes" or "species," much as a biologist might. This is about looking, finding, sorting, and making sense of architectural details and elements.

After "collecting" your "specimens" over the course of the summer, xerox or scan the relevant pages of your sketchbook into a neatly organized packet, and prepare an analytical introduction (1-2 pages) that summarizes and explains your overall findings, the unexpected themes, and the general nature of your architectural element in Venice.

ELEMENTS:

Street & Square "Furnishings": Catalogue the Monuments (statues, flagpoles, memorials, etc.), Wellheads and waterspouts (new and old), Street lighting, Benches and street seating, Kiosks, etc. (Graycar, Roig, Liu)

Street & Walkway Types: Note the street signs: Calle, Calle Larga, Callesela, Salizzada, Rio Terra, Fondamenta, Piscina, Sotoportere). Find a convincing way to inventory these, not just in name, but through an architectural drawing convention. (Kozar, Bodhidatta, Caranante)

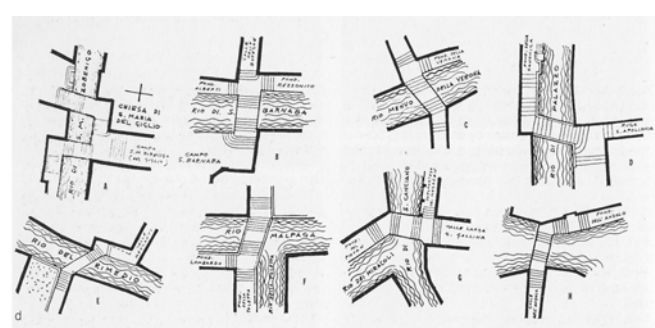
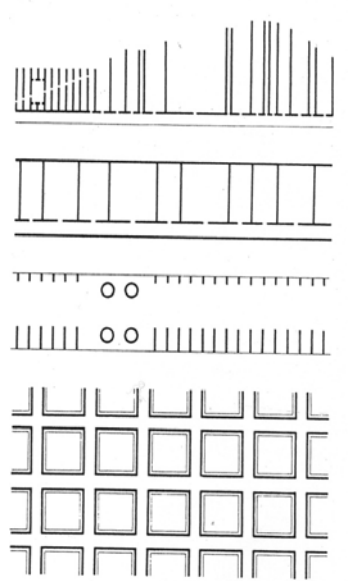
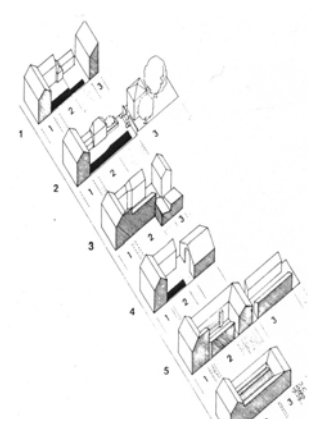
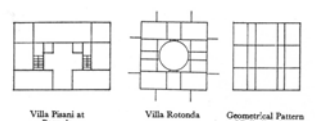
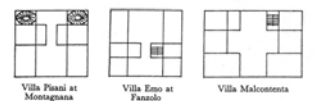
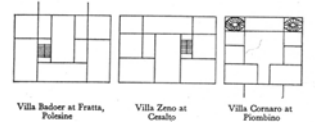
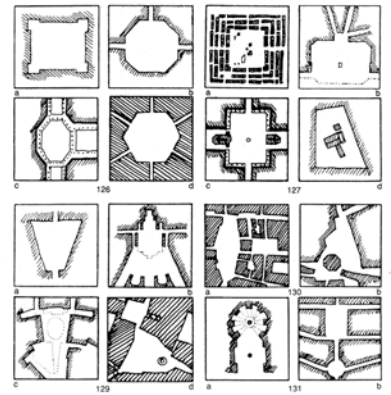
Squares & Courtyards: Note both the shapes/configurations of squares (large and small) as well as the functions/use patterns (see the Kostof reading in the "Square morphology" reading listed below), as well as the official name designations (Campo, Campiello, Corte, etc.) (Connell, Thianthai, Choi)

Bridges, Embankments & Stairs: Venice is full of bridges, embankments, and stairs (up to the bridges, down to the water, up into the palazzi...). Try to categorize or organize the wild assortment into an orderly array of types, and inventory them through drawings; include the "shape" of the bridge in plan & section, the "scale," railing type, etc. (Kuhns, Yankowski, Couch)

Building Types: Attempt to discern an "order" in the building types of Venice according to your own specified criteria (function, scale, shape, color, etc.). You can choose either to organize all the available types (Churches, Scuolas, Market Buildings, Palazzos, Housing, Mixed-Use...) OR you can organize one of these categories (I suggest either the housing OR the non-residential buildings) (Harari, Lui, Sethiwan)

