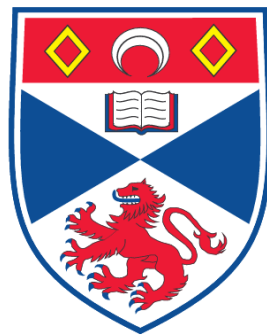


**A SCULPTURED ALTARPIECE IN RENAISSANCE VENICE, CA.
1460-1530**

Joachim Strupp

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St. Andrews**



1993

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THE SCULPTURED ALTARPIECE IN RENAISSANCE VENICE,
CA. 1460 - 1530.

JOACHIM STRUPP

Ph.D.

University of St. Andrews

September 1992

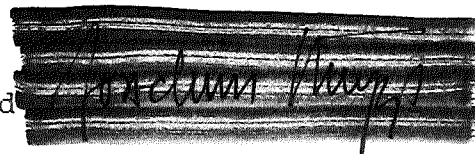
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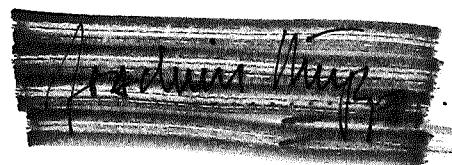


Joachim Strupp

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance No. 12 in October 1988 and as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in October 1988; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1988 and 1992.

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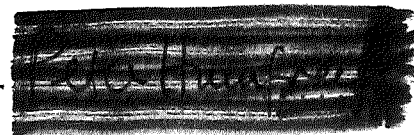
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Dr. Peter Humfrey

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ABSTRACT

This thesis comprises a study of the Venetian sculptured altarpieces during the period 1460 - 1530. During the course of research a surprisingly large number of examples were identified, many of which have so far received little attention. As well as providing an analysis of individual works, the thesis has the wider aim of examining the sculptured altarpiece as a genre, and hence also of contributing towards a greater understanding of the role of sculpture in Italian Renaissance art and society.

The main objectives of study are a) a survey of the chronological and formal development of the altarpieces, b) an investigation of their material and the application of polychromy and gilding, as well as of their manufacture and cost, and c) an analysis of the patrons and their interest in sculpture. The thesis, which draws on various archival sources, further includes an appendix of documents, which illustrates in detail the making of a sculptured altar. A catalogue provides a corpus of the major sculptured altarpieces of the period between 1460 and 1530 which can still be identified. The discussion of the objects is accompanied by an extensive photographic documentation. Several altars have been reconstructed through careful reading of the documents. Others, which have not hitherto been published, are reproduced and discussed here for the first time.

Rather than providing attributions of individual works on the basis of style, the emphasis lies on the cultural-historical analysis of a genre, and on the assessment of the

aesthetic and financial value of sculptured altarpieces and the appreciation of sculpture in Venice in general. Complementing previous studies of Venetian painted altarpieces, the results of research presented here aim to contribute to a fuller composite picture of the art market around 1500, and of the whole artistic environment in Venice of the period.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Renaissance Altarpiece

During the Renaissance the altarpiece was a major field of artistic activity, whether in Venice, Italy or elsewhere in Europe. Practically every painter and sculptor produced altarpieces and they were crucial to religious life in Renaissance society.

Therefore, altarpieces of the period, in particular Italian ones, have always been at the centre of art-historical attention. Every monograph on a Renaissance artist and virtually every study on the art of the period take altarpieces into account, analysing artistic attribution and style, iconography and function.

Nevertheless, whereas discussions and analyses of individual works abound, systematic generic studies are less frequent. Yet, already in 1898, Jacob Burckhardt's treatise of the Italian Renaissance altarpiece as a category showed an historical awareness of the genre, offering an excellent survey of the different forms and subjects of the altarpiece.¹ Its recent translation into English demonstrates this essay's relevance in contemporary art-historical writings, as well as the lack of current studies of such type.²

A collection of essays edited by Peter Humfrey and Martin Kemp of 1990 examined the Renaissance altarpiece under

¹ Burckhardt (1898).

² Burckhardt/Humfrey (1988).

various aspects.³ Although Paul Hills challenged the concept of a closed category of "the altarpiece", the volume made its existence and significance more than clear. However, the contributions paid little heed to the sculptured altarpiece as a category, apart from two contributions on the Netherlandish carved altarpiece by Woods and on the German winged altarpiece by Decker.⁴ To be sure, the volume did not aim at comprehensiveness, yet the neglect of the sculptured altarpiece there reflects the lack of literature on the subject in general.

2. Altarpieces in Venice

In this thesis I shall focus on altarpieces, in particular sculptured altarpieces, in one artistic centre, Venice, and its surrounding islands during the period between 1460 and 1530.

Venetian altarpieces as a category have been examined in several recent publications and under various aspects. While some authors have dwelt on issues of form and style,⁵ others have discussed iconographical problems,⁶ and others again have explored the altarpiece's social context.⁷

But all these studies focus almost entirely on paintings, and once again the category of the sculptured altarpiece has been virtually ignored. As for sculptured

³ Humfrey/Kemp (1990).

⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 76-89, and pp. 90-105.

⁵ H. Fechner, 'Rahmen und Gliederung venezianischer Ancone der Schule von Murano', in Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia, XI, 1969.

⁶ Meilman (1989). Schmidt in Pittura nel Veneto, II.

⁷ Humfrey (1986), Humfrey/Mackenney (1986), Humfrey (1988).

altarpieces in general, the major exception is Michael Baxandall's study of German limewood sculptors, which focuses on the category owing to the abundance of wooden altarpieces during the late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance in a particular area.⁸

3. Period

The limiting of the period to the years between 1460 and 1530 may appear arbitrary to some extent. Nevertheless, the seventh decade of the 15th century is characterised by the arrival of Antonio Rizzo and Pietro Lombardo, Venice's principal stonemasons of the Early Renaissance. While there are only few sculptured altarpieces of the first half of the 15th century that can still be reconstructed to any extent, the output of the later half of the century was considerable and developed forms and fashions that continued into the 16th century. From the 1460s onwards Venetian sculpture, or rather sculpture in Venice, until then of Byzantine, Central Italian or Northern origin, seems to come into its own. Boucher and Radcliffe noted (again omitting the genre of the altarpiece):

"Many of the most characteristic forms of Venetian sculpture, including the great ducal tombs, marble reliefs and ornamental bronzes were developed in the last quarter of the 15th century."⁹

The years around and after 1530, on the other hand, are increasingly dominated by the Florentine Jacopo Sansovino. Thus, the period marks a time of transition for Venetian sculpture from the creations of the late mediaeval period to those of the High Renaissance. It further witnessed a change

⁸ Baxandall (1980).

⁹ Boucher and Radcliffe in Hope/Martineau (1983), p. 355.

from the sculptor's image as a craftsman to his status as an artist.¹⁰

The main political event of the years between 1460 and 1530 was the War of the League of Cambrai, which broke out in 1509 and lasted for seven years. Indeed, peace was not entirely restored until 1529. It is significant that during these years building activity was limited to a minimum and that "only the most indispensable or richly endowed building projects were carried out",¹¹ before the market picked up again in the early 1520s. However, it should be noted that several sculptured altarpieces, above all the large and costly High Altars of the new churches of S.Sepolcro, S.Marina, S. Geminiano and S.Rocco, were carried out or begun during these very years. These altars attest to the development of a certain fashion for marble and other stone decorations.

While one of the earliest altarpieces of the period considered here, the polyptych of St. Peter in S.Maria dei Frari, is still a late mediaeval work, Renaissance forms were soon and quickly introduced by the sculptor-architects Antonio Rizzo and Pietro Lombardo. Pietro's sons Tullio and Antonio Lombardo developed them further and took Venetian sculpture to its classicist height, while other sculptors during the first decades of the 16th century produced altarpieces with reliefs and statues which recall the compositional and figure style of Giorgione and early Titian. This "painterly" period of Venetian sculpture came to an end in 1527 with the arrival of Jacopo Sansovino who introduced a

¹⁰ See also comment by Sheard (1987), pp. 478f.

¹¹ Howard (1981), p. 128.

much more monumental style, moulded by his years in Florence and Rome and the influence of Michelangelo. With Sansovino Venetian sculpture entered the period of "a more versatile and cosmopolitan style",¹² which generated works of a very different character. Therefore it seems appropriate to exclude his contributions from the present study.¹³

4. Sculptured Altarpieces and other Sculptured Objects

The sculptured altarpiece denotes a distinct group of objects. It is different from other major genres of sculpture of the period, such as tombs, portrait busts or reliefs, and statuettes, medals and carved gems. It has further to be distinguished from other works of religious sculpture, such isolated statues or reliefs of saints, street tabernacles and the huge body of exterior sculpture with devotional function.¹⁴

While Renaissance funerary monuments, especially Venetian ones, have been examined in several detailed studies as a category as well as with regard to the individual object, a history of the sculptured altarpiece in Venice remains to be written.¹⁵ In fact, the sculptured altarpiece

¹² Boucher (1991), p. 174.

¹³ Pope-Hennessy (1971), p. 96: "When Tullio died in 1532, the statues of the Medici chapel in San Lorenzo were all but finished, and the Moses and the Dying and Rebellious Slaves for the tomb of Julius II were complete, while eddies of the new style had reached Venice through Jacopo Sansovino, who for three years had been Protomagister at St. Mark's. The humanist synthesis established in the fifteenth century had succumbed to the emotions and ides of a new age, and mankind stood face to face with the colossus of Michelangelo."

¹⁴ Rizzi (1987), pp. 73-85 and *passim*, and Cuman/Fabbian (1987).

¹⁵ While Munman (1968) and Brand (1977) studied a series of Renaissance funerary monuments, the first discussing those in

does not appear to have been recognised *expressis verbis* as a category of Venetian Renaissance sculpture. Nevertheless, a great number of works still extant in Venetian churches and others which are lost, establish the sculptured altarpiece as a major task within Venetian Renaissance sculpture, whereas it never gained the same importance in Florence, commonly denominated as the birthplace of Italian Renaissance sculpture.

However, Alberti was well aware of this genre in the 15th century, pointing out the aesthetic dignity of the material and the great variety of forms.¹⁶ So was Burckhardt, who characterised the sculptured altarpiece as "eine der höchsten Aufgaben der verbündeten Dekoration und Skulptur".¹⁷ Despite this observation, his concept of the "Kunstgeschichte nach Aufgaben" was not taken up by other, subsequent scholars and the category of the sculptured altarpiece was again left unheeded.

Pietro Paoletti, author of the still essential *L'Architettura e la Scultura del Rinascimento in Venezia* of 1893, focused on the chronological and stylistic development of Venetian architecture and sculpture in general. Although he distinguished between different types of craftsmen, wood carvers, stone masons, sculptors and architects, as well as between the various materials, he was not concerned with categories of objects. Nevertheless, his survey of monuments and collection of documents remains an unchallenged source of information.

Venice, the other those by Pietro Lombardo, Sheard (1971) focused on a single tomb, that of Doge Andrea Vendramin.

¹⁶ For Alberti's comments see Chapter Two.

¹⁷ Burckhardt (1970), p. 220.

5. Recent Literature on Venetian Sculpture

In recent years, the study of Venetian sculpture has been revived by a small circle of scholars, approaching the subject from various angles, all dealing with sculptured altarpieces at one point or another. In their survey of Venetian art of the Renaissance, Wolters and Huse followed Burckhardt's "Kunstgeschichte nach Aufgaben" in the book's sections on architecture and painting. On the other hand, it is noticeable that Wolters' section on sculpture is structured in a more conventional way, according to the main sculptors of the period.

In view of the great number of unsigned, anonymous monuments the issue of their attribution and the reconstruction of artists' lives has always been one of the major aims in the research of Venetian sculpture. It has occupied scholars from Pietro Paoletti and Leo Planiscig to Robert Munman and Anne Markham Schulz. It is above all the merit of Anne Markham Schulz to have shed light on the lives and oeuvres of Antonio Rizzo, Giambattista and Lorenzo Bregno, Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco and other sculptors working in Venice during the period.¹⁸ Owing to her research, many documents and works of sculpture, which were hitherto unpublished or hard to find, have become easily accessible and extensively catalogued. Although Schulz provided the context for sculpture, her main aim has always been the attribution of works of sculpture to certain hands.

¹⁸ For Schulz's numerous publications of relevance to this thesis see Bibliography.

However, too often in this field there has been a concentration on the work of individual sculptors, based on more or less tenable attributions. The disadvantages of this approach are obvious: isolated works which cannot be studied as exemplars of an artist's style or of artistic excellence in general will remain neglected. The issue of attribution may draw too much attention to its sculptor, while other aspects of the object, the language of its form style and, above all, its material, are left behind. Equally, the social and aesthetic significance of the objects as a category and their patronage tend to be neglected. As my primary concerns in this thesis are of a contextual and cultural historical nature, I shall not dwell on matters of stylistic analysis and attribution in depth. Instead, a brief discussion of the authorship of each work shall be confined to the Catalogue (Appendix II).

In her thesis of 1976 Susan Connell provided much valuable information on the material and the making of works of architecture and sculpture in Venice during the 15th century. Her survey of workshop organisation, types and application of stone, and the relation between stone mason and patron is to my knowledge unique in the field of Venetian sculpture.¹⁹

Wendy Stedman Sheard, on the other hand, has contributed much to the contextual understanding of Venetian sculpture. Her doctoral thesis on the tomb for Doge Andrea Vendramin is a study of the individual monument as well as of the genre.²⁰

¹⁹ Recently, a similar approach was chosen by Jennifer Montagu in her book Roman Baroque Sculpture - The Industry of Art. New Haven and London, 1989.

²⁰ Sheard (1971).

Since then she has been investigating the appreciation of sculpture as an art form, the political and social meaning of sculpture, its iconography and relationship with painting.²¹

In a unique instance, Bertrand Jestaz demonstrated that this contextual approach on one sole chapel, in this case the Zen Chapel, its tomb and altar in S.Marco, can generate an extensive study. By exhaustively interpreting the contemporary documents, he uncovered the testator's motives, the patrons' intentions, and the sculptors' response.

6. Problems

While the many advantages of a generic analysis are manifest, the problems involved in a study of this kind are also clear. Several of the altars of the period have been dismembered. While some parts were lost or destroyed, others have been re-arranged on new sites. Others still have ended up abroad.

Furthermore, there are wide gaps in the documentation of our objects. Only a few chapels and altars, especially those administered by the Procurators of S.Marco, are accompanied by more or less complete sets of documents, from the initial donation to the eventual installation, as in the case of the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen from S.Maria dei Servi. Others, however, are not at all documented, such as the previously mentioned High Altar of S.Sepolcro. Despite losses and alterations the majority of sculptured altarpieces are still *in situ*, while various others can be reconstructed from documentation. In this thesis I will draw from a number of hitherto undiscovered sources, but also from several

²¹ See Bibliography for Sheard's various publications.

published documents which, however, have not been sufficiently explored.

7. Structure

Despite their relative obscurity, a considerable number of sculptured altarpieces decorated the churches of Venice during the period. In the Catalogue (Appendix II) I have listed as many as forty-nine objects.

Chapter One of this thesis shall provide a survey of their chronological, formal and thematical development. By doing this I shall introduce the major sculptured altarpieces of the years between 1460 and 1530 and describe their most significant characteristics. Owing to the multitude of form as well as of subject-matter, variations which often produced hybrids or different works co-existing alongside each other, an analysis of the sculptured altarpieces' development cannot be done in a strictly chronological manner. Therefore, the first chapter is divided into three major sections: first, I shall examine the altarpieces' formal development from polyptych to unified retable. Secondly, I shall turn to the evolution of narrative compositions and, lastly, to the exploration of space on sculptured altarpieces. Within these sections a chronological sequence will be maintained as far as possible.

A few objects will receive little attention in this context, either because their form cannot be reconstructed or because their significance lies in other areas like those of material or patronage. They will be discussed under different aspects in the subsequent chapters. The many altars, which incorporated sculpture as a subordinate part of their overall

decorative system, such as statues to the sides of a painted altarpiece, could not be taken into account.²²

Chapter Two dwells in detail on the use of different materials available for the making of sculptured altarpieces. In particular, it will offer a survey of the use of wood, bronze and different kinds of stone. It will also provide a close look at the application of polychromy and gilding on these materials.

After an outline of the altars' physical features (form, subject-matter and material) it will be the purpose of the third chapter to show how altarpieces were made. Although it has often been stated that sculptural monuments, altarpieces and tombs alike, were not the works of one person alone, but of large workshops, the majority of studies have attempted to solve problems related to the attribution of individual works to the hands of particular sculptors.²³

On the other hand, little attention has been paid to work in progress. How was a sculptured altarpiece made? What were the different stages of its production? How many craftsmen were involved? Work in progress will be illustrated by a body of documents in Appendix One, which follows each

²² Most notable are the three statues of the Salvator, Sts. Francis and Anthony of Padua, which are crowning Titian's *Assunta* in the Frari. The altarpiece's frame also contains a relief of the Man of Sorrows at the bottom. For these sculptures and their relationship to the altarpiece see Schulz (1991), pp. 49f. Probably the altar of the Dolce family at S.Giustina also always held a painting in the centre with the two statues of Sts. Thomas Aquinas by (Antonio Lombardo) and Peter Martyr (by Paolo Stella Milanese) at the sides. For these figures, now in SS. Giovanni e Paolo, see Schulz (1985).

²³ More detailed discussions of workshop organisation and work in progress can be found above all in Connell (1976) and in Maek-Gérard (1980); general conclusions by Wolters in Huse/Wolters (1986), pp. 146-152.

stage of the making of the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen from S. Maria dei Servi.

Another principal issue of this chapter will be a survey of the cost of sculptured altarpieces. Of particular interest will be the distribution of the money spent on them, whether they were more expensive than their painted counterparts, and, if yes, why. In order to illustrate these issues I have added an Appendix of Documents at the end of this thesis.

The altars' cost as well as their aesthetic value will lead to the questions taken up in Chapter Four:

Who were the persons who bequeathed substantial amounts of money for these impressive and expensive monuments? Who decided on the material, the style, and the iconography of these altars? Why did patrons choose sculpture rather than painting? Are there tendencies among certain groups of Venetian society to prefer works of sculpture to works in other media? Unfortunately, the majority of both altars and patrons are patchily or not at all documented. Thus, by necessity, I shall have to be selective. Nevertheless, by surveying more than twenty founders, commissaries or patrons of sculptured altarpieces I hope to shed light on these issues.

CHAPTER ONE

FORM AND CONTENT

In a study on the sculptured altarpiece, in this case in Venice, one of the principal questions has to concern the development of its form and content. How are reliefs and free-standing statues represented? How do altar and sculptured image relate? Did the achievements of central Italian sculpture of the Renaissance affect Venetian sculpture? Is there a significant change in the concept of the sculptured altarpiece in Venice (as of sculpture on the whole) during the period between 1460 and 1530? These are the issues which will be addressed in this chapter.

A discussion of form will necessarily lead to an analysis of the altarpieces' iconography and of the type of subject-matter that is represented, that is to say whether we deal with iconic images, the representation of narratives or mystical events.

1. From Mediaeval Polyptych to Renaissance Pala

It is common in the study of the history of the (painted) altarpiece to contrast the mediaeval polyptych, representing isolated images of saints in separate architecturally defined units, with the unified *retable*¹ of the Renaissance consisting of only one single representation. In Venice of our period, the latter would be predominantly the depiction of a *Sacra Conversazione* or of a mystic narrative event.²

Jacob Burckhardt, in an early analysis of the form of the Renaissance altarpiece, already recognised the vast variety of formats ranging from simply framed rectangular reliefs to grandiose triumphal arch constructions.³

Considering the form of the sculptured altarpiece on a most general level one also has to distinguish between the two types mentioned above: the late mediaeval polyptych, frequently designated as *ancona*, and the unified altarpiece of the Renaissance, now usually referred to as *pala*. Both terms are problematic and modern definitions conflict with usage during the period. Jestaz, aware of the problem, has interpreted the meaning of *pala*, which in 15th century Venice was equivalent to the term *ancona* and normally referred to the central image or images that decorated an altar. This decoration could be sculpted or painted, have the form of a

¹ The term *retable* is used here for a "painted or carved altarpiece, consisting of one or more fixed panels". See *Oxford Companion*, p. 977.

² See Schmidt in *Pittura nel Veneto*, II, p. 703 on *Sacra Conversazione*. See *ibid.* also for relevant bibliography, p. 722, n. 2. For the introduction of narrative subjects on altars see Meilman (1989).

³ Burckhardt (1955), p. 220.

polyptych with rows of saints or that of a unified retable with a narrative scene.⁴ In modern usage, however, the term *Renaissance pala* has come to be applied mainly to a unified retable, normally painted.

The definition of *ancona* in the *Lexikon des Mittelalters* declares it to be a Venetian form of the retable of the 14th and 15th centuries, consisting of a set form with five compartments, two lateral tiers and one large central tier with twin columns, sometimes surmounted by a third tier.⁵ This definition is not correct considering the use of the word in the 15th and 16th centuries. In fact, an *ancona* can have various shapes and architectural frameworks: Donatello's High Altar of the Santo in Padua (plate 4) is referred to as an *ancona* in contemporary documents,⁶ yet the altarpiece was presumably very different from the *ancona* mentioned as decoration of the chapel for Jacopo Bernabò in S. Giovanni Crisostomo before being replaced by Tullio Lombardo's relief of the *Coronation of the Virgin* (plate 150), which Temanza in the 18th century also called a *pala*. *Ancona* appears to be no more than the space provided for the altarpiece. This may be a niche, a canopy, a tabernacle, or, indeed, a compartmented construction of the type mentioned above.⁷ Although the forms

⁴ Jestaz (1986), pp. 169-171.

⁵ *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, Munich and Zurich, I, 1980, col. 581, *ad vocem* Ancone.

⁶ Sartori/Fillarini (1976), pp. 87-91.

⁷ See *Dizionario Enciclopedico Italiano* (Rome, 1970), I, p. 414, *ad vocem* ancona: "Col nome di ancona s'indica anche la sola incorniciatura architettonica, quando assume, per la ricchezza dei motivi e dei materiali, particolare importanza di arte decorativa." The *Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana* (Torino, 1961), I, p. 447, identifies *ancona* with "pala d'altare".

are manifold, in the following survey I shall differentiate between two major groups, one of iconic images, the other of unified retables.

1.1 Iconic Images

The term "iconic images" here refers to figures of saints represented alone or alongside other figures, which are not united in a common spatial setting, but usually separated by niches and compartments.

1.1.1 Groups

1.1.1.1 Unrelated Groups, Polyptychs

The standard Venetian altarpiece, painted as well as sculptured, around the middle of the 15th century is divided in the late mediaeval manner into several tiers and compartments: the polyptych or the triptych. The latter type, which is of a more intimate format, emerged slightly later, developing from images for private devotion.⁸ These altarpieces are normally made out of wood and are lavishly gilded and polychromed. Typically, they combine numerous painted as well as sculptural elements on a scale that is significantly smaller than life-size.

Among the major works of this type extant in Venice are the High Altar and the Altar of the Resurrection in the Chapel of S. Tarasio at S. Zaccaria, made in 1443, the year in which the building of the chapel was completed.⁹ The High Altar (plate 1) is a two-tiered construction with full-length

⁸ Schmidt in Pittura nel Veneto, II, p. 703.

⁹ The Altar of the Resurrection is dated in an inscription. See Pallucchini (1962), pp. 99f.

figures in the main tier and half-length figures above, surmounted by pinnacles topped with busts of prophets. While the main tier's central figures are painted, the lateral ones and those of the upper tier are carved in wood. This type of multi-tiered and compartmented polyptych represents a variation of the sculptured High Altar of S. Francesco in Bologna (plate 3), which was begun in 1388 by the Venetian stonemasons Pierpaolo and Jacobello delle Masegne.¹⁰ The Altar of the Resurrection (plate 2), on the other hand, does not have one but three vertically superimposed representations in relief at its centre, while painted figures occupy the lateral niches. Burckhardt noted that many early sculptured altarpieces consisted of a multitude of small elements of this kind and lacked a single focal point.¹¹

Completely different in character is Donatello's High Altar for the basilica di S. Antonio in Padua (plate 4). It was begun in 1447 and is therefore almost contemporary with the works from S. Zaccaria. Dismantled in 1579, the altar was re-erected only in the 19th century. The altar's original arrangement is not known. Nonetheless, whatever reconstructions scholars have suggested,¹² the seven free-standing bronze statues of nearly life size and the twenty-one predella reliefs express a monumentality which is completely absent from the S. Zaccaria altars. In fact,

¹⁰ See Wolters (1976), I, p. 219, for a detailed discussion and the possible sources for the altar of the dalle Masegne.

¹¹ Burckhardt/Humfrey (1988), p. 28.

¹² A choice of reconstructions of Donatello's altar can be found in an essay by John White in Lorenzoni (1984), figs. 113-124, and, more recently in Poeschke (1990), pp. 115-116. See plate 6 for two early reconstructions by Cordenons (1895) and von Hadeln (1909), which illustrate very clearly the three-dimensionality of figures and setting.

Donatello's altar was a complete novelty at the time of its first (provisional) installation in 1448, and it was not immediately assimilated by contemporary sculptors. Its significance became evident only during the period considered here.

The Triptych of the Mascoli Chapel in S.Marco and the Polyptych of St. Peter in the Emiliani Chapel in the church of S.Maria dei Frari are two further examples of the late mediaeval altarpiece. However, in both of these cases the material that was chosen for the altarpieces was not wood as in S.Zaccaria, but stone. On the Mascoli Triptych (plate 7), dedicated in 1430, marble statues of the Madonna and Child, Sts. Mark and John the Evangelist, all approximately two-thirds life size, are standing in stilted round-arched niches.¹³ They are surmounted by richly ornamented tympana.¹⁴ The altar frontal is decorated with the relief of two angels kneeling to the sides of the Cross. There are many traces of gilding on figures and frame. Despite its size, the altarpiece is reminiscent of small ivory works and reliquaries.

The earliest altar which falls within the limits of our period is the Polyptych of St. Peter (plate 8) in S.Maria dei Frari.¹⁵ Although perhaps begun before mid-century, the altar was probably completed only around the year 1464, when its

¹³ The so-called Mascoli Triptych was not commissioned by the Scuola dei Mascoli, but by Doge Francesco Foscari. See Chapter Four, *2.3.1 Three Altars in S.Marco for Doge Cristoforo Moro*.

¹⁴ See Wolters (1976), I, p. 277. The Madonna measures 130 cm in height, St. John 115 cm and St. Mark 120 cm; the antependium measures 69 x 136.5 cm.

¹⁵ See Chapter Four, *2.1.1 The Emiliani Chapel at S.Maria dei Frari*.

patron's tomb was erected in the same chapel. The altarpiece basically repeats the type of the mediaeval Venetian two-tiered polyptych, with full-length figures of male saints in the pointed-arch niches of the main tier (a statue of the chapel's titular saint occupying the slightly broader central niche, plate 9) and half-length figures of female saints on a larger scale in pointed-arch niches above.¹⁶ In this case, though, elaborate foliage and decorative architecture of the flamboyant Gothic manner, still essential features of the altars in S.Zaccaria, have given way to a much more sober architectural construction of the altar's framework. The free-standing figures are two-thirds life-size and some of them step forward from their narrow niches. The St. Peter Polyptych was not the last one of its kind, as examples from the Venetian mainland document. However, at the time of its completion this type was beginning to be superseded by new forms.

The first of a group of three altars by Antonio Rizzo in S.Marco now constitutes the superstructure of the Altar in the Chapel of St. Clement (plate 12). It takes us one step further in the development of the Renaissance sculptured altarpiece. Here, the hitherto typical polyptych structure has given way to a central "pala", a relief of the Madonna and Child, accompanied by two statuettes of Sts. Mark and Bernardino of Siena to its left and right.¹⁷ While the small size of the relief and figures is reminiscent of images made

¹⁶ Catalogue no. 24.

¹⁷ Catalogue no. 17. Schulz (1983a) p. 24, n. 21 also drew attention to a description of 1753 by Meschinello, p. 97, presumably describing the altarpiece in its original state, consisting of the three elements, relief and two statuettes, without any further framework.

for private devotion, the free-standing statuettes of saints endow it with a new sense of monumentality of a public work of art.¹⁸

1.1.1.2 Renaissance polyptychs

The original appearance of many polyptychs cannot be reconstructed, and only the presence of three or more figures suggests that a particular altarpiece once took the form of a triptych. Thus, it is impossible to make any definite statements about the original appearance of the Altar of the Barbers' Guild, of which four two-thirds life-size statues of saints have survived in S.Sofia (plates 15-18).¹⁹ Perhaps the figures, with a painting of the Madonna at the centre, once occupied the niches of an arrangement similar to that of the Polyptych of St. Peter. Alternatively, they may have been free-standing like those of the altarpiece in the Chapel of St. Clement.

Equally impossible is the reconstruction of the Altar of St. Nicholas of Tolentino in S.Stefano, which was rebuilt at the beginning of the 18th century (plate 19), incorporating three marble statues by Pietro Lombardo (plates 20-22).²⁰ Since nothing definite can be said about the form of these altars, I shall postpone a more detailed discussion of them until Chapter Four, dealing with the work's patronage.²¹

¹⁸ See Chapter Four, *2.3.1 Three Altars in S.Marco for Doge Cristoforo Moro*.

¹⁹ Catalogue no. 37.

²⁰ Catalogue no. 39.

²¹ See Chapter Four, *3.5 The Corbelli Altar in S.Stefano*.

The earliest example of a sculptured Renaissance triptych (but not the earliest Renaissance altarpiece!) in Venice is the Altar of the de' Martini Chapel in S.Giobbe (plate 23).²² As Eric Apfelstadt recently argued in a detailed analysis of the chapel and its patronage, the chapel and altar were made by the Florentine sculptor Antonio Rossellino and his workshop.²³ The altar was probably executed soon after 1475, when the chapel was referred to as being under construction.²⁴ On the altarpiece three shallow round-arched niches of equal size with shell decoration are occupied by marble statuettes of less than half life-size, representing Sts. John the Baptist in the centre and Francis and Anthony to the sides (plate 24). The pilasters dividing the niches are decorated with floral patterns. This main tier is surmounted by a large rectangular space, flanked by a pair of candelabra-bearing angels. The rectangle, which may once have contained a painting of the Madonna and Child, now holds a modern mosaic.²⁵

The triptych principally follows Central Italian designs for sculptured altarpieces (plate 26).²⁶ In Venice, this format became standard for painted altarpieces from Jacopo Bellini to Bartolomeo Vivarini (plate 27).²⁷ But among

²² Catalogue no. 9.

²³ Apfelstadt (1987), pp. 241-310.

²⁴ See Chapter Four, *3.1 The De' Martini Chapel in S.Giobbe*.

²⁵ Moschini (1815), I, p. 64.

²⁶ See Otto Kurz, 'A Group of Florentine Drawings for an Altar', in Warburg Journal, XVIII, 1955, pp. 35-53.

²⁷ Examples of this type are the four triptychs from the Bellini workshop from S.Maria della Carità from the early 1460s. Eisler, (1989), p. 62, noted that their frameworks (modern replacements which most probably correspond to the

sculptured altarpieces the de' Martini triptych is unique, as is the chapel's ceiling (plate 25), which is decorated with enamelled terracotta tiles from the della Robbia workshop. On the other hand the disproportionate height of the altarpiece, created by the upper storey, is not typical of Florentine, but of Venetian altarpieces.²⁸

A late example of the horizontal triptych is the Altar of St. Michael in S. Maria dei Frari (plate 28), which may date from the years around 1500. It is possible that, as a wooden polychromed and gilded altarpiece, it was made in the workshop of a painter.²⁹ Consequently, it follows the model of the previously mentioned painted triptychs of the second half of the Quattrocento. The altarpiece consists of three niches of equal size, containing wooden figures of saints (plates 29-31), St. Michael occupying the central niche. The three compartments of the broad predella zone, now plain, would originally have been filled with carved and gilded floral ornaments. There is no evidence that the altar was originally surmounted by a superstructure.³⁰ A figure of St.

lost originals) were among the most modern settings for altars in Venice. The same principle of three niches of equal height was still used on the Vivarini triptych of 1492 in S. Maria dei Frari. In this case, however, a high upper tier above the central niche endows the altar with a typically Venetian emphasis on the vertical axis (see n. 27).

²⁸ Both Sheard and Logan pointed out the "basic verticality of Venetian High Renaissance altarpieces" as compared to the "horizontality of Florentine Quattrocento altarpieces". See Sheard (1971), pp. 260 and 262a, and Logan (1972), p. 199. Logan observed that "altarpieces in side chapels were normally tall and narrow, having, in most cases, semicircular heads, although there was more variety in pieces for high altars."

²⁹ Catalogue no. 26. See Chapter Three, 4. *The Division of Labour*.

³⁰ Communication from dott. Luigi Sante Savio, restorer of the Soprintendenza dei Beni Artistici e Storici di Venezia.

Michael also assumed the central position between two other figures on the Altar of the d'Arnolfo Chapel in the cathedral at Chioggia, dating from ca. 1460.³¹ Although chapel and altar were destroyed, a drawing illustrates the altarpiece (plate 32). The arrangement is quite different from the previously mentioned triptychs. The three statues or reliefs are set together under or in front of a canopy, that is to say without a division of the figures by niches. Above, a half-length figure of God the Father with two angels is represented in a triangular pediment.

Although the first Renaissance triptych in Venice is the work of a Florentine, Venetian triptychs quickly followed, developed their own characteristics, and continued to be a formal possibility of Venetian sculptured and painted altarpieces until well into the 16th century. It was in particular the principle of compartmentalisation which continued to be used, in painting as well as in sculpture.³² Both the Triptych of the Madonna in SS. Giovanni e Paolo from the early 1480s and the Triptych for Giovanni Trevisan from S.Cipriano dating from the beginning of the 16th century, consist of a main tier with full-length figures and an upper tier. Braun noted the large number of altarpieces of this type, often furnished with a tabernacle-like top, interpreting the form as a simplified version of the late mediaeval retable transformed to suit the taste of Early

³¹ Catalogue no. 43.

³² As for painted compartmented altarpieces compare the shapes of the St. Vincent Ferrer altarpiece in SS. Giovanni e Paolo (mid-1460s), the Averoldi Polyptych in Brescia (commissioned in 1519) by Titian and of the St. Barbara Polyptych in S.Maria Formosa by Palma il Vecchio (dated by Rylands, 1988, p. 236, to 1523-24).

Renaissance society.³³ Although these altars were made in all parts of Italy, they were particularly popular in Venice. The two altarpieces described here are much larger than the de' Martini altarpiece - the statues of the main tiers are three-quarters life size, like many of Antonio Rizzo's and Pietro Lombardo's tomb figures.

The Altar of the Madonna (plate 33) in particular introduces an adaptation of the tripartite triumphal arch motif, a novelty in the Venetian altar, probably resulting from a preceding development of the monumental tomb in Venice.³⁴ Its central niche is broader and higher than the lateral niches, above which are rectangular reliefs of two half-length praying angels in *mezzo rilievo*. The angels' gazes are directed downwards, where a statue of the Madonna would originally have occupied the altar's central niche.³⁵ The lateral niches are still occupied by three-quarter life size free-standing statues representing Sts. Philip and Andrew (plates 34, 35). In the central rectangular field in a kind of attic above the central niche is a half-length relief of God the Father surrounded by cherubim.³⁶

³³ Braun (1924), II, pp. 366-368.

³⁴ Catalogue no. 14. Burckhardt/Humfrey (1988), p. 30, noted the adaptation of the motif, also indicating that it was purely formal. As Sheard demonstrated in her thesis and in several publications, the development of the monumental tomb culminated in the Monument for Doge Andrea Vendramin, which was under construction in 1493.

³⁵ The central niche is now occupied by Bartolomeo Bergamasco's statue of St. Mary Magdalen from the Altar for Verde della Scala from S. Maria dei Servi.

³⁶ Schulz (1977a) argued on stylistic grounds that the Benedetti altar, erected in the first half of the 1480s, followed at least in part a design by the Florentine sculptor Andrea Verrocchio, then resident in Venice until his death in 1488. In my opinion, there is no reason to assume that the

The niches of the main tier of the Trevisan Triptych (plate 36) are of equal size.³⁷ The two lateral compartments of the upper tier are square, whereas the central one is a round-arched niche which surmounts the sides, thus creating a vertical emphasis of the central axis. The 19th century paintings of half-length saints, which now decorate these compartments, may replace painted or sculptured equivalents, but nothing is known about their original decoration. The marble statues in the niches of the main tier (plates 37, 38) are free-standing and about three-quarter life size.

Despite Sagredo's conviction that the wooden Altar of the Florentine Community (plate 40) in S. Maria dei Frari was designed by Donatello, the arrangement is an early 19th century pastiche.³⁸ The altar's original framework of the early 16th century was filled with statuary of the late 16th century. The relief of the *Resurrection* in the pedimented superstructure once formed a little altar belonging to the Scuola della Passione. The restorer of the work believes that, while Donatello's wooden statue of St. John the Baptist filled the central niche, the original decoration of the laterals consisted of painted panels.³⁹ The frame was modelled on either the original or a similar altar from the late 15th century.⁴⁰ As a matter of fact, a very similarly

altarpiece was not made by Lombard sculptors, presumably from the shop of Pietro Lombardo.

³⁷ Catalogue no. 41.

³⁸ Sagredo (1853), p. 448.

³⁹ Communication from Luigi Sante Savio, restorer of the Soprintendenza dei Beni Artistici e Storici di Venezia.

⁴⁰ Documents point to a redecoration of the Florentine chapel at the beginning of the 16th century. See ASV, S. Maria dei Frari, Registro I, 2, c. 25 and ASV, S. Maria dei Frari,

compartmented construction can be found in the previously mentioned Altar of the Madonna in SS. Giovanni e Paolo.⁴¹ Thus, if nothing else, the pastiche demonstrates an awareness of the type of the compartmented Renaissance triptych by 19th century restorers.

The Triptych of St. Jerome (plate 41) in the Badoer-Giustinian chapel in S. Francesco della Vigna, executed during the first decade of the 16th century, is a further variation of the Renaissance triptych in two tiers.⁴² Here, however, an obvious attempt has been made to unite the relief space of the main tier. Three niches of equal size feature coffered barrel vaults in low relief, with the perspectival lines of the coffering converging in a vanishing point in the central niche, occupied by a seated figure of St. Jerome (plate 43).⁴³ Each of the lateral niches (plates 42, 44) accommodates two figures in high relief instead of only one. The upper tier is no longer fully developed and only the central compartment corresponds to the earlier works. This displays a half-length *mezzo-rilievo* of the Madonna and Child in a rectangular field, framed by pilasters and topped by a segmental-arched pediment. The lateral compartments of the upper tier consist of a kind of conflated volute occupied by angels.

During the 16th century, triptychs continued to be an important form of the sculptured altarpiece, but the possible formal solutions became more varied: The High Altar of

Indice, p. 109, 12th June 1504. This would also be a stylistically acceptable dating of the altar's framework.

⁴¹ Soravia (1823), II, p. 144.

⁴² Catalogue no. 8.

⁴³ See this chapter, *4.1 Vaults and Coffered Ceilings*.

S. Marina was one of these modern triptychs.⁴³ Although the framework is lost and only its three statues of Sts. Marina, Catherine and Mary Magdalen survive (plates 50-52), Schulz described the altar's original appearance referring to a document of 1676 in the Archive of S. Maria Formosa in Venice.⁴⁴ St. Marina, the church's titular saint, stood in a central and elevated position, accompanied on a lower level and to either side by the female saints, whose gazes are turned up and towards her. As Schulz concluded from the document, the three life-size figures probably stood in niches flanked by columns (plate 53).

Other altars with free-standing figures were similarly arranged in a setting that allowed the statues to relate to each other in one way or another. After 1500 the dominant framing device of these altars became the pedimented tabernacle or aedicula.⁴⁵ Braun, moreover, defined a special kind of pedimented tabernacle frame, consisting of a lower main tier with pilasters or columns and an upper attic, which is surmounted by the pediment. This form, typical of doorways and windows of the period (plate 57), he found characteristic also of Venetian altar architecture of ca. 1500 and reminiscent of the "Halbciborien" of the early Renaissance.⁴⁶

⁴³ Catalogue no. 15. Schulz (1991), p. 175.

⁴⁴ Schulz (1991), pp. 175-76.

⁴⁵ The term *aedicula* characterises "an ornamental architectural frame, having columns or pilasters at the sides and an entablature or canopy at the top." (Oxford Companion, p. 10). Describing the altar of the Trevisan family in S. Maria Mater Domini, made shortly after 1523, Paoletti (1893), II, p. 275, claimed that: "Quest'altare... nella struttura segue un tipo già allora molto in uso."

⁴⁶ Braun (1924), II, pp. 368-371. Particularly striking, but hitherto unnoticed, are the parallels between one of the doorways to the ground floor hall of the Scuola Grande di

On the High Altar of S.Geminiano (plate 54), for instance, a large aedicula frames a single round-arched and semicircular niche which contains three smaller niches. They are framed with triangular pediments and hold the marble statuettes of three saints by Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco. The figures were carved in the early 1520s.⁴⁷ As the small niches are set into this concavity, the lateral statues of saints turn inwards toward the central statue of St. John the Baptist (plate 55).⁴⁸ This is further accentuated by the turning of the head of the canon saint on the right, and the stepping toward the centre of St. Menna on the left. The Baptist (plate 56), on the other hand, is coming forward with his right leg, while turning his head to the other side, thus creating a kind of communication between the three figures.⁴⁹

The most complex project of the period is the High Altar of S.Rocco (plate 58), commissioned from the *tagliapietra* Venturin Fantoni in 1517, shortly after the building of the

S.Giovanni Evangelista (plate 57) and the High Altar of S.Rocco (plate 58).

⁴⁷ Catalogue no. 12.

⁴⁸ See also Schulz (1984b), pp. 262-64. Schulz also described the statues and established their position in the oeuvre of Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco, but did not point out the figures' relationship with each other.

⁴⁹ The concept of the S.Geminiano altar had been preceded by the decoration of the Chapel of the Sacrament (plate 90) in the Cathedral of Treviso, erected and furnished between 1503 and 1512. The semi-circular apse of this chapel features three pedimented niches, which contain statues of the Redeemer at the centre and angels to the left and right by Giambattista and Lorenzo Bregno. Two further niches along the chapel's lateral walls accommodate statues of Sts. Peter and Paul by the same sculptors. All lateral figures are directed towards the central statue of Christ. For the history of the Chapel at Treviso see Schulz (1991), pp. 159-65.

church had begun.⁵⁰ As Sheard has shown in her study on the Vendramin monument, the High Altar of S.Rocco held a key position: being at the same time reliquary, tomb and altar decoration, "it was bound to reflect the forms of funerary art more specifically than did altarpieces that functioned primarily as frames for paintings".⁵¹

Like the funerary monuments of the period - the Tomb for Doge Andrea Vendramin (plate 64) must be regarded as one of the main models for the altar - the construction follows the scheme of a triumphal arch with a tall central arch and lateral round-arched niches on two levels. The architecture is articulated by four large free-standing columns on the main tier and two shorter columns at the corners of the upper tier. At the same time, the typical structure of the Venetian aedicula altar, consisting of main tier and attic as defined by Braun, is superimposed on the triumphal arch motif. The altar's main opening houses a sarcophagus containing the relics of St. Roch, on top of which we find a free-standing statue of the saint showing his plague boil. The lateral niches and the platforms to the sides of the pediment accommodate six statues of saints.⁵² St. Roch and Sts. Sebastian and John the Baptist (plates 59-61) in the niches of the main tier are two-thirds life-size. It appears from a document published by Paoletti, that in 1521 the altar was to be decorated with another four statues to be put into niches on the altar's lateral faces, including a statue of a

⁵⁰ Schulz surveys the history of the altar in Schulz (1984b), pp. 257-62. Most of the documents relating to the making of the altar are published in Paoletti (1897), p. 124.

⁵¹ Sheard (1971), p. 260.

⁵² Catalogue no. 35.

"Christo di razi", a (resurrected) Christ surrounded with rays of light.⁵³ However, these were not executed.⁵⁴

A pair of wooden altarpieces, datable on stylistic grounds to the third decade of the 16th century, face each other from the left and right aisles of the cathedral on Torcello (plates 65, 67).⁵⁵ They are fine examples of this symbiosis of the mediaeval triptych with the triumphal arch motif of the Renaissance. The projecting central niches of these altars are tall and barrel-vaulted and contain free-standing figures of two thirds life-size, representing a bishop saint and St. Liberale respectively. The arches are framed by short pilasters and surmounted by a kind of lunette with reliefs of putti opening a curtain to disclose half-length reliefs of God the Father. In contradistinction to the

⁵³ The representation of a Resurrected Christ is typical of the apex of Venetian tombs of the period. On the High Altar of S.Rocco it would have echoed the statue of the "Resurrected" St. Roch.

The altar's lateral faces as well as the architectural motifs of the surrounding frecco decoration (See Chapter Two, 5.2 *Painted Decoration of the Altars' Surroundings*) emphasise the altar's three-dimensionality. This idea of a monument, "visible from three sides, with the fourth side attached to the wall and not visible" (account of the 1513 form of the Papal tomb, quoted from Pope-Hennessy, 1963, p. 315) recalls Michelangelo's second project for the tomb of Pope Julius II of 1513. This possible relationship between the two monuments is further corroborated by Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco's statue of St. Sebastian, which bears a remarkable likeness to Michelangelo's *Rebellious Slave* in the Louvre.

⁵⁴ Paoletti (1893), p. 124, and Schulz (1984b), p. 260. Another altar that fulfilled the three functions of high altar, tomb and reliquary is the Shrine of Ss. Theonistus, Tabra and Tabrata by Lorenzo Bregno in the Cathedral of Treviso. A complete description of it is provided by Schulz (1991), pp. 61-63, 113-115, 152-155. The contract, which was originally drawn up in 1485 with Pietro Lombardo, envisaged an urn on columns decorated with six figurative reliefs and reliefs with the coats-of-arms of the bishop of Treviso.

⁵⁵ Catalogue nos. 2 and 3.

central niches, the lateral niches are rectangular and lower than the central arches, and are occupied by free-standing figures of a smaller scale. The niches are divided by columns, behind which open passageways, leading from the central spaces to either side. This architectural form is reminiscent of Bellini's Pesaro Triptych in the sacristy of S. Maria dei Frari of 1488.⁵⁶ Similar to the Altar of St. Jerome in S. Francesco della Vigna, the altars' lower sides are linked with the centre above the main entablature by high volutes containing reliefs of the Annunciation. Both altarpieces have predellas and sarcophagi with narrative reliefs (plates 66, 68).

Dating from the end of the first decade of the 16th century, a few altarpieces in Venice retain the tripartite division of earlier triptychs, while assimilating the principle of the triumphal arch. Unlike previous altars which adapted the triumphal arch as a purely formal quotation, these altars employ the motif, endowing it with liturgical meaning, since the central arch is fitted with a container for the host or relics.⁵⁷

This type of altarpiece is further characterised by a simplified compartment structure, and the use of inlaid semi-precious stones, gilding and bronze, which replace earlier abundant decorative floral patterns on architectural elements. Their figurative decoration consists of highly finished marble statuettes in mannered poses, usually not

⁵⁶ See Goffen (1986), especially pp. 45-46.

⁵⁷ See this chapter, below, 4.3 *Space, Altars and Tabernacles*.

higher than fifty centimetres, with rich, softly falling draperies and delicate surface structures.

The High Altar of the church of S.Sepolcro (plate 69) by Lorenzo Bregno consists of a wide central bay and two narrow lateral bays divided by columns of the Composite order (as opposed to pilasters of earlier altars).⁵⁸ While the lateral bays contain small round-arched niches accommodating the statuettes of Sts. John the Baptist and Peter (plates 70, 71), the central bay features a large round arch which once held a rectangular bronze sportello. The lunette is decorated with a relief of Christ as the Man of Sorrows. The altarpiece's main tier is surmounted by a superstructure or attic, consisting of segmented pediments above the lateral bays and a rectangular field with triangular pediment above the central bay, in front of which originally stood a figure of the Resurrected Christ.⁵⁹

Despite Schulz's thorough stylistic analysis of the statuettes of Sts. John and Peter, which she dated to ca. 1511, and her discussion of the altar's history, she did not point out the altar's pronounced triumphal arch motif.⁶⁰ This becomes particularly evident in view of the similarities existing between the format of the altar and that of contemporary funerary monuments, in particular that for Doge Giovanni Mocenigo (plate 72).⁶¹

⁵⁸ Catalogue no. 31.

⁵⁹ Sansovino/Stringa (1604), c. 131 verso.

⁶⁰ The altar and the history of the church of S.Sepolcro are discussed by Schulz (1991), p. 64 and pp. 196-199.

⁶¹ Sheard (1977), p. 250, n. 250, concluded from documentary evidence that the Monument for Giovanni Mocenigo was not finished until 1522. However, its design may well date to the years of the first decade of the 16th century and the tomb's

The Altar of the Sacrament in S.Marco (plate 73), another work by Lorenzo Bregno, commissioned from him in 1518, develops further the principle of the S.Sepolcro altar.⁶² Once again, narrow lateral bays with round-arched niches containing statuettes (plates 74, 76) flank a broader, but also higher central bay, set off by columns (plate 75). In this example the latter features a *mezzo rilievo* of a vaulted space, framed by an aedicula with segmental pediment. At the centre of the relief is a gilded bronze sportello with a marble angel on either side.⁶³ A figure of God the Father appears in the apse of the relief, above the sportello. Above the entablature of the lateral bays a simplified version of volutes connects the sides with the central arch. They are an updated interpretation of the volutes we have noted on several previous altarpieces, such as on that of the Badoer-Giustinian chapel in S.Francesco della Vigna and on the Altar of the Madonna in SS. Giovanni e Paolo.

A further example of this kind may have been the Altar of the Sacrament from S.Maria Maggiore (plate 77), now to the left of the presbytery in S.Maria Mater Domini.⁶⁴ Like the two previous altars, statuettes of saints (plates 78, 79) are set in lateral niches, while the central portion is reserved for a container of the Host. The framework is lavishly

construction may well have been under way, before work came to a halt due to the War of the League of Cambray. Much of the tomb's statuary can be dated to the period between 1500 and 1510 on stylistic grounds and would, therefore, be approximately contemporary with the S.Sepolcro Altar.

⁶² Catalogue no. 20. The altar was discussed at length by Schulz (1991), pp. 72f. and pp. 177-80.

⁶³ The *sportello* was added in the early 1540s by Jacopo Sansovino. See Boucher (1991), p. 70.

⁶⁴ Catalogue no. 29.

decorated with pieces of colourful stones and gilding. Although the altar's framework is certainly piecemeal (it was perhaps altered in the late 17th century), it is likely that the original composition resembled that of Bregno's evidently successful altars.

1.1.2 Single figures

The most basic type of the iconic image is the representation of a single figure. A great number of devotional images, isolated statues and reliefs (in most cases representing an image of the Madonna), decorate the exterior as well as the interior of Venetian churches and houses (plates 80, 81).

Two of the most crucial sculptured altarpieces of our period are each decorated with one single statue of a saint. In fact, the novelty of Renaissance forms used on the triptych of the de' Martini chapel (under construction in 1475) is anticipated by Antonio Rizzo's two Altars of Sts. James and Paul in the basilica of S.Marco (plates 82, 84).⁶⁵ These were executed shortly after the same sculptor's hybrid altar of the Madonna in the Chapel of St. Clement in the same church, and completed in 1469.

Rizzo's works are the first to replace the in Venice hitherto common *ancona* in several compartments with one sole niche framed by an aedicula construction that is surmounted by segmental-arched pediment.⁶⁶ The altars' lunettes are

⁶⁵ Catalogue nos. 18 and 19.