READINGS: As you begin this assignment, look carefully at Monday's handout (pp.5&6) on "architectural elements" and "water & urban typology" morphology and "typology". In the next few days, find time to read three articles/handouts related to this assignment on Blackboard:

- 1) the "Square Morphology Handout" that I assembled about different types of urban squares,
- 2) Bandini's article "Typology as Convention," a scholarly article about the theoretical idea of "type" and "typology" (we will return to this theme in readings for next week on the "Venice School" of architectural theory), and finally,
- 3) Salvadori's "Introduction" to his guidebook on the architecture of Venice.



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Project 1: UNDERSTANDING THE VENETIAN URBAN FABRIC

In order to document (and receive a grade for) the work you did for the STUDIO portion of the first two weeks of your summer in Venice, please submit the following to Kai as a scanned electronic file before 08/01/08. Submit via Blackboard, as separate pdf files (filename lastname_drawings.pdf, lastname_sketches.pdf, lastname_readings.pdf).



URBAN ANALYSIS DRAWINGS OF A PIECE OF VENETIAN FABRIC

- Each drawing should be seen as a “design problem,” a challenge. Each must go beyond recording the facts, beyond stating what we already see or know, to provide unforeseen insights & new ways of looking.
- Work to make each drawing have a “point” or a “thesis,” a critical approach that you are trying to communicate to a reader. The drawings should help the viewer get a deeper understanding of your site than a “regular” plan might offer.
- Originals should be A3 size or similar, but can be scanned as two separate A4 sheets and “seamed” together in Photoshop or similar. Use Photoshop as necessary to “improve” the clarity and quality of work.
- Carefully compose the entire page for each sheet, and work to “harmonize” the four sheets so that they work as a “set”, and can be exhibited with pride.
- Each sheet should have a primary (large) drawing and theme, but can include multiple drawings, words, a title, or other elements to make the “idea” or the “main point” of your plan stand out more clearly.
- All drawings MUST be done by HAND, featuring primarily pencil on paper, though color & shading can be added as necessary to communicate your ideas more powerfully and evocatively (no photos or computer drawings).
- Include your NAME, SITE, INSTRUCTOR (me), and DATE on each sheet.

- 1. PLAN SHEET:** A primary figure-ground study of your piece of urban fabric that includes both exterior spaces, and the primary interior spaces (“Nolli-style”). The plan should include a north arrow, and at least one metric measurement.
- 2. SECTION SHEET:** A sheet of site and building sections of your urban fabric that shows clearly and provocatively how space and building interiors relate to the “solid” mass of your urban fabric (Nolli-style). The sections should include at least one scale figure
- 3. ANALYSIS SHEET:** A sheet of analysis drawings for your site, featuring a primary analysis & multiple subsidiary ones
- 4. 3D DRAWING:** A sheet of 3D drawings of your site using only orthographic drawings, including axo, cut-away sections, worm’s eye, “bird’s-eye” from directly above your site, etc. (avoid eye-level perspectives or vignettes).

SKETCHBOOK ANALYSIS

- Scan all relevant pages of your sketchbook, and NEATLY assemble pages into a single pdf file.
- You may “finish” or “redo” sketches, or add work to any pages of the sketchbook, or create entirely new pages, so that it represents the kind of intellectual thoughts you have about your site and the architecture we saw in our travels, and it represents your true ability as an architect. You should be PROUD of the sketches you submitted.

- 5. SKETCHES OF YOUR SITE:** Copies from sketchbook about your urban fabric, research & Site notes, etc.
- 6. URBAN ELEMENT COMPILATION:** Scan and assemble as many examples of your assigned urban element (see Assign. 1c) as you found, and assemble them carefully into groups or types so that you begin to reveal an underlying order, a typology, or an approach to morphology. Add a 1-2pp. Introduction, summary, overview, or conclusion
- 7. PALLADIO SKETCHES:** Scan the relevant pages of your sketchbook on Palladio, including the churches in Venice, the trip to Malcontenta, and the trip to Vicenza (Rotunda, Basilica, palaces, etc).
- 8. ROMANO SKETCHES:** Scan the relevant pages of your sketchbook on Giulio Romano, particularly the Palazzo del Te and its “mannerisms” in comparison to the orthodox ideas of classicism.

EXTRA CREDIT

- 8. VENICE READINGS:** Scan any notes you took of the analysis, typology, Rossi and Venice School readings (including those not assigned), to document that you read and understood the theory readings.