⁶⁶ Schulz (1983a), pp. 18f., commented on the introduction of the Renaissance tabernacle, i.e. pilasters supporting an entablature and a pediment, in Venetian art, its earliest manifestation being the Cenotaph of Federico Corner of the mid-1450s in the church of S.Maria dei Frari. A similar

decorated with half-length figures of God the Father, while their framework is lavishly decorated with floral patterns, sphinxes and putti.⁶⁷ Despite this wealth of ornament, the large marble statues dominate their setting. In contradistinction to the narrow but deep niches of the St. Peter Polyptych in S. Maria dei Frari, which did not allow their figures to move freely or "breathe", the niches of the S. Marco altars are much broader, while at the same time too shallow to contain the statues. As a consequence, these come forward from their setting as truly free-standing figures. Particularly St. Paul (plate 85), represented in a relaxed and restful contrapposto pose, meditating over the book he is reading, has an monumentality unprecedented in Venetian sculpture.

A bronze statue of the Resurrected Christ, made in 1494 or shortly later, originally adorned the Altar of the Saviour in the chapel of the jeweller Domenico de Piero located in the church of S. Maria della Carità.⁶⁸ Unfortunately, nothing remained of the altar's setting, when the chapel was destroyed in 1807, but a bronze statue of the Resurrected Christ (plate 89) in the collection of the Museo Poldi Pezzoli in Milan is probably the figure in question. Three altars by Giambattista Bregno might give us an idea of possible settings for statues of the Salvator.⁶⁹ On the setting can be seen on Jacopo Bellini's drawing from the Louvre Book of Drawings of *St. John the Baptist in a Niche* (plate 88) of the middle of the Quattrocento.

⁶⁷ See below, 3. *Development of Ornament*.

⁶⁸ Catalogue no. 47.

⁶⁹ Bregno's statues of the *Resurrected Christ* decorate the central niche of the *Bettignoli Bressa Altar* in S. Nicolò in Treviso, and the *Altar of the Sacrament* in the Cathedral of the same city. A statue of *Christ as a Man of Sorrows*

altars by Bregno, however, the Resurrected Christ is always accompanied by other figures, which was, as far as is known, not the case for the Salvator at S.Maria della Carità. The earliest commentator on the chapel, Marc'Antonio Michiel referred to only one figure on the altar.⁷⁰ Perhaps the lavish marble setting surrounding Bregno's Resurrected Christ in the Chapel of the Sacrament in the Cathedral of Treviso (plate 90) comes close to the rich decoration of the chapel at S.Maria della Carità. Alternatively, I would like to emphasise that the statue's setting was not so different from that of the Resurrected Christ represented in Carpaccio's painting of *St. Augustine's Vision* in the Scuola di S.Giorgio degli Schiavoni (plate 92). This picture, which was painted during the first years of the 16th century, features a very similar free-standing bronze-coloured statue behind the altar's mensa, very likely in imitation of the undoubtedly famous statue.⁷¹ The real statue's round base and its even surface on the front as well as on the back increase the probability that it was made to be free-standing.

Although the Altar of St. Luke in S.Giobbe (plate 93) from the Lombardo workshop of the first decade of the 16th century now features three niches, surely only the large central one, set between ornamented pilasters, is original. It accommodates a two-thirds life size statue of St. Luke. The later lateral niches are now occupied by angels, which

occupies a central position on Bregno's *Altar of the Corpus Domini* in the Cathedral of Cesena. See Schulz (1983c) and Schulz (1991), pp. 32, 36-39, 159.

⁷⁰ Frizzoni (1884), pp. 231-32.

⁷¹ See Sheard (1985), p. 435.

originally may not have been framed.⁷² The presence of a single saint on this altar may be explained by the fact that in 1463 the Franciscan friars at S.Giobbe had received what was believed to be the body of St. Luke. As Schulz pointed out, the authenticity of the relic was immediately challenged by the Benedictine monks of S.Giustina in Padua who also claimed to be in possession of St. Luke's remains. By installing one large statue of the Saint adored by angels, the friars were probably trying to emphasise the authenticity of their relics.⁷³

Also accompanied by two angels was the statue by Bartolomeo Bergamasco on the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen (plates 94, 98) in SS. Giovanni e Paolo, originally located in the church of S.Maria dei Servi.⁷⁴ The altar was an impressive size, its wealth of decoration inferior only to the High Altar of S.Rocco. The pedimented tabernacle or aedicula frame of the altar is more than nine metres high and originally held one sole life-size statue of St. Mary Magdalen (plate 95). This was located in a niche inserted into the altar's great central arch. The angels (plates 96, 97) were apparently located to the sides of the triangular pediment on the top, flanking a Crucifix.⁷⁵

A unique decorative feature of this work was the inclusion of an alabaster window. This was probably destroyed when the church of the Servi was suppressed in the early 19th

⁷² Catalogue no. 10.

⁷³ Schulz (1991), pp. 200-203.

⁷⁴ Catalogue no. 13.

⁷⁵ In this position the angels, originally made for the Altar of the Title of the Cross, were described by Soravia (1822), I, pp. 185f.

century and the altar was transported to its present site, where it occupies the first bay of the wall of the left aisle. The existence of this window in the "volto santo" of the altar is revealed by documentation in the Archives of the Procurators of S.Marco *de Citra*, which I shall discuss in Chapter Three. Perhaps the opening in the rear wall of the altar's great arch, which is now filled with a relief of the Assumption of the Virgin by Alessandro Vittoria, approximately corresponds to the shape and size of that window (plate 98).

Whereas the previously mentioned rivalry over the relics of St. Luke required the image of one sole saint adored by angels for church-political reasons, the case of the Magdalen is quite different. Here, we are no longer confronted with "just" the image of a saint, but the creation of a virtuoso figure carved by a sculptor who was distinctly different from the ordinary stonemason. Bartolomeo di Francesco's status is confirmed by a letter of 1525, recommending the sculptor's talents to the confraternity of the Misericordia in Bergamo.⁷⁶

This is also the case of the Altar of St. Jerome in S.Salvatore (plate 99).⁷⁷ Although Tommaso Lombardo's statue of the saint and the relief of God the Father in the lunette were not added until the 1540s,⁷⁸ the altar's framework undoubtedly foresaw the installation of one sole statue. Made by Guglielmo Bergamasco at the end of the 1520s, the

⁷⁶ Letter last published in Schulz (1984b), p. 257 and p. 271, n. 3.

⁷⁷ Catalogue no. 36.

⁷⁸ See Boucher (1991), p. 68.

architecture of this work elaborates on the principle of the same architect's Altar of St. Mary Magdalen. The concave rear wall of the niche is revetted with veined marble, which gives us at least a vague impression of what is lost on the earlier altar.

Although some representations of saints on altars remained relatively simple images, such as St. Francis on his altar in S.Maria Mater Domini (plate 101), statues gradually came to be virtuoso objects, on altarpieces as in all categories of sculpture.⁷⁹ Suffice it here to point out the exquisite statue of St. Jerome (plate 103) by Alessandro Vittoria of ca. 1576, made for the altar (?) of the Scuola di S.Maria della Giustizia e S.Girolamo at S.Fantin (now on the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen).

1.2 The Development towards the Renaissance Unified Altarpiece

As has already been observed, the tabernacle frame or aedicula, providing a single principal niche or arch to contain the altarpiece, painted or sculptured, became the standard format of the Renaissance altar in Venice. It is the prerequisite for the development of the Renaissance *pala*, which on innumerable painted altarpieces in Venice features a *Sacra Conversazione*.

⁷⁹ Little virtuosity can be discerned on the statue of St. Francis. Likewise, in S.Maria Mater Domini the Madonna of the Rosary (by Tiziano Minio?) on an altar by Antonio Buora of the late 1530s appears rather heavy-handed. For the former see Catalogue no. 30, for the latter Tramontin (1962), p. 38 and pp. 43-44, nn. 30-31, and Boucher (1991), pp. 149f.

1.2.1 The *Sacra Conversazione*

The term *Sacra Conversazione* refers to the representation of one central saint surrounded by other saints. The figures are no longer separated by compartments, but united in a common spatial setting, which is usually architecturally articulated and proportionate to the figures it contains.⁸⁰

The subject of the *Sacra Conversazione* was introduced into altar painting in Venice at the relatively late date of ca. 1475, when Antonello da Messina painted an altarpiece for S. Cassiano, and Giovanni Bellini the St. Catherine of Siena Altarpiece for SS. Giovanni e Paolo. Soon afterwards, this type of composition was also taken up by sculptors. However, there are only few cases where one can really apply the term in the way it has been done for painting.

As for Venetian sculpture, a first attempt to unite several figures of saints in a common spatial setting is the Street Altar of the *Traghetto della Maddalena*, attributed by Schulz to Antonio Rizzo and his workshop, made shortly after 1479.⁸¹ The altar has been dismembered and two limestone panels (plates 104, 105), each representing two saints and a kneeling angel, appear to be the only figurative remnants. However, a relief of the Madonna formed the centrepiece in the mid-16th century, which was what Grevembroch saw and drew in 1754 (plate 106). Schulz suggested a reconstruction of the

⁸⁰ Schmidt in Pittura nel Veneto, II, p. 704.

⁸¹ Catalogue no. 6. Although this work is not an altar proper - there probably was no altar table and mass was never performed at it - the large relief is so closely related to and important for the development of the sculptured altarpiece, that I have included it in the catalogue.

altar's original state, which would have featured a painting of the Madonna on a central panel.⁸² The form of the street tabernacle is closely related to Florentine altar designs (plate 107). Alternatively, the author of the relief could have seen a composition similar to his on Nicolò Pizolo's terracotta altar (plate 108) in the Ovetari chapel in the church of the Eremitani in Padua, dating from 1449.

In this particular context, it is important to point out several details which link the figures in a common space, in particular the relief ledge on which they are all placed - some of the kneeling angels' drapery even hangs over the front of it. Furthermore, the layers of relief overlap at several points, thus emphasising the space in which the figures are standing. Thus, the outer saints, John the Baptist and Mark, who stand closer to the front of the ledge and to the relief surface, and who are partially undercut, overlap at several points the inner saints, Magdalen and Sebastian, carved in low relief. In front of the standing figures are kneeling angels in slightly higher undercut relief.

With its subject-matter taken from contemporary painting, it is not surprising that the earliest proper sculptured work representing a *Sacra Conversazione*, set in an architecturally defined surrounding - the bronze Altar for Jacopo Surian in S.Stefano (plate 109) - reminded Burckhardt of the paintings of Cima da Conegliano.⁸³ The relief was cast shortly before 1493, when it was described by Marin Sanudo.⁸⁴

⁸² Schulz (1983a), pp. 163-165.

⁸³ Burckhardt (1965), p. 38. Catalogue no. 38.

⁸⁴ Sanudo/Aricò (1980), p. 51.

The large rectangular altarpiece represents the Madonna with the Christchild in her arms, seated on a two-stepped throne in a room. The two titular saints stand at either sides, recommending the kneeling donor and his wife to the Mother of God.

I believe that the original altarpiece of the funerary monument for the Doges Marco and Agostino Barbarigo from S. Maria della Carità (plate 113) was also a *Sacra Conversazione*. Although the work was replaced by three bronze reliefs of the *Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin* (plus four further reliefs of the Evangelists) (plate 114), which will be discussed below, the original altar can be reconstructed to a certain extent.⁸⁵ Schulz published an engraving of a medal of Agostino Barbarigo which represents the brothers' tomb. She observed that the altarpiece displayed "what seems to be a single figure".⁸⁶ On the other hand, the recently discovered contract of 1492, drawn up between Agostino Barbarigo and Giovanni Buora and Bartolomeo di Domenico, makes mention of several figures:

"... a *pala* with its framework and steps and small columns and figures at the centre."⁸⁷

Since the altar was dedicated to "nostra dona", the central one of these figures would have been the Madonna, most probably accompanied by Sts. Augustine and Mark as the patrons' name saints. The material of the *pala* is not

⁸⁵ Catalogue no. 4.

⁸⁶ Schulz (1981), p. 173.

⁸⁷ The contract for the Barbarigo monument will be published in a forthcoming publication by Prof. Bernd Roeck who kindly let me read his transcription of the document. The respective passage reads: "...una palla con il suo bassamento et soaze et coloneli et figure dentro."

mentioned in the contract, but doubtlessly it was made from either Istrian stone or marble. The marble effigies of the kneeling doges (plate 116) to the sides of the *pala* complemented the altar.

Contemporary to and perhaps not much different from the Barbarigo altarpiece is the relief in the crypt of S. Marco (plates 117-120), consisting of five slabs of Greek marble, each decorated with a figure.⁸⁸ The relief fills the lunette of the arch in front of the tomb of St. Mark. It represents an Enthroned Madonna with Child in the company of Sts. Mark and Peter to her sides, with the figures of two female saints on a smaller scale on the lunette's outer edges. Although no background setting is indicated, the figures share a common platform. While Sts. Peter and Mark are turned towards the Madonna, the female saints are presented frontally and bear no relationship to the central composition.

The Lombardesque relief of ca. 1503 from the church of S. Nicolò di Castello also depicts a type of *Sacra Conversazione* (plate 121). This time the customary central saint has been replaced by a tabernacle situated in an interior articulated by windows, walls and a ceiling.⁸⁹ High relief figures of the Virgin and St. Mary Magdalen are kneeling to its sides, while the Dove of the Holy Spirit hovers above the tabernacle.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Catalogue no. 21.

⁸⁹ See this chapter, below, 4. *Space and Perspective on Sculptured Altarpieces*.

⁹⁰ Catalogue no. 42. The figure on the right is clearly a female saint and not an angel. Her untied hair and penitent gesture identify her as St. Mary Magdalen. Hence, the relief does not depict an *Annunciation*, as Moschini (1819), p. 35, and Wilk (1978), pp. 99-100, believed.

Whereas most of the previous examples were reliefs which used illusionistic elements to suggest space, the *Sacra Conversazione* on the Altar of the Zen Chapel in S.Marco (plates 122, 123) does not.⁹¹ Instead, the seated Madonna holding the Child, accompanied by Sts. Peter and John the Baptist, all three of which are free-standing life-size bronze figures, are put in the real spatial setting of a large canopy. Three other, similar projects were intended by the same testator: the High Altars of the Venetian parish church of S.Fantin⁹² and of the cathedral of Vicenza, as well as an altar in the basilica of S.Antonio in Padua. All three of them were to be decorated with five or three figures apiece, "made from gilt bronze, their size corresponding to the proportion of the *pala* and the altar".⁹³ The obvious source for constructions such as these is Donatello's previously mentioned High Altar in the Santo in Padua (plate 6), the figures of which were standing on a common base under a large canopy.

No background setting is articulated on the marble relief which was made for the Altar of the Chapel of St. Nicholas in the Ducal Palace in 1523 (plate 13).⁹⁴ Yet, it is clear that the high relief figures of Sts. James on the left, Nicholas standing on a round base in the centre and Andrew on the right presenting the kneeling Doge Andrea Gritti, share a space common to them all as they rest on the same plinth at

⁹¹ Catalogue no. 23.

⁹² Catalogue no. 45.

⁹³ Jestaz (1986), doc. no. 2, p. 175, and doc. no. 3, p. 176: "ex aere inaurato, conventientis magnitudinis juxta proportionem pallae et altaris."

⁹⁴ Catalogue no. 22.

the base of the relief. Moreover, different layers of relief are made to overlap: Andrea Gritti is kneeling in front of St. Andrew who has placed his hand on Gritti's shoulder, St. James's staff rests in front of St. Nicholas's cloak, the Doge's praying hands are held in front of St. Andrew's cross. While the figures of St. James and the blessing St. Nicholas turn and look towards the kneeling Doge, his onomastic saint looks at the central figure. Only Gritti himself does not appear to see any of the saints. An engraving by Antonio Visentini (plate 14) indicates that the relief, now in the Chapel of S.Clement in S.Marco, was framed by a pedimented tabernacle and frescoes of the four Evangelists by Titian.⁹⁵

The Altar for the Trevisan family in S.Maria Mater Domini (plate 125) unites the statues of three saints in a common spatial setting.⁹⁶ Here, Sts. Peter, Paul and Andrew (the latter is free-standing, while the two former are carved in high relief) are standing in the apse of a church. Similar to the High Altar of S.Geminiano and the relief from the St. Nicholas chapel, the figures of the Trevisan Altar are related to each other by the positions of their bodies and the movements of their heads and direction of their gazes. God the Father in the main apse above, is looking down at St. Andrew and spreading his arms so as to connect the three lateral saints. St. Andrew is looking at St. Paul on his left, whose gaze is directed towards St. Peter on the other side (plate 126). St. Peter, on the other hand, has turned his head upwards, back to God the Father. This device of

⁹⁵ See Hubala (1977), p. 135.

⁹⁶ Catalogue no. 28. Schulz (1991), pp. 209-212, focused on descriptions and stylistic aspects of the individual figures, rather than examining the altarpiece as a whole.

directing eyes and heads had long been used in Venetian Renaissance painting of the *Sacra conversazione*, but only here is it fully explored for the first time on a sculptured altar.

1.2.2 *Pietà*

The subject of the *Pietà* was introduced into Venice from north of the Alps.⁹⁷ Like the above-mentioned sculptured altarpieces of the *Sacra Conversazione*, the two altar reliefs representing a *Pietà* existing for our period unite a number of saints sharing the same spatial setting, this time in meditation over the dead Christ's body. The earlier of the two is the delicately carved but often overlooked altarpiece made from Greek marble for the Gussoni Chapel in the church of S.Lio (plates 128, 129), probably executed in the early 1480s.⁹⁸ The altarpiece consists of a large vertical rectangular low relief, framed by pairs of pilasters on each side, a broad entablature and a segmented pediment. All of these elements are decorated with floral patterns in the Lombard fashion. The *Pietà* (plate 130) presents the Virgin lamenting the dead Christ in the central foreground with the cross behind, surrounded by four standing saints. Despite the relief's shallowness, the figures are undercut in many areas. Particularly the Madonna and Christ at the centre are deeply

⁹⁷ See Körte (1937). In his discussion of German *Vesperbilder* in Italy, Körte was aware of two *Pietà* of the period before 1460 in Venetian churches (Baptistery of S.Marco and S.Giovanni in Bragora), plus several more in the Veneto. Wolters (1986), pp. 102 and 262, recorded a third one in S.Bartolomeo, the church of the German community in Venice. They are very likely to have been made by craftsmen from the Alto Adige.

⁹⁸ Catalogue no. 16.

undercut along the contour, so as to set them off against the accompanying saints. Apart from the centrally placed cross the background is not articulated.

The other *Pietà* was originally located in the church of S.Andrea della Certosa (plates 131, 132).⁹⁹ Although it has been described as a Deposition,¹⁰⁰ it lacks the Cross, obligatory for that subject. The altarpiece may be characterised as a mystical event happening outside time and space, rather than as a narrative. The high relief includes several saints, most notably San Lorenzo Giustinian, who were not present at the Deposition. It is of a later date than the previous *Pietà*, probably from the first decade of the 16th century, and was carved from a single block of white marble.¹⁰¹

The relief from S.Andrea is pictorially much more advanced than both its predecessors (the S.Lio *Pietà* as well as the S.Marco lunette): the scene moves easily between all types of relief, from the heads of the figures in the foreground, which are practically sculpted in the round, to the low relief of the figures seen in profile. In this work, the figures of the foreground are situated in a kind of quarry, perhaps in front of Christ's sepulchre, while the silhouette of a hill town can be discerned on the horizon.

⁹⁹ Catalogue no. 27.

¹⁰⁰ Mariacher (1954), p. 369, n. 7.

¹⁰¹ A third *Pietà* in high relief (plate 133) with two isolated Saints and apparently no background setting was carved by Tullio Lombardo for and altar in S.Francesco in Rovigo in 1526. See Puppi (1972).

2. Narrative Altarpieces

While progressing from polyptych to Renaissance retable, we have also moved from isolated figures to the use of relief and common spatial setting - the preliminaries for sculptured narratives.

Goffen's claim that altarpieces with narrative subject-matter or with the Virgin and Child accompanied by saints (doubtlessly in the common spatial setting of a *Sacra Conversazione*) were far more common than groupings of three or more saints cannot be applied to sculptured altarpieces.¹⁰² A similar statement by Burckhardt, that sculptured altarpieces featured a narrative relief more frequently than a combination of figures, has also to be carefully examined.¹⁰³ In fact, the definition of the term narrative as such is problematic.

Alberti's criteria for a successful depiction of a *historia* were above all variety, proportion, harmony, movement and dignity. A good *historia*, he claimed, conveyed all this in a representation of not more than nine or ten figures.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, it is noticeable that when writing about the decoration of an altar, Alberti was not thinking of *historia* at all. Rather, he recommended a limitation of the number of statues to two, at most three.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Goffen (1989), p. 184.

¹⁰³ Burckhardt/Humfrey (1988) p. 37.

¹⁰⁴ Alberti (1972), p. 79.

¹⁰⁵ Alberti (1988), p. 243: "On an altar there should ideally be two statues, and at most three; others may find appropriate places in niches."

The term *historia* in the documents of the period clearly refers to the narration of a story, such as St. Mark healing and baptising Anianus. This means that iconographic details which do not belong to the story, such as additional saints, must not be included in the representation. Hence, as has previously been explained, the two reliefs of the *Pietà* in S.Lio and from S.Andrea della Certosa, are not scenes of the Lamentation or Deposition, as they have occasionally been labelled, since they include figures who could not have been present at the time of Christ's death. On Quattrocento altarpieces, *historie* are common in the predella zone, where they normally depict miracles of the saints represented in the altarpiece's main tier.

Mystical events, on the other hand, represent essential mysteries of the Christian faith, such as the Annunciation, Nativity, Baptism, or Crucifixion. Charles Hope has even gone as far as to claim that such events when represented on altarpieces are not narratives at all, but present single saints with their attributes.¹⁰⁶

The single, iconic image, such as the figure of a saint, is composed symmetrically either in itself or within its setting, and moves vertically from its niche towards the viewer, whereas a narrative representation may be asymmetrical and move horizontally, vertically and diagonally parallel to the picture plane as well as towards its background and, finally, out of the pictorial space towards the viewer. Therefore, a narrative expresses a moment in time

¹⁰⁶ Hope (1990), pp. 543-50. On the other hand, Hope reasoned, that representations of these subjects may take on a narrative character, when depicted in narrative cycles.

as well as a moment in space, it possesses a geography which is lacking in the iconic representation.

2.1 Narratives in Venetian Painting

One of the major tasks for Venetian painters of the Renaissance was the execution of narrative cycles for both the Ducal Palace and for the city's confraternities which modelled the decorations of their meeting places on the decoration of the seat of the government.¹⁰⁷ Yet, when it came to the decoration of the altar for either the Scuole or for other patrons, the choice was usually an iconic image. In the confraternities' meeting halls the narrative cycles were complemented by altarpieces representing these iconic images, such as Francesco Bissolo's triptych for the Scuola di S.Stefano (now in the Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan) or the lost polyptych for the Scuola di S.Girolamo, which probably had a statue at its centre.¹⁰⁸ The *Apotheosis of St. Ursula*, painted by Vittore Carpaccio in 1491, is unusual in that it shows an event, the culmination of Ursula's life story, although the representation of that event is extremely static.

Patricia Meilman, in a study on Venetian altar paintings in the age of Titian, sought to establish that, almost forty years after the St. Ursula altarpiece, Titian's St. Peter Martyr Altarpiece for SS. Giovanni e Paolo, completed in 1530, was a revolutionary novelty in Venetian altar painting:

¹⁰⁷ For narrative paintings during the period of ca. 1500 see Brown (1986) and most recently Humfrey in *Pittura nel Veneto*, I, pp. 295-338.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Humfrey, 'The Life of St. Jerome Cycle from the Scuola di San Gerolamo in Cannaregio', in *Arte Veneta*, XXXIX, 1985, pp. 43 and 46, n. 21. For a comprehensive account of narrative cycles in the Venetian Scuole and relevant bibliography see Brown (1986).

it represented a true and violent narrative on the altarpiece, which required a new emotional response from the church-goer.¹⁰⁹ We shall have to examine whether this development within Venetian painting also manifested itself in sculpture.

2.2 Narratives on Sculptured Altarpieces in Venice

Since the altar is the central location for the celebration of the Mass, potential narrative subject-matters for the altarpiece, predominantly Christological representations and Marian themes,¹¹⁰ can often be directly related to the mystery of Mass, that is to say to the celebration of the Eucharist. These mystical events were popular subjects of painted altarpieces, but they also occurred in works of sculpture.

Schulz, taking up Pope-Hennessy's point about the scarce appearance of Venetian Renaissance relief, observed that narratives were also not common in Venetian relief of the early Renaissance.¹¹¹ Yet, there do exist a number of reliefs with narrative subjects, sometimes in the most conspicuous

¹⁰⁹ See Meilman (1989).

¹¹⁰ Such as the *Nativity* (with its two variants of the *Adoration of the Shepherds* and the *Adoration of the Magi*), the *Crucifixion*, together with its related themes of the *Deposition from the Cross* and the *Lamentation*) and the *Resurrection*, of the *Annunciation*, the *Assumption* and the *Coronation of the Virgin*.

¹¹¹ Schulz (1983a), p. 22, and Pope-Hennessy (1963), p. 93. Schulz (1991), p. 96, recently reinforced her point, stating that more typically Venetian was the sculptor's concentration on the single figure. See also Sheard (1984a), p. 169, n. 9, for a list of narrative reliefs of the late Quattrocento in Venice.

locations, on ducal tombs,¹¹² as wall decoration on the interior¹¹³ as well as on the exterior of churches and other buildings. The question remains, whether they can also be found on altarpieces.

2.2.1 Nativity, Adoration of the Shepherds, Adoration of the Magi

One of the most popular narrative subjects, or, rather, the most popular mystical event for altarpieces was the representation of the *Nativity*, or of one of its variants, the *Adoration of the Shepherds* and the *Adoration of the Magi*.

A low relief of the *Nativity* (plate 134) from the workshop of Pietro Lombardo made of Istrian stone, is the first instance of such an event taking place on a sculptured altarpiece of the Renaissance in Venice.¹¹⁴ Now in the Seminario Patriarcale, it was originally located in the church of S. Andrea della Certosa, perhaps made for the chapel for Orsato Giustinian between the mid-1470s and mid-1480s.¹¹⁵ The scene is composed with a strong emphasis on the central vertical axis and on symmetry. Mary and Joseph are kneeling to the sides of the Child in the centre; behind him stand ox

¹¹² Such as on the tombs for Doges Pietro and Giovanni Mocenigo in SS. Giovanni e Paolo (plate 72).

¹¹³ Such as along the walls of the Badoer Chapel in S. Francesco della Vigna.

¹¹⁴ Catalogue no. 40.

¹¹⁵ Although the relief has been dated to the mid 1470s by the few scholars who have considered it, the plain architecture of the frame of the altarpiece would be most unusual for the this date (see Sheard, 1984, p. 169, n. 9). Low reliefs were made in Venice until the very end of the Quattrocento, for instance the *Resurrection* for the Barbarigo tomb in S. Maria della Carità. For the development of ornament on the framework see this chapter, below, 3. *Development of Ornament*.

and ass and two angels (plate 135). The stable's architecture defines a symmetrical internal frame for the holy event, and more particularly, for the Christchild.¹¹⁶ Unlike the rest of the relief the chubby body of the Christchild is highly polished and disproportionately large. Accordingly, a bust of God the Father appears in the lunette above in axis with the gable's top and with the Child. A second narrative event, the Annunciation to a sleeping shepherd, takes place in the background to the right, without interfering with the *Sacra Conversazione* in the main field. It is significant that, within the limitations of his technical skill, the sculptor has particularly emphasised the pictorial elements of his work. As the subject-matter undoubtedly derived from contemporary painting, surface structures such as the soil in the foreground, the Child's wicker basket, the drapes and pillow, and the stable's thatched roof are carefully articulated and have been carried out in minute detail.¹¹⁷ The hilly landscape in the background displays rocks and trees and a castle or hilltown, as well as the aforementioned *Annunciation to the Shepherd* including his dog and flock of sheep (plate 136). This pictorially conceived landscape of the Nativity from S. Andrea could be an indicator for the dating of this work, since it resembles the landscape background of the low relief representing the *Three Maries*

¹¹⁶ See below, 4. *Space and Perspective on Sculptured Altarpieces.*

¹¹⁷ Paoletti (1893), p. 228, appreciated the relief "pel sentimento, pel gentile modo di panneggiare, per le pittoresche linee della scena e specialmente per la squisitezza della fattura".

and an *Angel at the Tomb* (plate 138) on the attic story of the Pietro Mocenigo monument, datable to 1476-1483.¹¹⁸

The altars in the Emiliani Chapel at S.Michele date from 1530.¹¹⁹ Their altarpieces were carved by the Lombard sculptor Giambattista da Carona. The two laterals (plates 139-142) are high reliefs, depicting scenes of the *Adoration of the Shepherds* and the *Adoration of the Magi*. They were executed more than half a century after the *Nativity* discussed above. In the reliefs as well as in the contract which dictated their making we observe a particular emphasis on certain details. Thus, the lateral altars not only display a variety of figures and animals, but are also of a horizontal format which contributes to the narrative character of the representation in contrast to the more traditional and iconic vertical format of the relief from S.Andrea. The iconographic centre of the reliefs, the Christchild, is no longer out of proportion, but in keeping with the remaining figures. It has been shifted from a central to a lateral position.

On the other hand, the chapel's High Altar, representing the *Annunciation* (plate 143), exhibits two figures on a larger scale (approximately two-thirds life-size) than the relief figures. They are free-standing and isolated in their niches (plates 144, 145). Apart from the lectern of the Annunciate Virgin, which we could call her attribute, there is no particular emphasis on a narrative setting. The representation of a half figure of God the Father in a tondo

¹¹⁸ Wolters in Huse/Wolters (1986), p. 162. For the late dating of the *Nativity* see also this chapter, below, 3. *Development of Ornament*.

¹¹⁹ Catalogue nos. 32, 33, 34. The history of the chapel will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four, 2.2.1 *The Emiliani Chapel at S.Michele in Isola*.

placed in the middle above the niches emphasises the central vertical axis of the altar. The iconic representation prevails over the narrative one.

From the point of liturgy it is not even certain whether the laterals were ever used for the celebration of the mass. Perhaps the main altar was the only one which functioned as an altar proper. Therefore, the reliefs of the side altars would have had a complementary decorative rather than a strictly functional purpose, similar to the series of reliefs along the walls of the Badoer chapel at S.Francesco della Vigna.¹²⁰

2.2.2 Assumption, Coronation, Resurrection

The altarpiece by Tullio Lombardo in the Bernabò chapel (plate 150) in the church of S.Giovanni Crisostomo, executed between 1501 and 1503, represents another type of holy or mystical event.¹²¹ The relief features the Coronation of the Virgin by Christ in the presence of the Apostles (plate 151). All figures, with the exception of Mary, are standing. God the Father, the Holy Dove and angels are hovering above the scene. The event takes place under a coffered barrel vault in low relief and in front of a central tabernacle. As if to give the relief additional illusionistic emphasis, the most lateral figures in white marble overlap the decorative strips of variegated marble.

Despite the narrative title, which was given subsequently, the relief contains many elements which are

¹²⁰ For the overall sculptural decoration of the Badoer Chapel see Chapter Four, 2.2.2 *The Badoer Giustinian Chapel in S.Francesco della Vigna.*

¹²¹ Catalogue no. 11.

more characteristic of images with iconic value. The presence of the Apostles, who are generally present in scenes of the Assumption of the Virgin but not in the Coronation, is iconographically most unusual. Perhaps it can be explained by the fact that by the time the altarpiece was commissioned, the titular of the altar had changed from the Virgin Mary to the apostles.¹²² Wilk's study of Tullio Lombardo's sculpture has already examined the relief's stylistic affinities with the byzantine relief of the *Traditio Legis* in S.Marco.¹²³ Wilk also noted the extraordinary iconography of the kneeling Virgin next to the standing Christ, neither of them seated on the usual throne.

But how is the so-called narrative composed? The figures' poses are rigid and the action and movements are limited to a minimum. It seems worth pointing out that the relief's arrangement of figures in a barrel-vaulted space, their gestures and draperies are very similar to a non-narrative drawing of the *Twelve Apostles* (plate 152) by Jacopo Bellini in the London Book of Drawings. The Apostles' emotions, intrinsic to Alberti's definition of *historia*, are practically non-existent. Instead, the idea of movement is taken up by the architectural features: all perspectival lines of the vault, as well as the central position of God the Father and the Holy Ghost in the upper portion of the relief, converge in the figure of Christ, behind whom we see a door in accordance to the model of a Renaissance tabernacle. Thus, the altarpiece of the Bernabò chapel relates a narrative subject-matter, not directly linked to

¹²² Odenthal (1985), pp. 25 and 112, n. 72.

¹²³ Wilk (1978), pp. 85-145.

the mystery of the Eucharist, to the iconography or to the pseudo-function of a tabernacle.¹²⁴ The most important aspect of Tullio's relief is not the illustration of a story, but the function and the theological message of the subject in relation to the Mass.

As mentioned above, three bronze reliefs representing the *Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin* (plates 114) and four small reliefs of the Evangelists once decorated the altar in the central niche of Barbarigo tomb in the church of S. Maria della Carità.¹²⁵ Here, on a much smaller scale, two mystical events are represented in a much more dramatic manner and story-telling air than the one on Tullio's relief in S. Giovanni Crisostomo.

In several instances scenes from the Life of Christ or the *Resurrection* formed part of the altar's decoration, although they did not normally constitute the entire altarpiece. Selvatico knew of one Renaissance altarpiece of the *Resurrection* in sculpture on one of the altars in the church of S. Felice.¹²⁶ Analogous to funerary monuments, most representations of this subject-matter decorated the uppermost tier of altars. A wooden *Resurrection* relief occupies the central niche in the top tier of the Altar of the Sacrament in the chapel of S. Tarasio (plate 2). It complements the wooden relief of the *Lamentation* immediately below, thus establishing a narrative sequence. A wooden relief also decorates the uppermost pedimented rectangular

¹²⁴ Wilk (1978), p. 100.

¹²⁵ Catalogue no. 4.

¹²⁶ Selvatico (1847), p. 239: "S'ammira sopra uno degli altari un bassorilievo che presenta un Cristo sorgente dal sepolcro."

field of the Altar of the Florentine Community in S.Maria dei Frari (plate 40). As mentioned previously, this may have been an actual altarpiece, belonging to the Scuola della Passione in the immediate vicinity of the Frari.¹²⁷

Another *Resurrection* (plate 115) with two thirds life-size stone figures in relief was made by Giovanni Buora and Domenico di Bartolomeo shortly after 1492. It decorated the area above the Altar of the Virgin situated in the central arch of the previously mentioned Barbarigo tomb. Although this group does not form an altarpiece, it is related to the altar, at the same time forming part of the Ducal double tomb.

However, these Resurrections do little to emphasise the narrative aspects of the scene, and the soldiers may be regarded as mere attributes of representations of the *Resurrected Christ*. Free-standing statues of the *Resurrected Christ* also stood on top of the High Altar of S.Sepolcro and of the Altar of the *Pietà* in the Gussoni Chapel in S.Lio.¹²⁸

Much more animated, on the other hand, is the bronze relief of the *Resurrection* on the antependium of the Altar in the Zen chapel in S.Marco (plate 124). While Christ towers motionlessly in the centre, the poses and expressions of the surrounding soldiers range from sleeping and awakening to surprise and shock. As I shall show below, antependia and

¹²⁷ The provenance of this relief was pointed out to me by dott. Luigi Sante Savio, restorer of the Soprintendenza dei Beni Artistici e Storici di Venezia.

¹²⁸ Selvatico (1847), p. 236.

predellas were the customary parts of altars for the representations of narratives.¹²⁹

2.2.3 Scenes of the Life of a Saint

Sculptured altarpieces depicting scenes from the lives of saints do not exist in Venice and only two of the sculptured altarpieces of our period were intended to be adorned with true narratives: that of the Chapter hall of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco and the Altar of the Title of the Cross from S.Maria dei Servi.

The former is the sole example, albeit prestigious and important, in which a scene of the life of a saint was to form the subject-matter of a sculptured altarpiece.¹³⁰ However, it was never brought to completion. Nevertheless, the fact that a project for such existed at all proves that, even if the idea was unusual, it was not entirely inconceivable.

Some records survive in the registers of the Scuola's archives, relating to the Scuola's new altar, as commissioned in 1499. Although the contract drawn up between the *banca*, the Chapter General of the confraternity, and the sculptor, Giovanni da Traù, was published by Paoletti and summarised by Sohm, neither of them explored the document's outstanding significance.¹³¹ This contract contains detailed information about the altar's form and subject-matter as well as the materials to be used, the latter of which I shall discuss in

¹²⁹ See this chapter, below, *2.3 Decoration of Predella and Antependium*.

¹³⁰ Catalogue no. 49.

¹³¹ Paoletti (1893), II, p. 105, doc. 78, and Sohm (1978), p. 279.

the second chapter. In the present context it is important to emphasise that stipulations were made for the new altar to be composed of "three fields, that is one in the middle, on on the right and the third one on the left".¹³²

The contract with Giovanni only made reference to the altar's third compartment on the left, for the decoration of which the sculptor had already submitted a wax model. The subject-matter of the image was to represent "the story (of St. Mark) with architecture in perspective and with its figures made out of marble".¹³³ Thus, the narrative of the altar would have taken up the motif of the façade of the Scuola's *albergo* (plate 153), decorated by Tullio Lombardo with two scenes of the life of St. Mark between 1485 and 1490.¹³⁴

Narrative reliefs with the same subject-matter can also be found in other places. In the late Quattrocento, the *Scuola dei Calegheri*, the cobblers' guild, decorated the tympanum of the entrance to their hall with a relief of *St. Mark healing Anianus* (plate 154). In the early 16th century, Antonio Lombardo (?) carved a relief of the *Baptism of Anianus* for the socle of the tomb of Doge Giovanni Mocenigo (plate 72). During the second half of the 1530s and the early 1540s, Jacopo Sansovino made two sets of bronze reliefs with

¹³² Paoletti (1893), II, p. 105, doc. 78: "1498, 22 Ottobre... tre campi zoe uno al mezo, uno a dextris, et el terzo a sinistris"

¹³³ *ibid.*: "...la istoria cum caxamenti in perspectiva con le sue figure di marmo..."

¹³⁴ Already before the fire of 1485 the Scuola di S. Marco must have cared for figurative sculptural decoration: Antonio Rizzo was commissioned to carve reliefs with figures for the Scuola's pulpit according to designs by Gentile Bellini. See Paoletti (1929), p. 16.

scenes of the life of St. Mark for the *pergoli* of the church of S.Marco.

It is not by coincidence that the story of St. Mark is the only one to have found its way into the genre of the sculptured altarpiece (as of Venetian altarpieces on the whole) at that time. The saint's role as patron and protector of the city placed him in importance next to the Madonna. The contract demonstrates that the altar of the confraternity of St. Mark was not just another altar, but a first-rate status symbol of the Scuola's prestigious social position. It had to live up to the fame of the Scuola's newly erected façade.

Particularly important was the condition that the relief on the left represented a *historia*, in other words an episode of the life of St. Mark. It was thus going to be a work of sculpture much more sophisticated than an iconic image, such as a single statue of the saint, could have been. The relief was intended to include seventeen figures, nine of them full-length, approximately life-size, while the entire height of the relief was to be more than four metres (approximately the height of the Bernabò altar and altarpiece at S.Giovanni Crisostomo).

Given the space available on the wall of the Scuola's *sala superiore*, it appears impossible that such a large number of figures and a relief of such size could be accommodated. It therefore comes as no surprise that Giovanni da Traù failed to live up to the expectations of the confraternity's *banca*. One year after the commission it was

stipulated that "one must not pursue the said work because it is of great damage and shame for the said Scuola."¹³⁵

Judging by the above criteria noted for an *historia*, the altar for the Scuola Grande di S.Marco would have been the only true narrative altarpiece conceived in Venice before 1500, be it in sculpture or in painting.¹³⁶ The only other instance of narrative scenes occurring as decoration for an altarpiece is the Altar of the Title of the Cross, originally in the church of S.Maria dei Servi.¹³⁷ The altar was installed sometime between 1492, when the relic was donated to the church and before 1511, when the donor died in poverty.¹³⁸

Only four narrative bronze reliefs and a two-winged sportello (plates 155-160) by Andrea Riccio remain of the dismembered altar. The narratives depict scenes from the *Story of the True Cross*, while the relief of the double door sportello features the *Glorification of the Cross* in a triumphal arch. In the minute elaboration of detail on the crowded reliefs Riccio's training as a goldsmith can be felt. The reliefs' original arrangement is not known. However, their small size is reminiscent of the predella bronzes of

¹³⁵ Paoletti (1893), II, p. 105. doc. 78: "1500, 2 Febbraio... non si debia seguir dito lavoro per esser de gran danno et ignomia de la dita scuola." It is likely, though, that the project was interrupted for reasons other than Giovanni's failure. See Chapter Four, 3.2.1 *The Altar of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco*.

¹³⁶ In 1521 the chapter of the Scuola di S.Rocco also intended to have stories of the life of their titulus represented on the tomb-altar of the church. A paragraph in the related document quoted by Paoletti (1893), II, p. 124, doc. 147, mentions three bronze or silver reliefs to be made for the front of the saint's sarcophagus. However, these would have corresponded to the function of a predella or antependium.

¹³⁷ Catalogue no. 5.

¹³⁸ See Chapter Four, 2.2.5 *The Altar of the Title of the Cross from S.Maria dei Servi*.

Donatello's High Altar in Padua, Riccio's home town. Vicentini surmised that two marble angels, which subsequently came to adorn the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen, originally belonged to the Altar of the Title of the Cross.¹³⁹ A possible reconstruction of the altar, following central Italian models,¹⁴⁰ would place the angels to the sides of a central tabernacle with Riccio's sportello, while the reliefs would occupy a predella zone (plate 160).¹⁴¹

2.3 Decoration of Predella and Antependium

In fact, the altarpiece's lower zones, the predella and the antependium, were much more appropriate locations for narratives on altars. Yet, the Altar of St. Jerome (plate 41) in the Badoer chapel at S. Francesco della Vigna is the only sculptured altarpiece carved in stone of the period, which includes a fully articulated predella. This is decorated with three delicately carved low reliefs (plates 45-47) representing narrative scenes from the life of the altar's titular saint.¹⁴² Not diverging from this custom, the

¹³⁹ Vicentini (1920), p. 83, n. 2. See Schulz (1991), pp. 141-44.

¹⁴⁰ Examples of this type would be Mino da Fiesole's tabernacle altar in the cathedral of Volterra of 1467-71, or Matteo Civitali's work in the cathedral of Lucca of 1473-77.

¹⁴¹ This arrangement is corroborated further by the composition of the reliefs, which display a wealth of detail on the high relief front level as well as in the low relief background. They were not meant to be seen from below like Sansovino's bronze reliefs for the *pergoli* of S. Marco, but at eye level or slightly lower.

¹⁴² Schulz in her article on the Giustinian chapel (1977) focused on the reliefs of the Evangelists which form part of the chapel's decoration and did not devote much attention to the altarpiece, let alone the predella reliefs. Representations of St. Jerome with a narrative character appear relatively frequently in Venetian relief. Examples include three reliefs of *St. Jerome in the Desert* in S. Maria

predellas of the two wooden altarpieces on Torcello each contain three narrative reliefs telling the stories of the altars' tituli, Sts. Liberale and a bishop saint (plates 66, 68).

Whereas the predella zone on both painted and sculptured Venetian altarpieces was articulated only very rarely, it was more common to decorate the altar frontal with figurative representations.¹⁴³ Burckhardt suggested that this originated in the decoration of early altars, the frontals of which often presented the most striking artistic element of the whole church.¹⁴⁴ After all, the larger panel of the Pala d'Oro in S.Marco was originally an altar frontal. As for antependia of the Renaissance in Venice, the point is made clear by the superb delicacy of three reliefs with angels on the antependium of an altar in S.Trovaso (plate 161) dating from the late 15th century.

The earliest instance of an altar to be decorated with a frontal in the Renaissance style is Antonio Rizzo's *Conversion of Saul* (plate 86) on the Altar of St. Paul in S.Marco. Schulz discussed the relief in detail, pointing out the extensive and detailed landscape and the various narrative elements of the scene.¹⁴⁵

On the previously mentioned St. Jerome altar in S.Francesco della Vigna, the antependium is decorated with a del Giglio, in the Musée Jacquemart André, Paris, and in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, further a *St. Jerome in Penitence* on the Tomb of Benedetto Pesaro.

¹⁴³ One of the few exceptions, featuring a fully historiated predella, is the Vincent Ferrer altarpiece in SS. Giovanni e Paolo of the mid-1460s.

¹⁴⁴ Burckhardt/Humfrey (1988), p. 20.

¹⁴⁵ Schulz (1983a), pp. 20-22. See also below, 4. *Space and Perspective on Sculptured Altarpieces*.

large relief of the *Last Judgement* (plate 49). This would perhaps have complemented the iconographic programme of the narrative reliefs on the chapel's walls, but such subject-matter strikes one as inappropriate in this low position.¹⁴⁶ Jestaz made a similar point about the antependium of the Zen Chapel at S.Marco where the altar frontal is decorated with the aforementioned bronze relief of the *Resurrection* (plate 124).¹⁴⁷ Like the Badoer *Last Judgement* this subject in its position as altar frontal strikes the viewer as unusual, since the iconographical meaning of the *Resurrection* would justify its appearance at the top of the altar rather than at the bottom. Although a lively and largely developed narrative, the horizontal format of the relief is not convincing for a representation that is almost always represented in a vertical format.

Originally, the parts below the predellas of the two wooden altars on Torcello performed the function of altar frontals as well as sarcophagi containing relics. The wooden reliefs of the antependium of the Altar of S.Liberale depict two further scenes from the life of the titulus (in addition to those of the predella). The reliefs of the altar of the bishop saint, on the other hand, represent the Adoration of the Magi and the Circumcision.

¹⁴⁶ Since the relief is incongruous not only with the iconography, but also with the dimensions of the altar's mensa and the lateral balustrades, it may be possible that its original position was perhaps on a chapel screen.

¹⁴⁷ Jestaz (1986), p. 136. Jestaz (1986), p. 138, did not mention the antependium of the altar of St. Paul by Antonio Rizzo as one of the predecessors of the relief of the *Resurrection*. Yet several details, above all the soldier to the right of Christ, with the foreshortening of the head, the fluttering cloak behind him and the armour, are obvious borrowings from Rizzo's relief.

As an alternative, it became fashionable in the early 16th century to decorate the antependium with precious stones, particularly fine examples of which can be found on the High Altar of S.Rocco and on the altars in the Emiliani Chapel at S.Michele.¹⁴⁸

3. Development of Ornament

Having considered the development of altarpiece, predella and antependium, I shall include a short survey of the altars' frames and ornamentation. Although many points have already been made in passing in the previous sections, it is worthwhile drawing attention to this issue in a separate section.

The decoration of the two altars of Sts. James and Paul (plates 82, 84) in S.Marco (1465-69) must have had a revolutionary effect on the development of design, not only of altarpieces, in Venice.¹⁴⁹ Their floral patterns replaced the hitherto heavily foliated and florid "grammar of ornament" of the workshop of Bartolomeo Buon (d. 1464). As has been pointed out by Sheard and, later, endorsed by Armstrong, the overall architecture including the sphinxes to the sides of the altars' lunettes was immediately assimilated in late 15th century book illumination.¹⁵⁰ In addition, the antependium relief on the St. Paul altar, which represents the Conversion of Saul, is the earliest example of the application of schiacciato relief in Venice. The altars'

¹⁴⁸ See Chapter Two, *5.3 The Colouristic Effect of Stones*, and plates 63 and 146.

¹⁴⁹ This has also been noted by Wolters in *Wolters/Huse* (1986), p. 155.

¹⁵⁰ Sheard (1984c), p. 159, and Armstrong (1990), p. 18.

frameworks anticipate by a couple of years the first surviving aedicula frame for a painted altarpiece, Giovanni Bellini's destroyed *Sacra Conversazione with St. Catherine of Siena*. Surely inspired by Rizzo's altars, the altar framework, still *in situ* in SS. Giovanni e Paolo, features large sphinxes instead of the standard balustrades to the sides of the mensa.

The floral ornaments that cover almost every architectural element of the S.Marco altars became standard for subsequent works. In fact, they are the hallmark of the workshop of Pietro Lombardo during the last two decades of the 15th century, best known from the Lombardos' masterpiece, the church of S.Maria dei Miracoli, but also from S.Giobbe.

Elaborately carved floral patterns decorate the architectural elements, pilasters, entablature and lunette of the Gussoni altar of ca. 1480, as well as the entire chapel. Particularly striking, perhaps hinting at one particular sculptor and date (the early 1480s), is the bird motif decorating the pilasters of the Gussoni chapel, of S.Maria dei Miracoli, under construction from 1480 onwards, and the marble screen at the Scuola Grande di S.Giovanni Evangelista, completed in 1481. While most of the late Quattrocento altars made use of the floral ornaments for the frames, a much plainer style simultaneously evolved in the 1480s. The altar of the *Nativity* at the Seminario Patriarcale (plate 134), the size and frame of which are similar to that of the Gussoni *Pietà* (plate 129), is framed by profiled but otherwise plain pilasters. Similarly, the former's architrave is smooth, in contradistinction to the latter's rich ornamentation.

The façade of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco (plate 153, dating to 1485 ff.) anticipates the decorative schemes which were to dominate the ornamentation of altarpieces in the 16th century.¹⁵¹ Here, most of the pilasters are no longer ornamented with floral patterns, but are instead profiled and smooth, or fluted.¹⁵² Some feature inserted porphyry disks halfway up the shaft.

From documents published by Paoletti it becomes clear that most of the craftsmen working on the Bernabò chapel in S.Giovanni Crisostomo had already collaborated at the Scuola Grande di S.Marco. To my knowledge, though, it has not been stressed that Tullio Lombardo's altar and, indeed, the entire chapel (plate 150), erected between 1499 and 1502, repeat details of the Scuola's façade. Like the Scuola's main entrance, the entrance to the Bernabò chapel is flanked by columns on ornamented round bases, standing on square pedestals. Both the reliefs on each side of the Scuola's main portal and Tullio's altarpiece are framed by profiled pilasters with an inlaid porphyry disk in the middle. Their capitals are practically identical. Finally, the lateral Scuola reliefs and Tullio's altarpiece both feature coffered

¹⁵¹ A parallel development can also be observed on the monumental tombs of the period. The difference between the Quattrocento floral decoration and the essentially Cinquecento austere ornament shows most drastically on the tomb for Pietro Mocenigo from the early 1480s and that for his brother Giovanni Mocenigo, completed in 1522.

¹⁵² The "modern" profiled and smooth pilasters of the Nativity altar from S.Andrea della Certosa contrast sharply with the archaic representation of this relief. The contradictory elements of the altar were also noticed by Sheard (1984a), p. 169, n. 9. In view of the similarity of some of the scene's background details with the relief of the *Three Maries at the Tomb* on the Pietro Mocenigo Monument (plate 138), I suggest a late dating of the entire work at the Seminario to the first half of the 1480s.

barrel-vaulted spaces. We can surmise that, if the central portion of this part of the Scuola's façade had not served the purpose of a doorway, the logical consequence of the lateral reliefs would have been the vaulted space of Tullio's altar relief.

Whereas the Scuola's façade still allows floral patterns on a large proportion of the architectural elements, they were restricted to the columns' round bases in the chapel at S.Giovanni Crisostomo. Most of the chapel's decorative effect is achieved by the colouristic effects of the stone, its high polishing, as well as by the use of inlays of various shapes.

Thus, the Bernabò altarpiece is the forerunner of many altars of the period that feature "that chastely spare yet monumental style typical of the Venetian High Renaissance".¹⁵³ In the first decade of the 16th century floral ornaments disappear almost completely from marble surfaces. They are superseded by smooth surfaces, and by inlays of different coloured stones in various geometric shapes. Columns begin to replace the previously used pilasters.

In view of this development, the unique framework of the Altar of St. Jerome in S.Francesco della Vigna appears somewhat anachronistic. The architectural framework of the altarpiece is covered with putti carved in low relief, interwoven with the floral pattern of the pilasters (plate 48) and carrying the tools of the Passion on the entablature.

3.1 Introduction of Columns

Although "little columns" for the decoration of a Venetian altarpiece are mentioned in a document as early as

¹⁵³ Schulz (1991), p. 64.

1446,¹⁵⁴ this more likely referred to late mediaeval decorative elements, such as the twisted pillars dividing the niches of the altar of the Mascoli chapel in S.Marco, than to columns of any of the classical orders.

Such columns were introduced on Renaissance altars in Venice at a relatively late date.¹⁵⁵ The two fluted columns framing the Surian altarpiece (plate 109), made between 1488 and 1493, are probably not original.¹⁵⁶ However, the columns which support the central arch of Surian's tomb (plate 112) are among the earliest to appear on Venetian funerary monuments.¹⁵⁷ Columns certainly became standard once they had been introduced on the Ducal tombs. On the High Altar of S.Rocco (plate 58), modelled on the Vendramin Tomb from S. Maria dei Servi, not only two but four columns support the entablature and upper tier, on which two further, shorter columns carry the final entablature and pediment.

Lorenzo Bregno's Altar of the Cross in S.Marco (plate 73) is separated from the choir not only by steps and a balustrade, but also by a screen of six columns made of alabaster, African marble and verd antique. On the altarpiece itself, the columns framing the central bay are made from precious red jasper. A whole forest of columns frames the central niche of Guglielmo Bergamasco's Altar of St. Jerome

¹⁵⁴ ASV, S.Stefano, busta 8, fascicolo 45. Document quoted in Chapter Two, 2. *Stone*.

¹⁵⁵ Not so elsewhere. The wooden frame for Mantegna's S.Zeno altar of 1459 features four gilded fluted columns structuring the altarpiece.

¹⁵⁶ Sheard (1977), p. 263, n. 17, argued that only the marble *spalliera* of the present frame is original.

¹⁵⁷ The only exception I can think of is Nicolò Marcello's tomb from S.Marina (now in SS. Giovanni e Paolo) from ca. 1481-85. See Munman (1968), p. 138.

in S.Salvatore (plates 99) and the same architect's altars on S.Michele (plates 138-142). Particularly on the St. Jerome Altar, where the columns project and recede, while elongated niches are inserted into the gaps between them (plate 100), architecture is the dominant feature of the monument and exists quite independently of the sculpture. The statue of the saint appears almost like an afterthought.

4. Space and Perspective on Sculptured Altarpieces

In the following section, I shall discuss the treatment of space in the altarpieces of the period.

It is a common assumption that mathematical perspective which was "invented" in Florence never really made its way into Venetian sculpture. Hence, analyses of space have been undertaken predominantly for Florentine works of architecture, sculpture and painting, whereas very few scholars have paid any attention to Venetian sculpture and its relationship to space and perspective.¹⁵⁸

An interest in the representation of space in relief in Venice began to develop with Antonio Rizzo (at a relatively late date) in the 1460s. After him, various other sculptors, such as Tullio Lombardo and Lorenzo Bregno, also applied the rules of perspective to several of their works. Nevertheless, it is evident that complex illusionistic constructions did not occupy Venetian sculptors as much as they did their Florentine colleagues. Often, where the mathematical

¹⁵⁸ Whereas Schulz (1991), p. 35, did not investigate her general observation on the subject any further, Sheard (1984b), pp. 25-56, drew attention to the Lombardos' possible contact with Bramante, in particular the choir in S.Maria presso S.Satiro. However, Sheard concentrated on the discussion of the monumental façade of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco, without considering smaller reliefs.

exploration of space occurs in Venetian relief, it is adapted from Florentine models.

The most prominent example of Venetian prespectival relief is, of course, the façade of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco (plate 153), a creation of the late 1480s. As has been shown above and will be demonstrated below, this work inspired a number of subsequent works.

4.1 Vaults and Coffered Ceilings

The first example of the representation of a spatial setting on an altar relief occurs in 1465 with Antonio Rizzo's centrepiece of the Altar in the Chapel of St. Clement (plate 12) in S.Marco. However, no attempt has even been made to put, as it were, "the coffered ceiling on the ceiling". Instead, it is put behind the Madonna like a screen. Subsequent similar reliefs, on the other hand, such as the accomplished Badoer tabernacle in the Victoria and Albert Museum (plate 81) and the relief of the *Madonna delle Biade* in the Ducal Palace from the Pietro Lombardo workshop, are less occupied with the representation of space in low relief than with development of high relief.

The three low reliefs from S.Trovaso (plate 161), probably again by Antonio Rizzo and dating from ca. 1480, are the earliest in Venice to show a correct spatial recession in low relief. Here groups of angels are accommodated in spaces articulated by coffered ceilings.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ Closely related to the S.Trovaso antependium is a fragment of a marble tabernacle altar (plate 162) in the Castello Sforzesco in Milan. The large low relief (145 x 166 cm) shows six angels set into a space with lateral openings and a flat coffered ceiling to the sides of a missing *sportello*. Nothing is known about the work's provenance, but Paoletti (1893), II, p. 159 assigned the relief to Antonio Rizzo. Schulz

On the bronze relief of the Surian altarpiece in S.Stefano (plate 109), architectural space is again implied by a flat coffered ceiling. The square room in which Madonna and Child, saints and donors sit, stand or kneel is further defined by two windows, inserted symmetrically on the left and on the right. The base of the Madonna's throne is obviously designed with some idea of mathematical perspective in mind, though it is not pursued consistently. Moreover, the figures have been executed on different scales, the Madonna being one and a half times larger than the figure of the donor. Although the relief must have been famous at the time of its making, Pope-Hennessy commented that "the artist's determination is frustrated by incapacity."¹⁶⁰

A further major example of the use of perspective in Venetian reliefs would have been the altar for the chapter hall of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco. It is not insignificant that the *banca* of the scuola chose Giovanni da Traù, a non-Venetian sculptor, to accomplish the task of executing the relief:

"And in the empty space of the perspectives behind the figures he is obliged to put into place those stones he has been ordered to."¹⁶¹

The relief's "perspectiva" was probably to echo that of the Scuola's façade, which had been made in the previous decade.

The altarpiece of the Badoer chapel in S.Francesco della Vigna was commissioned at approximately the same time (1983a), pp. 183f., on the other hand, believed it to be a 19th century forgery.

¹⁶⁰ Pope-Hennessy (1963/1971), p. 93.

¹⁶¹ Paoletti (1893), II, p. 105 doc. 78: "Et nel vacuo de le perspective driedo le figure sia tenuto meter in opera quele piere come li sera ordinato."

as the altar relief of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco. Here we find a form of triptych which presents five figures of saints in high relief in front of three architecturally structured arches with coffered vaults in low relief. The perspective lines of the coffering converge in the centre of the central arch, occupied by St. Jerome. On the upper tier a high relief of the Madonna and Child is set against a flat coffered ceiling in low relief.

The composition of the three arches of its main tier was surely inspired by the Scuola's façade. It also bears a strong resemblance to Donatello's relief of the *Miracle of the Mule* (plate 5) on the Paduan High Altar. Nevertheless, whereas in the two previous cases, the motif was used as a means of establishing a monumental illusionistic spatial recession, here, the coffered vaults have a predominantly pictorial effect serving as the backdrop for the statuettes; the arches are narrow and the rear of the relief space is articulated by a cornice running behind the figures' heads. Notably, the figures do not in any way relate to this architecture. They are disproportionately high and stand on separate bases in front of the arches instead of under them. St. Jerome, larger than the other figures and by a different hand appears to have been made for a different setting altogether.

As mentioned previously, Tullio Lombardo's *Coronation of the Virgin* (plate 150) in S.Giovanni Crisostomo is further evidence of the outstanding success of the Scuola di S.Marco façade. It works on the same non-pictorial principle as the Scuola reliefs setting figures in high relief in front of an illusionistic architectural backdrop in low relief. The

construction of the barrel vault is mathematically precise and the perspectival lines converge in the figure of Christ.

However, the taste for sculpture in the early Cinquecento moved away from the great achievements of the previous century. Illusionistic low relief was superseded by high relief and free-standing statues. It also gave way to more pictorial compositions. This becomes evident in the tabernacle altar from S.Nicolò di Castello (plate 121), made by Tullio Lombardo shortly after his Coronation relief. In contradistinction to the earlier illusionistic coffered vaults and ceilings, the ceiling of this work is no longer coffered, but consists instead of a slab of speckled red marble.

The coffered ceilings and vaults on the altars mentioned here are surface ornaments or mere backdrops, rather than Donatellian experiments in the spatial depth of a relief. The Venetian altar reliefs of the late Quattrocento make use of a representation of space not in an illusionistic, but in a decorative manner.¹⁶² Despite the frequent use of illusionistic architecture and the interest of Venetian sculptors in space, sculpture in Venice remained essentially different from the Central Italian schools. It pursued a painterly mode of seeing.

¹⁶² Nor do Venetian reliefs of the Cinquecento. Even Jacopo Sansovino's narrative bronze reliefs from the choir of S.Marco, which feature an architecturally articulated setting, lack the Donatellian ambition to create grandiose and mathematically correct spatial settings. See Boucher (1991), p. 59.

4.2 Pictorial Space

This pictorial perception manifests itself already in late 15th century relief.¹⁶³

The earliest of these examples, the *Conversion of Saul* (plate 86) on the antependium of the Altar of St. Paul, is very much the exception, as it aims at rendering the space of a landscape in *schacciato* relief. Even if it is evident that the sculptor encountered technical difficulties in its carving, the companions of Saul are visibly escaping into the depth of the relief. As if to make sure of a tangible relief surface, the framing trees to the left and right stick out in slightly undercut relief.

The altar relief of the *Nativity* (plate 134) in the Seminario Patriarcale, attributed by Zorzi to the "Donatellian phase" of Pietro Lombardo,¹⁶⁴ also shows the sculptor's interest in the effective construction of space. Particularly the careful construction of the rustic shed gives the relief the character of an exercise in the science of perspective. Architecture of this kind, symmetrical and receding into the background, however, could also and above all be found in Venetian painting of the period, which surely provided the motif for the relief (plate 137).¹⁶⁵ This is corroborated by the delicacy of the low relief of the

¹⁶³ See Sheard (1984a), pp. 149f. and p. 169, n. 9.

¹⁶⁴ Zorzi (1971), p. 399.

¹⁶⁵ A series of studies for the *Nativity* were made by Jacopo Bellini around the middle of the 15th century (See Eisler, 1989, p. 299). Similar sheds are depicted on Lazzaro Bastiani's *Nativity* of ca. 1480 in the Accademia (Moschini Marconi, 1955, pp. 55-56) and on Leonardo Boldrini's *Nativity* in the Museo Correr of ca. 1475 (See Giovanni Mariacher (ed.), Il Museo Correr di Venezia: Dipinti dal XIV al XVI Secolo, Venice, 1957, I, pp. 60-61.).

landscape in the background and in the previously described care for details. Moreover, the altarpiece was originally polychromed.

The architectural details of the predella reliefs from S. Francesco della Vigna (plates 45-47) are not inserted as perspectival constructions as on Carpaccio's roughly contemporary paintings of the same subject at the Scuola di S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni. Rather, they are pictorial elements belonging to the narrative, which is represented in a way similar to much older narrative reliefs in S. Marco.¹⁶⁶

Two other approximately contemporary altar reliefs show the development of painterly space in relief during the early 16th century. One is Giambattista Bregno's *Visitation* (plate 163) of ca. 1505 in the cathedral at Treviso, the other the much rarely considered relief of the *Pietà* (plate 131) of the first decade of the 16th century in the sacristy of the Salute. Bregno in the Treviso altarpiece experiments by interlocking various levels of relief, that is to say a high relief slope in the foreground, with figures receding from high to low relief and a low relief background. The sculptor's interest, though, was not to develop depth, but rather to develop almost fully-rounded figures in the relief's foreground.

As previously described in detail, the Salute *Pietà* shows the Madonna holding the dead Christ (plate 132) sitting in the centre surrounded by six kneeling figures, while the background shows an extensive landscape culminating in a hill town on the relief's horizon. The composition in the

¹⁶⁶ Such as a Byzantine relief of the Nativity in the Zen Chapel in S. Marco. See Demus (1960), p. 174.

foreground moves gradually from the highest point in the centre to the three levels of lateral figures with the last two heads shown in profile and low relief. The background, on the other hand, is in no way related to the figures in the foreground and serves merely as a backdrop.

The High Altar of S.Rocco (plate 58) also plays with the illusion of profound architectural space, however, not in its sculptural, but in its painted elements to the sides of the altar (plate 62).¹⁶⁷

On the Trevisan altar in S.Maria Mater Domini (plate 125) Sts. Peter, Paul and Andrew are standing in the apse of a church, carved in low relief. The central barrel vault of the relief behind St.Andrew is coffered. In the semi-dome of the apse there is a representation of God the Father. The lateral saints stand in front of semi-circular arches, again reminiscent of the actual church architecture. Even more striking than the similarity between the Trevisan altarpiece in S.Maria Mater Domini and the Vendramin tomb which has been observed by Sheard,¹⁶⁸ is the affinity of the altar's apse to the apses of Venetian Renaissance churches. In fact, its proportions closely resemble the choir chapel of the church of S.Maria Mater Domini itself (plate 127), which had just be re-built.¹⁶⁹

The latest works of this survey are the side altar reliefs (plates 140, 142) in the Emiliani chapel at S.Michele. They show no interest in the development of

¹⁶⁷ See Chapter Two, 5.2 *Painted Decoration of the Altars' Surroundings*.

¹⁶⁸ Sheard (1971), p. 261.

¹⁶⁹ Building of the new church had begun in 1504. See Tramontin (1962), p. 18.

illusionistic spatial depth and subtle low relief. Three-quarter relief appears to have become the fashionable form of relief-making. In fact, this is stipulated in the contract drawn up between the procurators of S.Marco and Giambattista da Carona: the sculptor was to carve the altarpieces with "many figures and animals in high relief in such a way that they stand out almost entirely".¹⁷⁰ Here, illusionistic spatial recession is practically non-existent, only realistic spatial advance.

4.3 Space, Altars and Tabernacles

From the above discussion of the representation of space I have deliberately omitted a small group of altars which form a special category, that of the tabernacle altar, or altar of the sacrament, that is to say the place in the church where the host was stored.

Tabernacles in Venice did not play a significant role in figurative sculpture of the early 15th century.¹⁷¹ It is only from 1443 onwards (on the Altar of the *Resurrection* in S.Tarasio, plate 2) that tabernacle altars in Venice were decorated with a *pala*, and there are a number of sculptured altarpieces of our period which can be discerned as tabernacle altars, functioning as repositories for the host or relics.¹⁷² Despite Caspary's and Cope's studies of the

¹⁷⁰ ASV, Procuratori di S.Marco *de Citra*, busta 67, carta 19, right: "...molte figure et anemali de gran relieve tal che virano quaxi tutti fuora."

¹⁷¹ Of the late 14th century are the two tabernacles in the choir of S.Marco and the one in the church of S.Pantaleone (of the late 14th century) Of the early Quattrocento, only the one in the chapel of S.Tarasio. Wolters (1976), I, p. 276 and *passim*.

¹⁷² Caspary (1964), pp. 84f.

Italian tabernacle and the Venetian chapel of the Sacrament respectively, the sculptured tabernacles surveyed here have hitherto not been examined as a group.¹⁷³

Particularly the early Venetian examples follow the Florentine scheme of an illusionistically receding coffered barrel vault, with the perspectival lines converging on the host, contained behind a door at the tabernacle's centre. This had been introduced by Bernardo Rossellino on the tabernacle in S.Egidio (plate 164) in Florence in 1450, and was repeated many times by Florentine sculptors, most notably by Desiderio da Settignano on the Altar of the Sacrament (plate 165) in S.Lorenzo, completed in 1461.¹⁷⁴

The two small tabernacles to the sides of the presbytery in S.Maria dei Miracoli (plate 166) of the mid-1480s are decorated with reliefs of coffered vaults, with half-length reliefs of God the Father in the lunettes.¹⁷⁵ Their proportions are similar to Bernardo Rossellino's altar. The vaults are framed by ionic pilasters, an entablature and a triangular pediment, covered with floral ornaments. Yet, unlike possible Florentine models, the walls of the vaulted spaces, lunette backgrounds, spandrels and pediment centres, hold inlays of different coloured stones, in keeping with the decorative scheme of the church of the Miracoli.

¹⁷³ Caspary (1964) and Cope (1979).

¹⁷⁴ Pope-Hennessy (1963), pp. 277-278 and p. 285. Pope-Hennessy also pointed out that Bernardo Rossellino had made two tabernacles fifteen years prior to the tabernacle in S.Egidio.

¹⁷⁵ The construction of the *cappella maggiore* of the church was commissioned from Pietro Lombardo in February 1485. See McAndrew (1980), p. 155, and Lieberman (1972/1986).

The Tabernacle of the Precious Blood in the sacristy of S.Maria dei Frari (plate 166) was probably made shortly after the donation of a relic of a drop of Christ's blood to the friars in 1480.¹⁷⁶ It presents a complex notion of perspective and relief architecture. The sculptor has carved a low relief representing the crossing under a dome on pendentives, occupied by a tabernacle which holds the relic behind a bronze door featuring the relief of the Repentent Magdalen. The Dove of the Holy Ghost is descending from the dome above. Perhaps the motif was inspired by the dome of S.Maria dei Miracoli, which was under construction at the same time, but, again, the proportions are similar to Rossellino's tabernacle in S.Egidio, as is the motif of the descending Holy Dove.

The architecture of the relief is not decorated with ornamented surfaces and relies instead on the effect of variegated marbles and gilding. However, the architecture of the rectangular frame surrounding the low relief, consisting of a base, two pilasters of the Ionic order and an architrave, bears abundant Lombardesque floral ornaments. Above the entablature is a rectangular relief of the Dead Christ Mourned by Angels (plate 170).

The Altar of the Sacrament from S.Stefano di Murano (plate 171), now in the church of S.Pietro Martire on the same island, is inscribed with the date 1495.¹⁷⁷ It takes up motifs from the tabernacle of the Precious Blood, making the

¹⁷⁶ Catalogue no. 25. Although this tabernacle did probably not belong to an altar, it is very closely linked to the development of the sculptured altarpiece, for which reason I have included it in the catalogue.

¹⁷⁷ Catalogue no. 1.

crowning element of the former, the relief of the Dead Christ Mourned by Angels, its altarpiece, setting the figures in a deep coffered barrel-vault, framed by pilasters with floral reliefs and surmounted by a pediment. The actual container of the host, richly inlaid with rectangular pieces of porphyry and serpentine, is placed in front of the altarpiece on the altar mensa.

The Altar of the Sacrament in S.Marco (plate 73) made by Lorenzo Bregno in 1518 combines the motif of the triumphal arch discussed at the beginning with the traditional form of the tabernacle.¹⁷⁸ Schulz not only noticed the altar's dual function of tabernacle and altarpiece, but also observed Lorenzo's intelligent fusion of the two forms.¹⁷⁹ Thus, the central broad and high round-arched niche, framed by a pair of columns, features a coffered barrel-vaulted hall. The vault's perspectival lines converge on Christ's body, represented on Jacopo Sansovino's later bronze sportello at the centre of the relief (being at the same time the rear wall of the hall).

Whereas all altars of the Sacrament of the Early Renaissance in Venice more or less conform to the Florentine model of the relief of a barrel-vault, at the rear or centre of which is located a *sportello* to contain the host or relics, the altars of the period after 1530 begin to assume much more elaborate and, above all, independent three-dimensional architectures. They become the main feature of

¹⁷⁸ Lorenzo's other altar that served as a repository for the host and relics, the High Altar of the church of S.Sepolcro, does not make use of illusionistic architecture. See Schulz (1991).

¹⁷⁹ Schulz (1991), p. 72 f. and pp. 177-180.

these altars, pushing the figurative decoration to the sides of the altarpiece and occasionally abandoning it altogether.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Examples of this type of architectural altarpiece in Venice are the Sacrament altars in the Cappella dei Morti at the Scuola di S.Giovanni Evangelista, in the sacristy of S.Maria del Giglio, from S.Geminiano (now in the Villa Nazionale in Strà). In S.Fantin the Altar of the Sacrament was also decorated with a low relief of the kind of the above, representing a vault or temple in low relief with flanking angels. In the 17th century, however, this central relief was replaced with a pompous three-dimensional tabernacle construction.

See Caspary (1964), pp. 118f. and Carl (1991), p. 21. Both noted that in the course of the Counter Reformation the traditional altarpiece was frequently replaced by monumental tabernacle constructions. These became to be understood as the "heart" of the church.

CHAPTER TWO

MATERIALS

In a study on the sculptured altarpiece the importance of the medium of the works is, of course, fundamental. However, while the first chapter introduced most of the sculptured altarpieces of the period, dealing with their forms and types, the discussion of their material has largely been omitted.

This and related issues of polychromy and gilding shall be discussed separately in the following chapter.

1. Wood

Hitherto little art-historical attention has been paid to wooden sculpture in Venice. In 1976 Wolters noted that research on wooden sculpture of the Middle Ages remained to be undertaken.¹ Since then, the situation has not changed much and to my knowledge, there is no study dealing with the topic for the period considered here. Mariacher merely pointed out the importance of wood as a material for frames of paintings, and, most notably, for Venetian ceilings, but not for statues, let alone those on altars.²

Lately, the issue has been taken further in two publications, by means of surveys of wooden sculpture in in the Trentino and Friuli.³ Craftsmen of these areas maintained close contacts with northern sculptors and woodcarvers. On the other hand, many of them may have worked in Venice or supplied painters' workshops with the wood for panels and frames of paintings. In general, though, Paoletti's short and general account of wooden altarpieces and in Venice has remained the only one of its kind for one hundred years!⁴

Few wooden altarpieces have survived in Venice itself. Even fewer make use of a Renaissance vocabulary of forms. In the *Cicerone* the reason for the seemingly scarce use of wood was attributed for Venice's love of luxury, which gave preference to precious marbles.⁵ Yet, just before the arrival

¹ Wolters (1976), p. 11.

² Mariacher (1987), p. 212.

³ Rizzi (1983) and Castelfranco (1989).

⁴ Paoletti (1893), I, pp. 79-83.

⁵ Burckhardt (1910), p. 238.

of Renaissance sculpture in Venice, that is to say up to the last third of the fifteenth century, wood was the material commonly used for altarpieces. This was the case for both painted and sculptured images and also for their frames. In fact, already Vasari, no doubt thinking predominantly of altarpieces of earlier periods, noted:

"This type of [wooden] figure has often been used in the Christian religion, in view of the infinite masters who have made many crucifixes and various other things."⁶

It was only in the course of the later 15th century that many wooden altars in Venice were replaced by altars made of stone. Paoletti observed that then marble altarpieces were still the exception, while a monograph on the Augustinian church of S.Stefano claimed that all the church's altars were originally made out of wood and remained thus until the second half of the 15th century or even longer.⁷ Braun, too, was aware of the large number of wooden altarpieces of the 14th and 15th centuries, as works which required the collaboration of painters and woodcarvers.⁸ However, he did not put altarpieces with carved figures in a separate group, or set them off against contemporary or later counterparts in stone.⁹

The material of the remaining interior decoration of Venetian churches varied. The majority of tombs were made of stone, as were the choir screens of S.Maria dei Frari dating

⁶ Vasari (1981), I, pp. 166f: "Questa sorte di figure si è usata molto nella cristiana religione, attesoche infiniti maestri hanno fatto molti crocifissi e diverse altre cose."

⁷ Paoletti (1893), I, p. 79 and Apollonio (1911), p. 18. See also Saccardo (1886), p. 90, n. 2.

⁸ See Chapter Three, 4. *Division of Labour*.

⁹ Braun (1924), II, pp. 303 and 310.

from 1475 (plate 172), S.Stefano (from the end of the 15th century), S.Giovanni in Bragora and S.Francesco della Vigna. Other choir screens, like the one of S.Antonio di Castello and the *barco* of S.Alvise, were wooden constructions, as were many churches' wooden beam ceilings, and the figural decoration along nave and aisles, such as those of S.Maria dei Carmini and S.Nicolò dei Mendicoli, both initiated at the end of the 16th century.¹⁰

Church decoration in Venice at the beginning of the 16th century is also documented by some contemporary paintings: Carpaccio's painting of the *Vision of Francesco Ottobon* (plate 173) in the Gallerie dell'Accademia has often been quoted as showing a typical church interior of the Renaissance in Venice.¹¹ The painting offers a view of the right aisle of S.Antonio di Castello. Of the three altars depicted, only one is made out of stone (in the shape of a Renaissance tabernacle), while the other two are late mediaeval wooden polyptychs, with painted panels in richly ornamented and gilded niches.

On Lazzaro Bastiani's painting of the *Donation of the Relic of the True Cross* (plate 174) from the Scuola di S.Giovanni Evangelista, the High Altar of the church of S.Giovanni Evangelista appears to contain three painted wooden figures in niches with an elaborate superstructure, in contrast to the stone statues on top of the balustrade above.

As a general rule new altars from the late 15th century onwards were built in stone, mainly in order to decrease the dangers of fire or decay, but also as a matter of social

¹⁰ Lorenzetti (1926), pp. 552 and 555.

¹¹ Most recently by Humfrey (1990), p. 126.

standing and prestige that appertained to their donors. Although wooden altarpieces were usually lavishly gilded and combined painting and sculpture, they nevertheless represented a more conservative and often less valuable type of altarpiece.¹²

As a result, it is not astonishing that works in wood have survived mainly on the Venetian mainland which was stylistically behind. Particularly to the north of Venice, the influence of Northern church decoration could be felt. Incentives to replace existing works were not as urgent there as in the capital. The very elaborate polyptych of St. Roch (plate 175) from Ileggio, a village near Udine (now in the Galleria Franchetti at the Ca'd'Oro), is a good example to show the survival of the late mediaeval gilded and polychromed polyptych in the 1490s.¹³

A number of wooden altarpieces, or fragments of them, do remain in Venetian churches, or can be traced in documents. The most lavish examples of such late mediaeval wooden polyptychs, which characteristically are composite works of painting and sculpture, are the altarpieces in the chapel of S.Tarasio at S.Zaccaria (plates 1, 2), for which they were probably designed as a set.

¹² For prices of sculptured altarpieces see Chapter Three, 5. *The Cost of Sculptured Altarpieces.*

¹³ A fair number of such altars in the Friuli region is catalogued by Rizzi (1983); further examples are the polyptych of the Oratory of S.Giovanni of the Maltese knights at Pressana near Verona by Bartolomeo Giolfino (ca. 1410-1486), now in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice, which, according to the inscription at the altar's base, was carved in 1470. The polyptych of S.Rocco was carved by Domenico da Tolmezzo (ca.1448-1507). See Moschini, 1955, pp. 189ff. For other works by the same artist see Rizzi (1983), pp. 100-125.

The over-life size figure of St. Nicholas Enthroned (plate 176) in the church of S.Nicolò dei Mendicoli is a fragment of an altar dating from the middle of the Quattrocento.¹⁴ A second example for the use of large wooden figures on altars is the statue of *St. Louis of Toulouse* (plate 177), or "Alvise" in Venetian, in the homonymous church, probably dating from around 1500.¹⁵ Although the figures are now isolated and framed by baroque altar structure of the 17th century, their original setting may well have resembled the triptych of S.Giovanni Evangelista in Bastiani's painting mentioned above.¹⁶ North of Venice, several similar wooden figures have survived including their original canopy.¹⁷

A further monumental wooden figure made to stand on an altar was the giant statue of St. Christopher.¹⁸ Although the figure does no longer exist, it is documented and described by Sanudo and Sansovino as decoration of the High Altar of S.Cristoforo, known as the church of the Madonna dell'Orto.¹⁹ The figure, which was carved at the beginning of the 1470s, measured approximately five hundred and twenty centimetres in

¹⁴ Wolters (1976), p. 153.

¹⁵ D. Aldo Schiavini, Sant'Alvise e la sua Chiesa in Venezia. Venice, 1951, p. 25. See catalogue no. 7.

¹⁶ The altar's architecture is also made out of wood, but painted as marble!

¹⁷ See Rizzi (1983), pp. 94f. and 114-17.

¹⁸ Catalogue no. 44.

¹⁹ Sanudo/Aricò (1980), p. 51. Sansovino (in Sansovino/Martinioni, pp. 163 f.) describes in an anecdote, how the *intaiador* Gasparo Moranzone carved the statue of the giant according to the size of a relic of the saint's knee that had come into the possession of the church.

height!²⁰ Surely, a figure of such proportions was not framed by any wooden structure but by the architecture of the choir of the church itself. Indeed, it would have the dominant image of the entire building.

The statues of Sts. Michael, Francis and Sebastian (plates 28-31) on the Altar of St. Michael in S. Maria dei Frari are completely polychromed with large areas of the drapery being gilded. The niches in which they stand are painted blue with partial gilding. The frame is remarkably similar to Jacopo da Faenza's frame of the Pesaro triptych in the sacristy of the same church. The figures, however, would not have been carved by him, but perhaps by a woodcarver from the Friuli or Trentino regions, where comparable works were produced during the first decades of the 16th century.²¹

The two wooden Triptychs (plates 65-68) in the aisles of the cathedral at Torcello date from the end of our period, probably ca. 1530. Although they are in a poor state of preservation, one can see that the statues of the saints are polychromed naturalistically and wear lavishly gilded and painted robes. The narrative reliefs in the altars' predella zones are polychromed like on painted altarpieces. The altars' frames are elaborately carved and are painted dark blue with rich partial gilding. Again, there are parallels to wooden altarpieces in the Friuli.

In Venice wooden figures and altarpieces appear to have also been imported even from regions north of the Alps.²² A

²⁰ Paoletti (1893), I, p. 80.

²¹ See Rizzi (1983), particularly pp. 132-38.

²² Körte (1937), pp. 131-32, provides a list of documented German woodcarvers (and goldsmiths) in Venice between 1409 and 1516.

wooden altarpiece, ordered for the church of the Madonna dell'Orto (S. Cristoforo) between 1461 and 1474, was also made by a German woodcarver, called Niccolò, who was resident in Venice.²³ Simonsfeld noted a document concerning the seizure of a carved and gilded wooden altarpiece which had been imported illegally into the city by a German in 1457.²⁴ Vasari, too, reported of "very excellent Germans" who worked as woodcarvers in Italy.²⁵ The production of wooden altarpieces, and of wooden sculpture on the whole, was widespread in these areas and has been the focus of various studies.²⁶

That wood in Venice had become a little appreciated material by the late 16th century is documented by the fact that Sansovino hardly ever mentioned wood carvings and sculpture, even when they are of good quality. One of the few exceptions was the previously mentioned giant statue of St. Christopher on the High Altar of the Madonna dell'Orto, which was a unique curiosity. Another example is Donatello's St. John the Baptist (plate 40) in the church of the Frari:

"In the chapel of the Florentines, (the figure of) St. John the Baptist of gilded wood was carved by the most illustrious Donatello who made the horse of the Gatta Melata in Padua."²⁷

²³ Connell (1976), p. 213. This wooden altarpiece was to be installed together with the miracle working white Istrian stone statue of the *Madonna dell'Orto* (plate 178) of the late 14th century.

²⁴ Simonsfeld [1887] (1968), vol. I, p. 265.

²⁵ Vasari (1981), I, p. 167.

²⁶ See Castelnuovo (1989) and Baxandall (1980) for bibliographies.

²⁷ Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 188: "Di dentro nella cappella de Fiorentini, il San Giovanni Battista di legno indorato, fu scolpito dal famosissimo Donatello, che fece in Padova il cavallo di Gatta Melata."

From this passage it becomes immediately clear that Sansovino was not interested in the material as such, as he is when describing objects made from stone or metal, but in the artist and his main work in the Veneto; the equestrian monument in Padua, significantly made of bronze. For him wood was mainly a building material, which was floated down from the mountainous regions of the Venetian terraferma.²⁸

Vasari's interest in wood was also limited. In his eyes, it was the material of a craftsman rather than of an artist. Characteristically, he preferred nut wood to any other kind, as in its dark colour it resembles bronze.

"But truly, you can never give wood this fleshiness or softness, which you can give to metal or marble and to other sculptures which we see in those made of stucco or wax or clay."²⁹

2. Stone

In contrast to his lack of interest in wooden sculpture, Francesco Sansovino never failed to mention the use of special and precious materials such as gold, silver, bronze, variegated marbles or other stones. It is not surprising that he, being the son of the city's leading architect and sculptor, Jacopo Sansovino, had an eye for materials and referred frequently to "the finest and most beautiful marbles" and to other architectural and sculptural features. In the chapter on Venice's private palaces and their

²⁸ Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 383

²⁹ Vasari (1981), I, p. 167: "Ma, invero, no si dà mai al legno quella carnosità o morbidezza, che al metallo ed al marmo, ed all'altre sculture che noi veggiamo o di stucchi o di cera o di terra."

ornaments he differentiated in some detail between the various types of stone used in Venice.³⁰

The use of stone, mainly as a building material but also as a medium for figurative sculpture, in the 15th century has been discussed at length by Connell.³¹ Although some of her conclusions can be applied to the slightly later period discussed here and to the specific category of objects, it was not her task to pay special attention to altarpieces and their material.

Despite the fact that the majority of sculptured altarpieces of our period that are still in existence are made out of stone, only few works in stone of the type of the 15th century polyptych can be found. Among them are the Mascoli Altar in S.Marco (plate 7) or the Polyptych of St. Peter (plate 8) in the church of the Frari can be found.

Even so, a few works and documents of the first half of the Quattrocento provide information on such stone altarpieces in Venice or on the Venetian mainland. Paoletti published a contract of 1449 for the construction of a chapel and triptych in S.Pietro di Castello, which was to be made from Istrian stone.³² Wolters drew attention to the contract for the High Altar of S.Prodocimo in Padua 1436.³³ Although the altar was probably never completed, it emerges from the document that it was going to be a stone (or terracotta) polyptych, with figures in niches and on two tiers.

³⁰ Sansovino/Martinioni, pp. 382f.

³¹ Connell (1976). An excellent scientific as well as visual survey of the different types of stone can be found in Mario Pieri, I Marmi d'Italia, Milan, 1950.

³² Paoletti (1893), I, p. 41.

³³ Wolters (1976), I, p. 265.

In the years around 1500 the developing taste for the Antique exerted its influence not only on the style of sculptures but also on the choice of material. This is predominantly visible in works of secular as well as ecclesiastical architecture, but becomes equally evident in cases of smaller religious art works. Marble and bronze became increasingly fashionable and quickly replaced earlier wooden furnishings, whenever the financial situation permitted it.

During the last years of the 15th and the early 16th century one might even speak of a Venetian "Marblemania". Often, façades of special interest or status and sometimes the entire building were revetted in marble and semi-precious stone. For example, it was in this period that the church of S.Maria dei Miracoli (1481-89), the new façade of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco (built during the years following the fire of 1485) and the Palazzo Dario on the Grand Canal were erected. This particular taste for architectural decoration with coloured stones was not entirely new, but rather a revival movement, since most of the brick walls of the basilica of S.Marco had been covered with such materials.³⁴

To satisfy the rapidly growing market for stone cutting and carving, many Lombard stonemasons came to Venice in the second half of the 15th century, which eventually led to a

³⁴ Connell (1976), pp. 110f., pointed out that in Florence, too, important buildings had been encased in slabs of precious stones between the 12th and 15th centuries. At the same time she observed that while Florentines preferred geometrical patterns, the Venetians used patterns "made by nature". See this chapter below: *5.3 The Colouristic Effect of Stones*.

complaint by Venetian *tagliapietra* to the *Provedadori de Comun* in 1491.³⁵

The earliest Venetian stone altar mentioned in this study, is the Triptych in the Mascoli Chapel in S.Marco from the 1430s. Shortly later, in 1441, an agreement between the Augustinians at S.Stefano and the Venetian citizen Andrea Corbelli specifically related to marble as the particular material to be used for the making of a new altar:

"Hence, a place shall be given, conceded and assigned to mister Andrea de Corbelli, so that he can and may and must have built an altar adorned and constructed with marble stones, and bricks, with a vault above and surrounded by small marble columns."³⁶

As previously mentioned, one major reason for the replacement of wooden altars by altars made of stone was to minimise the danger of fire. In the quoted document, however, the emphasis of the content is quite different: not only was the altar to be built of stone, but marble was to be used as a particular decorative element, presumably covering brick structures and for the sides of the altar (and perhaps the chapel).

Hence, the installation of stone altars in the second half of the 15th century was not only a result of practical thinking but also of aesthetic perception. The latter changed as the painting of marble surfaces decreased and figures were left to display the natural beauty of the material. This shift in taste is corroborated by a comment from Alberti who

³⁵ Discussed in Maek-Gérard (1980), p. 111.

³⁶ ASV, S.Stefano, busta 8, fascicolo 45: "In quo quidem loco sia dato concesso et assignato dictus D. Andrea de Corbellis possit, et valeat, atque debeat fieri facere et fabricari unum altare ornatum et constructum lapidibus marmoreis, et coctis cum volto superius et clausum circum circa de colonellis marmoreis."

in his Ten Books on Architecture stated that he was fascinated by the shine of statues of deities made from white marble.³⁷

The fame of the Dragan chapel in S.Maria della Carità rested less on its altarpiece by Cima da Conegliano than on the lavish stone decoration and the use of columns. These were described by Marc'Antonio Michiel and, above all, by Francesco Sansovino.³⁸ Humfrey related Cima's painting to sculpture, noting that the figures of the Dragan *Sacra Conversazione* (plate 179) bear a resemblance to free-standing statuary, but did not draw further attention to the painting's bottom section. This features two large rectangular slabs of variegated marbles.³⁹ Surely, the painter inserted this prominent feature in response to the altar's frame and the remaining decoration of the chapel, which was executed well before the altarpiece was painted.⁴⁰

2.1 Istrian Stone

The hard Istrian limestone, called *pietra da rovigno* or *pietra viva*, was, together with brick, the standard material for works of architecture in Venice.⁴¹ Francesco Sansovino appreciated its whiteness and its similarity to marble:

³⁷ Alberti (1988), p. 243.

³⁸ By mistake, Francesco Sansovino even described a marble altarpiece in the chapel. Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 267: "Più oltre la palla di San Giorgio di marmo, legata in bellissimo Altare con ricche e nobili colonne."

³⁹ Humfrey (1983), pp. 39f.

⁴⁰ Humfrey (1983), p. 148.

⁴¹ For the provenance of Istrian stone in Venice see Connell (1976), pp. 89-96.

"...a beautiful and marvellous building material is the hard stone which is brought from Rovigno and Brioni, a citadel on the Dalmatian coast. It is white in colour and like marble but sound and strong, of a kind that resists frost and sun for a very long time. Therefore they make statues from it which are polished with felt to look like marble; then they are rubbed with pumice to resemble marble."⁴²

However, he also mentioned that, although Istrian stone can be polished to a high degree, it does not have the same lustre as marble. Sansovino's comment implies that it was less appreciated than marble. It was also cheaper and a number of stonemasons appeared to have quantities of it in stock or have direct access to the quarries in Istria. Marbles, on the other hand, were often supplied by the patrons.⁴³

Throughout the period surveyed here, it was common to make the architectural parts of stone altars and tombs from Istrian stone, which was either decorated with floral patterns carved in relief, gilded or decorated with some inlays in different-coloured stones.

A significant change in the use of material occurred with the increasing importance of the altars' figurative decoration. In several cases of late Quattrocento altarpieces surveyed here, even the figures are executed in Istrian stone. It appears that the use of marble, common for statuary in Florence throughout the Quattrocento, became normal in Venice only towards the end of the century. Among the altarpieces in Istrian stone are the documented works of the Franco chapel in S.Pietro di Castello, and of the d'Arnolfo

⁴² Sansovino, in Chambers/Pullan/Fletcher (1992), p. 24.

⁴³ This is the case in the making of the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen from S.Maria dei Servi and of the Barbarigo tomb formerly in S.Maria della Carità.

chapel in Chioggia (plate 32).⁴⁴ In the contract for the latter, the whiteness and smoothness of the *piera viva* to be used are particularly emphasised.⁴⁵

Still extant are the relief of the *Nativity* (plate 134) from S.Andrea della Certosa and the street tabernacle of the *Traghetto della Maddalena* (plates 104, 105). The statues from the Altar of the Barbers' Guild (plates 15-18) are also carved from a type of limestone of a higher quality, the Triestine *pietra aurisina*.

Furthermore, the contract for the Barbarigo monument in S.Maria della Carità stipulated that, though the four free-standing statues of saints in the niches of the tomb were to be made out of marble, it was sufficient to execute the *mezzo rilievo* of the *Resurrection* (plate 115) above the altar in Istrian stone.⁴⁶ From the wording of the document as well as from the fact that the effigies of the kneeling doges (plate 116) were made from highly polished marble in contradistinction to the much less polished Resurrection relief, we can deduce that an aesthetic sensitivity for the medium had evolved and a hierarchy of materials was establishing itself. By the end of the 15th century Istrian

⁴⁴ For the Franco chapel see Paoletti (1893), I, p. 41, 9th January 1449: "Nui pantallon e zuan ttaiapiera stamo rimaxi dachordo chon miser piero ffrancho de farlli una chapella de piera viva... Apresso investir l'altar de piera viva... e tutto el ditto lavor de piera viva e ben lavorato de quello aspetta al nostro mestier." For the d'Arnolfo chapel See Paoletti (1893), I, p. 53, 6th September 1458: "Maystro Giacomo de lazaro taia piera... E convegnudo et accordato cum misser pre Nicolo boza... a far e lavorar una Capella de piera viva..."

⁴⁵ ASV, Procuratori di S.Marco *de Ultra*, busta 16, fol. 1 recto.

⁴⁶ ASV, Archivio Nani-Mocenigo, busta no. prov. 190, fascicolo T, fol. 21 recto, in forthcoming publication by Roeck.

stone was regarded aesthetically inferior to marble. Consequently, limestone statues were normally polychromed, and there is a possibility that the group from the Barbarigo monument was originally gilded, concealing the relief's actual material.⁴⁷

It appears that alongside the introduction of columns on funerary monuments and altarpieces, marble also became the preferable material for frames, or, at least, for their more important elements, that is to say columns and antependia. Like the brick walls in S.Marco, Istrian stones would sometimes be revetted with a layer of marble slabs, as was done on the altar of St. Mary Magdalen from S.Maria dei Servi.⁴⁸

2.2 Marbles

Thus, by the late Quattrocento white marbles were the stones normally selected for the making of figurative sculpture. Carrara marble was particularly appreciated for its crystalline whiteness and high surface polish that had already fascinated Alberti. As early as 1388 it was specified in the contract for the high altarpiece for S.Francesco in Bologna (plate 3) by the dalle Masegne brothers that the work was to be made from Carrara marble, "tuto lo dito lavoriero de marmoro fino de Charara", except the altar's mensa, which was to be made from Istrian stone.⁴⁹ The dalle Masegnes' figures of the choirscreen in S.Marco were also carved out of

⁴⁷ See this chapter, below, *5.1 Polychromy and Gilding*.

⁴⁸ See Chapter Three and Appendix I.

⁴⁹ Contract published in Wolters (1976), I, pp. 217f.

white marble, although here the stone has discoloured.⁵⁰ Moreover, several originally white statues are now covered with a thick layer of dirt, which conceals their original candour. Thus, it is hard to believe that the now virtually black statue of St. Marina (plate 50) from the High Altar of the homonymous church was once praised as made of alabaster.

Whereas the marble figures of altarpieces during the first decades of our period were carved from various types of stone from the Venetian mainland, such as the yellowish marble used for the figures of St. James and St. Paul (plates 83, 85) on their altars in S.Marco, Carrara marble gained importance during the last quarter of the 15th century.⁵¹ Thus, in the contract for the altarpiece of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco it was repeatedly specified that the figures of the altar's foreground were to be made out of "marble from Carrara from the river of Pisa".⁵² Behind these, the sculptor Giovanni da Traù was ordered to insert the other stones provided by the Scuola's Chapter General, probably slabs of veined marble, as they had been employed on the Scuola's façade some ten years earlier.⁵³

The special value of Carrara marble is further demonstrated by the statuary in the Chapel of the Sacrament (plate 90) in the Cathedral of Treviso. Of the chapel's five

⁵⁰ As Connell (1976), p. 122 observed, this occasionally happened.

⁵¹ Connell (1976), p. 142: "From about 1480 Carrara marble was once again imported by Venetian masons." A most notable case of the use of Carrara marble on a large scale during the 1480s is Antonio Rizzo's monumental staircase in the Ducal Palace. See Seipp (1911), p. 25.

⁵² Paoletti (1893), p. 105, doc. 78: "marmo da carara de la riviera de pixa."

⁵³ See Sheard (1984a) and (1984b).

free-standing statues by Giambattista and Lorenzo Bregno only that of the Resurrected Christ (plate 91) as the central and most precious figure is carved from Carrara marble.⁵⁴ It distinguishes itself from the others by its transparency and different degrees of surface lustre.

As mentioned above, the transparent whiteness of the marble statues from S. Marina was so conspicuous that they were admiringly described in 1676 as made from alabaster.⁵⁵ Alabaster, however, was the material of two of the six columns constituting the screen of the Altar of the Sacrament in S. Marco (plate 73), which according to a legend had come from the Temple of Solomon.⁵⁶

In two cases, altar statues were carved not from white, but from coloured marble. The statue of St. Benedict on the Trevisan triptych from S. Cipriano (plate 36) is in fact made out of two different kinds of stone. While the head and hands of the figure are white marble, the saint's garment is a speckled grey marble. On the Trevisan altar in S. Maria Mater Domini the entire statue of the St. Andrew is carved from purplish marble. It is unlikely that this colour is due to the discolouring of the stone.

2.3 Porphyry, Serpentine and Other Special Stones

Parallel to the use of white marble for figures, the use of pieces of serpentine and porphyry increased greatly from about 1480 onward.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Schulz (1991), p. 159.

⁵⁵ See Schulz (1991), p. 176, n. 7.

⁵⁶ Seipp (1911), p. 59.

⁵⁷ Connell (1976), p. 145.

These were particularly hard stones which until the late 16th century could be cut but not carved.⁵⁸ Therefore, it is less surprising that Sansovino was full of admiration, when he recorded the chapel for Domenico de Piero as most noteworthy of all the city's chapels, because of its abundant use of marbles, porphyry and serpentine in large pieces, "molto alla grande".⁵⁹

Usually, the bits of such semi-precious stones were rather small and came as fragments from older monuments. Often their shape was not altered, and they were inserted as they came, as coloristic highlights mainly for the geometrical inlay patterns of the altars' framework. Particularly richly decorated with these stones were the High Altar of S.Sepolcro, the High Altar of S.Marina, the High Altar of S.Rocco and, in fact, the entire interior wall space in the Emiliani chapel at S.Michele (plate 147).

In the contract for the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen it was mentioned that "diverse fine stones [are to be] embedded into the marbles and alabasters [of the altar's framework]".⁶⁰ Thus, their effect was that of gems set into a piece of jewelry. Stringa, in his 1604 edition of Sansovino's guide of 1581, enthused about the High Altar of S.Sepolcro (plate 69):

"Inside, there is an altar made of marble, very abundantly used, and it is beautiful for its design as for the delicacy of its stones... On its antependium one sees a long and broad slab of porphyry, which is so

⁵⁸ According to Vasari, I, p. 112, the art of carving porphyry, lost since antiquity, was re-discovered by Francesco del Tadda in the second half of the 16th century.

⁵⁹ Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 267.

⁶⁰ See Appendix I.

beautiful and delicate that one can look at oneself like in a mirror."⁶¹

Furthermore, the materials, mainly rare Greek marbles, employed for the lost framework of the High Altar of S. Marina result from a description of 1676: "The large apparatus is made of Istrian stone, Parian Marble, Porphyry, green Lacedemonian and Tiberian marble in various colours."⁶²

Only occasionally were larger pieces of porphyry or serpentine employed for the decoration of the figurative representations themselves, such as for the ceiling of the Tabernacle Altar from S. Nicolo di Castello (plate 121) or the lectern of the Annunciate Virgin on the Main Altar of the Emiliani Chapel at S. Michele in Isola (plate 145).⁶³

Together with rare Greek marbles these pieces were spoils, purchased from local owners.⁶⁴ In 1524 the

⁶¹ Sansovino/Stringa (1604), p. 131 recto and 131 verso: "Qui dentro vi è un'altare di marmo molto ricco, e bello così per disegno, come per finezza di pietre... Nel suo parapetto vi si vede una lastra lunga, e larga di porfido, in cui vi si specchia, tanto è bella, & fina."

⁶² "Machina magna est ex Istrio, Pario, Porphyretico, Lacedemonio viridi, ac Tiberiaco marmore versicolore erecta, ac speciosis coruscorum et muscosorum lapidum segmentis conspicua." A full transcription of the document, which mentions Lorenzo Bregno as the altar's author and the Bragadin family as its patron, can be found in Schulz (1991), p. 176. This document, preserved in the Archivio S. Maria Formosa (MS, Teodoro d'Amadeni, Biologia S. Marinae monachum indutae virginis, Venice, 1676, 51 f.) was published in Schulz (1984a), p. 150 and note 31. See Cicogna, I, p. 333.

⁶³ Bits of porphyry are also set into the stonemasons' capital on one of the pillars of the 14th century at the Ducal Palace.

⁶⁴ Marble, too, was "recycled", even when decorated with reliefs. Thus, the Lombard relief of Leonardo's *Last Supper*, recently on show in the exhibition *Leonardo e Venezia*, was found on the reverse of a 17th century tomb slab in the pavement of S. Maria dei Miracoli (Planiscig, 1921, p. 234). During the re-installation of the Cappella Badoer-Giustinian at S. Francesco della Vigna in 1540, two fine marble slabs, possibly decorated with reliefs from the old Badoer chapel,

Procurators of S.Marco *de Citra* bought twenty-one pieces of porphyry and serpentine "large as well as small, some in the shape of disks and many other broken pieces which were originally round", that is to say ready-made, for the making of the altar of the Magdalen.⁶⁵ Some of the altar's other pieces of colourful stones were donated by the Servites, among them two marble angels.⁶⁶ Instead of being covered with glass, the altar's window consisted of a large slab of alabaster, which was cut into shape to fill the opening.⁶⁷ As is well-known, alabaster windows were frequently used in Italian churches during the Middle Ages.

Twice in 1529, the Procurators of S.Marco bought a large column of Greek marble and two pieces of a speckled serpentine column from the parish priest of S.Maria Formosa. They were to be sawn into disks and polished to decorate the frames of the lateral altars of the Emiliani chapel at S.Michele.⁶⁸ A certain Domenico was paid fourteen ducats for a "very beautiful white marble column with black marks, approximately seven feet long and one foot in diameter", which was subsequently cut up and carved to supply four of the small columns for the two side altars of the chapel.

were sold to Jacopo Sansovino. See Schulz (1977b), p. 28, and Lewis (1983), p. 326.

⁶⁵ See Appendix I.

⁶⁶ Schulz (1991), pp. 141-144.

⁶⁷ See Chapter One, *1.1.2 Single Figures*, and Appendix I.

⁶⁸ ASV, Procuratori di S.Marco *de Citra*, busta 67, Quaderno Spese, c. 10 left: "Contadi a messer lo piovam et presente titoladi di sancta maria formosa in la sua sagrestia per una colona di marmoro zode grecho longa pie 7 pe 1 per far i do altari minori et algune striche da incasta in frixi per ducati... XVIII."

Ibid., c. 17 left: "per pezi do de colone di serpentin bastardo longe pie 2½ in zercha et grose 2/3 di pe et per pezi n° 2 de pezi pur de serpentin bastardo..."

These early documents and descriptions concerning altars which were adorned with *piere fine*, indicate not only the stones' monetary value but also their aesthetic appreciation.

3. Bronze

A few altarpieces among those introduced in the first chapter are made of bronze. During the Middle Ages, bronze was used only occasionally in Italy, mainly for the fabrication of church doors, such as those of S.Zeno in Verona. Ghiberti's baptistery doors, for instance, still follow that tradition. Only a few years later, monumental bronze statues were cast in Florence, Ghiberti's St. John the Baptist for the Orsanmichele being the first of them all. At the beginning of the 16th century Alessandro Leopardi suggested to the Signoria to cast bronze doors with narrative reliefs for the Porta della Carta.⁶⁹

Leonbattista Alberti gave his opinion on the material of religious statues in his seventh book on architecture. Gold, he argued, would be too precious and tempting to steal. Ivory, on the other hand, would not suit larger figures. In his opinion, the aesthetically most appropriate materials for statues on altars were bronze or marble:

"I would like bronze most, were it not that the candor of pure marble is very attractive. One of the main advantages in using bronze is its durability, provided, of course, that the statue be such as to make the sense of outrage at its destruction outweigh any financial incentive to melt it down for reuse."⁷⁰

In the Veneto of the second half of the 15th century bronze as a material for religious monumental sculpture would

⁶⁹ Jestaz (1982).

⁷⁰ Alberti (1988), p. 243.

have been known principally through Donatello's High Altar for S. Antonio in Padua, and the works of Bartolomeo Bellano. In Venice herself, the most prominent work in bronze was Verrocchio's equestrian monument of Bartolomeo Colleoni, which was unveiled in 1496. It was followed one year later by the two giant moors on top of the Torre dell'Orologio at S. Marco.⁷¹

Bronze, which was an extremely expensive material, could only be afforded by wealthy patrons. Moreover, its significance as a "classical" medium attracted people with a humanist education (or pretensions). Carpaccio's painting of *The Vision of St. Augustine* (plate 92) for the Scuola degli Schiavoni illustrates the interior of a Venetian study of such a humanist around the year 1500. In the early 16th century bronze became a material that was appreciated in private collections as well as in public.⁷² Thus, it is not surprising that some of the most prestigious projects for altars in Venice made use of this medium rather than stone or wood.

The bronze Altar for Jacopo Surian (plate 109) in S. Stefano is one commission by just such a man of humanist learning.⁷³ Maximum attention was paid to the iconographical message of the academic details on the altar and tomb, and it is more than likely that the specification of bronze as the material to be used for the altarpiece once more signified the patron's learnedness. The altar and, above all, its

⁷¹ On the use of bronze in Venice before Sansovino see Boucher (1991), p. 58, and Jestaz (1982).

⁷² Wolters in Huse/Wolters (1986), p. 180.

⁷³ See Chapter Four, 3.3 *The Altar and tomb for Jacopo Surian in S. Stefano.*

medium certainly left a deep impression on Marin Sanudo who highlighted it in 1493 in a separate sentence among the *cosse notabile* of the city:

"At S.Stefano, [there is] the tomb of Jacopo Surian, physician from Rimini. And there is his altar made of bronze."⁷⁴

After Sanudo, Sheard was the first to notice that the Surian altar relief was the earliest work of this type in bronze.⁷⁵ In fact, it preceded all other public bronze works in Renaissance Venice.

Approximately contemporary with the altar and funerary monument for Jacopo Surian is the chapel of the Saviour at S.Maria della Carità. The previously mentioned bronze figure of the Resurrected Christ in the Poldi Pezzoli Museum, Milan, is probably the only surviving element of its decoration. Like the Surian altar, the Chapel of the Saviour, at that time still without figure on the altar, was included in Sanudo's catalogue of notable things in Venetian churches.

Compared to the Altar for Cardinal Zen (plate 123) at S.Marco, which was constructed over the first two decades of the 16th century, the two objects of the late 15th century appear small and insignificant. In Venice the only bronze monument of comparable scale commemorating an individual at that time was the equestrian monument to Bartolomeo Colleoni, which I mentioned above. The Zen altar consists of three free-standing life-size figures under a bronze canopy with a relief of God the Father and an antependium with a low-relief representation of the Resurrection. Furthermore, the

⁷⁴ Sanudo/Aricò (1980), p. 51: "A San Steffano, l'arca de Jacopo Surian da Rimano medico. 'E l'altar suo di bronzo."

⁷⁵ Sheard (1977), pp. 263-264, n. 17, and Sheard (1977), p.256.

cardinal's sarcophagus in the chapel's centre, containing the patron's effigy and decorated with lavish ornaments and the figures of six virtues, is also made entirely of bronze.

The same material was also to be used for the High Altar of the newly constructed church of S.Fantin, another project started by Cardinal Zen. The project was not executed, but according to the cardinal's will the altar was to be adorned with five gilded bronze statues to be put on the altar. The same number of bronze figures was to decorate another (unexecuted) altarpiece donated by the Cardinal for the High Altar in the Cathedral of Vicenza.⁷⁶

The Altar of the Title of the Cross from S.Maria dei Servi (plates 155-160) is quite different from the *Sacra Conversazione* relief in S.Stefano and the monumental canopy structure in the Zen chapel, which are closely related to painted altarpieces in Venice. The altar at the Servi was distinctly different. As described in Chapter One, it was decorated with four narrative bronze reliefs and a bronze door with figures of angels in low relief holding the cross. These multifigural representations ultimately derive from sarcophagus decoration. They are further related to bronzes in the Venetian private collections of ca. 1500. In this case, the altar's function as a reliquary justified a particularly precious and detailed decoration. In all likelihood the donor of the relic, Girolamo Donato, was also the patron of the altar and among the most learned Venetians of his age. Here, as well as in the case of Jacopo Surian,

⁷⁶ See Jestaz (1986), p. 176.

the patron's status of a humanist scholar may indeed have influenced the choice of material.⁷⁷

The altarpiece of the Barbarigo Monument, consisted of three small bronze reliefs of the *Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin* (plates 114) and a further four reliefs of the Four Evangelists. Made around 1515 by an anonymous master, they presumably replaced an earlier stone altar of inferior quality by Giovanni Buora and Bartolomeo di Domenico.

Bronze quickly became a popular material for practically all genres of secular as well as religious sculpture. While statuettes filled the cabinets of private collectors, the choir of S.Marco was gradually decorated with Sansovino's narrative reliefs for the *pergoli* (1537-42), the *Sacristy Door* (begun in 1546) and the figures of the Four Evangelists (1550-52).⁷⁸

On the other hand, bronze altarpieces remained the exception. As private but generally large-scale projects their cost probably exceeded what individual patrons could afford. The few bronze altarpieces of the late 16th century were made for particularly wealthy confraternities, such as the Scuola di S.Fantin, and the Scuola degli Orefici, the goldsmiths' and jewellers' guild, and for the High Altars of the well-funded and newly-built churches of S.Giorgio Maggiore and Il Redentore.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Catalogue no. 5. And Chapter Four, 3.3 *The Tomb and Altar for Jacopo Surian in S.Stefano*.

⁷⁸ For the bronze decoration of the choir of S.Marco see Boucher (1991), pp. 55-72.

⁷⁹ The statue of St. Anthony Abbot for the goldsmiths' guild by Girolamo Campagna was cast in 1605 (Timofiewitsch, 1972, p. 277), the statues of Mary and St. John ev. from the Altar of the Scuola di S.Fantin by Alessandro Vittoria were made in 1583/84. The High Altar for Il Redentore by Girolamo Campagna

4. Terracotta and Other Materials

There are records for two terracotta works in Venetian churches of our period. One represented a "gothic theatre" of the Lamentation of the Dead Christ with eight life-size figures by Guido Mazzoni in S. Antonio di Castello.⁸⁰ The other one was an altarpiece in the church of S. Spirito, representing the Nativity. Nothing of it survives, but it was recorded by Sansovino:

"There, Niccolo dell'Arca Schiavone made the Nativity from terracotta, painted and in *mezzo rilievo*."⁸¹

It is probably due to the fragility of the material and the damp Venetian climate that so little has survived the centuries. Although it is likely that more works of terracotta, a cheap but versatile medium, decorated the interiors of Venetian churches, it probably never gained the popularity it had acquired in Florence.⁸² The large output of enamelled terracotta altarpieces from the della Robbia workshop there had no equivalent at all in Venice.⁸³

dates from ca. 1590, while the contract for the High Altar of S. Giorgio Maggiore was drawn up between the same artist and the Abbot of the monastery on 20th January 1592 (Timofiewitsch, 1972, pp. 253-55, and pp. 257-62).

⁸⁰ Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 32. Fragments of it are preserved in the Museo Civico in Padua. See Zorzi (1972), pp. 312-315, and Timothy Verdon, The Art of Guido Mazzoni, Ph.D. dissertation, Yale, 1975, pp. 69-76. According to the contract Guido was paid 600 ducats for two years' work on the modelling, painting and installation of the group.

⁸¹ Sansovino/Martinioni (1663), p. 230: "Nicolò dall'Arca Schiavone vi scolpì il Presepio di terra cotta colorito di mezzo rilievo."

⁸² Krahn (1989), p. 103.

⁸³ However, terracotta altarpieces can be found on the Venetian mainland. Planiscig (1921), pp. 153-173, believed that works in terracotta had begun with Donatello and that, consequently, Padua had become the centre of works in this

5. Use of Paint and Gilding and the Colouristic Effect of Venetian Sculpture.

5.1 Polychromy and Gilding

No systematic studies deal with the polychromy of Venetian sculpture in the Quattrocento - perhaps for the simple reason that there is no underlying principle to the gilding and polychromy of monuments. An early essay by Boni contains little valuable information on individual monuments, while more recent authors such as Muraro merely pointed out the lack of studies.⁸⁴ However, it should be noted that Sheard, Wolters and, most recently, Schulz have treated the subject to some extent.⁸⁵

There are no fixed rules for polychromy or gilding for the sculptured altarpieces of the Early Renaissance, or for Venetian sculpture of the period as a whole. From close examination we can deduce that, similar to Venetian tombs, many sculptured altarpieces (as well as most other works of sculpture) were at least partly polychromed and, in almost all cases, partially gilded.⁸⁶

One can assume that wooden altarpieces were always fully polychromed. The flesh of figures in wood as well as in

medium. Still *in situ* in the Church of the Eremitani are the *Sacra Conversazione* (plate 108) by Nicolò Pizzolo of 1449 and two altars along the left wall of the nave, dating from 1495 and ca. 1500. See Egg (1965), pp. 326f.

⁸⁴ Boni (1883), and Muraro (1961a), p. 359.

⁸⁵ Sheard (1971), pp. 70-72 and pp. 355f., nn. 51-52. See also Wolters in Huse/Wolters (1986), p. 150 and pp. 165f. Schulz (1991), pp. 50f.

⁸⁶ Braun (1924), II, p. 417, though not naming examples, observed that the use of polychromy was deeply rooted in some places and continued to be used throughout the Renaissance.

terracotta was always painted in a naturalistic way, while their robes were either naturalistically coloured or extravagantly gilded, such as on the two altars in the cathedral of Torcello or the *Altar of St. Michael* in the church of the Frari. Quite a lot of statues which today, stripped off their colour, look clumsily carved, would have looked considerably better in their original painted state. Wooden frames and their decoration were certainly always polychromed and gilded. A lost wooden altar in S.Maria dei Frari was known as *di S.Girolamo d'Oro*, of the golden St. Jerome, since large parts of it were gilded.⁸⁷ This abundance of gilt, as a symbol of heavenly light, leads to a complete negation of the actual medium, or, as Rizzi coined it, "la smaterializzazione del legno".⁸⁸

It appears that works in limestone also required further embellishment. The Istrian stone altar relief of the *Nativity* (plate 134) from S.Andrea della Certosa was originally entirely polychromed, as many traces of pigments on the object indicate. In this case, the notion of polychromy goes alongside the pictorial conception of the relief, which has many parallels in contemporary Venetian painting. During recent restoration of the statues of Sts. Cosmas and Damian (plates 17, 18) from the Altar of the Barbers' Guild, traces of gilding and polychromy were discovered. It results that originally the figures' garments would have been painted blue with gilded collars, while the laces of their footwear, the contours of their lips and fingers show pigments of cinnabar

⁸⁷ Corner (1758), p. 365.

⁸⁸ Rizzi (1983), p. 20.

red.⁸⁹ Under these aspects, it appears unusual that the documents contain no reference concerning the polychromy or gilding of the d'Arnolfo chapel in Chioggia, which was made entirely from Istrian stone. Quite on the contrary, the contract for the altar emphasised the whiteness of the stones.

Most other altarpieces in stone before 1500, and before Tullio Lombardo, show at least partial polychromy and normally gilding on the rims of the draperies. Colouristic accents such as the painting of pupils and lips as well as painting and gilding of architectural details are standard. For example, the pupils of all figures of the Triptych of the Madonna (plate 33) in SS. Giovanni e Paolo were painted black. The niches of the St. Peter Polyptych (plate 8) in the Emiliani chapel in the church of the Frari were originally painted dark blue with stars. Many of the cornices and creepers were gilded, in very much the same way as Bartolomeo Bon's Porta della Carta (also known as Porta Aurea) at the Ducal Palace. It is further noticeable that the female saints on the upper tier were originally polychromed and their hair and attributes gilded. The male saints on the main tier, on the other hand, show no polychromy and only partial gilding on the hems of their drapery and on their attributes.⁹⁰ Their surfaces have been polished to a higher degree than those of the female saints.

Marble statues of saints (not necessarily of other figures) after 1500 were not frequently polychromed. The

⁸⁹ Ettore Merkel in Restituzioni (1991), p. 44.

⁹⁰ The statues of the main tier were perhaps executed thirty years later. See Chapter Four, 2.1.1 *The Emiliani Chapel at S. Maria dei Frari*.

naturalistic polychromy of the statues on top of the High Altar in S. Maria dei Frari, which was noted by Schulz, was probably an exception and depended on their particular position atop Titian's painting of the *Assumption*.⁹¹ On the other hand, effigies of the deceased on funerary monuments, that is to say the figures closest to life, were painted naturalistically.⁹²

While polychromy continued to be used on some works, others, like Lorenzo Bregno's Resurrected Christ in Treviso (plate 91), relied on the lustre of polished Carrara marble. Many others made extensive use of gilt. According to an early description, much of the monument for the doges Barbarigo, for instance, was gilded.⁹³ Contrary to Braun's observation, that as a rule Italian marble altars of the 15th century were not or only sparingly gilded, Venetian altars almost invariably had gilded areas.⁹⁴ Gilt was mainly applied to architecture and ornaments, as well as to the statues of saints, where it highlighted drapery and attributes, and sometimes also hair or the beard of God the Father or saints, or the wings of angels. On the relief of the *Pietà* in S. Lio (plate 130), the iconographically most important group, the Virgin and the Dead Christ is not only set off by deep

⁹¹ Schulz (1991), pp. 50 and 185.

⁹² Wolters in Huse/Wolters (1986), p. 165. See also Sheard (1971), especially p. 71. Sheard noticed that, while earlier sculpture was almost always polychromed and gilded, the Vendramin tomb employed paint only partially, while the later tomb for Giovanni Mocenigo virtually uses no colour at all (other than the natural hue of the stone).

⁹³ Jacobus Filippus Bergomensis. Supplementum Chronicorum. (1st edition Venice, 1483). Italian edition Venice, 1540, c. CCCXXIII verso: "fu sepellito in uno sepolchro dorato da esso fabricato."

⁹⁴ Braun (1924), II, p. 417.

undercutting, but is moreover emphasised by extensive gilding on the Madonna's veil and belt, on Christ's loincloth and on the cross behind them. This decorative but also meaningful principle of gilding was not abandoned throughout the period, although it was used less and less. As a rule of thumb one could say, the holier the subject, the more lavish the gilding. On both the Altar of the Sacrament (plate 76) in S.Marco and the Trevisan Altar in S.Maria Mater Domini (plate 125) the figure of God the Father is surrounded by a heavenly golden glow.

As the documents reveal, the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen from S.Maria dei Servi, made between 1523 and 1524, had large areas of gilding. These were probably lost, when the altar was taken from its original location and installed in its present location in SS. Giovanni e Paolo. It appears that the altar's large niche contained a further, smaller niche with a shell-shape apse, which originally accommodated Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco's statue of the Magdalen. This entire niche was gilded. In contradistinction to most altarpieces of the period, Tullio Lombardo's *Coronation of the Virgin* (plate 150) in S.Giovanni Crisostomo is completely void of gilding or paint. Tullio, like Rizzo on his Altars of St. James and St. Paul (plates 82-86), on the whole renounced polychromy and gilding, and exploited instead the invariably highly polished surfaces of his statues, which would have reflected candle light almost like mirrors.⁹⁵

The latest project discussed in this thesis, the decoration of the Emiliani chapel at S.Michele, does not show evidence of gilding, nor do the documents mention the

⁹⁵ For Rizzo see Schulz (1983a), pp. 166f.

employment of an *indorador*, a gilder. This indicates the way sculpture was to take in the second half of the 16th century and later, although gilt continued to be used throughout the Cinquecento, at times lavishly, like on the Sansovinesque Altar of the Sacrament from S.Geminiano.⁹⁶

5.2 Painted Decoration of the Altars' surroundings

Numerous Renaissance funerary monuments in Venetian churches were also originally surrounded by paintings, such as the pensile monument for Melchiore Trevisan (plate 180) in S.Maria dei Frari the background of which is decorated with frescoed ornaments. Vittore Carpaccio's previously mentioned painting of the *Vision of Francesco Ottobon* (plate 173) shows that only the large marble altar, which is fixed into the wall, is surrounded by a painted frame. In contradistinction, the wall behind the smaller wooden polyptychs, which are movable, is plain.

Carpaccio's painting probably gives a good impression of the lost original non-sculptural embellishment of the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen from S.Maria dei Servi. This decoration was particularly rich. A certain maestro Francesco was to paint the sides of the altar with grisaille "spolgie", probably medallions, further animals and a blue background. Moreover, the altar was to be adorned with some painted architecture, "some steps and cornices", in addition to its lavish gilding.

A similar case, where the altar is to the present day framed by painted decoration is the High Altar of S.Rocco

⁹⁶ This altarpiece is now in the chapel of the Villa Pisani at Strà.

(plate 58). While the altar was installed in 1520 and work on it was completed by 1522, it was decided six years later to complete or complement the decoration of the saint's chapel even further. Ridolfi recorded that Pordenone "composed a ring of columns to the sides of the altar, inserting between them some putti who carry the pilgrim's hat, staff and bag".⁹⁷ These frescoes, depicting an elaborate architectural backdrop with inlaid pedestals, variegated columns and entablature with architrave, variegated marble frieze and cornice, can still be seen today. Much more than the former decorative framing devices, these elements are identical with the real architecture of the altar's framework and create a magnificent spatial illusion.

The Altar of the Chapel of St. Nicholas (plate 13) in the Ducal Palace, built between 1505 and 1506, was originally surrounded by frescoes of the Four Evangelists by Titian as can be seen on an engraving of the mid-18th century (plate 14). Both altar and frescoes were *in situ* by December 1523, when they were described by Marin Sanudo.⁹⁸ In this case, however, the frescoes are no longer merely complementing the altar's framework. The scale of the painted figures, the evangelists on the level of the relief figures and the Madonna with St. Nicholas and the kneeling Doge Andrea Gritti above, is much larger than the scale of the sculptures.⁹⁹ Whereas the altar is strictly framed by the customary

⁹⁷ Ridolfi (1648), p. 121: "...ne' fianchi dell'Altare compose un giro di colonne, trammettendovi alcuni putti, che tengono il cappello, il bordone e la tasca del Santo Pellegrino."

⁹⁸ Hubala (1977).

⁹⁹ Doge Gritti was the patron of both frescoes and altar. See Chapter Four, 2.3.4 *The Altar of the St. Nicholas Chapel in the Ducal Palace for Doge Andrea Gritti*.

aedicule, the frescoes did not have any limits but the wall itself. They have thus become independent decorative elements, dominating the altarpiece at the centre of the chapel's rear wall.

5.3 The Colouristic Effect of Stones

The fashion for colourful stones had caught on in Venice long before 1500. Even before the fire of 1485 at the Scuola Grande di S.Marco, parts of its decoration were executed in stones of different colours.¹⁰⁰ After the fire, the Scuola's façade was re-built, not only using a wealth of Lombardesque ornaments, but also a variety of white, black, red and green stones, "tutta incrostata di marmi finissimi", as well as gilding.¹⁰¹

As mentioned in Chapter One, at the beginning of the 16th century the employment of red and green disks, ovals or diamonds, inserted into cornices and pilasters and lavish partial gilding replaced the rich floral patterns on monuments of the late Quattrocento.¹⁰² Objects such as the High Altar of S.Sepolcro were admired for their use of expensive and multi-coloured stones. Stringa in his additions to Sansovino's guide admired its altarpiece, as it was "all inlaid with marbles and beautifully crafted with fine stones in many colours."¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Paoletti (1929), p. 16.

¹⁰¹ Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 286.

¹⁰² See Chapter One, 3. *Development of Ornament*, and Wolters in Huse/Wolters (1986), p. 180.

¹⁰³ Sansovino/Stringa, p. 131 verso: "è tutta di marmo intersiata, & lavorata vagamente di pietre fine di più colori..."

The High Altar of S.Rocco (plate 58) is the most extravagantly decorated altar of the period. It displays a wealth of different materials. While the altar is also one of the richest exponents of the use of colourful stones in Venice on which serpentine, porphyry and variegated marbles have been abundantly employed, the front of St. Roch's sarcophagus was to be decorated with narrative reliefs made from bronze or silver. In addition, many decorative elements and parts of the draperies were originally gilded, as were the apses in front of which the statues of saints stand. The inlays and figures of the main tier have an extremely high polish (plate 61). Two inlays in the spandrels of the main arch are semi-spherical, as if to emphasise even more the jewel-like appearance of the material. Selvatico was particularly impressed by the altar's antependium (plate 63), "ricchissimo per scelti marmi", which is decorated with inlays as well as with floral patterns in niello work.¹⁰⁴

At the very end of the period, in the years following 1528, the construction of the Emiliani Chapel at S.Michele in Isola (plates 139-147) demonstrates clearly, that the Venetian predilection for colourful stones was still going strong. The chapel's interior is veneered in white marble. Large pieces of semi-precious stones such as porphyry and serpentine and strikingly variegated marbles were used for the ornamental decoration of the walls and the altars' framework. Only the rectangular altarpieces are made of white marble in three-quarter relief. Connell noticed that the marbles and stones from the works by Guglielmo Bergamasco are highly polished:

¹⁰⁴ Selvatico (1847), p. 171.

"The result is quite different from previous types of marble inlay in Venice: the colours of the materials are more varied and brighter and harsher."¹⁰⁵

In several cases the application of variegated marble slabs in the 16th century is not much different from the 12th century when the interior of S.Marco had been revetted with cut pieces of veined marble which formed patterns across the wall. This was applied, for instance, on the altar frontals in the Emiliani Chapel at S.Michele (plate 146), where the natural symmetrical patterns created by the stone replace a relief or a geometrical design. A close look at these antependia reveals an astonishing wealth in colours and the highly decorative pattern of the material as such.

¹⁰⁵ Connell (1976), p. 137.

CHAPTER THREE
THE MAKING OF THE SCULPTURED ALTARPIECE

In this chapter I shall reconstruct the process of the making of sculptured altarpieces from the initial model to the final installation. This will be based on contemporary documentation, such as contracts, account books and receipts. The information they contain will shed light on the scope of some of the altarpieces surveyed in the previous chapters, how many people were involved over what period of time, the division of labour as well as the financial dimensions of these works.

1. Documentation

Not many detailed records survive of the making of sculptured altarpieces. However, in the archives of the Procurators of S.Marco, whose role as patrons will be discussed in the following chapter, a few account books relating to projects presented in this thesis have been preserved. The account book of the *Commissaria* of Verde della Scala of 1523/24, which I have transcribed in full in the Appendix of Documents, was partly published and paraphrased by Michele Caffi in 1884. The important documents relating to the *Commissaria* of Margherita Vitturi Emiliani of 1528/31 were partly published by Vittorino Meneghin in 1962.¹ However, while Caffi's interest was mainly that of reconstructing the career of the architect Guglielmo Bergamasco, Meneghin treated the chapel at S.Michele in Isola as one small part in the history of the Camaldolese monastery. Also partly published by Paoletti and Connell are the records of the making of the d'Arnolfo chapel in the cathedral of Chioggia.²

A fourth large sculptural project for which extensive documentation has survived is the Zen Chapel at S.Marco, which was the object of a previously mentioned study by Jestaz.³ He was the only one to publish a substantial body of relevant documents and dedicated some of his attention to the progress of the commission.

¹ Meneghin (1962), II, pp. 333-339.

² Paoletti (1893), I, p. 53, and Connell (1976), pp. 201-202 and 211-12. Most relevant documents in ASV, Procuratori di S.Marco *de Ultra*, busta 16.

³ Jestaz (1986).

2. Models and Drawings

The first stage of an altar was the making of one or more drawings or models by one or more craftsmen, architects, sculptors, carpenters and painters alike.

Perhaps owing to the enormous losses there are no comprehensive studies dealing with drawings and models of the works of sculpture of the Early Renaissance in Venice. An almost contemporary detailed and useful account of the use of models made from wax, clay or plaster is given by Giorgio Vasari in the introduction of his *Lives of the Artists*.⁴ In recent academic writings, Wolters briefly referred to drawings and models for sculptural projects in general,⁵ while Connell's discussion dwelt almost exclusively on drawings for architectural projects before 1500.⁶

The presentation of models was certainly common practice for all larger sculptural and architectural enterprises. These objects were not bought ready made, and, in fact, all surviving contracts for altarpieces of our period, contain precise references to models. In addition to these models, the contracts usually described the features of the object to be made. This was done in meticulous detail, referring to certain formal stylistic features such as the imitation of other works, as will be discussed below, to material and colour, as well as to the altar's iconography.

Although most preparatory designs of sculptural projects in Venice are lost, they are documented in many cases. In an

⁴ Vasari (1981), pp. 152-154.

⁵ Wolters in Huse/Wolters (1986), p. 148.

⁶ Connell (1976), pp. 201-202.

agreement of 1449 between the stonemasons Pantaleone and Zuane and the patron Pietro Franco concerning the construction of a chapel and altar of the Madonna in S. Pietro di Castello, the craftsmen described the features of the chapel in detail, then added that a design of the project had already been handed to Pietro.⁷ Antonio Rizzo, when working on a pulpit for the old Scuola Grande di S. Marco, was supplied with designs by Gentile Bellini.⁸ Like the painter, the sculptor worked with different colours and the document specified that the figures had to be carved in white marble on a black background. Lorenzo Bregno, too, had submitted a drawing to the Procurators of S. Marco *de Supra* for the Altar of the Cross, the details of which were delineated in the contract.⁹

According to the contract of 1492 for the chapel of the Madonna and the double tomb for doges Marco and Agostino Barbarigo in S. Maria della Carità, Bartolomeo de Domenico and Giovanni Buora were working from a drawing.¹⁰ That models were likely to be subject to alterations and improvement is very clearly expressed in the contract for this monument, since the two stonemasons, craftsmen of mediocre qualities, were repeatedly reminded to seek to improve on the design they had submitted.¹¹ As has been mentioned previously, the High Altar

⁷ Paoletti (1893), I, p. 41.

⁸ Paoletti (1929), p. 16.

⁹ Document published in Cecchetti (1886a), p. 27, no. 160, see this chapter, below.

¹⁰ Parts of this document are published in Roeck (1991).

¹¹ Document quoted in Roeck (1991), p. 31. Connell (1976), p. 185, on the other hand, stated the opposite case, where a wood carver had improved on the contract drawing without the authorisation of the patron.

of S.Rocco also differs from the model that was described in the contract between the Chapter of the confraternity and Venturino Fantoni. While the original decision of the *banca* only referred to seven marble statues, a document of 1521 mentioned eleven marble figures that were to decorate the altar.¹² Eventually, neither the four figures that were to fill the niches on the altar's side faces nor the "christo de razi" for the pediment were carried out, so that the number of statues on the altar remained the original seven.

Only a couple of attributed drawings for sculptural projects in the Veneto exist for our period. Sheard published a drawing of a lavishly ornamented project for the Vendramin tomb by Andrea Verrocchio of the 1480s.¹³ She further suggested that a drawing of *St. Mark Healing Anianus* in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin, may have served as a model for a relief.¹⁴ Wilk drew attention to a drawing, attributed by her to the Bellini shop, which served as a model for Tullio Lombardo's relief of the *Miracle of the Miser's Heart* for the Cappella del Santo in Padua.¹⁵

As for altarpieces, a drawing by Jacopo Bellini in the Louvre Book of Drawings of the middle of the Quattrocento appears to represent a carved polyptych, as Christ's Cross projects from the niche (plate 181).¹⁶ Most interesting is the drawing of an altar (plate 32) by the Venetian stonemason

¹² Paoletti (1893), II, p. 124, docs. 146-47.

¹³ Sheard (1978), pp. 136 f.

¹⁴ Sheard (1984a), p. 174, n. 80.

¹⁵ Wilk in Lorenzoni (1984), p. 123 and fig. 220. Wolters in Huse/Wolters (1986), p. 147, tentatively attributed the same drawing to Antonio Lombardo.

¹⁶ See Eisler (1989), pp. 382 and 403.

Jacomo di Lazzaro for the d'Arnolfo chapel in the cathedral in Chioggia. In a thorough analysis of this unique example, Connell pointed out the eminent importance of the drawing for the construction of the chapel, since the contract for it does not contain a detailed description.¹⁷ Despite some uncertainties, the design clearly shows the chapel's most conspicuous decorative features and the arrangement of figures behind the altar's mensa (as described in Chapter One). A clause in the contract made clear that the figures were to be free-standing, a feature which is not visible on the drawing.¹⁸

Of course, apart from drawings, there were other forms of models for sculptured altarpieces. A "modeleto de cera", a small wax model, was made by Giovanni da Traù for the altar of the Scuola di S.Marco in 1498. Also made of wax was the model by Bartolomeo Bergamasco which he had presented to the Procurators of S.Marco *de Citra* for the statue of St. Mary Magdalen from S.Maria dei Servi, before the contract was drawn up on 21st August 1524. The previous year, the architect Guglielmo Bergamasco had submitted a drawing of the architectural frame of the same altar and the tomb that was to be situated in front of it. According to the contract, the wood carver Biagio da Faenza had also made a wooden model.¹⁹

¹⁷ Connell (1976), p. 202 and pp. 211-212. Paoletti (1893), I, p. 53; and Procuratori di S.Marco *de Ultra*, busta 16, folio 1 recto.

¹⁸ I have translated the expression "de tuto relieve zioe intriege" with free-standing. Connell, on the other hand, interpreted it as high relief.

¹⁹ Biagio had worked for the Venetian government already in 1503, when he made the wooden ceiling of the Stanza degli Scarlatti. In 1504 he was employed by the Scuola Grande di S.Marco to execute the ceiling of the confraternity's *albergo*. See Th.-B., *ad vocem* Biagio. See Appendix I.

From the contract between the Procurators of S.Marco *de Citra* and Giambattista da Carona for the Emiliani chapel on S.Michele, we learn that the sculptor had submitted models, probably made out of wax, for all three of the chapel's altarpieces. These had been to the procurators' satisfaction, and it was decreed that "all the figures and pale have to correspond to the form and manner of the models as ordered from him (that is to say Giambattista da Carona), or, if they differ, they have to be changed in such a way that they please us more".²⁰

2.1 Competition and Competitions

Pomponius Gauricus in his treatise *De Sculptura* of 1504 tells the story of the competition between Antonio Rizzo and Tullio Lombardo, although his tale conforms to previous models of the writing of artists' lives.²¹ In a socio-historically oriented analysis, Michael Maek-Gérard drew attention to the conflict between Venetian stonemasons and those from other parts of the world, in particular of Lombard origin, who were in the majority and represented a threat to local craftsmen.²²

While rivalry was certainly strong, formal competitions in Venice, on the other hand, were few or are not

²⁰ ASV, Procuratori di S.Marco *de Citra*, busta 69, Quaderno Spexe: "...tute le figure e palle dieno essere della forma et modo ali modeli decreta et etiam fata per lui over a quel altro modo se anno mudar che piui ne piassera."

²¹ Gauricus/Chastel (1969), pp. 254-255. See also Vasari's story of the competition between Giorgione and the young Titian, who were both working on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi.

²² Maek-Gérard (1980), p. 111.

documented.²³ It is doubtful, whether the competition for the equestrian monument of Bartolomeo Colleoni really took place, as the comment of 1487 by the German pilgrim Felix Faber is vague and Vasari's two versions of the story are contradictory.²⁴

In fact, only one formal competition is recorded for the category of sculptured altarpieces of our period, that for the High Altar of the church of S.Rocco (plate 58). Shortly after the Scuola Grande di S.Rocco had been permitted to build a new meeting-house and church, the Chapter General of the confraternity organised a competition for the construction of its High Altar.²⁵ In March 1517, from a number of models and drawings submitted by several stonemasons, that of maestro Venturin Fantoni was selected.²⁶ In the contract, the terms "modelo" and "desegno" are used synonymously, making it impossible for us to determine, whether there had been a three-dimensional model as well as a drawing on paper.

²³ Burke (1972/1987), p. 102: "Formal competitions for commissions also took place on occasion, especially in Florence and Venice, which is what one might have expected from republics of merchants."

²⁴ Vasari, III, pp. 367f. and F. Faber, Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti peregrinationem, 3 vols., edited by C.D. Hassler, Stuttgart, 1843-49.

²⁵ The Scuola di S.Rocco was particularly keen on competitions: they not only initiated the well-known story of Tintoretto's painting for the ceiling of the Scuola's *albergo*, but, more than sixty years after the commission of the church altar, also organised a competition for the altar of the confraternity's chapter hall. See Wladimir Timofiewitsch. 'Ein Entwurf für den Altar der Scuola di S.Rocco in Venedig', in Festschrift für Ulrich Middeldorf, ed. A. Kosegarten and P. Tigler, Berlin, 1968, pp.342-349.

²⁶ Paoletti (1893), p. 124, doc. 146: "...avendo in questo ttempo fatto far piui modeli a piui maistri ttagia pieri dil che avendo eletto i° fatto per man de m° Venturin..."

Rather than by means of competitions, it appears that the sculptors of our altarpieces worked on recommendation. Surely, Giovanni da Traù was recommended to the General Chapter of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco as a consequence of his previous activities for a Venetian patron in Rome.²⁷ The sculptor Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco, who made the statues of at least three altars of our period, was recommended to the deputies of the Misericordia in Bergamo, who were responsible for the adornment of the High Altar of the cathedral.²⁸

Schulz plausibly surmised that the Bregnos' projects in Cesena resulted from their family links with Antonio Rizzo, who had stayed in Cesena after his flight from Venice at the very end of the 15th century.²⁹ This is corroborated by the fact that patrons from Cesena were not regular customers for Venetian altarpieces.

In 1523 Guglielmo Bergamasco, the architect of the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen (plate 94) probably received the commission because of his family links with Bartolomeo Bon who since 1505 had been *proto* or chief architect for the Procurators of S.Marco.³⁰ Shortly afterwards, in 1525, Guglielmo was again employed by the procurators for making a decoration at the Lazaretto Vecchio as well as for making the

²⁷ See Chapter Four, 4.2.2 *The Altar of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco*.

²⁸ Schulz (1984b), p. 257.

²⁹ Schulz (1991), p. 23.

³⁰ See Th.-B., IV, pp. 264-265, *ad vocem* Bon, Bartolomeo.

tomb of Guglielmo Querini in S.Andrea della Certosa.³¹ Three years later, he was once again chosen by the procurators to construct the Emiliani chapel with its three altars at S.Michele.³² Coming from Bergamo, he counted as a Venetian and it was perfectly appropriate for the procurators to employ him. The regular employment of Guglielmo as well as of most of the other craftsmen working on both the altar of the Magdalen and the Emiliani chapel indicates a typically conservative and patriotic mentality among the procurators. This also characterised the patronage of other Venetian institutions.³³

It is more than likely that the sculptor Giambattista da Carona received the commission for the three altars of the Emiliani Chapel at S.Michele (plates 139-149) through family links with other Lombard sculptors and architects. According to the contract, Guglielmo in this case had the function of a mediator. A further decisive factor may have been the sculptor's relationship with Tullio Lombardo, whose will Giambattista witnessed in 1532.³⁴

³¹ For the Lazzaretto Vecchio see published document by Paoletti (1893), II, p. 123, doc. 136. For the tomb at S.Andrea see Connell (1988), p. 136.

³² For the career of Guglielmo Bergamasco see Angelini (1961), pp. 109-152.

³³ See Chapter Four, 4. *The Role of Official Bodies as Patrons and Executors*. Maek-Gérard (1980), p. 112, argued that Pietro Lombardo's and Giovanni Buora's dismissal from work at the façade of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco and their replacement by the "Venetian" Mauro Codussi from Bergamo was caused by such patriotic thinking.

³⁴ ASV, Notarile Testamenti, busta 210, no. 523.

3. The Contract

Once a particular model had been chosen, a contract was drawn up between the patron and the sculptor, or, if the project was of a larger scale, the stonemason who was going to supervise it. The contract normally prescribed the scope and size of the project, what was to be done by the craftsman (or craftsmen) and within what time span, what the material was going to be and what parts of it the respective parties were to supply. Naturally, in almost all cases, it also named the fee of the craftsman.³⁵

Thus, the contract between Guglielmo Bergamasco and two of the Procurators of S.Marco *de Citra*, Andrea Gussoni and Antonio Tron, specifies the adornment of an altar in the church of the Servi of an approximate height of twenty-eight Venetian feet and of a width of sixteen Venetian feet according to the model.³⁶

The principal material was to be Istrian stone, in some areas revetted with marble or alabaster, inlaid with various semi-precious stones, "with a figure in the middle in a niche, which has to be the Magdalen made out of marble".³⁷ This statue was to be the object of a different contract, as well as two marble columns that were to go on the altar. Guglielmo was to construct a tomb at the bottom of the steps leading up to the altar, the slab of which was to be made of Istrian stone into which pieces of marble and other "fine stones", plus two epigrams with inscriptions and the coat-of-

³⁵ As Humfrey (1986), p. 66, noted, contracts for Venetian altarpieces do not differ from Florentine contracts.

³⁶ For weights and measurements see Appendix I.

³⁷ See Appendix I.

arms of the Madonna Verde della Scala, the altar's founder were to be set.

All materials were to be supplied by the Procurators of S.Marco who presumably had easy access to such. As mentioned previously, these patrons turned repeatedly to the same craftsmen for supplies. Guglielmo's task was coordinate the construction of the altar, to supervise the stone suppliers, cutters and builders, and to ensure the smooth running of the workshop. Though he normally had his workshop in the parish of S.Aponal in the *sestiere* of S.Polo, in the vicinity of the meeting place of the stonemasons' guild, we learn from the contract, that Guglielmo was to have a temporary workshop. This was set up in an appropriate corner of the monastery of the Servites, where he would be able to work with the materials, dress and polish stones.³⁸

The other contracts of the period follow the same lines, and one can assume that in cases lacking documentation the specifications were more or less the same.³⁹

³⁸ The stonemasons' guild, the *Arte dei Tagliapietra*, united all sorts of stone workers: architects, sculptors and stonemasons. Only in 1723 the Senate agreed to divide the *tagliapietra* from the *scultori*. For the history of the guild of the Stonemasons see Caniato and Dal Borgo (1990), p. 162.

³⁹ One exceptional case is the contract for the d'Arnolfo chapel in Chioggia of 1458. Although the document does not mention the stonemason's fee (probably because it was already a second version of an earlier contract), Jacomo de Lazaro had to vouch for the completion and quality of the work with his own son. ASV, Procuratori di S.Marco de *Ultra*, busta 16, folio 1 recto: "Et ad observatione de tuti pacti e convention predicti el prefacto maistro jacomo obliga si e suo heriedi cum tuti soi beni presenti et futuri, et constituisse suo fiolo per prezo fina ad integra satisfation lavor predicto. et de tuti danari che per parte over tuto del dicto lavor lui avesse ricevudo."

3.1 Imitation

In several cases, contracts (not only of altarpieces) prescribed the imitation of existing works.⁴⁰

The contract between the Procurators of S.Marco *de Citra* and Alessandro Leopardi and Antonio Lombardo for the funerary chapel of Giambattista Zen at S.Marco (plates 122-124) does not refer to models or drawings as such, but repeatedly insists that the altar for this chapel must be modelled on the High Altar of the church of S.Marco itself:

"... however, with the difference that whereas one can walk around the altar of the church, that of the chapel shall lean against the rear wall where the altar will be put."⁴¹

Similarly, the cardinal's sarcophagus was to be designed "in the form of that of messer Orsato Justignan at Sant'Andrea del Lido [that is to say, della Certosa]".⁴² The bases of the altar's columns also had to be worked "in the manner of Constantinople like the feet of the candelabra at S.Giorgio Maggiore", while the frontispiece of the altar was to imitate the façade of the church of S.Michele or that of S.Giobbe.⁴³ Furthermore, it is interesting that Zen's idea of using bronze for his tomb and altar was probably inspired by

⁴⁰ Huse/Wolters (1986), p. 148, and Connell (1988), pp. 204ff.

⁴¹ Jestaz (1986), p. 186: "...uno altar simile a l'altar grando de la giexia di San Marcho cum questa tamen defferentia che dove a quel de la giexia granda se va atorno atorno, questo se apoza al muro del volto dove l'altar si fa..."

⁴² Jestaz (1986), p. 188: "a la forma de quela de messer Orsato Justignan a Sancto Andrea de Lio..."

⁴³ Jestaz (1986), p. 186: "a la constantinopolitana come i pie di chandelieri di San Zorzi Mazor."

recent papal tombs in Rome and by Donatello's bronze altar in Padua.⁴⁴

3.1.1 All'Antica

Certainly, considering imitation, the formula "all'antica" is the most frequently used during our period. Though, the concept of the "antique", and what of it was to be imitated by Renaissance craftsmen, was unclear to both patron and producer.⁴⁵

While Renaissance sculptors of the first generation in Venice, such as Pietro Lombardo and Antonio Rizzo, worked very much in the Florentine idiom, the second generation, above all Tullio and Antonio Lombardo, "collected antique mannerisms and used them as the core around which they developed a personal style".⁴⁶

The influence of the antique and the conscious reference to a classical repertoire of forms and motifs surfaces at several levels: Thus, the will of Cardinal Zen stipulated that his epitaph should be as faithful to the antique as was practicable, "that it follows the antique manner as closely as possible".⁴⁷ Similarly, in the procurators' account book for the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen it was specified that, apart from various other details, the altar's statue (plate

⁴⁴ This will be discussed further in Chapter Four, *2.1.2 The Zen Chapel at S.Marco*.

⁴⁵ On classical sculpture, its presence and imitation in Renaissance Venice in general, see Wolters in Huse/Wolters (1986), pp. 166-168, 176-179 and *passim*.

⁴⁶ Pincus (1979), p. 29.

⁴⁷ Pope-Hennessy (1971), p. 95: "che tenga più all'antica sia possibile..."

95) was to be "dressed in garments in the antique manner".⁴⁸ Yet, it is not Antonio's sensitive Mother and Child group of the Zen altar, nor Bartolomeo Bergamasco's Magdalen in contemporary dress, but the earlier work of Tullio Lombardo (most notably the *Coronation of the Virgin* in S.Giovanni Crisostomo, p. 151) and the statues by Lorenzo Bregno that strike modern viewers as particularly classicising.⁴⁹

Other works suggest, that either the patron gave instructions orally as to what the finished work should look like or that the sculptor was inspired by and imitated other works. For example, the two putti carrying the sarcophagus of the saint on the High Altar of S.Rocco are quotations from one figure in two much imitated reliefs of four Putti from the so-called *Throne of Saturn* (plate 182), dating from the 1st century A.D.. In the early 16th century they were fixed to a wall at the Frezzeria end of Piazza S.Marco, where they were described by Sanudo in 1522.⁵⁰

3.1.2 Imitation of Venetian Renaissance Painting

Imitation manifests itself mainly in the many similarities between Venetian painting and sculptured altarpieces.

However, a detailed comparison between sculptured and painted works would necessarily reach beyond the limited category of the altarpiece. Parallel formal developments have

⁴⁸ See Appendix I.

⁴⁹ The classicising aspects of Lorenzo Bregno's and Tullio Lombardo's art are discussed and characterised at length by Schulz (1991), pp. 93-95 and 80-82. I have not much to add to her description.

⁵⁰ Sanudo *Diarii*, LVII, col. 298, 30th November 1522. See also Zorzi (1988), p. 12.

been pointed out in passing in Chapter One and will be mentioned in Appendix II. Suffice it here to mention some evident parallels of motifs between the statue of the Resurrected Christ (plate 89) in the Museo Poldi Pezzoli and the painted one by Vittore Carpaccio in the Scuola degli Schiavoni, (plate 92, already indicated in the first chapter). Furthermore, the statuette of St. John the Baptist by Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco from the High Altar of S.Geminiano has its origin in a woodcut of St. Roch by Titian and the same sculptor's St. Mary Magdalen is undoubtedly related to Palma il Vecchio's St. Barbara in S.Maria Formosa.⁵¹ A detailed study of mutual influences between Venetian sculpture and painting remains a desideratum.

4. The Division of Labour

Painted altarpieces involved a number of craftsmen, above all a carpenter, who supplied a frame, and a painter, who provided the image. A wooden altarpiece such as the Triptych of St. Michael in S.Maria dei Frari (plate 28-31) may well have been commissioned from a painter's workshop. There, a carpenter would have been subcontracted to carve the frame, while a woodcarver, possibly outside Venice, would

⁵¹ For the *Resurrected Christ* see Sheard (1985), p. 435. For the Magdalen see G. Frizzoni, 'Nuove Rivelazioni intorno a Jacopo Palma, il Vecchio', in *Rassegna d'Arte*, VI, 1906, pp. 113f. For St. John see Schulz (1984b), p. 267 and p. 274, n. 75. Some parallels in motif have been mentioned in Chapter One and in Appendix I. In a paper presented at the Symposium of the University of Warwick at the Ateneo Veneto, Venice, in December 1991, I pointed out several parallels between Titian's paintings and sculpture.

have supplied the figures. These were then polychromed and gilded in the painter's workshop.⁵²

As for stone altarpieces, one might be inclined to conclude that, since architects and sculptors alike were joined in the *arte dei tagliapietra*, the stonemasons' guild, the designer of an altar's framework would also carve the images. This may indeed have been the case for the altar in Chioggia, where one single contract was drawn up with one stonemason for the decoration of an entire chapel, including its altarpiece. But even here, the stonemason was not the builder, who had to be employed and paid separately by the patron. Some smaller altars, like Lorenzo Bregno's Altar of the Sacrament, also included framework, figures and reliefs in one contract.

However, from Tullio Lombardo onwards, it was increasingly differentiated between types of stonemasons. Tullio presumably had no hand in the making of the Bernabò chapel, but was instead solely responsible for the actual altarpiece. Guglielmo Bergamasco, on the other hand, had obviously specialised in elaborate marble frames, whether for altars or doorways. Although when designing an altar, he must

⁵² This was pointed out to me by dott. Luigi Sante Savio, restorer from the Soprintendenza dei Beni Artistici e Storici di Venezia. The same production process can also be assumed to have taken place in the case of a polyptych for the *Duomo* in the Friuli village of S.Daniele. In 1441, the painter Michele Giambono and the woodcarver Paolo di Amedeo, both based in Venice, were commissioned to execute this work (the agreement between craftsmen and Cathedral chapter is published in V. Joppi, Di alcune opere d'arte in S.Danieli del Friuli. Inediti documenti, Udine, 1885). It is generally assumed that the wooden figures were supplied by Paolo and then polychromed by Giambono. Although this view was challenged in an article by Norman Land, 'A New Proposal for Michele Giambono's Altarpiece for S.Michele in S.Daniele in Friuli', in Pantheon, 81, IV, pp. 305-09, its author did not deny the presence of wooden carved figures on the altarpiece.

have planned the inclusion of an altarpiece, these images were provided by different stonemasons by way of separate contracts. On the Altar of St. Jerome in S.Salvatore, the statue of the saint was not set up until nearly twenty years after the making of the altar.

The procurators' account books proved to be an excellent source for the analysis of the making of an altarpiece, in particular of the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen from S.Maria dei Servi. By means of these documents, it has also become possible to reconstruct the original appearance of this altar, which included a gilded niche for the statue, as well as an alabaster window (plate 98). The account books further contain detailed information about the division of labour on an altarpiece, the number and kind of craftsmen working on it, how much money was spent and how long it took to complete the work.

The making of the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen, the fifth along the right wall of the church of S.Maria dei Servi, began on 6th December 1523. On this date, two of the Procurators of S.Marco *de Citra* drew up the previously mentioned contract with Guglielmo di Jacomo Bergamasco. In the subsequent weeks, the master stonemason Zaccaria from Lugano supplied all the Istrian stone that was necessary for the building of the altar. In the case of the Emiliani chapel at S.Michele in Isola, on the other hand, Guglielmo was sent to Rovigno in person to purchase Istrian stone.

The actual building of the Altar of the Magdalen did not start until the beginning of January, when a certain Francesco from Padua was paid for the supply of sand and chalk, transported by boat down the river Brenta.

By 31st January the two helpers of Master Mason Simon had broken down part of the wall of the right aisle of the Servite church and dug the foundations, where the altar was to go. As the foundations of the altar were being laid, the procurators purchased pieces of semi-precious stones. These were to be embedded in the altar's Istrian stone framework, from a certain Anzolla de' Priuli who appears to have stored them in her house.⁵³ In a similar fashion, the procurators bought material from the parish priest of the church of S.Maria Formosa for the frames of the altars of the Emiliani chapel at S.Michele.

Two further craftsmen, "christofalo segador di pierre" and a certain "maestro nicolo", were employed to cut the pieces of serpentine and porphyry into various geometrical shapes and to polish them. It appears that such pieces had to be bought before the Istrian stone could be cut into shape, since they were not available in every size and cutting them was an expensive and difficult undertaking.⁵⁴

During all this time, that is to say throughout the first half of the year 1524, the superintendent Guglielmo received installments of his fee at almost regular weekly intervals.

Finally, on 16th July 1524 work had sufficiently progressed to take steps concerning the statue of St. Mary Magdalen. The procurators bought a block of marble from the

⁵³ It has not been possible to find out more about Anzolla de' Priuli. Perhaps the way in which she is mentioned in the procurators' account book, "Madonna" and "daughter of Misser Carlo", indicates that she belonged to the noble family of the Priuli. To the present day, the courtyards of some Venetian palaces are storage spaces for spoils.

⁵⁴ See Chapter Two, *2.3 Porphyry, Serpentine and other Special Stones*.

Government, which had been stored in the courtyard of the Ducal Palace. In order to transport it, six men "who have carried many pieces of stone" put the stone into a boat and later took it from the boat to the workshop of Guglielmo at S.Aponal. In the following week the painter "maestro francesco" was paid for diverse ornamental and figurative frescoes surrounding the altar.

Then, as a separate part of the enterprise and by means of a different contract with Guglielmo of 20th June 1524, the procurators ordered the making of the pavement in front of the altar and around the tomb of Madonna Verde della Scala, the altar's founder. Only then, on 21st August 1524, the contract between the procurators and the sculptor Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco was set up. Work on the altar was completed on 17th January 1525, when the stonemasons and builders who had participated in its making were given a lunch.

The making of the Altar of the Magdalen involved as many as fourteen master craftsmen, most of whom were working on the altar at several points of its construction. Apart from Guglielmo as supervisor and Bartolomeo Bergamasco as the sculptor of the statue of the saint, several master stonemasons supplied Istrian stones, a *segador* cut them into shape, another stonemason specialising in inlay works made the cover of the tomb in front of the altar. Furthermore, there were carpenters, a painter and an *indorador*, as well as a blacksmith who cast two candelabra to go on the altar's *mensa*. This list does not take into account a handful of other skilled workers and apprentices, porters and boatmen who carried the material to the site. These figures

corroborate the (near) truth of a statement by Pietro Lombardo, which has previously been considered exaggerated.⁵⁵ In a letter of 1496 to the duke of Mantua, Francesco Gonzaga, the stonemason had mentioned that he was working with twenty-five men at a chapel in the castello of Mantua.⁵⁶

5. The Cost of Sculptured Altarpieces

In view of the size of the sculptured altarpieces, their figures, their material, and the time and effort it took to carve stone or cast bronze, one might suspect that they would also entail a considerable financial outlay. This is particularly so, where the project foresaw the erection of a chapel to accommodate the altar, as in the case of the Emiliani chapel at S.Michele.

Unfortunately, the surviving documents which refer to the financial aspect of sculptured altarpieces, such as sculptors' contracts, account books or sales of stone and other material, are scarce. In order to provide a broader base of documentary evidence concerning the expenses made for works of sculpture, I shall also consider some other altarpieces, made by sculptors in Venice, but installed in locations on the mainland, or other types of sculpture in Venice, for which records of cost are available.

Documents such as testators' wills and their bequests contain little information about the cost of the actual altarpiece that was eventually installed on their behalf.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Wolters in Huse/Wolters (1986), p. 146.

⁵⁶ Luzio/Renier (1888), p. 434.

⁵⁷ These documents will be discussed in the relevant sections of Chapter Four.

Thus, the modest sum of one hundred ducats which Pietro Emiliani in 1429 set aside for the altarpiece of his funerary chapel seems hardly enough for the gilded and polychromed polyptych (plate 8) with five full-length and five half-length stone figures of half life-size, which was subsequently erected in S.Maria dei Frari. This seems particularly evident, if one considers that shortly later, in 1440, the wooden polyptych of S.Daniele in Friuli with fourteen much smaller figures, which were, however, lavishly gilded, cost ninety-five ducats.⁵⁸

This is confirmed further by records relating to the payment of a wooden altarpiece, which the Scuola dei Mercanti at S.Cristoforo commissioned from a German woodcarver in 1461 and which was finished by 1484.⁵⁹ It was valued at three hundred ducats, which included the materials, wood, paint and gilt, as well as the craftsmen's (woodcarver, painter and gilder) fees. Unfortunately, nothing is known about the scope of the work and how many figures it contained, though the fact that it was made to stand behind the over life-size miracle-working stone statue of the *Madonna dell'Orto* (plate 178) in the church indicates that it must have been a rather large multi-figural work.

Saccardo discovered that the figure of St. Christopher from the High Altar of the church of the *Madonna dell'Orto* resulted from a bequest by Marco di Matteo Trevisan of

⁵⁸ Rizzi (1983), pp. 76-79. The polyptych measures 248 cm x 261 cm, the figures of the main tier ca. 75 cm, the half-length figures of the upper tier ca. 37 cm. See Humfrey (1986), p. 80.

⁵⁹ Connell (1988), pp. 213-214, and pp. 284-285.

1429.⁶⁰ The testator had stipulated that one hundred and fifty ducats were to be spent solely on the image and on the construction of an altar.

Schulz estimated that the maximum cost of the Altar of the Madonna (plate 33) in SS. Giovanni e Paolo with three large free-standing statues of saints and two smaller angels and high reliefs of God the Father and angels could hardly have been more than two hundred ducats.⁶¹ Given the altar's size, the number of figures and reliefs, and also the lavish gilding of not only the architectural elements, but also of the figures' beards, their drapery and attributes, the angels' hair and wings, this amount is probably correct.⁶²

While these amounts may be regarded as average figures, we also find extremes. Thus, Lorenzo Loredan, son of doge Leonardo Loredan, planned to spend one thousand and five hundred ducats for his father's monument, which was to include the High Altar of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. In the will of Cardinal Giambattista Zen, five thousand ducats were set aside for either of two chapels and their altarpieces, one being his funerary chapel at S.Marco (plate 122).⁶³

5.1 Cost of Material

In a few cases it is possible to distinguish between amounts paid on material and the sculptors' fees. They shall be surveyed in the following paragraphs.

⁶⁰ Saccardo (1886), p. 89 and n. 1.

⁶¹ Schulz (1977a), p. 204.

⁶² Schulz (1977a), p. 205.

⁶³ See Chapter Four, *2.1.2 The Zen Chapel at S.Marco*.

The most expensive material was bronze. The material alone for each of the life-size bronze figures of Sts. Peter and John the Baptist to go on the altar of the Zen chapel cost seventy-five ducats. The bronze used for the antependium was another thirty-two ducats, the sarcophagus with figures two hundred ducats.⁶⁴ The total cost of Verrocchio's equestrian monument to Bartolomeo Colleoni was one thousand eight hundred ducats, "everything included, that is to say wax, wood, moulds, bronzes and iron for the said destination".⁶⁵

Much less expensive, but still far from cheap, was marble. The four pieces of marble for the two altar reliefs and the figures of the Annunciation at S.Michele (plates 140, 142, 144, 145) cost thirty-five ducats.⁶⁶ From a passage in the procurators' account book it appears that the cost of the chapel's main altar amounted to four hundred and thirty-three lire, or nearly seventy ducats. Judging from the wording of the document this amount concerned mainly the altar's

⁶⁴ Jestaz (1986), p. 204, doc. 69.

⁶⁵ Milanesi, G. Nuovi documenti per la storia dell'arte toscana dal XII al XV secolo. Rome, 1893 (reprint Soest, 1973), pp. 150-152, doc. 172: "omnibus sumptibus, videlicet cere, lignaminis, stantie, bronzi et ferramentorum dicte Dominationis."

⁶⁶ ASV, Procuratori di S.Marco de Citra, busta 67, Quaderno Spese, carta 16 left, 21st November 1529: "contadi che se a manda per maestro vielmo a ser piero moroxin per marmori bianchi pezi 4 comprati da lui zoe quadri do grosi di pie 3 inzercha per quono per far le do pale deli do altari piccoli et do pezi tondi per far le do figure intierge vano alaltar grando qual tuti sono sta milliaria X dacordo a ducati 3 1/2 al milliarium monte ducati 35 e per piata la condotta da maestro vielmo lire 2 e fachini 8 a soldi 13 lun lire 5 soldi 4 tuta lire 224 soldi 4.

materials and did not include the making of the statuary, nor the cost of the altar's installation.⁶⁷

The total cost of the Altar of the Magdalen (including the tomb slab for Verde della Scala in front of it) was four hundred twenty-one ducats five lire and nine soldi.⁶⁸ Although much of the material, including two marble angels by Giambattista Bregno, was donated "gratis senza alcun pagamento" by the friars of the Servite monastery, approximately half of the money was spent on materials.⁶⁹ The block of marble from which the life-size statue of St. Mary Magdalen (plate 95) was carved cost twenty ducats.

Istrian stone was much cheaper than white marble. During our period, it was available at price between eighteen soldi and approximately half a ducat or three lira per *milliarium*.⁷⁰ White marble, on the other hand, was sold at approximately three and a half ducats per *milliarium*. A list of materials supplied by various stonemasons for the Bernabò Chapel at S.Giovanni Crisostomo (plate 150) demonstrates that most of these stones were marbles, bought for considerable amounts of money.⁷¹ Thus, Pietro Lombardo was paid thirteen ducats for two marble columns, whereas two capitals made from

⁶⁷ ASV, Procuratori di S.Marco *de Citra*, busta 67, fascicolo no 19, carta 17 left: "7 marzo 1529. contadi a maestro vielmo che a dado a ser francesco zustignan a san moixe per uno pezo di marmoro bianco per far el spirito santo va di sopra alaltar grando fo lire 433 a ducati 4 el milliarium monte dacordo lire 11 et per barcha e fachim el condusse da maestro vielmo soldi 11 val lire 11 soldi 11."

⁶⁸ See Appendix I.

⁶⁹ Ibid., and Schulz (1991), p. 123, who attributes the angels to Lorenzo Bregno.

⁷⁰ One *milliarium* weighs 1,000 pounds. For weights and measurements see Appendix I.

⁷¹ Paoletti (1893), II, pp. 110-11, doc. 90.

"piere da rovigno", that is to say stone from the Istrian town of Rovinj, cost only two lire. There was an enormous difference between the cost of Istrian stone and that of rare marbles and of the semi-precious stones serpentine and porphyry, with which more or less all stone works of the later half of our period were adorned.

More expensive than white marble were serpentine, porphyry and rare variegated stones. On 17th December 1524 the *commissaria* of Verde della Scala spent nine ducats for twenty-one pieces of porphyry and serpentine of various shape and sizes. For the Emiliani chapel at S.Michele the procurators bought two seven foot long and one foot thick columns of variegated marble for fourteen and eighteen ducats respectively, in order to make the small columns for the framework of the lateral altars.⁷²

Considerable sums of money were spent on the gilding of altars of the period. The most complete record of this process is the order for the gilder Donato da Bergamo to embellish the altar of St. Mary Magdalen from S.Maria dei Servi. Donato was commissioned by the Procurators di S.Marco de Citra to

"... gild the altar at his expense... that is all straight and flat parts of the cornice of the frontispiece and of all other cornices and ledges which surround the marbles and inlaid semi-precious stones, further all cornices which go below the vault and all shafts of the round and square columns which are fluted, the plinths of the steps and bases and pilasters, the small frieze of the antependium. For all this work we shall have to pay him for his labour and gold provided at his expenses thirty-two ducats."⁷³

⁷² See Chapter Two, *2.3 Porphyry, Serpentine and Other Special Stones.*

⁷³ See Appendix I.

5.2 Sculptors' Salaries

In 1449, the sculptors Pantalon and Giovanni asked for fifty ducats in payment for three figures of unknown size they were going to carve from hard stone for an altar in the cathedral of S.Pietro di Castello.⁷⁴

In 1458 the stonemason Jacomo di Lazzaro was promised two hundred ducats for the making of the d'Arnolfo Chapel in Chioggia. As was customary, payment took place in several instalments. According to the contract, this fee included all the stones "a tute sue spexe et pericholi e fadige". The patron, on the other hand, a canon from the Cathedral Chapter, had to hire boats and men to transport the material from Jacomo's workshop in the Venetian parish of S.Pantalon to the church at Chioggia. Likewise, he had to pay for builders to erect the chapel. Ten years later Jacomo claimed that although he had carved free-standing statues he had been paid for figures in relief only and was paid an additional eighteen ducats.⁷⁵

As mentioned previously, in July 1476 Antonio Rizzo was commissioned by the Scuola Grande di S.Marco to build and carve a marble pulpit with a spiral staircase and figurative reliefs. For this work, which was to take him no longer than five months, he was promised a fee of one hundred and ten ducats.⁷⁶ Fifteen years later, in 1491, Rizzo, then chief architect at the Ducal Palace, received one hundred and twenty-five ducats annually. This sum was little enough for

⁷⁴ Paoletti (1893), I, p. 41.

⁷⁵ See Connell (1976), p. 212.

⁷⁶ Paoletti (1929), p. 16.

him to complain that, as owner of a private workshop, he would be able to earn three times as much.⁷⁷ As a consequence of this complaint, his salary was raised to two hundred ducats per annum. Compared to Antonio Rizzo, other stonemasons employed in the Ducal Palace, earned next to nothing.⁷⁸ And even Rizzo's successor, Pietro Lombardo, only received one hundred and twenty ducats. In comparison, the annual income of the master mason/builder Simon who laid the foundations of the altar of the Magdalen in S.Maria dei Servi in 1524 would have been approximately sixty ducats.

As a private entrepreneur Pietro Lombardo was able to earn much more money: in the contract for the High Altar of the Cathedral of Treviso his fee was to be five hundred and twenty ducats (a sum which presumably included the material) plus "cari do di vin", two cart loads of wine.⁷⁹

The letter from Bernardo de' Marin to Lorenzo Lotto mentions that Bartolomeo Bergamasco, one of the most successful sculptors in Venice in the years around 1520, had a respectable monthly stipend:

"This master sometimes earns ten, sometimes twelve, sometimes sixteen ducats per month depending on the

⁷⁷ Lorenzi (1868), p. 106, document n° 230 (ASV, Magistrato al Sal 1491-1529, Notatorio 2, carta 6): "[Antonio Rizo] expose, che essendo diputado per soprastante a la fabrica del Palazzo si a far le figure come tutte le altre cosse necessari a ditta fabricha cum el salario tantum de ducati cento et vinticinque, cum el qual el non puol viver ni far dote a la sua vechieza ni a la fameia sua per haver dil tutto serado et abandonato la sua botega per cessar dogni suspicion suportando intolerabel fatiche: cum la qual sua botega era sufficiente et etiam guadagnar in triplo ditto salario."

⁷⁸ See Lorenzi (1868), p. 114f., document n° 239: the salary of the other stonemasons is calculated by the day, and varies between 13 and 24 soldi.

⁷⁹ Last published by Schulz (1991), pp. 114-115.

contract. It took him three months to sculpt the figure of the Magdalen. He got fifty ducats."⁸⁰

As a matter of fact, Bartolomeo got ten ducats less: forty ducats for the life-size statue of the Magdalen which was to be put on the altar for Verde della Scala in the church of the Servi. These figures make up an average income of ca. one hundred and fifty-six ducats annually. His colleague architect Guglielmo Bergamasco, on the other hand, was paid one hundred and forty-five ducats in several installments as the architect and supervisor of the project. The painter Francesco who decorated the wall against which the altar was placed (and perhaps also the niche behind the statue) was paid three ducats.

The stonemasons and builders who carried out the actual building of the Altar of the Magdalen in S.Maria dei Servi were paid daily by the procurators. The two helpers of the master builder Simon were paid thirteen soldi per day, whereas Simon himself earned twenty-four soldi per day.

The above salaries and wages are standard and correspond roughly to the sums quoted by Lane for craftsmen and workers in the Arsenal.⁸¹ However, other sculptors were promised, and sometimes even paid, much higher fees. Giovanni da Traù, a sculptor of considerable reputation who had worked with Andrea Bregno on papal monuments in Rome, signed his contract for the altarpiece of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco in 1498. For only one relief, which was, however, to contain seventeen figures, nine of which full-length, he was to be paid four hundred and fifty ducats, plus a bonus of one

⁸⁰ Letter last published by Schulz (1984b), p. 271, n. 3.

⁸¹ Lane (1973), p. 333.

hundred ducats, should the relief please the examining committee. Moreover, the material was to be supplied by the Chapter of the Scuola. This amount is exceptionally high, if one considers that almost at the same time Pietro Lombardo as the new superintendent of the works in the Ducal Palace had an annual stipend of only one hundred and twenty ducats.

In 1506 Tullio and Antonio Lombardo were paid two hundred and thirty-five ducats for a couple of chimney hoods in the Sala dell'Udienza and in the vestibule to the Doge's private rooms, which they had made a few years earlier, decorated with narrative reliefs that contained figures and horses.⁸² Once Antonio Lombardo had moved to Ferrara he had a regular monthly income of twenty gold ducats.⁸³

Among the most expensive projects before 1500 was the Ducal double tomb for the brothers Barbarigo (plate 113). It was entrusted to the sculptors Giovanni Buora and Bartolomeo di Domenico Duca at S.Maria della Carità, who were to build it for seven hundred and eighty ducats. As specified in the contract of 1492, Giovanni and Bartolomeo had to provide the Istrian stone. Marbles, porphyry and serpentine, on the other hand, were to be supplied by the patron, Doge Agostino Barbarigo. Agostino had also commissioned a different sculptor, probably Antonio Rizzo, to carve the life size figures of the kneeling doges to the sides of the altar in the monument's central bay.⁸⁴ The size of the project, which covered three bays of one aisle of the church and included a

⁸² Lorenzi (1868), pp. 137-138, doc. n° 283, and Wolters (1983/1987 italian), p. 21.

⁸³ A.Venturi, 'Nuovi Documenti', in Archivio Storico dell'Arte, 1894, VII, p. 55.

⁸⁴ Wolters (1986) and Roeck (1991).

considerable number of large statues made from Istrian stone and marble, would have required the intervention of a large number of craftsmen, builders, stone masons, stone cutters, and gilders alike. Since the business of subcontracting other craftsmen and their payment appears to have been left to Giovanni Buora and Bartolomeo di Domenico, the fee is not necessarily a very generous one. This becomes even more evident in comparison to the much smaller but (at least according to the contract) generously rewarded project for the altarpiece of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco a few years later.

In 1514 Lorenzo Bregno was to be paid one hundred ducats for the Altar of St. Leonard in the cathedral of Cesena. His fee included all materials, above all the blocks of Carrara marble from which the three life-size figures of saints were to be made. One year later, Lorenzo agreed to make the Altar of St. Sebastian in the church of S.Margherita in Treviso, which included only one full-length figure of almost life size plus half-length high reliefs of the Madonna and Child and two Angels. Here, too, Lorenzo's fee was to be one hundred ducats. This amount excluded most materials necessary for the construction of the altar, which were to be supplied by the patron. However, Lorenzo had to provide the marbles and Istrian stones, as well as install the work, at his own expense.⁸⁵

In 1518, Lorenzo agreed to make the Altar of the Sacrament (plate 73) in the choir of S.Marco, once more for one hundred ducats. For this amount Lorenzo had to "make his perspective which is half a foot deep", that is to say the

⁸⁵ Schulz (1991), pp. 147-150 and pp. 119-120.

central relief of the altar representing a vaulted space with two angels to the sides of the door of the Sacrament, a high relief of God the Father, and in the lateral niches two statuettes of Sts. Anthony of Padua and Francis. These he had to carve "with utmost diligence and beauty".⁸⁶

Although for all three of the above-mentioned projects, the fee had remained the same, Lorenzo's actual involvement had decreased. In the last case, he did not have to take care of the purchasing of the materials. Instead, they were provided by the procurators who, as we have seen in the case of the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen and of the Emiliani chapel, had easy access to stones.

Bregno's career confirms that sculptors, like other Renaissance craftsmen, were paid according to experience and status and the scope of the object, and their fees could vary considerably. Thus, the little known Lombard sculptor Giambattista da Carona was paid a mere one hundred and thirty ducats for his three altar decorations in the Emiliani chapel at S.Michele in Isola plus the two life-size statues of Sts. Margaret and John the Baptist on the chapel's exterior and a statuette of St. John the Baptist to decorate a holy water stoup. This is less than a third of the amount the well-known sculptor Giovanni da Traù was promised for one relief, even if one considers that his work was to be large and contain seventeen figures. In fact, the number of principal figures in high relief on Giambattista's altarpieces already add up to fourteen, not counting angels and animals. The cost of the

⁸⁶ Cecchetti (1886a), p. 27, doc. 160: "cum summa diligentia, bauta et bellezza..."

material does not account for the difference in fees, since in both cases, marbles were provided by the patron.

Venturin Fantoni was to receive three hundred and fifty ducats for the High Altar of S.Rocco. From the documents it does not become clear, whether this amount included the material.⁸⁷ Like Giovanni da Traù, Venturin, was also promised a bonus, although this time, only the modest amount of twenty ducats.

In the contract of 19th January 1504, Alessandro Leopardi and Antonio Lombardo were promised the extraordinarily high fee of two thousand and six hundred and fifty ducats for the decoration of the Zen chapel (plate 123). However, we have to bear in mind, that this included not only an altarpiece, but also a large sarcophagus. Apart from that, the chief architects were obliged to subcontract several other masters, because the "difficultà di fare i getti", as Vasari called it, required specialised craftsmen and often necessitated re-casting.⁸⁸ Moreover, the procurators demanded a speedy execution of the chapel. Therefore, Alessandro and Antonio were admonished to employ "as many masters and journeymen as possible to make the work as beautiful and quickly as possible".⁸⁹

5.3 The Price of Sculpture in Comparison with Painting

Sculptured altarpieces were more expensive than their painted counterparts, but this was not because sculptors

⁸⁷ See Paoletti (1893), II, p. 124.

⁸⁸ Vasari, I, pp. 161f.

⁸⁹ Jestaz (1986), p. 189: "piui maestri et lavoranti che se puol per far l'opera bellissima et piui presto si puol."

were paid a higher fee than their painter colleagues. As has been shown previously, it was above all the considerable quantities of expensive materials which accounted for much of the overall cost. The material for painted altarpieces, on the other hand, can hardly have exceeded a few ducats.

Moreover, even more than the making of a painted altarpiece, the manufacture of a sculptured stone altarpiece required the collaboration of a fairly large number of craftsmen, as the account books in the appendix of documents illustrate. Surely, it was more expensive to hire six men to carry a block of marble than two or three to carry a canvas or panel.

Another important factor, related to the sculptor's fee, was the time it took to carve a figure out of stone or wood. This was a process considerable longer than painting a figure of the same size on panel or canvas. Presumably commissioned at the same date sometime in 1513, Jacopo Palma il Vecchio and Tullio Lombardo were working on an Altar of the Assumption for the Scuola di S. Maria Maggiore. In February 1514 the painter was paid fifty ducats for the altarpiece, while Tullio Lombardo was paid one hundred ducats for the altar's framework four months later.⁹⁰ Although the latter's fee would have included the material, most of the difference

⁹⁰ ASV, Scuole Piccole e Suffragi, busta 99, fascicolo XII, Scuola di S. Maria Maggiore, Spese di Fabbriche, e Conciari, fol. 16 recto: "A di 5 Febraro 1513. Fo contado a maestro Jacomo palma depentor per depenzer la pala delaltar in scola da basso ducati 50. Adi 4 Zugno 1514. Fo contado a maestro tulio lonbardo tagiapiera per far laltar In scola ducati 100." Document published by Rylands, 'Palma Vecchio's *Assumption of the Virgin*', in *The Burlington Magazine*, CXIX, 1977, pp. 245-50. See also Rylands (1988), p. 199. Tafuri (1986), p. 40, without giving any further reference, claimed that Tullio's frame had the form of a triumphal arch with the painting in the centre and reliefs of Sts. Sebastian and John and putti to the sides.

in payment resulted from the longer period of time it took to make the frame.

Apart from the bronze altar of the Zen Chapel at S.Marco, the most expensive altarpiece of the period was the Altar for the Scuola Grande di S.Marco. According to the contract of 1498, Giovanni da Traù's fee (of four hundred and fifty ducats) was going to be more than twice as high than the highest fee for a Venetian altarpiece of the period before 1530, Titian's Averoldi Polyptych for Brescia (completed in 1522), for which the painter was paid two hundred ducats.⁹¹

⁹¹ Humfrey (1986), p. 69.

CHAPTER FOUR

PATRONAGE

In the following chapter I shall survey the patrons of sculptured altarpieces.

As the previous chapters have shown, sculptured altarpieces were conspicuous monuments decorating Venetian churches. Most of them were large objects made from marble and other stones. Sculptured altarpieces in particular stood as (posthumous) status symbols "in perpetuum", manifesting wealth and social status of their donors and patrons, as they were almost invariably more expensive and believed to be more durable than their painted counterparts.

1. What is a Patron

Before examining the patrons of the individual objects in detail, it is necessary to define the term "patron".

In many of the cases discussed below, the initial idea for the installation or decoration of an altar goes back to a clause in a will. In it, a testator normally defined the location and frequently also the iconography of his altar and its decoration.

However, more often than not, the testator, donor or founder of an altar did not even see the commencing of work on, let alone the completion of the altar founded or acquired and financed by him. Renaissance donors, being well aware of the fragility of human life, normally appointed commissaries to oversee donations "in perpetuum" and projects that were likely to take their time, such as tombs and altarpieces. Hence, a typical clause in wills of the period reads "as seems fit to my commissaries". These commissaries were either relatives or friends, the Chapter General of a confraternity of which the testator was a member, or the Procurators of S.Marco.

Hence, a patron, strictly speaking, was the person or group of persons who commissioned one or several craftsmen to actually make an altar and its altarpiece, thus normally choosing the style and medium, sometimes iconography, occasionally even the site of an altarpiece, provided it had not been determined by the donor.

Donors and patrons of sculptured altarpieces, as of altarpieces in general, can be and have often been divided into several social categories. For the sake of practicality I have adhered to the standard division between individuals

of Venetian society, that is to say patricians and non-noble citizens, clergy, officers of state, above all the doge. Furthermore, there are different kinds of organisations, such as religious or national confraternities and guilds. However, it will emerge that often donors and patrons who, according to the above division, belong to different categories commonly belong to a new category.

Rather than depending on class, patrons' attitudes towards piety and their interest in commissions of religious character depended above all on their wealth, their education and their social standing. These factors influenced the founder's or patron's interest in the installation of an altar in general, his or her choice of the medium, iconography and style of an altarpiece, as well as the original location for his commission.

2. Individuals

2.1 Ecclesiastical Patrons and their Altars

Among the patrons of sculptured altarpieces we find only three eminent clerical patrons. All of them belong to the Venetian patriciate. One of them, the cardinal Giambattista Zen, commissioned the largest and most costly project of the period in Venice. The second is bishop Pietro Emiliani, whose chapel is situated in S.Maria dei Frari, while the third, Giovanni Trevisan, was abbot of S.Cipriano di Murano, where his oratory was constructed.

2.1.1 The Emiliani Chapel at S.Maria dei Frari

Pietro Emiliani was the founder of the large chapel added to the left aisle of the church of S.Maria dei Frari at the height of the choir screen.¹ It is accessible from the church as well as by a separate entrance on the chapel's street front. This façade (plate 10), is decorated with a large round window and a pointed-arch doorway. The lunette of this door is decorated with an Istrian stone statue of St. Peter, with a bishop's mitre and the Emiliani coat-of-arms at his feet. The space between lunette and window is filled with a half-length statue of God the Father.² The chapel's altar is decorated with the stone polyptych on two tiers (plate 8) discussed in Chapter One. Despite its size and conspicuous site, the Emiliani chapel has remained relatively unknown and only recently has it been attempted to attribute the altar's statues to the Florentine sculptor Agostino di Duccio, while the patronage aroused no further interest.³

Pietro Emiliani belonged to a small Venetian noble family whose *casa di statio*, or main seat, was in the parish of S.Simeone. He was appointed bishop of Vicenza by Pope Alexander V on 12th August 1409, thus being the first Venetian bishop in Vicenza after the city's submission to the Serenissima in 1404. During his 23-year-long period of

¹ Catalogue no. 24.

² The sculptures of the façade probably date from an early construction period, ca. 1434. See Wolters (1976), I, p. 256. A corbel frieze runs along the chapel's gable, and corners and the centre are accentuated by little Istrian stone turrets. Thus, the façade of the Emiliani chapel (plate 10) is almost identical with the Corner chapel, which was added to the left transept of the Frari in the 1450s.

³ Stefanac (1991).

office Pietro was involved in two major architectural projects. He launched the rebuilding of the Cathedral of Vicenza, part of which had collapsed in 1384.⁴ Moreover, on 25th August 1428, Pietro laid the foundation stone of a sanctuary on the Monte Berico, a hill just outside Vicenza, after the Virgin had miraculously appeared there.

When he wrote his will in the following year, on 8th April 1429, the bishop mentioned a couple of further architectural projects, that the construction of his chapel at S.Maria dei Frari had already begun, and that the foundations had been laid:

"I want to be buried in the place of the Franciscan friars of Venice, if the chapel which I have begun to build and the foundations of which have been laid will be in such a condition at the time of my death that it will appear appropriate to my executors to bury me in that place."⁵

For the execution of the entire project Pietro left the considerable amount of two thousand and five hundred gold ducats, one hundred of which were to be spent on the altarpiece, "pro una ycona magna et pulcra". An additional one hundred and twenty ducats were intended for a chalice, a missal, altar furniture and other customary liturgical objects for the chapel. Another one thousand and one hundred ducats were put aside for the bishop's alternative burial place, the Camaldolese monastery of S.Michele in Isola, which was distinguished for the devout religious life of its monks.

⁴ Mantese (1964), III, pp. 893ff.

⁵ ASV, Cancelleria Inferiore, busta 240, will of Pietro Emiliani: "Sepeliri volo in loco fratrum minorum Venetorum. Si capela quam construere incepti et eius fundamenta ibi cepta sunt. Erit in tali conditione tempore mortis mee quod comissariis meis videatur me ibi apte sepeliri posse."

It was also the burial place of Pietro's first-born son Giovanni.⁶

Similarly, he bequeathed four hundred ducats for the future construction and decoration of a chapel in the cathedral of Vicenza, to which he also donated a chalice, "my alb, stole and other things that are used to celebrate mass by my chaplain in the chapel of the episcopal palace" and also "a gold pall which he (the chaplain) used to carry in front of me".⁷ Like the chapel in Venice, the Vicentine chapel (which was never executed) was to be decorated with "una ycona magna et honorabilis", displaying the bishop's coat-of-arms, once again for one hundred ducats. The altarpiece was far from being the most expensive item of the chapel's decoration: five hundred gold ducats were spent for a missal to be used for mass there.

In view of the cost of sculptured altarpieces discussed in the previous chapter, the amount of one hundred ducats set aside for the "ycona magna et pulcra" of the Venetian chapel is only a modest sum, especially since the altarpiece would originally have been at least partially gilded and polychromed. It would at the most have sufficed for a painted altarpiece, but certainly not for the stone polyptych that was eventually installed. Presumably the making of the

⁶ See this Chapter, below, 2.2.1 *The Emiliani Chapel at S. Michele in Isola*, and Mantese (1964), III, p. 117. See also Barbaro, ASV, V, p. 73. Mantese (1964), p. 112, n.3, quoting a document from the Vatican archives of 1449, explains that it was possible for Pietro Emiliani to have legitimate children during his term of office as a member of the Apostolic Chamber: "dudum in seculo existens, matrimonium contraxerat, ex illo nonullos filios et nepotes fuerat legitime consecutus ac, eius postea uxore de medio sublata, ad apicem pontificalis dignitatis et in episcopum fuit vicentinum assumptus."

⁷ ASV, Canc. Inf., busta 240.

altarpiece was also sponsored by Faustino, Pietro's son, who was one of the executors of the bishop's will. In 1434, Faustino had dealings with the chapter of the Frari concerning his father's chapel, which was also to become his own burial place.⁸ According to the inscription of the tomb slab in front of the chapel's altar he was buried there in 1435, which implies that by this date the chapel was largely completed. Finally, according to Barbaro, a second Piero, son of the bishop's first-born son Giovanni, was buried there in 1464. In the Genealogies by Marco Barbaro the inscription underneath the pensile monument on the chapel's side wall is related to him.⁹

Although Barbaro probably confused grandfather and grandson in his writings, the altarpiece may have been completed on the younger Pietro's behalf. Accordingly the polyptych commemorates himself, but also the founder of the chapel, while putting St. John the Baptist, the name saint of his father, in the place of honour, to the left of the central statue of St. Peter. A continuous decoration and re-decoration of the chapel over three generations may also account for the different styles of the altar's sculptures. The originally partially polychromed and richly gilded half-length female saints on the upper tier with their standardised faces and fit easily into the period of the 1430s, the full-length male saints on the main tier, which are individualised and only partially gilded, were carved thirty years later.

⁸ Cancelleria Inferiore, busta 214, also in Paoletti (1893), II, doc. 6, where the relevant documents are quoted as busta 213 and busta 215.

⁹ ASV, Barbaro, V, p. 73.

2.1.2 The Zen Chapel in S.Marco

In contrast to the Emiliani chapel at S.Maria dei Frari, the chapel for the Venetian Cardinal Giambattista Zen has always been one of the most discussed sculptural monuments of the Renaissance in Venice.¹⁰ This is due partly because of its prominent location at the south end of the narthex of S.Marco, and partly because of the extraordinary wealth of the decoration it displays. As mentioned in Chapter One, the altar of the Zen chapel (plates 122, 123) consists of the life-size bronze figures of Sts. Peter and John the Baptist to the sides of an Enthroned Madonna and Child.

The personality of the testator, the proceedings of the procurators of S.Marco *de Citra* as executors and the history of the making of the chapel have been thoroughly studied by Jestaz and shall not be reiterated at any length here.¹¹ For our purpose, though, it is important to draw attention to a few points.

Giambattista Zen was born in 1439 as the son of Niccolo Zen and Elisabetta Barbo. The latter's brother followed Pope Pius II Piccolomini on the papal throne as Paul II in 1464. Probably as a consequence of these family relations, Giambattista was appointed cardinal in 1468 and bishop of Vicenza in 1471.

After the cardinal's death on 8th May 1501, an inventory of his house in Padua was made. This listed, above all, six safes, which contained more than sixty thousand ducats. The total of his estate was estimated to amount to eighty

¹⁰ Catalogue no. 23.

¹¹ Jestaz (1986). For a concise biography of Zen see also Schulz (1991), pp. 181f.

thousand and fifty ducats.¹² He was thus one of the wealthiest Venetians of his time.

Even if Jestaz stated that Giambattista Zen's education was not much above average and that he can not be classified as a humanist, we have to consider that he spent many years of his life in Rome, where by 1483 he had built his own palace.¹³ There, he would have been acquainted with some of the richest and most influential men, in particular the Popes, whose monuments he would certainly have been familiar with. Zen retired to Padua, where he had already spent his years as a student (1455-1460), that is to say at a time when Donatello's bronze altar (plate 4) and the equestrian monument of the Gattamelata were brand-new.

Among the architectural projects mentioned in his will, the first place is taken up by the re-building and decoration of his family's parish church of S.Fantin.¹⁴ For ten thousand ducats, this was also to include the High Altar of that church, which the cardinal wanted to be decorated with five gilt bronze figures cast in the round, an idea which was probably inspired by Donatello's High Altar of the basilica of S.Antonio.

Being as bishop of Vicenza a successor of Pietro Emiliani, Zen also continued the re-building of the city's cathedral. For the decoration of the High Altar chapel at the Cathedral of Vicenza he bequeathed a further five thousand ducats. He furthermore restored and embellished S.Zeno at Verona, of which he held the benefice.

¹² Jestaz (1986), p. 29.

¹³ Jestaz (1986), pp. 11-12.

¹⁴ Catalogue no. 45.

Moreover, Giambattista Zen ordered the construction of yet another chapel in a further codicil to his will. This chapel was to be erected in S. Antonio in Padua, next to the chapel of S. Anthony himself. Its altar was to contain three gilt bronze images of his onomastic saint John the Baptist, and the patron saint of the basilica, St. Anthony of Padua, to the sides and a Madonna and Child composition in the centre. The walls of the chapel were to be built

"made out of large stones of rectangular shape and noteworthy size, and that those stones are beautiful and very hard, well and regularly carved, with figures made from beautiful marbles and with antique festoons in the Roman manner, and with artificial leaves, minutely carved."¹⁵

Still not satisfied with his commissions, the most ambitious of all of the cardinal's projects was his funerary chapel, which he wanted to be in the Ducal Chapel of S. Marco and for which he bequeathed another five thousand ducats. The chapel was to contain Zen's sarcophagus and an altar, all cast in bronze.

The minuteness with which the testator described the details of the monuments to be erected in his memory is most unusual for contemporary wills. It is no accident that Zen chose bronze as the material for his sepulchre, since only a few years earlier, Antonio del Pollaiuolo had cast the monumental bronze tombs for two popes, Sixtus IV and Innocent VIII.¹⁶ There is no doubt that Zen wanted to follow suit,

¹⁵ Jestaz (1986), doc. 4, p. 177: "ex lapidis magnis forme quadrate et notabilis magnitudinis et quod ipsi lapides sint pulcherimi et durissimi, bene et stabiliter incisi, cum figuris ex marmore pulcherimis et cum festis antiquis, more Romanorum, et cum foliis artificiose ac minutim incisis..."

¹⁶ The monument for Sixtus IV (d. 1484) was made between 1484 and 1493, that of Innocent VIII (d. 1492) between 1492 and 1498. See Poeschke (1990), pp. 181-183. Sixtus IV had granted Zen the right to dispose independently of his estate.

commemorating himself in a completely novel monument in his home town. Moreover, as Jestaz rightly observed, the papal monuments were only tombs: as a combination of sepulchre and altar the chapel of Giambattista Zen is probably unique at its time.

Despite his detailed plans for his various chapels, Zen could not supervise any of them, but put everything in the hands of executors, as we shall see below.¹⁷

2.1.3 The Trevisan Chapel at S.Cipriano di Murano

In contradistinction to the extensively documented *Commissaria* Zen, there are no contemporary documents to substantiate the patronage of the two-tiered marble triptych of St. Benedict (plate 36) from the Benedictine monastery of S.Cipriano di Murano, then seat of the Seminario Patriarcale.¹⁸ A first indicator of the patron can be found on the altar itself in form of the two coats-of-arms on the inner pilasters of the altar's main tier (plate 39) and one on the entablature above the central niche. They belong to the principal branch of the Trevisan family, called *del Scaglione*. The coats-of-arms on the pilasters are accompanied by an abbot's mitre. The altar's original site was in an elegant oratory, adjacent to the church, which was built for a certain Giovanni Trevisan, who was abbot at S.Cipriano.¹⁹ According to Moschini's guide to Murano, a tomb slab was situated in front of the altar, which was also decorated with the Trevisan coat-of-arms. The presence of St. John the

¹⁷ See this chapter, below, 4.1 *The Procurators of S.Marco*.

¹⁸ Catalogue no. 41.

¹⁹ Moschini (1815), II, p. 425.

Baptist in the place of honour (to the left of St. Benedict who occupies the central niche) as the abbot's onomastic saint underlines Moschini's statement. Subsequently some confusion was caused by the fact that in the 16th century two Giovanni Trevisan were abbots at S.Cipriano. However, Moschini ruled out the patronage of the later Giovanni, since he, as patriarch of Venice between 1560 and 1590, was buried in the cathedral of S.Pietro di Castello.²⁰ To Moschini's identification of the donor/patron I have not much to add, but it will emerge from further case studies of patronage that Giovanni Trevisan was not the only member of his family to have commissioned an important work of sculpture.²¹

All three of the above projects were not just pieces installed on pre-existing altars in older chapels. They also necessitated major architectural activities. In the case of Pietro Emiliani's chapel this meant the insertion of a large arch in the wall of the left aisle of the Frari and the addition of a brick chapel with a separate entrance.²² For the Zen chapel the southern end of the narthex of S.Marco had to be closed off, while at S.Cipriano a separate oratory was erected.

²⁰ Moschini (1808), p. 78. Moschini's information is corroborated by Corner (1758), p. 21, who noted that the younger Giovanni had left "il corpo nel seno della sua cattedrale da lui ornata coll'altare di marmo dedicato a San Giovanni Evangelista". According to Sansovino/Martinioni (1663), p. 9, the altarpiece for this altar was painted by Paolo Veronese.

²¹ See Barbaro, ASV, VII, p. 114 and this chapter, below, 2.2.3 *The Trevisan Chapel at S.Maria Mater Domini*.

²² In fact, the Emiliani Chapel was the first of three extensions, followed by the Corner Chapel in the 1450s and the Pesaro Chapel in the 1480s.

2.1.4 Other Patrons from the Clergy

Despite the low number of only three cases of clerical patronage presented above, it must not be forgotten that members of the clergy constituted an important group among the patrons of (painted) altarpieces. Titian's *Assumption* for the High Altar of S. Maria dei Frari, made at the behest of the Franciscan prior, Fra Germano, is the most notable case in point. Other patrons of sculptured altarpieces may also have belonged to the clergy. As I have argued in Chapter One, it seems likely that the Altar of St. Luke in S. Giobbe was commissioned by the Franciscan friars. It fulfilled the function of a visual statement to emphasise the authenticity of their relics of the saint, as opposed to those that were in the possession of the Benedictine monks of S. Giustina in Padua.²³ Furthermore, the relief of the *Pietà* at S. Maria della Salute may have been made for the Venetian patrician Antonio Surian, who was prior of S. Andrea della Certosa and patriarch of Venice from 1504 until 1508, the year of his death.²⁴ However, in these two cases the lack of documentation does not allow us to draw definite conclusions.

On several occasions the parish priest may have played a not insignificant role in the patronage of an altarpiece and in the choice of its medium.²⁵ Schulz argued that S. Geminiano (including its High Altar) was rebuilt by Cristoforo da Legname under and as a result of its parish priest Matteo

²³ See Chapter One, 1.1.2 *Single Figures*.

²⁴ See Catalogue no. 27.

²⁵ Howard (1975), p. 62: "In Venice the parish priest was not appointed by a higher Church official, but was a layman elected by the non-noble house-owners of the parish, subject only to the approval of the patriarch."

degli Eletti.²⁶ Similarly, Ludovico Talenti of S.Giovanni Crisostomo was the initiator behind the re-building of his church around the year 1500. Finally, S.Maria Mater Domini was newly constructed under Angelo Filomati who died only in 1540, that is to say after all the church's altars had been erected.²⁷ It appears that these parish priests, who also worked as notaries for their parishioners, were able to exert some pressure on patrons and the physical aspects of their commissions. Co-ordinated chapels and altarpieces, such as the Bernabò and Diletti Chapels in S.Giovanni Crisostomo, or the frameworks of the Trevisan and Contarini Altars in S.Maria Mater Domini, may have been the result of the parish priest's intervention. However, there is little documentation to prove the parochial clergy's role, "although business might be carried out in the name of the parish priest and the latter would certainly have to petition the Senate".²⁸

2.2 Lay patrons

The majority of commissions of sculptured as well as painted altarpieces came from lay individuals.

2.2.1 The Emiliani Chapel at S.Michele in Isola

Another member of the previously mentioned Emiliani family, Margherita Vitturi Emiliani, was the founder of the Emiliani chapel at S.Michele in Isola (plate 139-149). Despite the little attention this building has received so

²⁶ Schulz (1984b), p. 264.

²⁷ Tramontin (1962), pp. 19-20 and 25-26, n. 14.

²⁸ Logan (1972), pp. 197-198.

far, it is a major architectural and sculptural project of the third decade of the 16th century.²⁹

As has been indicated in Chapters Two and Three, comprehensive documentation survives in the archives of the Procurators of S.Marco *de Citra* and of the Camaldolese convent of S.Michele in Isola.³⁰ Although Margherita is only the donor and not the patron of the chapel, she is a particularly interesting figure in this context. Previous writers were not aware that she was the widow of Giovanni (d. 1419), the first-born son of the above Pietro Emiliani, and hence the Vicentine bishop's daughter-in-law.³¹

The original project of the chapel dates back to 23rd July 1427, when Margherita wrote in her will:

"Herewith I wish and order that my money shall be deposited and put aside so that it may grow and multiply, until there is a sufficient amount to have a chapel constructed and newly built... ." ³²

For unknown reasons, Margherita did not want to leave her estate to members of her family alone. Instead she dictated:

"As the executors of my estate I appoint the procurators (of S.Marco) *de citra* and my relatives who are to have this said chapel constructed and built as a sign of my

²⁹ The chapel was described by various authors, above all by Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 235, Temanza (1778), pp. 127-28, Tassi (1793), pp. 24-25, and, less favourably, Ruskin (1851), III, pp. 326-27, who compared it to a bee-hive. For a description of the architecture See Appendix II.

³⁰ Meneghin (1962), pp. 333-39, published parts of the documents and summarised much of their content. However, he did not point out the historical context discussed here.

³¹ Barbaro, ASV, V, p. 73 and ASV, Avogaria del Comun, Indice Matrimonii, *ad vocem* Miani, Giovanni.

³² ASV, Procuratori di S.Marco *de Citra*, busta 67, will of Margherita Vitturi. The documents were known to and partly published by Meneghin (1962), II, pp. 333-39.

devotion and for my consolation at the church of S.Francesco della Vigna."³³

Thus, like her father-in-law, Margherita intended to have her chapel adjoining a Franciscan church. In her unusually precise iconographical as well as architectural instructions, she stipulated that this chapel was to be built as an extension to the existing church, accessible through a separate door without and through another door within the church.³⁴ This characteristic also happens to be an important feature of Pietro Emiliani's chapel in S.Maria dei Frari, as I have shown earlier in this chapter. In 1427, at the time Margherita wrote her will, the construction of this chapel either had already begun or was about to begin and it is likely that a plan of it was already in existence. Thus, in all probability, it was Margherita's intention to imitate her father-in-law's grandiose project.

However, in contradistinction to the bishop's chapel, that of Margherita was to be furnished with not only one but three altars (plates 139, 141, 143).³⁵ The main altar, she ordered, "must be founded, made and built under the term and title of the Annunciation of our Virgin Mary".³⁶ The two

³³ ASV, Procuratori di S.Marco *de Citra*, busta 67, will of Margherita Vitturi.

³⁴ ASV, Procuratori di S.Marco *de Citra*, busta 67, will of Margherita Vitturi: "Et illo tunc volo et ordino quod per ducatos meos commissarios una cum dominis procuratoribus de citra quos commissarios meos constituo et esse volo penes predictes commissarios meos et consanguineos dicta capella construi fieri et de novo fabricari debeant ex mea devotione et consolatione apud ecclesiam Francisci de vinea extra ecclesiam ubi nunc est domus scole que habeat portam unam extra ecclesiam ad viam publicam et portam aliam intra ecclesiam."

³⁵ Catalogue nos. 32-34.

³⁶ ASV, Procuratori di S.Marco *de Citra*, busta 67, will of Margherita Vitturi.

other altars she intended to be "dedicated to and in memory of the Nativity of Christ... and in devotion to and reverence of the Three Magi."³⁷ For further spiritual comfort Margherita also spent one hundred ducats which she bequeathed to the friars of S.Francesco for an eternal light burning in the chapel. Another one hundred gold ducats she donated to the friars of S.Michele in Isola, where the chapel was eventually erected:

"Alternatively I wish to be buried in the monastery of S.Michele di Murano, where my husband lies, in which case I shall leave one hundred gold ducats in government bonds to the friars of the said monastery for masses to be said for my own and for my husband's souls." ³⁸

Unfortunately, Margherita never mentioned the *residuum*, that is to say the amount of money she set aside for the project. However, since she had decided that her money should be invested in government bonds until it had accrued a certain amount of interest, one can imagine that it had been considerably less than her father-in-law's bequest. By the time the procurators took initial steps towards the construction of Margherita's chapel in 1508, Margherita's will was eighty-one years old and the testator had been dead for fifty-four years. Nevertheless, in the early 16th century, there was enough money make the chapel one of the most outstanding monuments of its kind. The activity of the procurators on S.Michele (as well as on other sites) shall be discussed later in this chapter.³⁹

³⁷ ASV, *ibid.*

³⁸ ASV, *ibid.*

³⁹ See this chapter, below, 4.1 *The Procurators of S.Marco.*

2.2.2 The Badoer Giustinian Chapel in S.Francesco della Vigna

At the time the Procurators of S.Marco *de citra* were negotiating with the Chapter General of the church of the Observant Franciscan monastery of S.Francesco della Vigna, the chapel of another Venetian noble family was either just completed or about to be finished. Although now generally known as *Cappella Giustinian*, the project was founded and embellished by members of the Badoer family.⁴⁰

Located immediately to the left of the presbytery, it is now furnished not only with the elaborate sculptured altarpiece of St. Jerome (plate 41) described in Chapter One, but also with three sets of reliefs along the chapel's walls. These represent twelve prophets, the four Evangelists and eighteen narrative scenes of a Christological cycle.

For various reasons the project of this chapel and altar for the Badoer family is similar to that of Margherita Emiliani's chapel at S.Michele in Isola: in both cases the chapels were decorated with sculptured altarpieces, both projects involved women in significant roles: while Margherita Emiliani acted as the founder of chapel and altars, much of the decoration of the Badoer chapel was supervised by a woman, Agnesina Badoer. In relation to the Emiliani family one issue becomes particularly interesting: why was one patron allowed to erect a family chapel at S.Francesco and decorate it abundantly, while the other

⁴⁰ Catalogue no. 8. See Barbaro, ASV, I, p. 74. This chapel has been the object of two studies. While Schulz in 1977 analysed the stylistic features of the chapel's sculpture, Lewis in 1983 presented a thorough investigation of the Badoer and Giustinian art patronage. In the following paragraphs I shall mostly refer to the results of his research.

project was turned down more or less at the same time. Moreover, the Badoer chapel was even re-installed after the church of the late Quattrocento had been replaced by Sansovino's new building of the 1530s. The answer may well be that the Badoer family had one crucial advantage over the Emiliani: In the late 15th century, the Franciscan monastery had been re-built with the financial help of mainly two men, Andrea Bragadin and Girolamo di Giacomo Badoer, both from the neighbouring parish of S.Giustina.⁴¹

As Douglas Lewis revealed in his study of the sculptures in the chapel of the Villa Giustinian at Roncade, Girolamo Badoer (1429-95) was a keen patron of architecture and sculpture. For the decoration of a first chapel on the interior façade of the old church, Girolamo had commissioned two reliefs, decorated with reliefs of the *Madonna and Child* (now in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, plate 81) and *St. Jerome* (now in the Museo Bardini, Florence).⁴² Perhaps they served the function of wall altars. Lewis also noted that a further relief, the *Madonna delle Biade* in the Ducal Palace, also carries Girolamo's coat-of-arms, as he was one

⁴¹ Foscari/Tafuri (1983), p. 14. Perhaps the Badoer's takeover at S.Francesco della Vigna and their activity in the field of sculpture provided the incentive for members of the Bragadin family to erect the High Altar of the church of S.Marina at the beginning of the 16th century. However, there is no documentation to allow definite conclusions.

⁴² See Lewis (1983), pp. 310-11. Despite the same author's in many ways convincing argument there is no proof that the two reliefs were actually wall altars, nor that they were commissioned by the Girolamo in question. Lorenzetti (1926), p. 374, mentioned the year 1478 as the foundation date of a Badoer chapel at S.Francesco. There is a possibility that they were commissioned by his uncle, another Girolamo, who was probably the founder of that first chapel. Until the discovery of further documentation, none of these possibilities can be verified. Plaster casts of the two reliefs of the *Madonna and Child* and *St. Jerome* are now installed in the family chapel at Roncade.

of the magistrates in the years 1481-82.⁴³ Girolamo's building activities in S. Francesco della Vigna concerned mainly the area of the choir, which was erected on Badoer land. This included a monk's choir (built between 1490 and 1494) which was originally decorated with the reliefs of the prophets that were eventually installed in the chapel (plate 183). He also intended to decorate his chapel at S. Francesco with a marble altarpiece, for which he left unusually precise instructions. Not only did he determine which saints were to be represented, but also that the altarpiece was to be made out of marble, "beautiful and without regard to expenses".⁴⁴

However, Girolamo died before it was completed and the project was taken over by his daughter and universal heir Agnesina (ca. 1472-1542).⁴⁵ In 1494, she had married Girolamo Giustinian. According to Lewis, Agnesina had the entrance to the chapel decorated with a pair of marble pillars and two putti carrying shields with the arms of the Badoer and Giustinian families. Agnesina must also be regarded as the patron of the narrative reliefs and the altar frontal of the *Last Judgement*, as well as the altarpiece itself, the iconography of which she changed, placing St. Jerome as the name saint of her great uncle, father and second husband

⁴³ The relief, which has been attributed to Giovanni Buora (Schulz) and Pietro Lombardo (Munman), features the coat-of-arms of Doge Giovanni Mocenigo (1479-84). The coats-of-arms of six civil servants are added below, plus an inscription which names their tasks and the construction of new offices. See Wolters (1983), p. 137, n. 1.

⁴⁴ Document published in Schulz (1977b), p. 40, n. 8: "Sia fato uno altar de messer S. Antonio in giexia dala banda del inchiostro di marmore. S. Antonio in mezo del abito S. Francesco. S. Jeronimo. San Michiel dale bande. Apreso S. Agnexe, S. Benedeto apreso nostra dona de sopra. E sia fato belo e non se vardi a spexia."

⁴⁵ See Schulz (1977b), p. 40, n. 11.

(Girolamo Giustinian) in the central niche. Lewis noted that the Seated St. Jerome as well as the Madonna and Child relief of the altar's upper tier are modelled on the earlier devotional reliefs, dating the altarpiece to ca. 1510-13. Schulz, on the other hand, argued that the altarpiece was made shortly after Agnesina had inherited her father's fortune and that it was finished by 1509, when the chapel was no longer mentioned in a version of her will.

As is known, this arrangement of the chapel was undertaken during Sansovino's re-building of the church around the year 1540. Sheard noticed that the chapel's original decoration did not include the marble panels of prophets and evangelists (plate 183).⁴⁶ While the former were part of the church's monk's choir, similar to that of S. Maria dei Frari (which in an inscription is dated 1475) (plate 172), the latter, according to Lewis, belonged to a chapel screen.⁴⁷ The original chapel would thus have been decorated mainly with the triptych discussed in Chapter One. Lewis plausibly surmised that the Christological narrative reliefs probably also formed part of the chapel's original decoration.⁴⁸

2.2.3 The Trevisan Chapel in S. Maria Mater Domini

The Trevisan family features three times among the patrons of sculptured altarpieces. After the previously mentioned oratory and altarpiece at S. Cipriano, the second

⁴⁶ Sheard (1977), p. 238f. and p. 262, n. 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid. and Lewis (1983). For S. Giovanni in Bragora see Mariacher (1959), p. 195.

⁴⁸ Lewis (1983), pp. 324-25 and p. 348, n. 39.

large project is the marble altar of Paolo Trevisan in the parish church of S.Maria Mater Domini (plate 125).⁴⁹ Francesco Sansovino recorded that it was "fatta già da Paolo padre di Giovanni Patriarca di Venetia".⁵⁰ The altarpiece, described in Chapter One, presents figures of Sts. Paul and Andrew, the name saints of the patron and his son, and St. Peter. If we compare Sansovino's information with the corresponding pedigree in the Marco Barbaro's Genealogies, we discover, that our patron Paolo of S.Maria Mater Domini was not only the father of Giovanni the Younger, abbot of S.Cipriano and later patriarch of Venice, who died in 1590, but also that Paolo was the brother of Bartolomeo, bishop of Cividale, and of the abbot Giovanni for whom the above discussed oratory and altarpiece at S.Cipriano were erected.⁵¹ However, while the abbot chose a site that was related to his office, Paolo Trevisan chose his parish church as the location for the memorial altar of his family. The inscription on a slab in front of the altar commemorates Paolo himself, as well as his second son Andrea, his daughter Elena and his wife Anna. The first-born son Giovanni, on the other hand, is excluded from the inscription, probably because of his office as abbot at the Benedictine monastery of S.Cipriano from 1524 onwards, which is shortly after the altar had been commissioned from Lorenzo Bregno.⁵²

Here, as in the cases of the two chapels for members of the Emiliani family, one sculptural project undertaken by a

⁴⁹ Catalogue no. 28.

⁵⁰ Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 205.

⁵¹ Barbaro, ASV, VII, p. 114.

⁵² Schulz (1991), pp. 210-211.

prominent member of the family was soon followed and in a certain sense outdone by another. Both altars display three saints, one in the more conventional form of a large triptych, the other in the modern spatial setting of a relief representing a church apse. One may wonder, whether it is just by coincidence that the central statues of both altars were carved from a particular coloured stone.

The two large altars for members of the Trevisan family of the early 16th century were preceded by a commission of the late 15th century. It is not an altarpiece but the masterly sculptured tabernacle which served as a reliquary to contain the relic of the Precious Blood in the Sacristy of S. Maria dei Frari (plate 167).⁵³ This relic was donated to the Franciscans by Marchio Trevisan in 1480.⁵⁴ Marchio was a distant relative of the two Trevisan mentioned above, one generation older than the others, but nevertheless of the same branch of the family, the *Scaglione*. As the donor of the relic Trevisan would probably also have paid for its container.

Cicogna recorded an inscription in Marchio Trevisan's funerary chapel of S. Michele in the left transept of the Frari, from which we learn that the relic of the Precious Blood must originally have been kept in the chapel of the Arcangel Michael which now contains the tomb of Marchio

⁵³ Catalogue no. 25.

⁵⁴ Barbaro, ASV, VII, p. 119. "abba un'ampola con una gozzola del Prezioso Sangue di Cristo, che poi donò ai Frari al 1480".

Trevisan as well as the wooden Triptych of S.Michael.⁵⁵ The patronage of that altar will be discussed below.

2.2.4 The Gussoni Chapel in S.Lio

The presbytery of the parish church of S.Lio is flanked on its right by a chapel the altar of which is decorated with the relief of a Pietà with four Saints (plate 130).⁵⁶ The entrance to the chapel, identical with that on the other side of the presbytery, is articulated as a large aedicule with a triangular pediment (plate 128). It is built on a square plan and surmounted by a ribbed dome on pendentifs which hold roundels with half-length reliefs of the evangelists.

Unfortunately, hitherto no documents concerning the construction of the chapel have come to light.⁵⁷ Two reliefs of the Gussoni family's coat-of-arms on the altar's lateral balustrades, identify the altar to the right of the presbytery as a project of a member of that family. Francesco Sansovino was the first to make mention of the chapel and of a Jacopo Gussoni as its founder, whom he characterised as

⁵⁵ BMC, Codice Cicogna, busta 2009, Inscrizioni inedite: Inscrizioni di S.Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, n° 29: "Melchiori Trivixano / Pauli Tri. F / qui cum gallearum Romaniae praef. / esset ex Constantinopoli patriam / vediens preciosissimi salvatoris N / Iesu Christi sanguinis guttam Mariae / Magd. unguento infusam divino / mitu absportare mervillet in urbe / iam ductus eadem sacro huic con / ventui pie ac benigne donavit / Ex quo non ingrati tanto munere / huius convent. fratres praeter / nonnulla alia spiritualia dona una cum clave sacri eiusd. deposi / ti sacellum hoc sub divi Arcangeli / Michaelis auspiciis prout extat ex / tructum eidem largitori et post / perpetuo bm. di cavere ann. sal. MCCCCLXXXVIII XI maii."

⁵⁶ Catalogue no. 16.

⁵⁷ The Archive of S.Lio at S.Maria Formosa contains no information on either the chapel or its patron.

"senator of high esteem in his time".⁵⁸ Jacopo, born in 1422 and died in 1501, may well have been a very distinguished man, but he remains one of the more elusive patrons surveyed in this chapter. We know that he lived only a few yards away from his parish church in a palace on the Rio della Fava.⁵⁹ The rich Renaissance decoration of the palace façade (plates 184, 185) corresponds to the floral patterns and bird reliefs decorating the pilasters of the chapel in S.Lio. At the same time these modern ornaments contrast with the mediaeval asymmetry and irregularities of the building. Similar revampings took place at the houses of the citizens Giovanni Dario and Domenico de Piero.

In the case of the Palazzo Gussoni, this has led John McAndrew to suspect that "the owner may have wanted something in the newest fashion, and wanted it quickly; perhaps he had come into money or was marrying it - and he had a stylish new slipcover put over the old front."⁶⁰ The latter of McAndrew's assumptions may be true, since, as late as 1479, Jacopo Gussoni had married Donata Loredan, the eldest of Leonardo Loredan's four daughters.⁶¹

As we shall see in relation to the project for the funerary monument of doge Leonardo, the Loredan family was exceptionally wealthy. In the Decima of 1514, his fortune was

⁵⁸ Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 41: "senatore di molto stima ai suoi tempi".

⁵⁹ Barbaro, ASV, IV, p. 206, noted that Jacopo came originally from the parish of S.Vitale, which was also the neighbourhood of the Loredan family.

⁶⁰ McAndrew (1980), p. 223.

⁶¹ ASV, Avogaria de Comun, Matrimonii, *ad vocem* Gussoni, Giacomo.

valued at thirty thousand ducats.⁶² Thus, a hypothetically fortunate wedding for Jacopo Gussoni would coincide with a stylistic dating of the Palazzo Gussoni as an early work of Pietro Lombardo to ca. 1474-80. Moreover, it would provide the occasion for the restoration of Gussoni's house at S.Lio where he moved from his house in S.Vitale. Probably it was around the same time that Gussoni acquired the space in the parish church to erect his chapel and there appears to me no good reason to assume, along with John McAndrew, that the chapel was erected "near the end of the 15th century".⁶³

Apart from St. Nicholas depicted on the far left of the relief, the saints surrounding the seated Madonna holding the Dead Christ have hitherto not been identified. They might well represent St. James as Jacopo's onomastic saint on the far right, St. Andrew (both Jacopo Gussoni's father and son were called Andrea) on the inner left, whereas the female saint on the inner right, holding the Cross and a book, would iconographically suit St. Helena,⁶⁴ the onomastic saint of Jacopo's mother, Elena Pisani. Finally, the presence of St. Nicholas explains itself by the fact that Jacopo's brother was called Nicolò.⁶⁵

2.2.5 The Altar of the Title of the Cross from S.Maria dei Servi

The Altar of the Title of the Cross in S.Maria dei Servi was decorated with Andrea Riccio's four bronze reliefs and

⁶² See Da Mosto (1966), p. 267.

⁶³ McAndrew (1980), p. 226.

⁶⁴ LCI, *ad vocem* "Helena Kaiserin", col. 488: "Neben dem Kreuz hält Helena oft noch ein Buch."

⁶⁵ Barbaro, ASV, IV, p. 206.

double-winged bronze *sportello* (plates 155-159), and two kneeling marble angels (plates 96, 97).⁶⁶

The relic of the Title of the Cross had been donated to the church of the Servi in 1492 by the Venetian patrician Girolamo Donato, according to Cicogna "uno de' più ragguardevoli soggetti della casa sua non solamente, ma della repubblica".⁶⁷ Although it is known that Girolamo Donato died destitute in 1511, he was in all likelihood the patron of the altar that contained the relic donated by him.

Girolamo was one of several members of his family to patronise the Servi - bequests go back to the 14th century. Already in the first half of the 15th century Pietro Donato, bishop of Padua, had tried to acquire the *jus patronatus* for the choir chapel of the Servi and reserve it for members of his family, by leaving a large bequest to the monastery, which, however, the monks renounced.

Girolamo was the author of several treatises concerning the government of the Church, works resulting from his long experience as Venetian ambassador to the Pope and to Crete.⁶⁸ As a result of his services to the Pope, he was given a piece of the Title of the Cross during the first of his four Roman periods in 1491-92. Diplomat and man of great learning, Girolamo was also a well-known connoisseur of antiquities.⁶⁹ As governor of Ravenna he commissioned the restoration of a

⁶⁶ See Chapter One, 2.2.3 *Scenes from the Life of a Saint*, and Chapter Two, 3. *Bronze*.

⁶⁷ Cicogna, I, p. 90.

⁶⁸ See Margaret L. King, *Umanesimo Cristiano nella Venezia del Quattrocento*, in Vian (1989), pp. 15-54, and King (1986), mainly pp. 532-35.

⁶⁹ Zorzi (1988), pp. 23f.

classical statue of Hercules and at his behest another statue was transported from Ravenna to Venice, where it was seen and drawn in the Palazzo Donato at S. Stin by Johannes Grevembroch in 1759.⁷⁰

Girolamo Donato's taste is certainly reflected by the learned character and classicising manner of the bronzes on his altar in the church of the Servi. Similar reliefs by Riccio once decorated the tomb of Girolamo della Torre, a distinguished physician at the University of Padua.⁷¹ As we shall see in the case of another physician, Jacopo Surian, the choice of bronze to some extent depended on the patron's learning.⁷²

2.3 Doges as Patrons of Sculptured Altarpieces

Among individual patrons of Venetian nobility, the doges as highest officers of the state occupy a separate position. According to Francesco Sansovino's *Dialogo di tutte le cose Notabili che sono in Venetia* of 1560, every doge was obliged to commission three objects for the Ducal Palace.⁷³ These were a portrait of himself for the Sala del Gran Consiglio, a devotional picture of the Doge kneeling in front of the

⁷⁰ Grevembroch, I, c. 43.

⁷¹ Radcliffe in Hope/Martineau (1983), p. 372. The reliefs are now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris.

⁷² See this chapter, below, *3.3 The Altar and Tomb for Jacopo Surian in S. Stefano*.

⁷³ Sansovino (1560), p. 49: "... il principe nel suo principiato fa tre cose: il suo ritratto naturale, il qual si mette nella sala del gran consiglio... un quadro in collegio o in Pregai o in qualunque altro luogo ove torni meglio, nel qual si fa la Madonna e il Doge in ginocchioni con altre figure. Ultimo uno scudo con l'arma del Doge, il qual vivendo esso porta nel Bucentoro e si tiene attaccato nella sua sala; e morto si mette in S. Marco a sua perpetua memoria."

Madonna or a saint, and a shield with the doge's coat-of-arms for the Sala dello Scudo.⁷⁴ In addition to these, from doge Nicolo Marcello's term of office onwards, each newly elected doge was also legally bound by his *promissione*, his government declaration, to donate an antependium for the high altar of S.Marco, which was to cost at least forty ducats.⁷⁵

The doges' mortal remains were customarily deposited in splendid marble tombs, the only monuments outside the Ducal Palace where they were allowed to display their coats-of-arms. This restriction of displaying the ducal coat-of-arms had existed since 1413 and was once again emphasized in 1501 in the additions and corrections to Agostino Barbarigo's *promissione*, where it was stated that:

"His lordship the Doge must not exhibit nor allow anyone else to exhibit his arms anywhere else than the Ducal Palace under penalty of 200 ducats..."⁷⁶

Although during the funeral ceremony the doge was separated in public from his office and thus returned into the private sphere, the ducal tomb was an official as well as a private commission.⁷⁷ It glorified the impersonal State, its most distinguished civil servant and the private patrician who was buried in it. In 1486, in the codicil to his will Marco Barbarigo decided that, as doge, his person no longer belonged to him but to the dignity of his office: "...et hoc dicimus quia persona nostra non est nostra

⁷⁴ See Wolters (1983), p. 92.

⁷⁵ See Wolters (1983), p. 95, and ASV, Cancelleria Inferiore, Doge, busta 157/A.

⁷⁶ ASV, Promissione di Agostino Barbarigo, no. 186: "Dominus Dux non possit facere nec permittere quod fiatur in aliquo loco extra palatium arma sua sub pena ducatorum CC..."

⁷⁷ Muir (1978), and Muir (1981), p. 273 ff.

sed dignitatis."⁷⁸ As a consequence, he annulled a previous disposition according to which he was to be buried in the Barbarigo family chapel constructed by his father in the church of S.Andrea della Certosa.

Sculptured altars were made for Cristoforo Moro in S.Marco, for Andrea Gritti in the chapel of St. Nicholas in the Ducal Palace, Marco and Agostino Barbarigo had their tombs in combination with an altar in S.Maria della Carità. A sepulchre with altar was planned in the memory of Leonardo Loredan in the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo.

Among the doges of the period between 1457 and 1523, two doges, namely Cristoforo Moro (1462-71) and Agostino Barbarigo (1486-1501), excelled the others for their interest in art and architecture. Both reigned for a comparatively long period and, therefore, were perhaps more dexterous than others at developing a policy of self-glorification.

2.3.1 Three Altars in S.Marco for Doge Cristoforo Moro

In contrast to his predecessor Pasquale Malipiero, according to contemporary writers a man of mediocre abilities, in whose time nothing memorable was done, Cristoforo Moro was among the most outstanding and educated men in Venice of the second half of the 15th century.⁷⁹ He had studied at the University of Padua and had served as ambassador to popes Eugene IV and Nicholas V. Yet, in a Latin poem, Moro was described as "crudelis, raptor, avarus" who wanted "vanissima pompa".⁸⁰ Some forty years later, when the

⁷⁸ ASV, Notarile Testamenti, busta 1060.

⁷⁹ Da Mosto (1966), p.217.

⁸⁰ Da Mosto (1966), p. 224.

imminent danger of Doge Moro's self-glorification was overcome, he was praised as a person of great devotion and as a patron of religious art.⁸¹

We learn from his will of 1470 (codicil from 1471) that Cristoforo Moro had a collection of manuscripts which he bequeathed to the monastery of S.Salvatore⁸² and it was due to his initiative that the Franciscan church of S.Giobbe (and S.Bernardino) was rebuilt.⁸³ As is well known, its presbytery was erected as the doge's mausoleum. During Moro's term of office, between 1462 and 1464, the *Arco Foscari*, the archway leading into the Ducal Palace, begun on a modest scale by Doge Francesco Foscari, was transformed into a grandiose monument to the doge as the restorer of the earthly paradise.⁸⁴

Cristoforo Moro was the patron of Antonio Rizzo's three marble altars of Sts. Paul and James and the Madonna in the basilica of S.Marco (plates 12, 82-87), described in Chapter

⁸¹ BNM, Ms.Cod.it. VII, 323 (8646), fol. 173 verso: "Or questo doxe benigno e devoto in sua vita molto agumento el monestier de Sam Job nel qual luogo a reverentia de misier Sam Bernardino fexe molte e belle cose e la capella e granda a honor de Sam Bernardim e simel tuto el monestier e feze festizar la sua festa che prima non festivizava. E dapuo la sua morte laso tuta el suo e vestamenti fose fato paramenti e sui stendardi e bandiere e tuto zo iera suo per el qual modo molta. E agumenta el dicto luogo... fo portado con bel seguio ai frati minori e bello honor daposta, el suo corpo fo portado a S.Job e li fo sepulto."

⁸² ASV, Procuratori di S.Marco de Supra, busta 186: *Commissaria Moro*, codicil 12-10-1471 (copia): "Et perche di sopra ordino che i mie libri et scripture siano depositadi a S.Andrea della Certosa/siano depositadi nel monestier di St. Salvador..."; see also Da Mosto (1966), p. 220.

⁸³ See McAndrew (1980), pp. 134-143.

⁸⁴ Muir (1981), p. 256, and Pincus (1976), pp. 208-52.

One.⁸⁵ Around the year 1430 Foscari had also commissioned the so-called Mascoli Triptych in a side chapel of S.Marco, which may have prompted Moro to have his altar, the first of the three, in another chapel (that of St. Clement).⁸⁶ Like its predecessor, though in a much different form and on a smaller scale, Moro's altar presents the Madonna and Child at the centre accompanied by two saints on the sides. It is more than likely that Moro, as a man educated at Padua, deliberately chose Rizzo as a "modern" sculptor, and that he personally supervised the altars' design and execution.⁸⁷ Moreover, he may even have been the man who made the sculptor come to Venice.

Although the church of S.Marco was the ducal chapel, it maintained at the same time its character as the state church. Thus, personal memorials of doges, or of any other individual, were banned from the building, and no doges were buried there after 1354.⁸⁸ According to Sansovino, only the coats-of-arms of the dead doges were exhibited in S.Marco "to their eternal memory".⁸⁹ Therefore, it seems odd that all

⁸⁵ Catalogue nos. 17-19. A document in the archives of the Cancelleria Inferiore records a final payment of 35 ducats to Antonio Rizzo for the three altars on 28th June 1469. The document was found by Julia Keydel, A Group of Altarpieces by Giovanni Bellini Considered in Relation to the Context for which they were made, Ph.D. diss., Harvard, 1969, p. 242, n. 15. Its relevant parts were published in Schulz (1983), p. 18, n. 1.

⁸⁶ Although Foscari's patronage of chapel and altar is not further documented, the inscription above the altar leaves little doubt. It reads: "MCCCCXXX DUCANTE INCLITO DOMINO / FRANCISCO FOSCARI PROCURATORIBUS / VERO SANCTI MARCI DOMINIS LEONARDO MOCENIGO ET / BARTOLOMEO DONATO HEC CAPELA CONDITA FUIT." See also Muraro (1961b), pp. 264f.

⁸⁷ See Sheard (1987), p. 475f.

⁸⁸ Muir (1981), p. 257.

⁸⁹ Sansovino (1560), See note 72.

three altars in S.Marco bear prominent inscriptions which refer to and honour Doge Moro as donor.⁹⁰ Even more so, the narrow balustrades to the sides of the altar tables of the altars dedicated to Sts. James and Paul carry medallions with doge Moro's coat-of-arms (plate 87).

According to the records of the *Collegio dei Cerimoniali*, it was not at all easy for doges to alter anything in S.Marco: in 1556, the doge in office, Lorenzo de' Priuli, was admonished not to act as it pleased him with respect to S.Marco:

"Even though the care for and conservation of our church of S.Marco ought to belong principally to the doge, he must not be allowed to deal with the building at his own discretion... as for instance the erection of new structures or other changes to the building of this church..."⁹¹

The location of the first of Moro's altars, the Chapel of St. Clement is to the right of the presbytery. It played a particular role within the church of S.Marco: here was the door through which the doge privately entered the church from the ducal palace, here stood his throne during the Middle Ages, above which, on the intrados of the arch towards the presbytery, appeared the image of the *pantocrator*, while opposite, in full view of the enthroned doge, was the mosaic figure of the Virgin.⁹² It is important to bear this particular location in mind when looking at Moro's altar. Although it is no longer in its original state, Rizzo's altar probably consisted of what is now the upper half of it: above the later relief, we see the Madonna and Child with Sts. Mark

⁹⁰ See Catalogue nos. 17-19.

⁹¹ ASV, Collegio dei Cerimoniali, II, cc. 3 verso f., 7-6-1556. Translation quoted from Sinding-Larsen (1974), p. 131.

⁹² Demus (1960), p. 47.

and Bernardino of Siena (plate 12). Both saints along with the inscription represent personal and official references to the personality of Moro. While St. Mark represented the doge's official status as head of the Venetian republic, the presence of St. Bernardino of Siena has a personal connotation, since Moro had been acquainted with the Tuscan saint.

The inscription of the altar carries the date 1465, which was probably the year of this altar's completion as the first of the three. The other two altars are located in prominent positions symmetrically to the sides of the choir-screen. Their importance in the history of Venetian sculpture has been discussed in the previous chapters.

2.3.2 The Altar of the Virgin in S.Maria della Carità for Doge Agostino Barbarigo

Recently discovered documents disclosed much of the history and authorship of the Barbarigo tomb and altar in S.Maria della Carità.⁹³

Agostino Barbarigo was by far the most conspicuous of the ten doges of the period between 1462 and 1523. His fifteen-year-long term of office in which he succeeded his brother Marco certainly shows signs of dynastic ambition. That the Venetians were well aware and suspicious of such trends is revealed by contemporary writers. On 20th June 1501, the day of Agostino's death, the diarist Girolamo Priuli remembered the doge as a proud and arrogant ruler who

⁹³ Roeck (1991). Catalogue no. 4.

let people kiss his hand and accepted presents from everyone.⁹⁴

The tomb of the doges Barbarigo was the first and largest double monumental tomb in Renaissance Venice. It was constructed under Doge Agostino Barbarigo from 1492 onwards. He must have been impressed by the memorial for Doge Nicolò Tron, already finished and very visible, above all in its size, at S.Maria dei Frari and he must have decided to outdo it.⁹⁵ The Barbarigo monument was destroyed at the beginning of the 19th century, but an engraving of 1692 by Isabella Piccini (plate 113) allows us to get a fairly accurate impression of it: the monument encompassed three contiguous shallow barrel-vaulted bays and was approximately nineteen meters wide and twelve meters high. Inserted between the two arches of the brothers' tombs was the altar of the Madonna. In the niches between the bays stood statues of the Annunciate Virgin and the Angel Gabriel, and of Saints Mark and Augustine.

Of the two marble statues of the kneeling doges to the sides of the altar only that of Agostino has survived (plate 116). It was probably carved by Antonio Rizzo, who was then *proto*, or chief architect and sculptor, at the Ducal Palace and in charge of the monumental, free-standing staircase, later called the *Scala dei Giganti*. This project had been initiated by Marco and was carried further during Agostino Barbarigo's term of office.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ G. Priuli, *I Diarii*, vol. II, edited by R. Cessi. Bologna, 1913, p. 176.

⁹⁵ McAndrew (1980), p. 78.

⁹⁶ See Muraro (1961a).

By the time Isabella Piccini executed her engraving, the monument's altar was no longer in its original state. As mentioned previously, the figures of the altarpiece had been replaced by three bronze reliefs (plate 114) donated in 1515 by Vincenzo Grimani.

The altar provided the space where the public monument of the ducal tomb was combined with "la cappella di nostra dona", a place of individual, private devotion, where the prayers of the church-goer would ensure the salvation of Agostino's and Marco's souls. The figures of the Annunciation and onomastic saints in the niches can also be interpreted as part of both tomb and altar: underneath the promise of salvation of the Annunciation and Resurrection, the kneeling figures of the doges in eternal veneration of the Madonna stimulate the church-goer to kneel and pray as well.

Roeck's essay on Agostino Barbarigo's role as a patron of works of art has also indicated that Barbarigo may have been the person who commissioned the three reliefs with musician angels and angels carrying the instruments of the Passion in S.Trovaso (plate 161).⁹⁷ S.Trovaso was the parish church of the Barbarigo family, who had their principal seat on the other side of the Rio di S.Trovaso, just opposite the church.

2.3.3 The Project for the Monument and Altar to Doge Leonardo Loredan

After Agostino Barbarigo's self-aggrandizing term of office, the Venetians seem to have chosen their new leader carefully. According to Sanudo, Leonardo Loredan who had

⁹⁷ Roeck (1991).

remained in office for twenty years died "con ottima fama di principe".⁹⁸

Although Leonardo was initially buried in SS. Giovanni e Paolo in a plain, unmarked grave, that contrasted with the nearby funerary monuments of Doges Pasquale Malipiero, Nicolò Marcello and Pietro and Giovanni Mocenigo, more ambitious plans were underway. As early as 1517, when the doge was still alive, his son, Lorenzo, initiated negotiations with the Chapter of SS. Giovanni e Paolo for the construction of a splendid funerary monument embracing the church's High Altar.⁹⁹ The Chapter of the Dominican church, probably anxious to outshine the new High Altar under construction at the church of the Frari, ceded an area in the choir of the church to Lorenzo in order to construct a monument for his father.¹⁰⁰ In a later document of 1536 the project, still unexecuted and by now come down to Lorenzo's nephews, is further described as also comprising an altar:

"... they want to erect... a beautiful altar made entirely of marble with three figures and a pyramid on top in which must be inserted a beautiful ornament for Christ's body. For this they intend to spend 1,500 ducats..."¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Sanudo Diarii, XXX, col. 388.

⁹⁹ Catalogue no. 46. The history of the monument has been outlined by Da Mosto (1966), pp. 274-275 and p. 701 (bibliography).

¹⁰⁰ ASV, SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Serie Registri in Busta, busta 11, c. 81 verso: "... concederet locus in capella maiori ubi nunc est presbiterium ut possint construere sepulturam magnam et solempris pro padre suo..."

¹⁰¹ ASV, SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Consigli Diversi, c. 711 recto: "...facere volunt... Altare pulcherium totum marmoreum cum tribus figuris et piramide supra qua poni debebat ornamentum perpuerum pro corpore Cristi, et exponere intendunt ducatorum 1500..."

A further document of the same year mentions that the pyramid was to be made out of marble, and that the container of the host on top of the pyramid, was to be made out of crystal.¹⁰² When the funerary monument was finally erected in 1572, it was no longer related to the High Altar (or, in fact, any altar at all), and looked quite different from what Lorenzo Loredan must have had in mind.

2.3.4 The Altar of the St. Nicholas Chapel in the Ducal Palace for Doge Andrea Gritti

The building of the Chapel of St. Nicholas was begun under doge Leonardo Loredan in 1505. However, presumably due to the War of the League of Cambray, the building came to a halt, and was not taken up again until the early 1520s. Andrea Gritti was elected doge on 20th May 1523. Nearly six months later the chapel and its altar were finished and consecrated.¹⁰³

Howard noted that an early biography of the doge confirms his interest in embellishing the city.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, she pointed out that Andrea Gritti made the generous donation of one thousand ducats for his monument in front of the High Altar of the re-built church of S.Francesco della Vigna.¹⁰⁵

Regarding its location, as the doge's private chapel, the Chapel of St. Nicholas was part of the Ducal Palace, at

¹⁰² *ibid.*, c. 711 verso.

¹⁰³ Catalogue no. 22.

¹⁰⁴ Howard (1975), p.4: BMC, MS Gradenigo-Dolfin, no 50: Vita di Andrea Gritti doge di Venezia, tradotta dal Latino al volgare 1686.

¹⁰⁵ Howard (1975), pp. 68 and 173, n. 36 and n. 37; ASV, S.Francesco della Vigna, busta 4, pp. 236-43, 25 July 1536.

the same time, it was situated above the choir of S.Marco.¹⁰⁶

It was here, where the doge could listen to mass privately.¹⁰⁷

Sanudo reported:

"The most serene [doge]... with the *Signoria* and the Councillors and *Avogadori* and the heads of the Ten, attend mass in the new church of S.Nicolo, which has been nearly completed by this doge. And this doge, who is well, has been painted by Titian, with his lap dog next to him and other figures, St. Nicholas and the four evangelists who are writing the gospel; then [there is] the gilded altar, where yesterday and today the holy office was performed for the first time."¹⁰⁸

The *altar dorado* mentioned by Sanudo can be seen in an engraving by Antonio Visentini of 1761, when it was still in its original location (plate 14).¹⁰⁹ It has since been removed and been brought into the Chapel of St. Clement in S.Marco, where it was installed in combination with Rizzo's altar of the Virgin for Doge Moro. The altarpiece (plate 13) shows St. Nicholas in the centre, with Andrea Gritti, the newly elected doge, kneeling on the right, presented by his name saint Andrew, and St. Mark on the left. The relief demonstrates the close relationship between altarpieces and devotional images,

¹⁰⁶ Pincus (1976), pp. 21 f.

¹⁰⁷ Marin Sanudo, *Vite dei Dogi*, BNM, It.VII.801 (7152), c. 199 f.: "... et comenzo abrusar la capella chel doxe ogni zorno udiva messa..."

¹⁰⁸ Sanudo, *Diarii*, XXXV, col. 254: "El serenissimo... con la Signoria e li Savii et Avogadori e Cai di Dieci, andono a messa in la chiezia nuova di San Nicolo, dove quesio Doxe l'ha fato compir quasi et e dipento esso Doxe, che sta ben, di man di Tiziano, fon col, suo cagnol suetin drio, et altre figure, San Nicolo et li quatro evangelisti che scriveno li evanzeli; poi l'altar dorado, si die eri et hozi si principio qui afar officio..."

¹⁰⁹ Antonio Zatta, *L'Augusta Basilica dell'Evangelista San Marco*, Venice 1761, plate V. See also the engraving by Antonio Visentini, BMC, Raccolta Gherro, I. This has been reproduced and discussed by Hubala (1977), pp. 134-35. See also Lionello Puppi, in *Renovatio Urbis* (ed. Manfredo Tafuri), Rome, 1984, pp. 222-23.

which each doge customarily displayed in the Ducal Palace.¹¹⁰ However, it is probably not the official *quadro* each doge had to donate according to custom, which in Gritti's case was probably a lost painting by Titian.¹¹¹ Thus, it is one of the very few Venetian altarpieces of the period, which includes a representation of the patron.

This was customary for devotional images, but unusual for altarpieces. Devotional images of the kind are the reliefs of the *Presentation of Doge Leonardo Loredan to the Virgin* as well as the painted votive image of Giovanni Mocenigo, now in the National Gallery in London, or Giovanni Bellini's *Pala Barbarigo*, now in S. Pietro Martire on Murano. According to Agostino Barbarigo's will, this painting, his obligatory devotional picture for the Ducal Palace, was to be transferred and placed upon the High Altar of S. Maria degli Angeli after the Doge's death.¹¹² However, it is unlikely that this ever happened. Decorum may have allowed the presence of a donor on a private side altar, as on the reliefs for Andrea Gritti or Jacopo Surian, but such decorations would surely have been unacceptable on a High Altar.

3. Cittadini

The term "cittadino", citizen, does not refer to an inferior or poorer class of Venetian society. Sometimes it is not even possible to draw a clear line between citizens and

¹¹⁰ See Wolters (1983), pp. 92-136: 'Die Votivbilder der Dogen'.

¹¹¹ Hubala (1977), p. 138.

¹¹² Agostino's will was first published by F. Nani-Mocenigo, "Testamento del Doge Agostino Barbarigo", in *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, XVII, pp. 234-61; see also Chambers/Pullan/Fletcher (1992), pp. 418-19 and Roeck (1991), p. 106.

patricians and many families had branches among patricians as well as citizens. Many of them were merchants, while others followed the liberal professions, as civil servants, advocates and notaries, or physicians.¹¹³ It is a well-known fact that Venetian citizens, although excluded from the politically ruling class, were not necessarily less wealthy than Venetian patricians.¹¹⁴ Indeed, artistic projects of great prestige and financial scope were undertaken by *cittadini*.

During our period, the most ambitious project that encompassed sculptured decorations and that was initiated by Venetian citizens, the de' Amadi family, is the church of S. Maria dei Miracoli.¹¹⁵ They were wealthy silk merchants and belonged to the *cittadini originarii* of Venice. The fame of the church rests on the rich sculptural decoration of exterior and interior by the Lombardo workshop and the marbles and semi-precious stones that were used. Perhaps its High Altar was originally decorated with sculptures, as was claimed by Temanza.¹¹⁶

Although in this context the majority of individual patrons were patricians, some of the most prominent and lavishly furnished projects of chapels and sculptured altarpieces resulted from bequests of Venetian citizens, such as the chapels for the naval officer Giorgio Dragan, Jacopo Bernabò, Domenico de Piero, Jacopo Surian, Filippa Benedetti

¹¹³ Pullan (1971), p. 100. A detailed definition of *cittadino* can be found *ibid.*, pp. 100 ff.

¹¹⁴ Lane (1973), p. 151: "Not all nobles were rich nor were all rich Venetians noble."

¹¹⁵ See Lieberman (1972), pp. 35-145.

¹¹⁶ Temanza (1778), p. 121.

and the Corbelli and de' Martini families.¹¹⁷ All of these were executed during the last quarter of the 15th century.

3.1 The De' Martini Chapel in S.Giobbe

The chapel of the de' Martini family is the earliest of these projects. It is the second on the left in the church of S.Giobbe and decorated with a triptych (described in Chapter One, plate 23), exhibiting statuettes of St. John the Baptist in the central niche and of Sts. Francis and Anthony in the lateral niches.¹¹⁸ Furthermore the chapel's vault is clad with enamelled terracotta tiles (plate 25), featuring roundels of the four Evangelists and God the Father.

The de' Martini chapel has for a long time not received much scholarly attention. However, in a recent thesis by Apfelstadt on the later sculpture of Antonio Rossellino, the patrons and their family background have been disclosed and former misleading conclusions have been clarified. Apfelstadt demonstrated through documentary evidence that our de' Martini family were not silk merchants from Lucca as was previously thought, but that they had belonged to the Venetian *cittadini originarii* and were probably of Milanese origin.¹¹⁹ It has further been shown that their family ties

¹¹⁷ Schulz (1991), p. 88, n. 37, listing non-patrician patrons of important works of sculpture included only the former three citizens.

¹¹⁸ Catalogue no. 9.

¹¹⁹ Apfelstadt (1987), p. 250. See also Tassini, cc. 1306ff. According to Tassini's confusing account in the *Genealogie*, there were three families called Martini, one from Milan, which acquired Venetian citizenship in 1348, one "molto antica e che à Martino nell'arma", and a third one, who were silk merchants from Lucca and had come to Venice in the 14th century, where they lived opposite the church of the Carmini, on the other side of the canal in the parish of S. Angelo Raffaele. In 1398 this family acquired Venetian citizenship

with Florence account for the chapel's un-Venetian features.¹²⁰

Checking the testaments of the different members of the de' Martini family, it became clear that the patron of the chapel and triptych in S.Giobbe was Giovanni di Pietro de' Martini who lived in the parish of S.Geremia, not far from S.Giobbe. Giovanni wrote his will on 15th May 1475.¹²¹ It reveals that he had significant assets in Florence, owned a cloth shop there and held investments at Florentine banks. Together with his brother Alvise, he also had a business branch in Damascus.¹²² From Giovanni's will it also emerges that, at the time of its writing, a chapel was under construction at the Franciscan monastery of S.Giobbe, where he wanted to be buried.¹²³ The decoration of this chapel Giovanni left for his wife, Cornelia de' Pazzi, "quod fioratur secundum opinionem et dispositionem predictae uxoris mee", whose will is unfortunately no longer extant. As one would expect, the three statuettes of the altarpiece are the onomastic saints of the chapel's founder and two of his brothers, Francesco and Antonio.¹²⁴ Another of Giovanni's

under Francesco Martini who was resident at S.Bortolomeo, which is the adjacent parish to that of S.Giovanni Crisostomo.

¹²⁰ Apfelstadt (1987), pp. 241 ff.

¹²¹ Unaware of Apfelstadt's thesis I discovered Giovanni de Martini's will at an early stage of my research in the Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Canc. Inf., Misc. Testamenti, Not. Diversi, busta 27, n° 2513. A complete transcription of it can be found in Apfelstadt (1987), pp. 243-45.

¹²² Frederick C. Lane, I mercanti di Venezia. (1944/it. ed. Turin, 1982), p. 99.

¹²³ As mentioned above, in relation to Doge Cristoforo Moro, S. Giobbe was being re-built at that time.

¹²⁴ At the same time, the lateral figures represent the principal saints of the Franciscan order. Incidentally, the

brothers, Girolamo, had his own chapel erected in the church of S. Maria delle Grazie.¹²⁵

It is significant that Giovanni de' Martini's widow, a Florentine, employed Florentine artists rather than Venetian or Lombard sculptors for the decoration of the family chapel. The altarpiece is from the workshop of Antonio Rossellino, and the glazed terracotta vault was produced in the della Robbia workshop. In a most interesting parallel, Apfelstadt pointed to a marble altarpiece made for the church of S. Girolamo in Fiesole. It was commissioned by Tita de' Martini, sister of Cornelia de' Pazzi and wife of Giovanni de' Martini's brother Girolamo.¹²⁶

3.2 The Benedetti Altar in SS. Giovanni e Paolo

The large triptych in SS. Giovanni e Paolo (plate 33) was founded by and built for the Venetian citizen Filippa Benedetti.¹²⁷ Some of the altar's history has been uncovered by Schulz, who emphasised the role of a possible former founder of the altar, Zanetta Grimani.¹²⁸ However, the same author observed correctly that her bequest paid for the

figure in the central niche, St. John the Baptist, is not only Giovanni's name saint, but also the patron saint of Florence.

¹²⁵ This must have happened some time before 1483, when Girolamo wrote his will. See Tassini, *Genealogie*, cc.1306 f.

¹²⁶ This altar is a typically Florentine tripartite triumphal arch structure, with a large central arch flanked by smaller niches surmounted by medallions. It was made between 1493-97 by Andrea di Piero Ferrucci of Fiesole and Jacopo di Andrea del Maza, is now in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

See also Pope-Hennessy (1964), I, pp. 179-81, and III, pl. 174.

¹²⁷ Catalogue no. 14.

¹²⁸ Schulz (1977a).

repair rather than for the making of an (older) altar.¹²⁹ Hitherto unknown documents suggest that a new altar was made for the Benedetti family.

The Benedetti were rich cloth merchants and of rather high social standing. Thus, one Pietro, son of Marin Benedetti, Filippa's uncle, was *Cancellier Ducale* and was buried in SS. Giovanni e Paolo in 1488.¹³⁰ According to the *Cittadinanze* by Tassini, the Benedetti family had two tombs in SS. Giovanni e Paolo, one in the second choir chapel on the right, which is the site of our altar, and one "outside, not far away".¹³¹ It is the former that was erected by Filippa. In her will of 1487 Filippa Benedetti, wife of Girolamo Businello, mentioned the altar in her chapel at SS. Giovanni e Paolo, which at that date had been erected "some time ago". Her brother Andrea had already been buried in the tomb in front of the altar. Thus, despite her marriage to Girolamo Businello, Filippa kept her original family bonds.

As a recently discovered document in the Archive of the *Inquisitori di Stato* has revealed, the genesis of the Benedetti altar was linked with a court case between the Scuola Grande di S.Marco and Filippa Benedetti in 1478 before the *Inquisitori di Stato*.¹³² From it we learn, that the initial concept of the altar originated from Andrea Benedetti's will, and that Filippa acted as a commissary of

¹²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 204.

¹³⁰ For the pedigree of the Benedetti family see Tassini, VI, cc. 260 verso and 261 recto.

¹³¹ Tassini, VI, c. 259 recto.

¹³² ASV, *Inquisitori di Stato*, busta 912, 26-1-1478. I would like to thank Joseph Wheeler for having drawn my attention to this document.

her brother's estate, which was estimated at 20,000 ducats. According to the Scuola di S.Marco, in a first version of this will Andrea (d. 20th January 1478), had bequeathed a large fortune to the confraternity.¹³³ In its complaint before the Inquisitors, the Scuola accused Filippa Benedetti of having "taken away and hidden" the original version of the document and having forced her brother on his deathbed to re-write it "in order for her to profit of the goods of the said ser Andrea".¹³⁴

Eventually Filippa won the courtcase and thus became an extremely wealthy woman. It comes as no surprise that the altar is a richly gilded marble triptych which originally contained three marble figures. While a figure of the Madonna decorated the central niche, statues of Sts. Philip and Andrew (plates 34, 35), the name saints of the patron and her brother, stand in the lateral niches. More than a century later it was still an object of prestige, as confirmed by Angelo Benedetti who wrote in his will in 1589:

"I want my corpse to be buried in SS. Giovanni e Paolo in our family tomb, which has our coat-of-arms... in our Chapel of the Madonna, next to the *cappella grande*... the altar in the said chapel has been made with the proper money of our family of the Benedetti... the monastery of this church has profitted from our family..."¹³⁵

¹³³ ASV, Inquisitori di Stato, busta 912, 26-1-1478: "promission fata de lassar case 24 da logar 24 povere fameie, et proveder al viver de quelle."

¹³⁴ *ibid.* "per vegnir lei ala succession di beni del ditto q.s. Andrea, i qual sono calculata de ducati 20,000."

¹³⁵ Tassini, VI, c. 259 recto and ASV, Notarile Testamenti, will of Angelo Benedetti, 9-12-1589, Atti di Marco Trigier: "Volgio che il mio corpo sia sepolto a S.Zuane e Paolo nella nostra arca che ha le nosttre arme per li cantoni di esa arca nella nostra cappella della Madonna appresso la cappella grande per essere stato fatto l'altar che è in detta cappella delli propri denari de casa nostra de ca' Benedetti... il monastero di essa giesa è beneficato da chà nostra..."

3.3 The Altar and Tomb for Jacopo Surian in S.Stefano

As mentioned in Chapters Two and Three, the bronze relief of the *Sacra Conversazione* in S.Stefano (plate 109) was one of the most recent of the notable things in Venice listed by Marin Sanudo in 1493.¹³⁶

According to the Genealogies by Toderini, there were two branches of the Surian family in Venice.¹³⁷ That of Jacopo had come to Venice as late as the 15th century. In fact, the patron's father, Bartolomeo, a legal counsellor, was the first one recorded.¹³⁸ Jacopo is mentioned in various sources as a "celebre medico". He built and owned two houses, one in the parish of S.Trovaso, the other one in the parish of S.Giuliano, where he lived. On 31st May 1488, an agreement was reached between the procurators of S.Maria dei Frari and Jacopo Surian, which permitted him to erect his tomb in the Franciscan church near the campanile. Why the monument was eventually erected in S.Stefano is not known, but the dates of the document and Sanudo's description establish its making to the years between 1488 and 1493.

Jacopo's personality remains rather sketchy, but his funerary monument and altar document that he must have enjoyed a considerable social status and financial well-being. The type of his marble tomb (plate 112) is that of

¹³⁶ Catalogue no. 38.

¹³⁷ Toderini, V, pp. 1863-65. Apart from the citizen Surian family, there was also a Venetian patrician family of the same name. One of its members, Antonio Surian (d. 1508), was in all likelihood the patron of the marble *Pietà* from S.Andrea della Certosa in S.Maria della Salute (Catalogue no. 27). He was, however, not related to Jacopo Surian.

¹³⁸ BNM, Cronaca di Famiglie Cittadinesche Venete, ms. 18th century, *ad vocem* Surian.

humanist and ducal monuments of the period, consisting of a triumphal arch on fluted columns, containing an effigy of the deceased.¹³⁹ Resting on a sarcophagus, the figure of Surian is dressed in academic robes. His head and feet rest on books, which also appear on the sarcophagus' front, where they are entitled "Aristoteles" and "Galen", and, finally, also on the altar at the base of the Madonna's throne. The sarcophagus is carried by gryphons, a classical as well as Christian symbol of eternal life and the Resurrection.¹⁴⁰ In the lunette of the arch the kneeling Jacopo Surian is presented to the enthroned Madonna by St. John the Baptist. The spandrels are prominently decorated with the patron's coat-of-arms. The tomb also features two inscriptions, one on the sarcophagus, the other, below it, carried by two shield-bearers.¹⁴¹

As for the altar, bronze was a material that few could afford on a relatively large scale. In addition to the aforementioned tomes, the base of the Madonna's throne holds once again Surian's coat-of-arms at the centre. An inscription engraved in the marble ledge at the bottom of the relief refers to the patron. But most importantly Jacopo Surian and his wife themselves (plate 110, 111), designed on a smaller scale and kneeling to the sides of the two saints, are represented on the altarpiece. They have both individualised features and look up to the Christchild, who,

¹³⁹ In fact, it goes back to the design of the funerary monument for Nicolo Marcello of ca. 1485. See Munman (1968), pp. 204 ff.

¹⁴⁰ LCI, II, col. 202.

¹⁴¹ The inscription on the sarcophagus reads "RURA DOMUS NUMMI FELIX HINC GLORIA FLUXIT."

turning towards Jacopo, is blessing him. In Venice of the years examined here, this altarpiece is one of the very few where a portrait of the patron is included.¹⁴²

Almost all of these elements allude to the patron's learning, his social standing and self-esteem. Surian's monument and altar certainly impressed not only Marin Sanudo. Shortly afterwards another monument for a learned patron, the Venetian physician and philosopher Pietro Roccabonella, was made by the Paduan artist Bartolomeo Bellano. It included two large bronze reliefs, one with the effigy of the deceased, the other one representing the Enthroned Madonna between Sts. Francis and Peter Martyr.¹⁴³

3.4 The Chapel of the Saviour in S.Maria della Carità

Along with the chapels for Jacopo Bernabò and Jacopo Surian, the most prestigious project of our period initiated by a *cittadino* was the Chapel of the Saviour in the church of S.Maria della Carità. Its altar was adorned with a bronze statue of the Resurrected Christ (plate 89), which I have discussed in the previous chapters.¹⁴⁴

The personality of Domenico de Piero has been delineated by Sohm in connection with the Scuola Grande di S.Marco, of which Domenico was *guardian grande*.¹⁴⁵ Significantly, he held office as many as four times in the years 1482, 1485, 1487

¹⁴² The other one is the altar from the Chapel of St.Nicholas in the Ducal Palace, which includes a portrait of Doge Andrea Gritti. In a certain sense, the kneeling statue of Agostino Barbarigo also belonged to the altar of the doge's monument.

¹⁴³ This latter measures 1.97 (height) x 1.59 m (width). See Krahn (1988), p. 183.

¹⁴⁴ Catalogue no. 47.

¹⁴⁵ Sohm (1978), pp. 114-18.

and 1496/97. Following his second election briefly after the disastrous fire of the confraternity buildings, he must have been deeply involved with the decoration of the new Scuola, which will be discussed below.

While Domenico de Piero's social status as one of Venice's leading jewellers and president of the Scuola di S.Marco was certainly outstanding, his wealth must have been colossal. It is probably for this reason that he is described by Marcantonio Michiel as "zogiellier et antiquario singular".¹⁴⁶ In his will of 1496, Piero ordered the compilation of a most impressive inventory of the contents of his house. Among many other things this catalogue was to include jewels and pearls, vases made out of chrystal, ivory, jasper or chalcedony, silver objects, paintings, mosaics, cameos, medals and figurative reliefs, gold salt cellars and tapestries.¹⁴⁷ Unfortunately the actual inventory does no longer exist, but even without it, we can roughly guess the testator's wealth as well as his social ambitions as a private art collector.

Domenico owned a palace on the Grand Canal, near S.Maria della Carità, until 1483 when he sold it to the Signoria.¹⁴⁸ In 1489 he purchased marble slabs for his new house, which were to be used as decoration on its façade.¹⁴⁹ In this, he

¹⁴⁶ Frizzoni (1884), p. 231-32..

¹⁴⁷ Paoletti (1893), II, p. 135, doc. 104, and ASV, Notarile Testamenti, busta 718, Malipede Francesco.

¹⁴⁸ Tassini, *ad vocem* Di Piero, c. 1654.

¹⁴⁹ Paoletti (1893), p. 118, 7-7-1489: "Conttati da ser domenego de piero per pie 25 de lastre de marmoro strete che alias lave al fabricar de la sua caza mese in la faca de quela Come referi maestro Iacomo taiapiera a san vidal dacordo ducati 6, le quali sono dade in tempo de maestro Antonio zelega come die aparir per suo libro."

follows the fashion of the period, which in Chapter Two I have called "Marblemania".

This was even more true for the jeweller's chapel at S.Maria della Carità. It was first mentioned by Sanudo who listed it among one of the "cosse notabile" in Venice. Almost a century later, Francesco Sansovino commented, full of admiration:

"Et nella cappella del gioielliero, è un Christo di bronzo di buona mano..."¹⁵¹

and later:

"All'incontro apparisce la cappella di San Salvatore, notabilissima frà tutte l'altre della città, edificata da Domenico di Pietro gioielliero ricchissimo, et antiquario, con marmi, con porfidi, et con serpentini molto alla grande."¹⁵²

Apart from these early descriptions, almost nothing is known about the appearance of the chapel. However, it is referred to in a hitherto unknown agreement between the chapter of the monastery and Domenico of 6th April 1494 and in the jeweller's will of 1496.¹⁵³ From these documents it emerges that construction of the chapel began shortly after 9th March 1488 and that, while Sanudo admired the finished chapel in 1493, an altar including its decoration was installed only in 1494 or later.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Sanudo/Aricò (1980), p. 50.

¹⁵¹ Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 266.

¹⁵² Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 267. Sohm, (1982), p. 117, noted that "Sansovino seems to have considered the type of ornamentation in the chapel as fitting expression of a jeweler's aesthetic, since he substituted the ecclesiastical designation of the chapel with that of 'cappella del gioielliero'."

¹⁵³ See Zorzi (1972), pp.525-27.

¹⁵⁴ ASV, S.Maria della Carità, busta 28.

Whoever the designer of the chapel may have been, its fame was unabated in the 18th century, when it was described and attributed to Mauro Codussi by Temanza.¹⁵⁵ Perhaps it is not just by chance that more than one hundred years after the making of the bronze Resurrected Christ for the "Cappella del gioielliero", the jewellers' guild commissioned a statue of St. Anthony Abbot (1603-07) from Girolamo Campagna to decorate their altar in S.Giacomo di Rialto.¹⁵⁶

3.5 The Corbelli Altar in S.Stefano

From documents in the Archive of the Augustinian monastery of S.Stefano in the Archivio di Stato in Venice it emerges that the founder of the altar of St. Nicholas of Tolentino in S.Stefano was the Venetian citizen Andrea Corbelli.¹⁵⁷ At the end of the 15th century, this altar was decorated with the statues of three saints.¹⁵⁸

According to the Genealogies by Toderini, Andrea Corbelli was appointed count palatine and knight by Emperor Sigismund in 1434.¹⁵⁹ In other instances, too, the Corbelli proved to be a most distinguished family: according to Cicogna who refers to several ancient sources, they were "conti cesarei, nobili di Padova e Cittadini veneti

¹⁵⁵ Temanza (1778), p. 96: "E perchè non se gli può attribuire anche la cappella del Salvatore nella Chiesa della Carità, la quale a tempi del Sansovino chiamavasi la Cappella del Gioielliero, ricca di marmi, porfidi, e serpentini come di quei tempi era l'uso?"

¹⁵⁶ Timofiewitsch (1972), pp. 276-278.

¹⁵⁷ ASV, St.Stefano, busta 8, fascicolo 45, and busta 9, fascicolo 48, *Mansionaria Corbelli*.

¹⁵⁸ Catalogue no. 39.

¹⁵⁹ Toderini, II, p. 655.

originarii", who had come to the lagoon in 1390.¹⁶⁰ Among the most outstanding family members listed by Cicogna are Benedetto, son of the above Andrea, who in 1488 financed the construction of a church in Mira, on the banks of the river Brenta, and Nicolò Maria who supported the Republic "con molti soldati a proprie spese"¹⁶¹ in the War of the League of Cambray. In 1506 Benedetto and his son Andrea also donated their third of the vineyard at S.Francesco della Vigna to be used by the friars for the erection of the new church.

In an agreement of 24 August 1441 between the prior of S.Stefano and the "circumspectus egregius vir" Andrea, a space was ceded to the Corbelli family to erect their altar and family tomb "under the pulpit, which at present is attached to the wall of the said church, on the left handside if one enters the church through the main door. There is the place near the altar of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary."¹⁶³

By the time Andrea wrote his will on 1st August 1447, he mentioned that both altar and tomb were completed.¹⁶⁴ In the meantime, the Augustinian hermit Nicholas of Tolentino had

¹⁶⁰ Cicogna, V, p. 22.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*

¹⁶² Document published in Foscari/Tafuri (1983), pp. 183-185.

¹⁶³ ASV, S.Stefano, busta 8, fascicolo 45, 24-8-1441, *Instrumentum* (copy): "sub pulpito, quod ad presentis est in dicta ecclesia apud murum parte ecclesiae introeundo dictam ecclesiam per portam magnam ad manum sinistram qui locus est apud altare Annunciationis Virginis Mariae"

¹⁶⁴ ASV, S.Stefano, busta 8, fascicolo 45, p.3: "Volo, et ordino corpus meum sepelli debere in ecclesia sancti stephani, Ordinis fratrum eremitarum de venetiis, in Arca et sepultum mea nova, quam fieri feci in dicta ecclesia posita in dicta ecclesia ante capellam meam quam noviter fieri feci in dicta ecclesia."

been canonised (on 5th June 1446), but it must not be excluded that even before his canonisation an altar had been dedicated to him.

The marble statues of three saints which have remained on the altar despite its later reconstructions do not date from the 1440s, but from the last quarter of the 15th century and are fine works by Pietro Lombardo. Whereas the central saint has always been recognised as St. Nicholas, the names of the two lateral saints have been various.¹⁶⁵ I suggest that they represent Sts. Andrew (on the left) and Jerome (on the right), since the patron of the statues was probably Girolamo Corbelli, son of Andrea, who would have acted either as a commissary of his father's will or as a patron in his own right.¹⁶⁶ Although no dates are available for Girolamo, the decoration of the altar would probably have taken place in the years around 1488, when Girolamo's brother Benedetto patronised the building of the church at Mira on the Venetian mainland.¹⁶⁷ Hence, the statues which are still in situ on the much altered altar commemorate father and son, the altar's founder and the patron, as well as the titular of the altar.

¹⁶⁵ Moschini (1815), II, p. 585, identified them as two representations of St. Jerome in different attire, while Paoletti (1893), p. 158, only names St. Jerome. Apollonio (1911), for no obvious reason identified the saint on the left with St. Paul the Hermit. Burckhardt (1909), p. 538, also interpreted the figure on the left as St. Paul.

¹⁶⁶ Tassini, VIII, c. 686 - 1.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*

4. The Role of Official Bodies as Patrons and as Executors

In several of the above cases, donor and patron were not identical. When testators died childless and/or without close relatives or friends who would act as trustees of their estate and ensure that their will was carried out, they normally chose the Procurators of Marco or the Chapter General of a Scuola of which they were a member. By doing this, the testator had a guarantee that even projects that were left unexecuted over a long period of time would eventually be seen to.

4.1 The Procurators of S.Marco

The honorary office of the Procurators of S.Marco was among the most prestigious in the Venetian government and often the last step before election to the dogeship. As is well-known, the procurators' office was the only one, apart from that of the Doge and the *Cancelliere Grande*, that was held for life.

The principal function of the Procurators of S.Marco was the supervision and execution of testators' wills. The office was subdivided into three sections of *de citra*, responsible for the estates and their administration in the three *sestieri* on the S.Marco side of the Grand Canal, of *de ultra*, in charge of the remaining three *sestieri*, and of *de supra* which was responsible exclusively for the administration of Piazza S.Marco and its immediate surroundings.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ Da Mosto (1937), I, p. 25. See Reinhold Mueller, 'The Procurators of St. Mark's', in Studi Veneziani, 1971, pp. 105-220.

The making of five large sculptured altars discussed in this thesis was administered by the procurators: the d'Arnolfo chapel for Chioggia Cathedral, the chapel of Cardinal Zen and the Altar of the Sacrament in S.Marco, the Emiliani chapel with its three altars at S.Michele and the altar and tomb for Verde della Scala from S.Maria dei Servi.

In the above survey of individual patrons or donors I have not included the last one of these, Madonna Verde della Scala. She was the daughter of Mastino della Scala, podestà of Verona, and had been married to Nicolo d'Este, duke of Ferrara. After her husband's death in 1388, political tensions forced Verde della Scala to move to Venice, where she resided in the parish of S.Maria Formosa.¹⁶⁹

Although the donor of the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen was undoubtedly a lady of high social standing, she was not at all involved with the making of her altar. In fact, in her will of 4th December 1393 she asked for a funeral "sine alia pompa" in a wooden coffin in front of an altar in S.Maria dei Servi.¹⁷⁰ Without further specifications concerning the altar she bequeathed two hundred ducats to the Servites "pro fabrica", for the building of the church. With the execution of her will she entrusted the Venetian patricians Giovanni Contareno and the banker Gabriele Soranzo, whom the testator called "compatrem meum".¹⁷¹ However, for unknown reasons, the lady's altar and tomb were not erected by them, but instead, one hundred and thirty years later, with the professional

¹⁶⁹ Verona e il Suo Territorio. Verona (1975), III, 1, p. 751. See also Appendix I, doc. no. 1.

¹⁷⁰ Appendix I, doc. no. 1.

¹⁷¹ *ibid.*

routine of the Procurators of S.Marco *de Citra*, outlined in the previous chapter. The other projects administered by these state officers are documented very much in the same manner.

The Procurators ensured that their role in the making of these chapels and altars did not pass entirely unnoticed. Thus, on the façade of the Emiliani chapel they commemorated themselves with an inscription that makes the chapel as much a project of the founder as of the Venetian state and its officers.¹⁷² Similarly, to the side of the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen, an inscription referred to the "most pious" Procurators who had erected tomb and altar.¹⁷³ Notably the bronze sarcophagus of Cardinal Zen was modelled on the marble one of Orsato Giustinian, himself a Procurator of S.Marco, whose estate was administered by his successors in office.¹⁷⁴

Occasionally, officers of the state emerged as patrons in their own right. The previously mentioned devotional relief of the Madonna delle Biade was made on behalf of the Officers of *Magistrato alle Biade*, who were responsible for the Republic's grain supplies. The street altar of the *Traghetto della Maddalena*, on the other hand, was commissioned by the Heads of the Council of Ten.¹⁷⁵ Generally,

¹⁷² The inscription reads: "MARGARITAE AEMILIANAE TESTAMENTO / MATRONAE PIETATE INSIGNIS / PROCURATORES DIVI MARCI DE CITRA / FIDE OPTIMA A FUNDAMENTIS EXTRUENDUM / CURARUNT ANNO M.D. XXX."

¹⁷³ Catalogue no. 13.

¹⁷⁴ ASV, Procuratori di S.Marco de Citra, buste 117/118, Commissaria Orsato Giustinian.

¹⁷⁵ Catalogue no. 6.

street tabernacles, whether painted or sculptured, were commissioned by the *Provveditori di Comun*.¹⁷⁶

In at least one case, the Procurators were patrons of a sculptured altarpiece in their own right. On 3rd March 1518 the three Procurators of S.Marco *de Supra*, Andrea Gritti (to become doge in 1523), Lorenzo Loredan (son of the ruling doge Leonardo) and Alvise Pisani, drew up a contract with Lorenzo Bregno to construct a new Altar of the Sacrament for the church of S.Marco.¹⁷⁷

4.2 Confraternities as Patrons of Sculptured Altars

In Venice, there are several types of confraternities, the Scuole Grandi, the Scuole Piccole, which comprise the devotional lay confraternities, the confraternities of the trade guilds and the confraternities of the foreign communities.¹⁷⁸ Each confraternity had its meeting place, the location, size and decoration of which varied according to the confraternity's wealth and status.

A keen sense of rivalry between the Scuole can be observed in the ongoing architectural and sculptural competition between the two Scuole Grandi of S.Marco and S.Giovanni Evangelista at the end of the 15th century: between 1478 and 1481 the entrance to the Scuola di S.Giovanni Evangelista was decorated with an elaborate marble façade screen (1478-1481) that included figurative sculpture as well as the use of different stones. Perhaps it was part

¹⁷⁶ Rizzi (1987), p. 75.

¹⁷⁷ Catalogue no. 20.

¹⁷⁸ For a more detailed definition of Scuola see Pullan (1971), pp. 33f. For a survey of the Scuole of Venice and their artistic decoration see Pignatti (1981).

of a deal between the confraternity and the stonemasons who until 1516 had their meeting place in the church. The fire of 1485 at the Scuola Grande di S.Marco provided a welcome opportunity for its confrères to start the rebuilding of their façade, which was shortly afterwards followed by the staircase designed by Mauro Codussi. Three years after its completion in 1495, the board of the Scuola di S.Giovanni also decided to have a new staircase, also by Mauro Codussi.¹⁷⁹

Whereas the wealthy Scuole Grandi were able to afford large meeting houses built by the city's leading architects and sumptuous exterior and interior decoration, the smaller confraternities had to be content with smaller buildings in the vicinity of a church, or often only a chapel or an altar in one of Venice's churches.

Apart from fulfilling a variety of administrative and charitable tasks, the confraternities took care of the spiritual welfare of their members. A passage from the statutes of the Florentine community in Venice emphasises the scuola's supportive function in issues of faith and religion:

"And since all confrères must not lack someone to turn to in cases of doubt, which can be relieved by spiritual persons, when there is no confessor, or at similar occasions and needs; hence we order, that a religious friar has to be elected, resident in Venice, of the order and convent of S.Maria dei Frari."¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Sohm (1978), p. 29.

¹⁸⁰ BMC, Mariiegola dei Fiorentini, no. 71, capitolo 28. See Sagredo (1853), p. 490: "E perchè egli non manchi à tutti i fratelli dove ricorrere in que' casi e dubbi, che à persone spirituali appartenessero; come in mancamento di confessore ò in altro tale accidente e bisogno; ordiniamo noi, che egli si debba eleggere un religioso frate, stanziale in Venetia, de l'ordine è convento di Santa Maria de' Frari."

An altar with its altarpiece was of utmost importance to the confraternity, since, independent of the individual confraternity's wealth or nature, its devotional tasks were among the most important.¹⁸¹ In the first place, a scuola's altar was used for the celebration of mass, which constituted an essential part of the confraternity's devotional activities. When the stonemasons' guild moved to S.Aponal in 1515, it was established that a sung mass, including a procession round Campo S.Aponal, was to be held on the last Sunday of every month as well as on the Scuola's holiday, plus small masses every Tuesday.¹⁸² These could not have been performed without an altar.

Apart from being the centre of the mass, the altar was also the location around which the main events in the Scuola's social life, for example the elections of the confraternity's officers, would take place. Again a passage from the *Mariegola*, that is to say the statutes, of the Florentines illustrates the altar's role in this secular context:

"Of the observation and ceremonies which must be followed in the appointment of offices... it is obligatory that the first of the [Scuola's] governors has to be present, whereas the *proveditore* will find all things necessary for this business at the altar: the beans [which serve as lots] to select the parties, the bag which contains the names of all confrères who have the legitimate age, and all the other instruments, necessary for this."¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ See Pullan (1971), pp. 42f.

¹⁸² BMC, *Mariegola dei Tagliapietra*, no. 150, c. 69 verso.

¹⁸³ Sagredo (1853), pp. 464f.: "De l'osservanza e cerimonie che si debbon'usare ne la creazione degli uffici... il primo dei governatori che vi sie presente, mentre che il proveditore troverà le cose necessarie, apparecchiate per questo affare, a l'altare: le fave per i partiti da farsi, la borsa dove siano imborsati tutti i nomi de'fratelli che habbian l'eta legittima, e tutti gli altri strumenti perciò di bisogno."

In accordance to their central role, the altars were normally richly decorated. Humfrey and MacKenney surmised that only the smallest and poorest of guilds could not have been able to afford some sort of painted altarpiece.¹⁸⁴ However, it appears that during our period relatively few altars with sculptural decoration were commissioned by Venetian confraternities. On the other hand, the altarpieces of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco and of the Scuola Grande di S.Rocco were the most sensational and prestigious projects of the period. Those of the guilds of the barbers and the crockery sellers, are projects on a smaller scale and are very much the exception compared to the large number of Scuole Piccole.

4.2.1 The Bernabò Chapel in S.Giovanni Crisostomo

Like the procurators, the scuole acted as commissaries of their members's estates and bequests. This was the case of the estate of Jacopo Bernabò whom I omitted from the previous survey of *cittadino* patrons.

Tullio Lombardo's relief of the *Coronation of the Virgin* of 1502 was made for the chapel of the silk merchant Bernabò in the former parish church of S.Giovanni Crisostomo (plates 150, 151).¹⁸⁵ Bernabò lived in the vicinity of this church, which since the 14th century had been the centre of silk merchants.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Humfrey/Mackenny (1986), p. 318.

¹⁸⁵ Catalogue no. 11.

¹⁸⁶ Odenthal (1985), p. 15.

Although I have found no proof that the Bernabò family had been admitted to the patriciate, as McAndrew claimed,¹⁸⁷ there is no doubt that Jacopo Bernabò was an extremely wealthy and prestigious merchant, since silk was an expensive luxury item and its trade was among the most profitable in Venice.¹⁸⁸

Hence, Bernabò's will of 11th July 1438 contains numerous bequests to Venetian churches and monasteries, some of which of considerable value.¹⁸⁹ While he had his private chapel at S.Giovanni Crisostomo, his funerary chapel was located in S.Stefano. The Augustinian monastery was generously endowed with the sum of one thousand ducats in government bonds on the condition that the testator's funerary chapel in that church was never to be ceded to another benefactor. In fact, it was not until 1708/9 that the wooden altar there was replaced by a marble one.¹⁹⁰

Furthermore, Bernabò ordered that several good and devout people must be sent on pilgrimages on his behalf, among other places to the Holy Land, Santiago de Compostela, to Vienna and Rome.¹⁹¹

Finally, Bernabò, as a member of the Scuola Grande della Misericordia, stipulated, that eight thousand ducats of the capital he had deposited with the Scuola, were to be invested

¹⁸⁷ McAndrew (1980), p. 312.

¹⁸⁸ See F. Brunello, Arti e Mestieri a Venezia nel Medioevo e nel Rinascimento. Vicenza, 1980, pp. 120-29.

¹⁸⁹ The will was discovered and partly published by Paoletti (1893), p. 178, doc. 89.

¹⁹⁰ Apollonio (1911), pp. 11-12.

¹⁹¹ This passage of Bernabò's will in Odenthal (1985), pp. 153-54, doc. no. 1.

in government bonds in the Scuola's name "aspettante alla commessaria del Iacomo de Bernabo".¹⁹² The interest of that money was to be spent in favour of the church of S.Giovanni Crisostomo. Bernabò's chapel there was already built and decorated with the image of a *Virgo Orans*, so that no immediate need arose to refurbish it.

However, during the re-building of the church between 1495 and 1504 by Mauro Codussi, it eventually came to the construction of the present chapel and its altarpiece. This time, strictly speaking, the patron was the Chapter General of the Scuola Grande della Misericordia which was in charge of the bequest and of the chapel. Nevertheless, it is tempting to interpret the extraordinarily delicate folds and surface shine of the figures' draperies not only as proof of Tullio's talent, but also as an allusion to Bernabò's profession.

In the archives of the confraternity a series of records documents the proficiency and sense of responsibility with which the Scuola's board proceeded.¹⁹³ Thus, the chapel with its altar practically became as much property of the Misericordia, in charge of the re-erection as well as the maintenance of the chapel, as of Jacopo Bernabò. Of course, each scuola also had its own altars, which were, as it appears, in churches in parts of the city other than their own *sestiere*.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² *ibid.*

¹⁹³ ASV, Scuola della Misericordia, busta 198, Notatorio 1438 - 1587; see also Odenthal (1985), pp. 21 ff.

¹⁹⁴ In 1466, an inventory of the liturgical objects related to the altars of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco in the churches of S.Cassiano and S.Croce, for example, provides an impressive list (BMC, Mariiegola 19, c. 11 recto).

Interestingly enough, the chapel opposite, donated by the merchant Giorgio Diletti, was also closely connected to a confraternity, the *Scuola Grande di S.Marco*, of which the Diletti was a member. Like in the previous case of Bernabò, the *Scuola's banca* acted as executor of Diletti's estate, as a consequence of which the altar in S.Giovanni Crisostomo may have passed into the possession of the confraternity.¹⁹⁵

4.2.2 The Altar of the *Scuola Grande di S.Marco*

The sculptured altarpiece for the Chapter Hall of the *Scuola Grande di S.Marco* was planned and begun in 1498, but abandoned only one year later.¹⁹⁶ In case of its execution, it would have complemented the lavish marble decoration of the confraternity's façade. This and previous architectural undertakings there have been discussed at length by Sohm.¹⁹⁷

The driving force behind the reconstruction of the *Scuola Grande di S.Marco* appears to have been mainly one man: Domenico de Piero, the same man who financed the decoration of the Chapel of the Salvator at S.Maria della Carità. Domenico was the *Scuola's guardian grande* in the years 1482, 1485, 1487 and 1496. Holding office four times and, during the interims, remaining a member of the *Scuola's Chapter General*, Domenico was probably able to pursue his personal politics to at least some extent.

The *Scuola di S.Marco* received the main impetus for its embellishment exactly during the years Domenico held office, especially in 1485 when, only two months after the fire had

¹⁹⁵ Goffen (1989), p. 183.

¹⁹⁶ Catalogue no. 35.

¹⁹⁷ Sohm (1978).

destroyed the previous building, Domenico was re-elected *guardian grande*. Sohm also noted that, shortly before his re-election, he had also accepted the life-time post as one of the Scuola's five *proveditori sopra la fabrica*.¹⁹⁸

"With its intricately carved and gilded surfaces enlivened by the inlaid porphyry, serpentine and Carrara marble, the Scuola's façade must have been a jeweler's vision of perfect beauty."¹⁹⁹

Even before the fire of 1485, one of Piero's first activities as *guardian grande* had been to commission "Jachomo de Vechi depentor de conpir de belezar e depenzer lo resto dela faza dela nostra schuolla... fino al muro dela giexia de Zanepollo..."²⁰⁰. Further records for the decoration of the Scuola follow later the same year, still during Domenico's term of office, including the manufacture of twelve large, golden, two-branched candlesticks and of an altar hanging woven with gold threads.²⁰¹

The man who received the commission for the relief was Giovanni Dalmata from Traù, a highly competent sculptor who spent much of his career in Rome. There, in the mid-1470s, he had been commissioned by the Venetian cardinal Paolo Barbo to execute the monument for his uncle Pietro, who, as Pope Paul II, had occupied the seat of St. Peter until 1471. At the time of its completion, it was the largest and sculpturally most elaborate of all papal tombs in Rome. It contained several narrative reliefs, most important of which a representation of the *Resurrection* which apart from the

¹⁹⁸ Sohm (1978), p. 115.

¹⁹⁹ Sohm (1978), pp. 117-118.

²⁰⁰ ASV, Scuola Grande di S.Marco, Registro 16 bis, c. 4 recto, 3-5-1482.

²⁰¹ *ibid.*, c. 4 verso, 15-8-1482.

obligatory soldiers includes two angels and a landscape background.²⁰² It is highly unlikely that Giovanni's altar relief was so inferior that it would put the Scuola to shame. The cancellation of the commission was perhaps caused by pressure from members of the confraternity itself, since prominent painters like Giovanni and Gentile Bellini and Alvise Vivarini would have been keen to promote their own art.

4.2.3 The High Altar of the Church of S.Rocco

At the beginning of the 16th century the Scuola Grande di S.Rocco joined the competition. At the time of its construction and for years afterwards, the High Altar of the homonymous church (described in Chapter One, plate 58) was the largest and most lavishly decorated of all the city's altars.

With repeated outbreaks of the plague during the second half of the 15th century, veneration of St. Roch as a protector from the epidemic grew in Venice. After a severe outbreak of the disease in 1477, a confraternity dedicated to the saint was founded and approved of by the Council of Ten on 10th June 1478.²⁰³

The transferral of St. Roch's relics from Piacenza to Venice in 1485, following yet another outbreak of the plague, was an acquisition of major importance for the city. Within a few years, St. Roch complemented the traditional plague Saint Sebastian as principal protector from the disease, a development which manifests itself clearly in the changing

²⁰² See Poeschke (1990), pp. 155-156.

²⁰³ Tramontin (1965), p. 89.

iconography of Venetian art between the late 15th and the early 16th century.²⁰⁴

In fact, Venice became one of the principal centres of the saint's veneration. On the *terraferma*, too, confraternities dedicated to the saint were founded. In 1489, the Scuola di S.Rocco was declared Scuola Grande. Apart from the church and meeting house that were erected at the choir end of the Frari, another church dedicated to Sts. Roch and Margherita was simultaneously erected in the parish of S.Samuele.

Yet, it was not until the year 1516, that the project for the rebuilding of the church of S.Rocco and its high altar was initiated by the Chapter General of the confraternity "del glorioso magistro San Rocho", and even then only after considerable pressure and complaints.²⁰⁵ At the same time it seems to have been clear from the beginning that a monument which was to contain the "chorpo glorioso" had to be particularly pompous,

"because many gentlemen and notable persons and pilgrims and foreigners, who from time to time come to this illustrious city, are desirous to come and revisit the said church, as they wish to see the said body [of St. Roch]... but see that it is kept with lack of honour."²⁰⁶

In the same document of 8th June 1516, the Chapter General decided that the saint's relics were to be

²⁰⁴ Stefania Mason Rinaldi, 'Le Immagini della Peste nella Cultura Figurativa Veneziana', in Venezia e la Peste, Venice, 1979.

²⁰⁵ ASV, Scuola Grande di S.Rocco, busta 49, c. 6 verso.

²⁰⁶ Paoletti (1893), II, p. 123, doc. 142: "per che moltti signori ett nottabile persone et signori peregrini et foresttieri che veno de ttempo in ttempo In questa incllitta zitta sono desideroxi venir arrevexittar ditta giexia volendo vixittar ditto... chorpo... vedendo esser tenuto ditto chorpo glorioso chon mancho honore..."

transferred from their former location to the choir of the new church, "fazendo pero prima far uno ett più modelì".²⁰⁷ The *guardian grande* under whom the project was started and much of it seen through was Jacopo Dragan, who appears to have combined the construction of the High Altar with the commission of his own monument at the second altar on the left. However, unlike in the case of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco, nothing indicates that the decoration of S.Rocco may have been promoted by one single person.

The church and High Altar of S.Rocco demonstrate that already in the second decade of the Cinquecento, when the Venetian government was in a financial crisis, the confraternity's fortune must have been considerable. It was one of the few architectural and sculptural enterprises that were erected immediately after the War of the League of Cambrai, when only few projects of such considerable financial scope were launched. Already in 1525 the Scuola di S.Rocco was renowned for its liking of pomp and luxury, when Bernardo de' Marin stated that Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco had made all the statues of the church's High Altar, "as in that place they do not mind the cost in order to have good and perfect works".²⁰⁸ Certainly the scuola's reputation was established by the end of the 16th century, when Francesco Sansovino claimed that the confraternity had become the wealthiest of them all.²⁰⁹ Full of admiration, he

²⁰⁷ *ibid.*

²⁰⁸ Letter quoted in Schulz (1984b), p. 271, n. 3.

²⁰⁹ Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 288: "Accresciuta poi per i tempi calamitosi del morbo di limosine, di lasci, & d'altri utili e vivi proventi, divenne finalmente la più ricca fraterna di tutte l'altre." The treasure of the Scuola di S.Rocco is an impressive collection of devotional objects. Among its

described the Scuola's façade as "entirely encrusted with most noble marbles and rich with ornaments, made at incredible expense".²¹⁰

4.2.4 The Altar of the Barbers' Guild

Only four free-standing statues of saints (plates 15-18) have survived of the Altar of the Barbers' Guild.²¹¹ Originally in S.Maria dei Servi, these are now located in the church of S.Sofia. All other elements of the altar, frame and a central image of the Madonna, are lost.

Schulz, attributing the statues to Antonio Rizzo, shed light on the history of the altar. It was first mentioned in an agreement between the guild and the brotherhood of the Servi of 19th July 1462. As commemorated in an inscription of 1468 and in a document of 6th July of the same year, the chapter of S.Maria dei Servi and the guild of the barbers agreed on a meeting place for the members of the guild in the church of S.Maria dei Servi: an oratory, adjacent to the cloister of the Servites was constructed and an altar, the second on the right (as seen from the entrance), then dedicated to St. Mark, was ceded to the guild. The members were given permission to re-dedicate the altar to Sts. Cosmas and Damian and to any other saint they chose.

"[They shall] make it and decorate it with a *pala*, putting in the middle the figure of the Virgin Mary and

objects are two small silver altars, one from the beginning of the 16th century with a central relief of a Pietà and figures of Sts. Roch and Sebastian to the sides, the figures of which are not unlike the marble statues on the high altar of the church.

²¹⁰ Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 288: "tutta incrostata di nobilissimi marmi & ricca di ornamenti, con incredibil spesa"

²¹¹ Catalogue no. 37.

on the sides the figures of Sts. Luke, Andrew, Cosmas and Damian."²¹²

Schulz reasoned that the Barbers' Guild was neither wealthy nor prestigious and, in contradiction to the documents, that its members could not afford an independent meeting house, concluding that "probably they did not have much money to decorate their altar."²¹³ However, the Barbers' Guild may have been more prestigious than she believed. According to legend, the guild's patron saints Cosmas and Damian were Christian physicians in the Near East during the 3rd century.²¹⁴ Therefore, they were the appropriate protectors of the barbers, who traditionally had the functions of physicians and surgeons, and thus played an important role during the plague.

The 1460s were hit by three outbreaks of the epidemic, from 1460-62, in 1464, and in 1468. In view of the related historical circumstances and documents, it becomes very likely that the sculptural decoration of the new altar, which was completed by 1490, was initiated in or shortly after the year 1468, that is to say after the epidemic, when the spiritual need for physical protection would have been at its height. Similarly, the commission of the St. Vincent Ferrer Polyptych in SS. Giovanni e Paolo may well have come as a result of the epidemics in the 1460s.

²¹² ASV, S.Maria dei Servi, busta 9, codice 2.1:"e far lo e adornarlo cum una palla metando in quello la figura dela vergine Maria in mezo e da illadi le figure de San Luca e Santo Andrea e San Cosma e Damian."

²¹³ Schulz (1983a), pp. 41-43, and 180-81.

²¹⁴ LCI, VII, col. 344-52.

4.2.5 The Altar of S. Michael in the Church of the Frari

Another guild which probably was in the possession of a sculptured altarpiece (plate 28) was the *Arte dei Bocaleri*, the guild of the crockery sellers. They had their meeting place in the chapel of St. Michael in the church of the Frari.

Cicogna concluded from an inscription recorded by him, that the altar belonged to the patrician Marchio Trevisan who was buried in the same chapel.²¹⁵ in my view this is not very likely. Trevisan's lavishly decorated pensile marble monument (plate 180), which was erected on the chapel's right side wall, would hardly have been accompanied by a wooden altar.²¹⁶ As the donor of the relic of the Precious Blood (plate 167) and General of the Venetian fleet, he or his executors would have commissioned an altarpiece in a more precious material.

On the other hand, we know that wooden statues were often carried around in processions of the confraternities and guild. This was perhaps the case with the figure of the Archangel Michael, the guild's patron saint. During recent restoration it was discovered that the central statue was fitted into its niche much later than the date of its carving - as a consequence, St. Michael's wings had to be cut off almost completely. Presumably, it came to replace an earlier statue during the chapel's re-arrangement in the early 19th century.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ See this chapter, above, n. 55.

²¹⁶ According to Munman (1968), p. 295, no documents concerning the Trevisan tomb survive.

²¹⁷ This was pointed out to me by dott. Luigi Sante Savio from the Soprintendenza dei Beni Artistici e Storici di Venezia.

In the above survey I have selected those patrons which can be determined with reasonable certainty and who contribute to convey a comprehensive picture. Many other donors or patrons of sculptured altarpieces remain more obscure, some can no longer be identified. Wherever feasible, I have indicated possible patrons in Appendix II.

CONCLUSION

The sculptured altarpiece is a major genre of Venetian sculpture during the period between 1460 and 1530, second in rank only to the Venetian monumental tomb. Although by far outnumbered by their painted counterparts, there is a surprisingly large number of sculptured altarpieces in Venice. As the thesis has shown, many of them are impressive monuments, decorated with reliefs or free-standing figures and employing expensive materials for their construction.

1. Form and Content

Shortly after the middle of the 15th century, parallel to a development in altar painting, the sculptured altarpiece in Venice began to develop from its late mediaeval forms of polyptych and triptych towards the unified retable of the Renaissance. During the transitional years of the late Quattrocento both forms and their variations co-existed. Thus, Rizzo's pair of aedicula altars in S.Marco (plates 82, 84) of 1465-69 is approximately contemporary with the Polyptych of St. Peter in S.Maria dei Frari (plate 8), probably completed in 1464, and with the altar of the d'Arnolfo chapel in Chioggia (plate 32), which was made in the years after 1458. Moreover, the basic form of the triptych continued to be used throughout the 16th century, often in combination with the motif of a triumphal arch. This can be observed on the Altar of the Madonna in SS. Giovanni e Paolo of the early 1480s (plate 33), approximately forty years later on the two wooden altars in the cathedral of Torcello (plate 65,67), and finally on Alessandro Vittoria's

Altar of St. Anthony Abbot in S. Francesco della Vigna (plate 186), which was commissioned in 1561 by the Procurators of S. Marco de Citra.¹

Even though they often lack the elegance of Rizzo's statue of St. Paul (plate 85), the statues on many of these altars are imposing images of saints of considerable dimensions, often two thirds life-size, sometimes life size, as on the monumental tombs of the period, such as the lost wooden statue of St. Cristopher (catalogue no. 44). In a few exceptional cases they were even larger. On altars of the Sacrament, on the other hand, statuary remained on a small scale in order to give precedence to the central tabernacle as the symbol of the Eucharist, while, as Burckhardt noted, "pure decoration came into its own."² Eventually, this led to the exclusively architectural type of tabernacle altars of the Counter-Reformation, which focused on the holy nature of the Host and Eucharist and not on "idolatrous" images of saints.

While these statues were normally isolated iconic figures or sometimes grouped as a *Sacra Conversazione*, narrative altarpieces in sculpture are comparatively rare. They were also far less common than their painted counterparts. A generalising hypothesis by Hills that "narrative altarpieces were commonplace, even if they were not designated *storie* before the Cinquecento" cannot be confirmed.³

¹ Pope-Hennessy (1963), p. 417. The altarpieces of the later Cinquecento will be discussed in a forthcoming thesis by Susanne Kiefhaber (Technische Universität, Berlin).

² Burckhardt/Humfrey (1988), p. 40.

³ Hills in Humfrey and Kemp (1990), p. 39.

The dignity of the altar's location in the church appears to have determined the choice of a narrative for the altarpiece. During the period considered in the thesis, that choice was restricted to principal Christological and Marian scenes, that is to say mystical events which were most closely related to iconic images. Venetian narrative altar reliefs, such as the Altar of the Nativity (plate 134) in the Seminario Patriarcale, virtually always retain the meditative character of the *Sacra Conversazione*. Significantly, the only true sculptured *historia* which was intended to decorate a Venetian altarpiece of the period, the Altar of the Scuola Grande di S.Marco, would have shown a sequence of representations, conveying separate moments of an *historia*, like the predella reliefs of the Badoer Altar in S.Francesco della Vigna (plates 45-47) or those of the Altar of the Title of the Cross from S.Maria dei Servi (plates 155-158).

Apart from a few exceptions, Venetian sculptors did not endeavour to emulate Donatello's tour-de-force perspectival constructions. The emphasis seems to have been on the monumental statue rather than on the subtleties of *schacciato* relief. At any rate, by the time Venetian Renaissance sculpture began to distinguish itself, the main achievements of Quattrocento sculpture in Italy were already out of date and beginning to be overshadowed by the figurative art of Michelangelo. Before the arrival of Jacopo Sansovino in Venice, only a few sculptors showed themselves receptive to Michelangelo's new concept of monumental sculpture and the virtuoso figure, most notably Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco in his "figura serpentinata" of St. Sebastian (plate 60) on the High Altar of S.Rocco.

The mainstream of Venetian sculpture during the years up to Tullio Lombardo's death in 1532 was, however, dominated by the Lombardo, their workshop and similar-minded sculptors (such as Lorenzo and Giambattista Bregno), drawing on a set classicising vocabulary of forms that had been established in the late 15th century and did not develop much in the years after 1500. It is noticeable that, with the exception of Antonio Rizzo, Tullio and Antonio Lombardo and Lorenzo Bregno who proved themselves to be first-rate artists, the majority of these sculptors had the social status of craftsmen and were, together with architects, united in the *arte dei tagliapietra*, the stonecutters' guild.

2. Material

The extant sculptured altarpieces in Venice of our period are exclusively made of either wood, stone or bronze. At least one terracotta altarpiece (Catalogue no. 48) existed, but has not survived.

While the altars' innovative forms during the second half of the Quattrocento were the aedicula and derivatives of the triumphal arch, the innovative material was marble. White marble, and Carrara marble in particular, quickly became the standard material for altar sculpture, whereas the hitherto common wood, terracotta and Istrian stone were pushed more and more into secondary positions.

As long as it had been a common habit to polychrome both wooden and stone sculptures, there was no crucial difference between the various materials. Only when changing taste discovered the "noble" qualities of marble, its high surface

polish and the fact that it had been used by classical sculptors, the difference between wood and stone became evident. The Vendramin tomb from S.Maria dei Servi, under construction at the time Sanudo wrote, was praised by him as "the most beautiful of this world" for the "worthy marbles" it was being made from.⁴

Parallel to the development of the *colorito* in Venetian painting, a preference for colourful stones, such as rare veined marbles, porphyry and serpentine, crystallised in Venetian sculpture. They came to decorate virtually every available surface and replaced earlier floral ornaments.

Painters of altarpieces seem to have been eager to depict such precious stones and variegated marbles, most notably Cima da Conegliano in Giorgio Dragan's altarpiece from S.Maria della Carità (plate 179), where the painter had to compete with a lavish marble decoration of the chapel, and Giovanni Bellini in his altarpiece in S.Giovanni Crisostomo, which was made for the Diletti Chapel in 1513, situated opposite Tullio Lombardo's *Coronation of the Virgin* (plate 150) of the previous decade. Although I have tried to point out parallels between sculptured and painted altarpieces wherever it was suitable, a comparative study was beyond the aim of the thesis and would offer a starting point for further research.

The appreciation of the beauty of these stones manifests itself in the lavish way they were employed on the framework of many altars and in a few cases even on the figurative sculptures themselves. It furthermore emerges from contemporary documents. Even the normally dry and business-

⁴ Sheard (1977).

minded Procurators of S.Marco enthusiastically praised the beauty of the material during the construction of the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen and of the Emiliani Chapel at S.Michele. Andrea Gussoni's entries in the account books express his admiration for the pieces he and his colleague had chosen. For once, these records speak of "a very beautiful column made from white marble with black marks" or of "two most beautiful pieces of a speckled serpentine column" or "a slab of a black and white stone with the most beautiful pattern". It is particularly on Venetian altars with their lavish inlays of coloured stones and large areas of gilding, where Burckhardt's idea of the "pure decoration" is put into practice.

The third material, bronze, was a completely new medium for the genre of the altarpiece, the earliest example being the relief for Jacopo Surian (plate 109) of ca. 1490. As an extremely expensive medium, it could only be afforded by a few affluent patrons. Interestingly enough, the terracotta altarpiece of 1449-51 by Nicolò Pizolo in the Ovetari Chapel in the church of the Eremitani at Padua was painted brown so as to look like bronze. This was certainly done in imitation of the High Altar in the Santo, which consisted of seven life-size bronze statues and twenty-one bronze reliefs. For the same High Altar Donatello had made a terracotta relief of the *Entombment*, which was also painted in imitation of the altar's figural decoration in bronze.⁵ Alessandro Vittoria's terracotta figures for the Altar of the Sacrament in the Venetian church of S.Giuliano of 1577-78 were disguised in

⁵ Alberta De Nicolò Salmazo, in Pittura Veneta, II, pp. 488-490.

the same fashion.⁶ Stucco was a material to be discovered for Venetian altarpieces in the second half of the Cinquecento.⁷

Sculptured altarpieces, whether made from marble or bronze, were almost invariably more expensive than painted ones. Not only was the material cost higher, but their manufacture normally took longer and required the participation of several craftsmen, from the porters to carry the blocks of stone, to the sculptors who carved the figures.

3. Patronage

Ironically, the 17th century altar of the stonemasons' guild at S.Silvestro is decorated with wooden figures, which are painted to look like stone. The guild's altarpiece of the early 16th century is not a sculptured one at all, but a painting of rather poor quality (sometimes attributed to Vincenzo Catena), now in the Gallerie dell'Accademia. The reason for this choice was surely conditioned by the stonemasons' lack of financial resources. The *arte dei tagliapietra* was simply not wealthy enough to afford a better painted altarpiece, let alone a sculptured one. In fact, during the period considered in the thesis, the only guild that is certain to have owned an altarpiece with stone

⁶ Timofiewitsch (1972), p. 236.

⁷ It was used, for instance, on Alessandro Vittoria's Altar of St. Jerome in S.Maria dei Frari, where the central figure of the altar's titular was carved in marble, whereas the accompanying figures were conceived as stucco reliefs.

statues is that of the barbers.⁸ Among the remaining Scuole, only two of the competitive Scuole Grandi commissioned sculptured altarpieces, and only one of them, the High Altar for the church of S.Rocco (plate 58), was ever completed.

Most patrons were wealthy individuals from Venetian patrician and *cittadino* families. Between these two classes no distinction can be drawn regarding patterns of patronage. This becomes particularly evident in the four cases of sculptured altarpieces which featured bronze works. Two of them were commissioned by patricians, Girolamo Donato (plates 155-160, catalogue no. 5) and Giambattista Zen (plate 122, catalogue no. 23), the other two by citizens, Jacopo Surian (plate 109, catalogue no. 38) and Domenico de Piero (catalogue no. 47). Both Donato and Surian were men of humanist learning. Donato was further known as a collector of antiquities, as was Domenico de Piero.

Zen, on the other hand, does not seem to have chosen bronze predominantly for its implications of learnedness. Instead, his main interest was to have costly monuments on a large scale erected in his honour and memory. For these he also chose the most conspicuous religious sites of the Venetian Republic, the Ducal Chapel of S.Marco and the basilica of S.Antonio in Padua. In his funerary chapel in S.Marco, with Zen's large sarcophagus directly in front of the altar, Mass could not have been celebrated for anyone but

⁸ It is only from the last years of the Cinquecento that guild altars with significant sculptural decoration are extant. The most important of them are the altar of the guild of the goldsmiths in S.Giacomo di Rialto with a life-size bronze figure of St. Anthony Abbot by Girolamo Campagna, and in the same church the altar of the Casaroli with a marble statue of St. James from the workshop of Alessandro Vittoria.

Zen, while the altarpiece with its life-size statues remained clearly visible for everyone.

While most other patrons were more modest in the choice of the location of their altars, they regarded altarpieces - like funerary monuments -, whether paintings or sculptures, as important status symbols of their society. Thus, the founder of the altar in the Badoer Chapel at S.Francesco della Vigna, Girolamo di Jacopo Badoer, stipulated in his will of 1494 that his altar was to be made of marble "and one must not think of the cost of it".⁹

Individual founders and/or patrons of the altars I have surveyed are usually commemorated by the representation of their onomastic saint on the altarpiece. Furthermore, patrons often had the family's coat-of-arms inserted on the altar's framework. Inscriptions on the altars themselves are less frequent, but feature prominently on all three of Doge Cristoforo Moro's altars in S.Marco. In a few cases, altar reliefs even include a portrait of the donor, such as Jacopo Surian and his wife on the physician's altar in S.Stefano.

Both altars and tombs were crucial to the salvation of the soul of the person they commemorated, they were commissions "in perpetuum", which means they had to last forever. It is probably for this reason that some patrons preferred works in bronze or stone on their altars, as they were believed to be longer lasting than paintings. Thus, to a certain extent, the emphasis of the altarpiece as a functional object was on material, not artistic aspects, which shows in the poor quality of some of the works. Sadly, the present situation shows that the opposite is the case as

⁹ Document published in Schulz (1977), p. 40, n. 8.

many of the sculptured altarpieces discussed in the thesis are badly neglected. Using this argument of the durability of his works, Tullio Lombardo successfully tried to convince a patron of his in Rovigo. Praising the invaluable qualities of sculpture in a letter of 18th July 1526 he wrote:

"Once finished it will be a beautiful work and an everlasting memory, as your lordship will be able to judge... Painting is such a common thing... whereas sculpture is much more without comparison and not to compare with painting in any way."¹⁰

¹⁰ Document published in Puppi (1972), p. 103.

APPENDIX I

DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE MAKING OF THE ALTAR OF ST. MARY
MAGDALEN AT S.MARIA DEI SERVI

The following documents are preserved in the Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Procuratori di S.Marco, *Misti*, Busta 98A. In the transcription I have put into square brackets standard phrases which are repeated regularly. Legible words, the sense of which is unclear, are followed by a question mark. Illegible words are marked as such in a footnote. Some specialist terms are explained in the footnotes.

The contract and a few paragraphs of the account book were published and paraphrased in 1884 by Caffi with some minor differences in the transcription. *Carta 18 right* of the account book, paraphrased by Caffi, was published by Schulz (1991, pp. 123f.), again with minor differences in the transcription.

Document I: Excerpts from the Will of Madonna Verde della Scala, 4th December 1393

In nomine dei eterni Amen. Anno ab incarnatione domini nostri Ihesu christi. Millesimo trecentesimo nonagesimo tercio mensis decembris die quarto...

Ego Viridis de la Scala civis veneciae de confinio S.Marie formose nata quondam clare memorie magnifici et potentis domini mastini dela scala olim Veronae..., ac olim consors bone memorie Illustris domini Nicolai olim Estensis marchiois sana mentis et intellectus fratia ihesu christi copius sum egritudine corpis aliququaliter alterata timens humane nature fragilitatem nolens quod intestata decedere vocari feci ad me Marcum de Raphanellis notarium et --¹ meum, et cum rogavi, ut hoc meum testamentum scriberet et compleret illud post obitum meum cum clausulis et additionibus consuetis.

In quo quidem meo testamento volo et constituo meos fideicommissios et executores huius mee ultime voluntatis Nobiles viros dominum Johannem Contareno quondam domine Luce moratur ad sanctum Job et dominum Gabrielem superantio bancherium in Rivoalto compatrem meum, et post eorum dicti decessum aut eorum alt'ius Nobiles et sapientes viros dominos procuratores sancti marci supra comissariabus constitutos. Qui domini Johannes et Gabriel donec vixerint et post eorum decessum aut alterius eorumdicti domini procuratores debeant post meum obitum facere et adimplere ut infra seriusius continetur. In primis volo et ordino quod corpus meus sepelliatur ad locum fratrum servorum sancte marie di Venecia in una capsula lignea, in loco basso in terra ante unum

¹ Illegible word.

altarem ubi indebitur suprascriptis dominis Johani et Gabrieli commissariis meis supra quod meus corpus in terra positum ponatur solum unus lapis vivus et volo ut ad exequum mee sepulture sint solum fratres suorum servorum quattuor deplecii sine alia pompa. Item ecclesie dictorum fratrum servorum pro fabrica ducatos ducentos auri de prode meorum Imprestitorum. Item dimitto ecclesie et commissarie de padua ducatos ducentos auri per fabrica quos solvi volo de dicto prode meorum imprestitorum.

Item dimitto cuilibet Regule fratrum mendicantium de Venecie minorum, predicatorum, carmelitarum, servorum sancte marie et hermitarum ducatos sedecim omni anno in perpetui quos solvi volo de dicto prode meorum imprestitorum cum conditione tamen, quod quilibet conventus dictorum fratrum teneatur --² fallo facere celebrari omni die in perpetuum in sua ecclesia una missam specialiter pro anima mea cum orationibus votivis et etiam omni anno in perpetuum facere aniversarium meum solemniter...

Item dimitto Aqueti nepoti mee ducatos mille auri... per dote sua... Item dimitto Matteo dicto Zuacharato filio Mignanelli de Senis ducatos mille auri... cum ipse fiut etatis annorum decemocto... Item dimitto Luchino filio Anechini sartoris olim habitantis ferrarie ducatos centum auri...

Item volo et ordino quod Mazina sclava mea sie libera Reliquum no (?) prodis meorum Imprestitorum super abundantis, legatis contentis in hoc meo testamento dari et dispensari volo omni anno in perpetuum per anima mea in fabricis ecclesiarum et monasteriorum de Venecie sicut indebitur meis commissariis...

² Illegible word.

Document II: The Contract between the Procurators of S. Marco de Citra, Andrea Gussoni and Antonio Tron, and Guglielmo di Giacomo d'Alzano, 6th December 1523

El si dechiara per la presentte Come i Signori progurattori di zittra a di sopraditto sono rimasti da cordo com maestro vielmo tagiapiera di Jachomo che li die far uno adornamento daltar ne la giexia di servi da Venexia per conto dela comesaria de madonna verde de la schalla quale di essere altto da tera fino ala zima del fronttespizo da pie 28 in zircha et largo di fuora via de tutti li pilastri da pie 16 in zircha secondo la forma e modi de uno desegno fatto per el ditto maestro vielmo e de uno modello di legname fatto per el maestro biagio da Faenza qual alttar die essere de piera vive da ruigno com due colone di marmoro et algune in vestixom de marmori over alabastru ingaxado de diverse piera fine com una figura al mezo in uno nichio qual die essere la madalena fatta de marmoro. Die far etiam el ditto maestro vielmo li inchastru di una sepultura dela ditto madona verde che va davantti li schalini da baxo de ditto alttar qual dieno essere etiam de piera viva de ruigno largi pe³ 1 inzircha, soazadi et in chaxadi de marmori e piera fine el choverchio de la qual e fatto vechio che si vol metere in opera pero di quel non se dize alltro. Die far etiam due pigrame pur di piera viva che vano per banda de lalttar soazade e le sue letere denttro che achaderano stuchade qual dieno essere large pie 2 in zircha e longe pie 3 1/2 in zircha e die far due arme schiete de la ditto madona verde sotto ditti epigrame over dove melgio parerano star bem. Qual tutto

³ One Venetian foot measures 34.77 cm. See Concina (1988), p. 110.

sopraditto lavor zoe alttar in chastri epigrame et arme ezeto che la figura de la madalena che die essere fatta per qo altro modo uno altro marchado.

El sopraditto maestro vielmo si obliga a far zoe solum per quanto appartiem a la fattura per che tutte le piere vive piere fine marmori chollone I sopraditti signor prochurattori dieno meter loro

et el ditto maestro vielmo li nel monestier di servi in uno locho comodo che li aparechiato die lavorar ditte colone e piere vive et fregar e lustrar tagiar e comzar ale mesure i marmori alabastri e tutte piere fine achaderano et il tutto meter et inchazar ai sui logi come melgio parera et ordenera el magnifico meser anttonio Trun et meser andrea gussoni prochurattori che hano el chargo de ditta opera e per che el achadera segar alcuni pezi de alabastro marmori e piere fine se dichiara che ditta spexa de segadure die essere fatta per i sopraditti magnifici signori prochurattori magistri alttre fattura de fregar lustrar e alttro come e ditto di sopra die essere fatta per el ditto maestro vielmo el qual e obligatto etiam metere in opera al suo locho tutto il sopraditto lavor maestro zoe buttar mane et maistrare i mureri che pagerano i sopraditti signori prochurattori per meter in opera i ditti lavori ut supra. Del qual tutto sopraditto lavor I sopra ditti prochurattori dieno dar al sopra ditto maestro vielmo per sua fattura si come sono rimasti da cordo presentte maestro bom protto de i signor progurattori de la giexia e parentte del ditto maestro vielmo ducati 145 zoe duchatti zentto e quarantta zingue qual danari doverano essere datti al ditto maestro vielmo per zornada si chome andera lavorando Talche non vengi ad intachar i ditti signor prochurattori i

lui abi il suo dover e pero de tempo in tempo gratta dil
 lavor havera fatto habi etiam la porziom e ratta del danaro.

El qual maestro vielmo promete far ditto lavoro com ogni
 diligenza bem comeso et bem inchaxado il tutto promete
 farllo quantto per lui presto li sera possibile lavorando
 com quattro e 6 maistri com ogni solizittudine et pero
 cadauna de le parte qui sotto si sotto scriverano cusi e per
 contratto.

Cussi essere contento Io andrea gussoni prochorator per nome
 mio et dei signori prochorattori mei cholege sono contento
 et confermo quanto di sopra e ditto.

Io maestro vielmo chondam iacomo taiapiera sono chontento et
 asicuro quanto di sopra et dalaltra banda chontente.

**Document III: The Account Book of the Commissaria Verde della
 Scala**

carta 1/left

1523

Spexe in monte fate per el farfar laltar et sepoltura de
 madonna verde dela schala nela giexia di servi de Venezia die
 dar adi 12 dezembro contadi a maestro biasio da Faenza sta in
 San Lio per aver fato uno modelo di legname soazado secondo
 la forma die essere el sopradito altar ducati 2 val lire 12
 soldi 8.

5 Zener.

Contadi a Francesco Ferarexe proto de barcha da padoa per
 bene do sabiom grosso che se trova di sora padoa per el fondo
 de la brenta dacordo a soldi 40 la benasi come li pagano
 quelli de san rocho monte lire 4. qual e tolto per adoperar a
 far segar i alabastri. marmori et algune balote grande et
 altre piere a butar dal monestier di servi val lire 4 soldi.

31 dito.

contadi a maestro simon di nicolli dal castelliom murer per dar a manoalli do che anno lavorato zorni 5 per uno Incavar le fondamente et romper el muro in giexia di servi dove va laltar son zornade 10 a soldi 13 per uno al di lire 6 soldi 10.

Item.

Contadi al dito maestro simon che a compra calcina negra per far dite fondamente fo masteli 12 a soldi 6 el mastello⁴ lire 3 soldi 12 e per sabiom lire 1 soldi 4 barcha a conduto ai servi soldi 12 tuto lire 12 soldi 18.

7 Frever.

Contadi a maestro simon murer sopradito per calcina negra: acomprado mastelli 25 a soldi 25 el mastello monte lire 6 soldi 5 et per barcha la conduse ai servi soldi 12 et per terram di savon⁵ burchiele 4 a soldi 13 la burchiela conduti li monte lire 2 soldi 12

Item.

contadi a manoalli numero 3 anno lavorato questa setemana che sta zorni 5 in tuto zornade 15 a soldi 13 luna monte lire 9 soldi 15

Item.

contadi al dito maestro simon per zornade 6 a lavorato lui di murer a soldi 24 al di lire 7 soldi 4 suma in tuto lire 26 soldi 8

⁴ One *mastello* is equivalent to 7 secchie or 75.117 litres. Cf. Concina (1988), p. 97.

⁵ *Terra di savon* is an impermeable clay. See Giorgio Gianighian (ed.). Dietro I Palazzi. Venezia, 1984, p. 37.

le qual sopra dite robe et opere sono sta per el farfar dele
fondamente de li schalieri et pilastroni de lo altar et meter
in operam tuti diti schalini et alaltar va di sopra.

c.1/right

Spexe al incontro die aver adi 7 frever per lei medeme porto
avanti per saldo di questo charte 6 lire 54 soldi 14

carta 2/left

1523

Piere fine in monte comprade per metter nel altar et fafar ai
servi da Venezia per la commissaria di madonna verde dela
schalla die dar adi 17 dezembris contadi a madonna anzolla di
priolli moier che fo di miser carlo per pezi numero 21 di
porfidi et serpentini fra grandi et piccoli zoe alguni in
forma di tondi et molti altri pezi roti che erano tondi
grandi dacordo di tuti per ducati 9 Lire 55 soldi 16.

7 mazo 1524.

contadi a christofallo segador di piere che lavora in chaxa
per aver fato di nostre piere pinzete⁶ piccole no 12 di
serpentin et porfido fini et pinze 4 grande de piera meschia
negra et bianca dacordo con lui de tute lustrade come dieno
star per ducato uno lire 6 soldi 4.

dito.

per maestro nicolo segador per uno marchado fato con lui di
far di nostre piere do mandole grande de serpentin et doi
mazor cha mezi tondi de porfido et segar do quadri et
tondizar et conzar uno tondo de porfido come apar destinto
lire 16

⁶ Illegible word.

dito.

per maestro nicolo dito per segar uno --⁷ pezo de fites⁸ et
far di quello 4 striche⁹ et darne del suo 4 tondineli di
diaspro el tuto come destinto apar charte 5 lire 92
suma lire 87

carta 2/right

Piere alincontro die aver adi 17 zener 1524 per spexe in
monte fato per far far uno altar et sepoltura in la giexia di
servi da venetia porto a quel conto per saldo di questo
charte 17 lire 87

carta 3/left

1523

maestro zacharia da lugam taiapiera die dar adi 17 dezembris
contadi alui a bonconto di piere vive da ruigno lui ne die
dar per lo altar se fafar ai servi ducato uno secondo la
forma del marchado fato con lui val lire 6 soldi 4

17 zener. contadi a lui a bonconto ducati X val lire 62 soldi
11 frever. contadi al dito utsupra ducati XV val lire 93
soldi

20 april 1524. contadi al dito ut supra ducati XX val lire
124 soldi

⁷ Illegible word, perhaps crossed out.

⁸ The word *fites*, possibly with an abbreviation at the end occurs at several instances throughout the document. I have not been able to find a definition of it anywhere. In my opinion, judging from the use of the word in the documents, it describes a precious material (stone or glass?) used for the decoration of the altar's architecture. The four bright red disks on the Altar of St. Jerome in S.Salvatore (plate 99) may be pieces of it.

⁹ A *stricha* defines a stone ledge.

16 luio. contadi al dito per resto di tute piere vive da ruigno ne anno conduto et di ogni altra raxon lire 68 soldi 16.

suma lire 354 soldi

carta 3/right

1523

maestro Zacharia alincontro die aver adi 17 zener 1524 per spexe in monte fate per far laltar et sepoltura in giexia di servi per piere vive da ruigno ne a consegnado adi 12 dezembris 1523 secondo la forma del marchado abiamo con lui zoe che el ne die dar tute le piere vive che ne besognano per lo altar et sepoltura se fano far ai servi qual dieno esser da ruigno son stade et redute secondo le sagome et mesure li son sta date per maestro vielmo taiapiera che fa dita opera qual piere ne die dar condute et descargate li in giexia overo in monestier di servi dacordo per lire 3 el miliarium¹⁰ et soldi 0 ne consegna adi 17 dezembris per parte alcuni pezi per far i schalini et quadroni fo miliaria no 18 a lire 3 el miliarium ut supra monte lire 54 val charte 17 lire 54 soldi dito.

per spexe dite che ne a consegna descargato li ai servi adi 12 zener 1523 algune lastre per i basamenti et per parte del salazado et altri pezi per altri besogni In tuto miliaria 20 a lire 3 el miliarium monte charte 17 lire 60 soldi. dito.

¹⁰ One *milliarium* weighs one thousand libbra (1,000 x 0.476 kg). Francesco Semi, Glossario del Latino Medioevale Istriano, Venezia, 1990, p. 247, *ad vocem* miliare. The term, which in the documents is almost always abbreviated, is identical with the term *mier* (see n. 19).

per spexe dite che ne consegno adi 16 luio 1524 deschargato
 li In li servi in tre fiade fin questo di tute le piere ne
 manchavano per compimento di lopera zoe i triancolli il
 nichio tute le lastre per el salizado do pezi per far i
 pegrami et per far le colone quadre et alcuni pezi de cornixe
 qual tuto son sta dacordo miliaria 80 a lire 3 el miliarium
 secondo el marchado monte lire 240 soldi
 suma lire 354 soldi

carta 4/left

1523¹¹

maestro vielmo q. Jacomo taiapiera diedar adi 19 dezembrio
 contadi alui a bon conto di uno margado fatto con lui di far
 lo altar et sepoltura dela commissaria di madonna verde dela
 scualla in la giexia di servi de Venezia ducati 2 doro val
 ducati 2 lire 12 soldi 8

23 dito.

contadi al dito a bonconto ducati do val lire 12 soldi 8

3 zener [...] ducati 3 val lire 18 soldi 12

9 dito [...] ducati 4 val lire 24 soldi 16

17 dito [...] ducati 7 val lire 43 soldi 8

24 dito [...] ducati 7 val lire 43 soldi 8

31 dito. contadi al dito ut supra ducati 6 val 37 soldi 4

14 frever [...] ducati 5 val lire 31

21 frever [...] ducati 5 val lire 31

11 marzo 1524 [...] ducati 15 val lire 93

24 dito [...] ducati 10 val lire 62

3 april [...] ducati 10 val lire 62

17 dito [...] ducati 8 val lire 49 soldi 12

¹¹ Corrected by the same hand for 1524.

24 dito [...] ducati 10 val lire 62
 primo mazo [...] ducati 5 val lire 31
 8 dito [...] ducati 5 val lire 31
 16 dito [...] ducati 5 val lire 31
 23 dito [...] ducati 20 val lire 124
 19 zugno [...] per resto del contrascrito marchado ducati
 diexe lire 64 soldi
 dito e fo adi 2 frever 1523 che ave contade ducati 6 val lire
 32 soldi 4
 suma lire 899 soldi

carta 4/right

1523¹²

maestro vielmo taiapiera alincontro die aver adi 17 zener
 1524 per spexe in monte fate per far uno altar et sepoltura
 in giexia di servi et som per uno marchado fofato con lui
 fino adi 6 de dezembrio 1523 per el qual era obligato far uno
 adornamento daltar in la giexia di servi di venezia et una
 sepoltura qual altar die esser alto da teram fino ala zima
 del frontespizo da pie 28 inzircha et largo di fuora via di
 tuti li pilastri da pie 16. in zircha: die aver uno nichio
 almezo dove andera una santa madalena di marmoro qual altar
 die essere di pietre vive da ruigno con due colone di marmoro
 et algune investizom di marmori et alabastri incastado di
 diverse piere fine secondo la forma et modi de uno desegno et
 uno modelo fato pel dito maestro vielmo die far etiam do
 epigrame de piera viva soazade et cornixade che vano una per
 banda del dito altar qual tuto sopradito lavor zoe altar
 incastri dela sepoltura et epigrame etzeto che la fegura che

¹² Corrected by the same hand for 1524.

die esser fata per uno altro maistro el sopradito maestro
 vielmo se obliga a far zoe per quanto apartiem ala fatura per
 che tute le piere vive alabastri marmori colone et piere fine
 le debiamo dar del nostro: tal che lui non mete salvo che a
 la fatura dichiarando che tute le segadure di marmori et
 alabastri noi le dovimo far et lui le die fregar et lustrar
 et taiar secondo le forme achaderano le piere fine etiam noi
 dobbiamo dargelle tute lavorate del qual tuto lavor debiamo
 dar al dito maestro vielmo per sua fatura ducati 145 come
 apar per uno sto (?) apresso di noi di magnifico messer
 andrea gussoni procurator et sottoscrito di sua man val charte
 17 lire 899 soldi.

carta 5/left

1523

Maestro nichollo segador di piere fine tien botega al ponte
 di Fuxeri die dar adi 31 zener contadi alui a bon conto di
 uno marchado di alguni pezi di piere fine el ne die far lire
 6 soldi.

21 frever.

contadi aldito abonconto ducati 2 val lire 12 soldi 8

3 april 1524.

contadi aldito per resto di uno marchado lire 6 soldi 12 como
 apar alincontro val lire 6 soldi 12

carta 5/right

1523

maestro nichollo die aver adi 7 marzo 1524 per piere fine per
 uno marchado fato con lui adi 14 zener 1523 che el ne die far
 di nostre piere do mandole grande de serpentini fini et doi

mazor cha mezi tondi pur grandi di porfido: et segar do quadri lustrar et squarizar di porfido secondo le sagome alui dati et tondizar et conzar uno tondo di porfido qual tuti pezi son per el schabello¹³ di lo altar et farfar ai servi dacordo con lui per lire 16. et fu mezam et preferito vielmo taiapiera val charte 2 lire 16 soldi

dito. per piere fine sopradite per uno altro marcado fato con el dito adi 31 zener pasado che ne die segar uno nostro pezo di fites et far di quello striche 4 comese et incolade in do pezi et far do mandolete il tuto lustrado et die ne etiam dar del suo 4 tondineti di diaspro qual tuti pezi vano nelantipeto delaltar et del tuto siamo dacordo mezam maestro vielmo taiapiera per lire 9 val charte 2 lire 9 soldi.

carta 6/left

1523

Spexe in monte per far far l'altra et sepoltura per conto de la commessaria de madonna verde dala schala nela giexia di servi die dar adi 7 frever per lei medeme trato avanti de charta 1 lire 54 soldi 14

21 dito.

contadi a maestro simon murer per zornade 3 a fato questa setemana a soldi 24 aldi lire 3 soldi 12 et per zornade 9 de 3 manoali a soldi 13 luno monte lire 5 soldi 13 et lire 9 soldi 9 qual zornade son sta per metter i pilastroni delaltar et saldadi di muro come dieno star val lire 9 soldi 9

11 marzo 1524.

¹³ *Schabello* normally means stool, but us sometimes also used in the meaning of predella. See Connell (1976), p. 292.

contadi a ser bortolo garbin segador di marmori per zornade no 10 da noi lavorado fin questo di per segar alcuni pezi a soldi 15 aldi monte lire 7 soldi 10 val lire 7 soldi 10
24 dito.

contadi a ser bortolo sopradito per zornade no 8 a fato finquesto di che el zuoba santo¹⁴ a soldi 15 al di monte lire 6 soldi.

3 april.

contadi a ser bortolo sopradito per zornade numero 4 a lavorado: In segar marmori questa setemana dapoi pasqua a soldi 15 aldi monte lire 3

10 dito.

[...] per zornade numero 4 [...] alcuni pezi di marmoro per le basse dele colone a soldi 15 aldi monte lire 3 val lire 3
17 dito.

[...] per zornade no 4 questa setemana a soldi 15 monte lire 3 et contadi a zuane manoval che a Ida el dito bortolo a segar uno pezo de colona de marmoro grosa ed una sega granda a soldi 12 aldi zornade do lire 1 soldi 4 tuto lire 4 soldi 4
18 dito.

contadi a maestro vielmo taiapiera che a compra calcina negra mastelli 12 a soldi 6 1/2 el mastello monte lire 3 soldi 18 sabiom lire 1 soldi 4 barcha soldi 14 qual esta permessa in opera lantipeto del laltar el schabelo i quadri basse et colone quadre et tonde et saldar el tuto di muro dentro via et contadi che a dadi a bastaxi¹⁵ no 6 che anno conduto tute dite piere del Ciostro fina in giexia suso el lavor et aiutar

¹⁴ Venetian for *Giovedì* - Thursday.

¹⁵ Porters.

ameterlle inopera lire 4 soldi 18 tuto lire 10 soldi 14 val
 lire 10 soldi 14
 lire 98

carta 6/right

spexe alincontro die aver al di 18 april 1524 per lei medeme
 porto avanti per saldo di questo charte 7 lire 98 soldi 11

carta 7/left

Spexe in monte fate per far far laltar et sepoltura nela
 giexia di servi da Venetia per conto dela commessaria madonna
 Verde dala schala die dar adi 18 april per lei medeme per
 saldo trato avanti da charte 6 lire 98 soldi 11
 dito.

contadi per far segar uno pezo de serpentin in do striche
 dametter nei quadroni lire 1 soldi 0 et per 3 cantenele¹⁶ per
 i ponti et per adoperar alargani et per barcha conduse uno
 cao da san marcho et per do sponze soldi 16 tuto lire 1 soldi
 16

20 dito.

contadi a maestro simon murer per zornade 6 a fato per far i
 ponti meter in opera lantipeto dellaltar schabelo colone
 tonde et quadre et altri pezi a soldi 26 aldi monte lire 7
 soldi 16 et contadi a do manoali per zornade no 12 ano fato
 con dito maestro simon indita opera a soldi 15 al di monte
 lire 9 et contadi al dito maestro simon per agudi grandi per
 far i ponti fo libra 15 a solidi 12 1/2 la libra monte lire 1
 soldi 17 suma lire 18 soldi 13 val lire 18 soldi 13
 dito.

¹⁶ A *cantinella* is either a ledge or a softwood joist.

contadi a bortolo segador per zornade 6 a fato questa setemana a segar la colona a soldi 15 aldi monte lire 4 soldi 10 et contadi a zan manual per zornade 6 che li a butta man a soldi 12 aldi lire 3 soldi 12 suma lire 8 soldi 2 primo mazo.

contadi a bortolo dito per zornade numero 5 a fato per andar driedo a segar la colona sopradita in taolle a soldi 15 al di monte lire 3 soldi 15 et a zan manoal la i dado per zornade 5 a soldi 12 monte lire 3 suma in tuto lire 6 soldi 15 8 dito.

contadi a maestro simon murer per zornade numero 4 a fato permetter i lidi de le colone et el primo frico a soldi 26 al di lire 5 soldi 4 et contadi a do manoali per zornade 8 ano lavorato con el dito a soldi 15 aldi monte lire 6 et contadi al dito che a compra calcina negra mastelli 6 a soldi 8 el mastello lire 2 soldi 8 sabiom et barcha lire 1 soldi 0 suma in tuto lire 14 soldi 12 val lire 14 soldi 12 dito.

contadi a ser bortolo segador per zornade 4 a fato questa setemana che a principia a segar el pezo grosso dalabastro tavole a soldi 16 aldi lire 3 soldi 4 et al monal per diti zorni lire 2 soldi 8 tuto lire 5 soldi 12

carta 7/right

1524

Spexe in monte alincontro die aver adi 8 mazo per lei medeme per suo saldo porto avanti dieno dar charte 8 lire 154 soldi 1

carta 8/left

1524

Spexe in monte fate per far far [...]

16 dito.

contadi a bortolo segador per zornade 6 a fato questa setemana che e andato driedo a segando lo alabastro a soldi 16 monte lire 4 soldi 16 et contadi a zane suo compagno per altre zornade 6 a soldi 12 monte lire 3 soldi 12 suma lire 8 soldi 8

22 dito.

Contadi a Bortolo dito [...] lire 5 soldi 14

12 zugno.

contadi a maestro vielmo taiapiera che a comprado uno pezo di marmoro zalo per meter nei cantoni del schabelo del altar soldi 18 et che a da contadi a maestro nicholo segador per segar el dito in do striche soldi 8 et contadi che la dado a francesco Ferarexe per bene do sabiom per compir da segar i alabastru che non ne sian privi di quello fo tolto per avanti a soldi 40 la bena monte lire 4 soldi 2

dito.

contadi a bortolo segador per zornade numero 17 a fato in setemane 3 che son sta fuor dela terra da di 22 mazo finquesto di che a segado tuti i pezi di le balote per far il primo frixo a soldi 16 monte lire 13 soldi 12 et contadi a zane che li a dado per altra tante zornade a soldi 12 1/2 aldi monte lire 10 soldi 13 tuto lire 24 soldi 5.

15 dito.

contadi a maestro alexandro taiapiera lavora de intagio per aver conzo el coverchio vechio dela sepoltura zoe fato uno intavolado a torno in locho di alcuni retortoli et ancheti ne

erano Item fato l'altra parte de le rasom et renovato anchor
 quello era fato et conzado i drapi de la dita figura del tuto
 dacordo per lire 6 soldi 10 val lire 6 soldi 10
 suma lire 204 soldi 4

carta 8/right

1524

Spexe in monte alincontro die aver adi 25 zugno per lei
 medeme per suo saldo porto avanti dieno dar charte 9 lire 204
 soldi 4

carta 9/left

Spexe in monte fate per far far lo altar et sepoltura [...]
 19 dito. contadi a bortolo segador per zornade 6 fate questa
 setemana In segar i alabastri a soldi 16 al di monte lire 4
 soldi 16 et contadi al¹⁷ manoal che lia buta mam per altre
 zornade 6 a soldi 10 al di monte lire 3 suma lire 7 soldi 16.
 26 dito. [...]
 3 luio. [...]
 10 dito. [...]
 16 dito.

contadi mandadi al offitio dal sal fino adi 12 dito a maestro
 alvixe bom provedador al dito offitio ducati 20 qual li
 porto maestro antonio scharpogim porto et rafael mio servidor
 et som per uno pezo de marmoro abiamo comprato dala signoria
 dita in corte di palazo puol essere miera¹⁸ 5 1/2 qual esta

¹⁷ Another word in the text appears to have been crossed out.

¹⁸ Mier, *pl.* miera, is a measurement for weight, consisting of one thousand libbre (pounds), equivalent to 470,998 kg. It is the vernacular word for the latin term *miliarium*. Concina, 1988, p. 98.

tolto per far la fegura de la madalena che va suso laltar
 dacordo con dito maestro antonio et de consentimento del
 serenissimo In ducati XX et contadi abastaxi: 6 che anno moso
 molti pezi di piera viva In corte di palazzo per de sora via
 dito marmoro et et lano chargato in una barcha et conduto a
 santo aponal et deschargato nela botega de maestro vielmo
 lire 2 soldi 10 tuto fa in suma lire 131 soldi 10 val lire
 131 soldi 10

17 dito.

contadi a garbim segador per zornade 6 a fato lui solo per
 alcuni tondi fato dele balote¹⁹ a soldo 1 aldi lire 4 soldi 16

carta 9/right

Spexe in monte alincontro die aver adi 17 luio per spexe dite
 porto avanti dieno dar per saldo di questo charte 10 lire 366
 soldi 10

carta 10/left

1524

Spexe in monte [...]

dito.

contadi a maestro vielmo taiapiera che a comprado calcina
 negra tolta per meter suso el resto delaltar fo mastelli 25 a
 soldi 6 1/2 el mastello monte lire 8 soldi 2 et per sabion
 lire 2 soldi 4 barcha soldi 14 suma lire 11 soldi 0 e per
 tavole dalebedo (?)²⁰ no 8 per far i sest²¹ da meter i volti
 e per agudi da 25 et alcuni zovadeli (?) ale armadure lire 3

¹⁹ A *balota* is a sphere or a ball. Concina (1988), p. 44.

²⁰ Perhaps this means *dal'abete*, made of fir-wood.

²¹ Ribs of a vault.

soldi 10 et per agudi grandi da 1/2 pe oltra quelli tolti per avanti lire 2 soldi 12 suma in tuto lire 17 soldi 2

dito. contadi a maestro simon murer per zornade 4 fate questa setemana che a comenzado a meter siuso el resto del altar dai ladi dele colone in suso a soldi 28 aldi lire 5 soldi 12 et contadi a manoali 4 che anno lavorado tuta la setemana li che son zorni 6 a portar el resto dele piere del dito altar in giexia sopra el lavor et ano aida²² atirar suso i ponti i volti cornixon: frontispizi et meter in opera son sta zornade 24 a soldi 16 luna monte lire 19 soldi 4 tuto lire 24 soldi 16

24 dito. contadi a bortolo segador per zornade numero 5 a fato questa setemana che se anda driedo a segar i tondi va nel salizado a soldi 16 aldi monte lire 4
dito.

contadi a maestro simon murer per zornade 5 fate questa setemana che e andado driedo metando suso laltar a soldi 28 aldi monte lire 7 soldi 0 et contadi a manoali 4 anno lavorato con lui a soldi 16 aldi per uno per dite zornade 5 monte lire 16 soldi 0 tuto lire 23

dito. contadi a maestro francesco depentor a santa maria mater domini per capara²³ de uno marchado fato con lui che die depinzer atorno dito altar zoe a far algune soaze et cornixon et algune spoglie di chiaro et schuro ed animali et campo azuro per ducati 3 1/2 lire 3.

²² Read *aiutato*.

²³ A form of payment.

carta 10/right

Spexe in monte alincontro die aver adi 24 luio per spexe dite
porto avanti dieno dar per saldo di questo charte 11 lire 438
soldi 8

carta 11/left

1524

Spexe in monte [...]

30 dito.

contadi a maestro vielmo chi compra calcina negra masteli 13
per compir da meter in opera laltar et principiar a meter el
salizado a soldi 7 el mastelo monte lire 4 soldi 11 et per
sabion lire 1 soldi 10 et per barcha conduse soldi 12 et per
alguni arpeseti di rame per meter nel foro per tener i pezi
di alabastri lire 1 soldi 12 suma lire 8 soldi 13

dito.

contadi a bortolo garbin segador per zornade 5 fate questa
setemana in fregar i anzolli et renovarlli fregar la figure
dela sepoltura et altre fusarete (?) a soldi 16 aldi monte
lire 4 soldi

dito.

contadi a maestro simon murer per zornade 5 fate questa
setemana per compir da meter suso laltar a soldi 28 aldi
monte lire 7

dito.

contadi per do manoali per zornade 5 per uno alavorado con el
soradito maestro simon la dita setemana a soldi 16 per uno
aldi lire 8

7 avosto.

contadi a bortolo garbin segador per zornade numero 5 fate questa setemana che a comenzado a segar uno alltro pezo di alabastro per el foro che manchava a soldi 16 aldi lire 4 soldi 0 val lire 4 soldi

dito.

contadi a maestro simon murer per zornade 5 a fato questa setemana in meter el resto del salizado et ponte dela Investixom del foro a soldi 28 aldi monte lire 2 soldi 0 et a do manovali che li a buta man a zorni 5 per uno son zorni X a soldi 16 aldi monte lire 8 tuto lire 15

dito.

contadi a alcuni fachini che ano porta in giexia el resto dele laste del salizado lire 1 soldi 8 et per calzina negra masteli 7 che ano manca per dita opera a soldi 6 el mastelo monte lire 1 soldi 2 et per sabion e barcha e sponse do lire 1 soldi 13 tuto suma lire 5 soldi 3

carta 11/right

Spexe in monte alincontro die aver adi 7 avosto per lei medeme porto avanti per saldo de questo charte 13 lire 490 soldi 4

carta 12/left

1524

maestro vielmo s. Jacomo taiapera per conto del salizado va davanti lo altar atorno la sepoltura die dar adi 3 luio contadi a lui a bon conto del marchado fato e di lui ducati do val lire 12 soldi 8

10 dito.

contadi al dito a bonconto di dito marchado lire 18 soldi 12

17 dito.

contadi al dito ut supra ducati 4 lire 24 soldi 16

24 dito. [...] ducati 4 lire 24 soldi 16

30 dito. [...] ducati 3 lire 18 soldi 12

7 avosto. [...] ducati 1 lire 6 soldi 4

16 dito. [...] ducati 2 lire 12 soldi 8

27 dito. [...] ducati 2 lire 12 soldi 8

11 settembre. [...] ducati 3 lire 18 soldi 12

21 dito. contadi alui per resto del controschrito marchado del salizado ducati 2 lire 12 soldi 8

dito.

contadi aldito maestro vielmo a bonconto del marchado fato di far I perfilli²⁴ rossi che vano atorno dito salizado che non era comprexo nel sopradito marchado lire 6 soldi 4

14 novembro.

contadi a mestro vielmo dito per resto del marchado fato con lui per far i perfilli rossi atorno el salizado lire 3 soldi 2

carta 12/right

maestro vielmo alincontro die aver adi 17 zener 1524 per spese in monte fate per far uno altar et [...] per uno marchado fato con lui adi 20 zugno 1524 per el qual sia obligato a far uno salizado atorno lo altar et sepoltura sopradita Qual salizado die essere largo pie 20 e longo pie 20 die essere dilastre de piere di Rovigno Incasade di marmori et alabastri di diverse sorte et altre piere fine con alcuni tondi pinze et quadri secondo la forma del disegno

²⁴ Stonemasons' jargon of uncertain meaning, *perfilo* probably describes a long and narrow marble slab. See Concina (1988), p. 111.

fato per el dito col alguni suo perfilli negri di stucho che fa alguni gropi et ligamenta qual tute piere di ogni sorta et le segadure debiamo meter noi tutto el resto de la fatura et fregadure et lustrar die far lui de la qual opera siamo dacordo de darlli ducati 26 val charte 17 lire 161 soldi 4 dito.

per spexe dite per uno altro marchado fato con lui adi 21 settembrio 1524 per el qual era obligato a far i perfilli rossi largi --/3²⁵ di pe vano atorno atorno el salizado del qual siamo dacordo dela fatura di i diti perche le piere le debiamo dar noi in ducati uno e 1/2 charte 17 lire 9 soldi 6

carta 13/left

1524

Spexe in monte fate [...]

13 dito.

Contadi a maestro francesco depentor a bonconto dele depenture fa intorno altar ducato uno val lire 6 soldi 4

14 dito.

contadi a bortolamio garbin segador per zornade numero 5 fate questa setemana per segar I alabastri a soldi 16 aldi monte lire 4

dito.

contadi a maestro simon murer per zornada una fata lui lire 1 soldi 8 et per zornade 3 del suo manoal a soldi 16 lire 2 soldi 8 et contadi che a compra calcina bianca mastelli do a soldi 11 monte con la portadura lire 1 soldi 10 suma lire 5 soldi 6

16 dito.

²⁵ Illegible number.

contadi a maestro vielmo taiapiera che a compra da uno taiapiera pexi 6 de piere rosse di pe 1 1/2 per quadro per meter nel salizado lire 5 soldi 14 [...]

21 dito.

contadi a bortolo segador per zornade 4 a fato questa setemana in segar alabastri ut supra a soldi 16 aldi monte lire 3 soldi 4 [...]

dito.

contadi a maestro francesco depentor a bonconto dele depentura e fa atorno del altar ducato 1 lire 6 soldi 4

dito. contadi a maestro simon murer per zornade 4 a fato questa setemana che a compido da investir el foro del altar a soldi 28 aldi mote lire 5 sodli 12 et per altre zornade 4 di uno suo lavorante la buta man soldi 16 aldi monte lire 3 soldi 4 val lire 8 soldi 16

dito.

contadi per calcina bianca masteli 3 per far altar dentro di luogo del volto santo che bisogno romper molto muro et sfondrar dentro per meter laltar a soldi 12 monte lire 1 soldi 16 et per piere grande numero 150 tolte per salizar in giexia dove erano i do coverchi dele sepulture rosse tolti per far el frixo etorno el salizado monte ed barcha lire 1 soldi 15 et per legno di noxe suma lire 4 soldi 7

carta 13/right

Spexe in monte alincontro die aver adi 29 avosto per lei medem per saldo porto avanti die dar charte 14 lire 533 soldi

carta 14/left

Spexe in monte [...]

23 dito.

contadi a maestro francesco depentor per resto dela depentura a fato atorno laltar dei servi lire 6 soldi 6 [...]

28 dito.

contadi a garbin segador per zornade 5 a fato questa setemana in segar alabastro per meter nel salizado a soldi 16 aldi lire 4 soldi 0 [...]

dito.

contadi a maestro simon murer per zornade 2 a fato uno suo lavorante la salizada li in giexia ai servi dove erano i do coverchi rossi di arche tolti per far i perfilli del salizado a soldi 16 aldi monte lire 1 soldi 12 et contadi al dito per calcina negra mastelli 5 a soldi 8 el mastello monte con la condutura lire 2 soldi 6 tuto lire 3 soldi 18

3 settembre.

contadi a garbin segador per zornade 6 a fate questa setemana che e per tuto ozi nelequal a compido di segar i alabastri del salizado a soldi 16 aldi monte lire 4 soldi 16 [...]

19 dito.

contadi a garbin segador che a segado questa setemana alcuni tondi di marmoro et di piera negra per meter suso i schalini nel frixo roso son sta zornade 5 a soldi 16 aldi monte lire 4

28 dito.

contadi a maestro simon murer per zornade 4 a fato per meter tuti i perfilli atorno el salizado et sopra una fenestra dentro di luogo del volto santo desfar tuti I ponti a soldi 26 aldi lire 5 soldi 4 di manoal buto aman al dito per far el

soradito lavor a soldi 16 aldi lire 3 soldi 4 tuto lire 8
soldi 8

29 otubrio.

contadi a maestro marchio maragon per zornade 2 1/2 a fatto
inconzar el suolo ai servi dala banda abiamo fato laltar che
tuto era sta desfato et etiam a fato da novo dito suolo in
doi lochi dove erano alcuni coverchi di sepulture tolte per
adoperar per noi a soldi 20 aldi lire 2 soldi 10 e per agudi
--²⁶ numero 300 lire 3 soldi 8

carta 14/right

Spexe in monte alincontro die aver aldi 29 otubrio per lei
medeme per saldo porto die dar charte 16 lire 568 soldi 15

carta 15/left

1524

maestro bartolomeo di francesco da bergamo schultor a sancto
apostolo die dare adi 21 avosto contadi alui a bon conto de
ducati 40 el die aver per marchado fato per far di una figura
di marmoro dela madalena come alincontro ducati 4 val lire 24
soldi 16

11 settebrío.

contadi aldito a bonconto ut supra ducati 5 lire 31

9 otubrio. contadi [...] ducati 5 lire 31

30 dito. [...] ducati 5 lire 31

30 novembrio [...] ducati 5 lire 31

21 dezembrio.

²⁶ Illegible word.

contadi aldito per resto del contrascrito marchado ducati 16
 prestate maestro vielmo taiapiera chome apar del --²⁷ de sua
 man in uno libro tenuto per el magnifico messer andrea
 gussoni procurator da driedo de quello val lire 99 soldi 4
 suma lire 248

maestro donado da bergamo indorador die dar adi 24 avosto
 contadi alui a bonconto de ducati 32 el die aver per el dorar
 del altar al qui come apare alincontro ducati 5 lire 31
 2 settembre.

contadi aldito a bonconto ut supra ducati 10 lire 62
 23 dito. contadi aldito a bonconto ut supra ducati 10 lire 62
 2 otubrio.

contadi aldito per resto del contrascrito marchado ducati 7
 val lire 43 soldi 8

carta 15/right

1524

maestro bortolamio alincontro die aver adi 13 zener 1524 per
 spexe In monte per far per uno altar et sepoltura In giexia
 dei Servi di Venezia per uno marcado fato con lui adi 21
 avosto 1524 per el qual era obligato a far una figura de
 nostro marmoro di santa maria madalena qual da longa da pie 5
 1/4 inzercha: la qual die aver el conzier del capo In chaveli
 legadi et nonzo per spalla con el suo vaseto In mano vestida
 con drapi largi alantiga secondo la forma di uno modelo afato
 di chrea per fatura dela qual figura li debiamo ducati 40 et
 è sta presente maestro vielmo s. Jachomo taiapiera val charte
 17 lire 248 soldi

²⁷ Illegible word.

maestro donao da bergamo alincontro die aver adi 13 zener
 1524 per spexe In monte fate per uno altar et sepoltura se fa
 far In giexia de servi per uno marchado fato con lui adi 24
 avosto 1524 per el qual era obligato a far zoe dorar a
 mordente a tute suo spexe lo altar sopradito zoe tuti i dreti
 et piani de le cornixe del frontispizo et de tute le altre
 cornixe tuti li regolli che sono atorno i marmori et piere
 fine incasade tute le suaxe sono soto el volto tuti i quarti
 de colone tonde et quadre che sono acanelade li orri del
 schabelo quadrixeli et pilastri: el frixeto de talgio de
 lantipeto del qual tuto lavor li debiamo dar per sua fatura
 et oro a tute suo spexe ducati 32 val lire 198 soldi 8

carta 16/left

1524

Spexe In monte fate [...]

14 novembrio.

contadi a maestro vielmo taiapiera che a dado a maestro
 Zuanantonio taiapiera sta suo fiol che anno fato alcuni tondi
 di fites et dalabastro et mezi tondi di marmoro et li anno
 incastadi nele lastre deli schalini nel qual lavor anno fate
 zornade 5 1/2 e fo fin questa setemana pasado a soldi 24 aldi
 monte lire 6 soldi 12 et contadi che a dado a garbin per
 zornade 3 a fate per notizar (?) et le rustagnar (?) da novo
 tuta lopera a soldi 14 aldi lire 2 soldi 2 tuto lire 8 soldi
 14

21 dezembrio. contadi a maestro vielmo taiapiera che a dado a
 fachini X che anno lavorato tuto ozi In condur la figura dela
 madalena da san cassan dala sua bottega fino ai servi fra
 conzar et descargarlla et meterla suso consada al suo loco

computo etiam la spexa de la piata lire 10 soldi 10 et
contadi per pionbo lire 11 per Impionbar la dita lire 1 soldi
14 val lire 12 soldi 4

10 zener. contadi a maestro rocho marangon lavora di parecchio
quie a santa marina per uno bancho a fato ai servi apresso el
sopradito altar che e demezo laltar vechio qual e largo da
pie 8 In zercha con el suo pozo cornizado fi la raxon et -- -
-²⁸ con le arme de la dita madonna verde et del marido fato
in alcuni quadri dacordo con lui a tuto suo spexe furo meso
in opera per ducati 4 e 1/2 val lire 22 soldi 18

11 dito.

contadi a maestro donado indorador per aver dorado tuto el
nichio dove e andato la figura et la capa etiam qual
alavorado fo complexo nel alttro marchado dacordo a tute suo
spexe per lire 14

suma lire 631 soldi 11

carta 16/right

1524

Spexe alincontro die aver adi 11 zener per lei medeme per
saldo porto avanti die dare charte 17 lire 631 soldi 11

carta 17 left

Spexe in monte fate per far far lo altar et sepoltura: in
giexia di servi da venexia per conto dela comessaria di
madonna verde dala schall die dar adi xi zener: per lei
medeme trato avanti per saldo di quella come apar charte 16
lire 631 soldi 11

17 dito.

²⁸ Illegible words.

contadi a maestro zan da bergamo favro a san rocho per aver butado uno paro de candelieri delaton grandi fati alantiga et per far i suo feri grosi che li tengono in sieme lire 8 soldi 10. et contadi per laton lire 48 e andato inditi a soldi 6 pi 8 libbra monte lire 15 soldi 4. et contadi a bortollo tornedo qui in san lio per aver tornidi tuti li pezi de laton de diti candelieri et polir el tuto come die star et far le forme de legno per el butar dei diti lire 3. suma in tuto lire 20 soldi 20 lire 14

dito.

per piere fine per saldo di quelle portade qui como apar charte 2 lire 87

dito.

per maestro zacharia da lugan taiapiera per piere vive da ruigno a aver da lui come apar charte 3 milliarìa 18 a lire 3 el milliarìa charte 3 lire 54 soldi

dito.

per maestro zacharia dito per piere vive da ruigno milliarìa 20 a lire 3 el milliarìa come apar charte 3 lire 60 soldi

dito.

per el dito per piere vive milliarìa 80 a lire 3 el milliarìa charte 3 lire 240

dito.

per maestro vielmo taiapiera per sua merzede de aver fato lo altar come destinto apar charte 4 lire 899 soldi

dito.

per maestro vielmo dito per el far del salazado atorno lo altar como destinto apar charte 12 lire 161 soldi 4

dito.

per maestro vielmo dito per far i perfilli atorno el dito
 salazado como apar charte 12 lire 9 soldi 6
 suma lire 2162 soldi 15

carta 17/right

Spexe in monte alincontro die aver adi 17 zener 1524. per lei
 medeme porto avanti per saldo de questa setemana 18 lire 2162
 soldi 15

carta 18/left

1524

Spexe in monte fate per far uno altar [...] die dar adi 17
 zener per spexe dite trato avanti per saldo di questo charte
 17 lire 2162 soldi 15
 dito.

per maestro francescho di Bergamo schultor per sua merchado
 de far la figura de la madalena come a suo conto apar ducati
 40 val charte 15 lire 248 soldi
 dito.

per maestro donado da bergamo indorador per aver indorado el
 dito altar como destinto apar charte 15 lire 198 soldi 8
 dito.

per contadi ai taiapiera et mureri anno lavorato indita opera
 per far et una colation fra loro per sua regallar corona (?)
 una del saldo lire 6 soldi 10

suma tuto	L 2615 soldi 13
ducati 421 sono	L 2610 soldi 4
resto	L 5 soldi 9

carta 18/right

Suma lo amonte dela spexa fata pel far de lo altar et sepoltura nela giexia de i Servi da Venezia per conto de la commissaria di madonna Verde de la Schalla como destinto al incontra apar ducati 422 lire 5 soldi 9 Dechiarando che oltra la sopraschrita spexa abiamo avuto che sono sta messo in dita opera dal monesterio et Frati dei Servi da Venezia gratis senza algun pagamento per averlle donate per suo cortexia: azo se fati dita opera. Le sotoschrite piere et prima: do colone di marmoro venade, uno pezo grandio de serpentin bastardo messo nel antipeto del altar, Ittem alcuni pezi de alabastro rosi et bianchi adoperati nel foro et nela gozola del altar: Item alcuni pezi di serpentin bastardo et de porfido mesi nei quadrixeli dele colone. Item tavolle numero 8 de marmoro de una meschia rosa et bianca dele qual e fato i do²⁹ Frixi di sopra et incasadi neli pilastroni da baso. Item alcuni pezi di fites mesi nel antipeto del altar et fato el tondo e nel Frontispizio de sora: Ittem ne ano dato li do anzolli di marmoro con alcuni pezi di marmoro del qual son sta fati i lidi et base dele colone et ladornamento che e di marmoro atorno el nichio dela figura. Qual dechiaracion: se fa con inteligencia et volonta dei sopraditi frati dei servi azo che in ogni tempo se sapia la verita

carta 19/left

1524

maestro matio chrestaler sta in chale dale aque a san zulian die dar adi 8 frever 1523. che li abiamo dato uno pezo de

²⁹ Schulz (1991), p. 123, transcribed the word as *100*.

porfido de uno pe e 1/2 per uno quadro grosso deda 4 ma non ben saldo per aver do sfesure qual pezo sie ebe nel numero dele piere comprade da madonna anzolla de priolli moier fo de messer carlo qual e sta dato al dito dacordo per ducati 4 a sconto de fature et de piere avuto da lui come alincontro apar lire 24 soldi 16

primo avril 1524. per uno altro pezo de porfido dela grandezza di quello di sopra grosso uno dedo³⁰ ma saldo et bon qual se ave e eran dala sopra dita madonna anzola di priolli in sieme et le altre piere qual pezo non meter in opera delaltar pero (?) fo dato al dito dacordo per ducati 4. alincontro di tante fature et piere come alincontro apar val lire 24 soldi 16

noto che le contrascrite piere et fature avute da maestro matio sopradito non e sta messo a conto di spexe in monte per far lo altar et sepoltura ai servi: et questo perche le piere soprascrite alui dade esta comprade da madonna anzolla di priolli et lo amonte de -- -- --³¹ esta messo a conto (?) de piere fine comprade per dita operam come apar in questo charte 2

carta 19/right

1524

maestro matio alincontro die aver adi 4 april per fatura de do mandole grande de serpentin (?) vano neli incastri dela sepoltura. de nostre piere per lire 5. Item per do tondi di porfido de nostre piere vano neli diti incastri per lire 5. Suma lire 10 soldi
dito.

³⁰ One *dedo* equals one tenth of a Venetian foot, 3.47 cm.

³¹ Illegible words.

per do tondini di porfido con 4 triangoleti de serpentin fin de suo piere vano nei cantoni del nichio lire 6 soldi 4 dito.

per do mandole longe de porfido vano neli schalini de mezo delaltar de nostre piere lire 5 soldi dito.

per do striche longe 3 a deda et longe pie 2 --³² 1/4 de porfido de nostre piere vano dei epigrama lire 3 soldi 12 19 mazo.

per fature de duo cuori grandi de serpentin fini de nostre piere vano nel primo scalin delaltar lire 4 soldi

dito. per do tondi de serpentin fin de nostre piere grandi 1/3 de pe vano neli pilastri son dale bande del nichio lire 4 soldi

dito.

per do tondineti di porfido et una pinzeta de serpentin di sue piere va nel frixo sopra el nichio lire 4 soldi

dito.

per segar uno tondo di piera meschia de nostre piere asai grandando indo tondi et lustrarlli qual vano neli triangolli del volto lire 3 soldi

dito.

per segar uno 1/2 tondo grandando de fites de nostre piere et lustrarllo vano nel frontispizo delaltar lire 3 soldi 10

dito.

per do tondi de terzo de pe di prasana de sui pietra vano nei perfilli del salizado lire 2 soldi

dito.

³² Illegible word.

per do tondi de terzo de pe de porfido ne nostra pietra vano
nele colone quadre delo altar lire 3 soldi 10

dito.

per fatura di do volte fini over remenati di serpentin
bastardo di nostra pietra vano neli volti delepigrama lire
soldi 16

suma lire 49 soldi 12

APPENDIX II

CATALOGUE OF SCULPTURED ALTARPIECES OF THE PERIOD 1460 - 1530
IN VENICE AND ITS SURROUNDING ISLANDS

The purpose of this catalogue is to provide the most basic information regarding each individual altar in a clear outline. Each catalogue entry will introduce the object as well as its original and present location. It will further mention the altarpiece's material, measurements and the date of its making.¹ Wherever possible I shall also mention the artist(s) and craftsmen who were involved in the manufacture of the altarpiece, and the patron(s) who commissioned it.

The catalogue is further divided into two parts. *Part I* contains the altarpieces which are still at least partially in existence. *Part II* lists those altarpieces which are no longer extant, but can be reconstructed to some extent.

¹ Although some of the dimensions may be imprecise in detail, all are at least approximately correct.

Part I

1. Murano, S.Pietro Martire. Altar of the Sacrament from S.Stefano di Murano.

Plate 171

The Altar of the Sacrament was originally located in S.Stefano on Murano. Shortly before the monastery's destruction in 1815, the tabernacle was removed and installed in S.Pietro Martire, where it now occupies the altar in the chapel to the left of the presbytery.

The altar is an aedicula construction decorated with a marble relief of the Dead Christ Mourned by Angels. The figures are set in a coffered barrel vault. The representation of the Dead Christ in Venice derives from Donatello's relief on the High Altar in the Santo in Padua, but has also many parallels in contemporary Venetian painting.² Large parts of the relief's architectural elements, Christ's loincloth and the angels' wings and draperies are gilded. The principal pilasters of the framework are decorated with floral ornaments, whereas the outer pilasters are plain. The altar is further adorned with inlays of porphyry, serpentine and niello work.

The entire width of the altar (excluding the outer pillars, which are not original) measures 163 cm. The relief with the Dead Christ measures 127 cm in height and 93.5 cm in width.

² Very similar to and perhaps inspiring the relief are Giovanni Bellini's early *Pietà with Angels* in the Museo Civico Correr in Venice and the same painter's *Pietà with Angels* in the Pinacoteca Comunale in Rimini. For Bellini's development of the theme of the *Dead Christ* see Goffen (1989), pp. 66-83, unfortunately without reference to coeval sculpture.

The repository of the host in front of the altar is inscribed with the date 1495 at its base.

The altar has not hitherto been attributed to any artist. Paoletti tentatively assigned it to "qualche buon ornatista di Lombardia venuto in Venezia con Cristoforo Solari".³ On the grounds of its similarity to two tabernacles in S. Maria dei Miracoli and to the Dead Christ on top of the Tabernacle of the Precious Blood in the Sacristy of S. Maria dei Frari (see Catalogue no. 25), I suggest an attribution to the workshop of Tullio Lombardo.

2. Torcello, Cathedral. Triptych of a bishop saint.

Plates 67, 68

3. Torcello, Cathedral. Triptych of St. Liberale.

Plates 65, 66

The wooden triptych of a bishop saint is the second in the right aisle of Torcello cathedral. Its central round-arched niche is supported by richly decorated columns of no classical order. The lateral niches are lower and rectangular. The figure in the central niche is a young, beardless bishop saint, possibly St. Louis of Toulouse. He is accompanied by Sts. Anthony Abbot (left) and Nicholas of Bari (right, his crosier is missing) in the lateral niches. The spandrels above the latter are filled with reliefs of the Virgin and the Angel of the Annunciation. Above the entablature of the central bay is a kind of lunette, held by putti, with a relief of God the Father.

³ Paoletti (1893), II, p. 233. See also Maria Teresa Fiorio in Leonardo a Venezia, Milan, 1992, p. 396.

The altar also features a predella with three narrative reliefs and a sarcophagus, whose front is decorated with another two narratives. While the former probably relate events of the saint in the altar's central niche, the latter represent the *Adoration of the Magi* and the *Circumcision*. All elements are polychromed and gilded.

The Altar of St. Liberale is the second along the church's left aisle. Apart from some minor differences, all elements of the framework are constructed analogous to its counterpart in the left aisle. St. Liberale, holding a scroll inscribed with his name, occupies the triptych's central niche. He is accompanied by Sts. Jerome (left) and Anthony (right).

The altar's bottom zone is decorated with a predella, featuring three narrative reliefs, as is the front of a wooden sarcophagus below the predella. All reliefs relate to the life of St. Liberale. The altar is fully polychromed and gilded.

Neither altar has received any scholarly attention.⁴ In an early study of the churches of Torcello, no attempt is made to differentiate between the wooden altarpieces and their later stone frames.⁵ Hubala (1965) did not refer to them at all, while Lorenzetti mentioned them only briefly.

The altarpieces are no longer in their original state, but have been inserted in stone tabernacle frames from the 17th century, matching the remaining side altars of the cathedral. On both altars the pilasters of the stone frame

⁴ The only one to mention the altars at all was Lorenzetti (1926), p. 827.

⁵ Bruno Schulz, Die Kirchenbauten auf der Insel Torcello, Berlin and Leipzig 1927.

overlap with much of the outer columns and parts of the predella narratives of the wooden altarpieces. I suggest that the sarcophagi at the bottom zone originally had the function of altar frontals.

The central protruding bay of the Triptych of St.Liberale is 123 cm high (base to architrave) and 80 cm wide (measured at the base of the predella). The figure of St.Liberale measures approximately 145 cm (height) including its base. The lateral saints of this altar are approximately 90 cm high. The dimensions of the Triptych of a bishop saint are approximately equal to that of the Altar of S.Liberale.

Nothing is known about the patronage of the altars. Judging on stylistic grounds the triptychs were probably made during the late 1520s. Lorenzetti believed the two altars to be the work of the wood carver Paolo Campsa, "altered and spoiled" by Antonio de Poris, without, however, giving reasons for these attributions.⁶

4. Venice, Galleria Franchetti della Ca' d'Oro, Scuola Grande di S.Giovanni Evangelista and Sacristy of S.Maria della Salute. Fragments from the Monument to Doges Marco and Agostino Barbarigo at S.Maria della Carità.

Plates 113-116

The church of S.Maria della Carità had several chapels that were richly decorated with marble and bronze monuments. Apart from the Barbarigo monument and altar, there was the famous Chapel of the Saviour (see Catalogue no. 47) and the chapel for Giorgio Dragan (with Cima da Conegliano's altarpiece, plate 179), which was also renowned for its lavish marble decoration. Two bronze reliefs, now in the Ca'

⁶ Lorenzetti (1926), p. 827.

d'Oro, representing a *Battle between Satyrs and Giants* and a *Battle between Horsemen and Soldiers* were part of the funerary monument by the medallist Vittore Gambello, called *il Camelio* (d.1537), for "Briamonte capitano Illustre".⁷

The Barbarigo monument extended across three bays on the left wall of the church of S.Maria della Carità. It included an altar which occupied a niche in the central bay. After the suppression of the monastery of the Carità, the Barbarigo monument was dismembered and its pieces brought to different places. However, the tomb was reproduced in an engraving of 1692.

4.1 Three Bronze Reliefs of the Coronation and Assumption of the Virgin.

The Galleria Franchetti della Ca'd'Oro houses three bronze reliefs of the *Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin*, which in all likelihood replaced the monument's earlier altarpiece in 1515.⁸ Four bronze reliefs of the Evangelists which once were part of the complex are now preserved in Berlin.

The bottom relief with the *Twelve Apostles* measures 30 cm (height) x 83 cm (width). The central *Assumption of the Virgin* measures 36 cm x 25 cm. The top *Coronation of the Virgin* measures 25 cm x 70 cm.⁹

⁷ Grevembroch, III, c. 72. The sarcophagus with the two reliefs is illustrated by Johannes Grevembroch. The bronzes of the dismembered monument are now in the Galleria Franchetti at the Ca' d'Oro.

⁸ Planiscig (1921), p. 209, claimed that the reliefs were originally attached to a *cancello*.

⁹ Dimensions from Schulz (1981), p. 190, n. 23.

The reliefs were commissioned by the Venetian patrician Vincenzo Grimani, son of the later Doge Antonio Grimani.¹⁰

They were finished in 1515 and installed on 20th March 1518. Perhaps they immediately replaced an earlier altarpiece. The reason for this replacement may well have been the latter's inferior quality, which would have been particularly evident in comparison to Antonio Rizzo's effigies of the kneeling doges to the sides of the altarpiece.¹¹

Some writers suggested Andrea Riccio, others Tullio Lombardo, Alessandro Leopardi or Antonio Lombardo as creators of the reliefs.¹² Planiscig and Wolters assigned them to an anonymous "Master of the Barbarigo reliefs",¹³ while Pope-Hennessy attributed them to Paolo Savin.¹⁴

4.2 Relief of the Resurrection

A further fragment of the monument is the Istrian stone low relief of the *Resurrection*. No traces of gilding or polychromy are visible today. Formerly in the central arch above the altar, it is now in the ground floor hall of the Scuola di S. Giovanni Evangelista.

The relief measures 190 cm in height. The molding below is 72.8 cm wide.¹⁵

¹⁰ The relevant document is published in Paoletti (1893), II, pp. 183-84.

¹¹ See Schulz (1981), and Roeck (1991), p. 33.

¹² Valcanover (1986), p.36.

¹³ Planiscig (1921), pp. 212-15, and Wolters in Huse/Wolters (1986), p. 182.

¹⁴ Pope-Hennessy (1968), pp. 180f.

¹⁵ Dimensions from Schulz (1981), p. 191, n. 33.

The *Resurrection* was commissioned by Doge Agostino Barbarigo from the stonemasons Giovanni Buora and Bartolomeo de Domenico who were the designing and executing stonemasons of the entire funerary monument.¹⁶ The relief was made after the conclusion of the contract on 12th November 1492 and probably finished by 1501.

4.3 Statue of Doge Agostino Barbarigo.

A third element which is related to the altar is the marble statue of the kneeling Agostino Barbarigo in the ante-sacristy at S.Maria della Salute. It was originally situated to the altar's right. Its counterpart, the statue of the kneeling Doge Marco Barbarigo, is lost.

The statue measures 120 cm in height. Traces of dark paint are visible in the figure's eyes. The figure's extremely high artistic quality warrants an attribution to Antonio Rizzo.

5. Venice, Galleria Franchetti della Ca' d'Oro. Four bronze reliefs and a bronze sportello from the Altar of the Title of the Cross from S.Maria dei Servi.

Plates 155-159; 160 (reconstruction)

Like the church of S.Maria della Carità, the church of S.Maria dei Servi contained a series of important sculptural monuments. Three of these, the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen (Catalogue no. 13), the Altar of the Barbers' Guild (Catalogue no. 37) and the Altar of the Title of the Cross are discussed in this study. It furthermore housed the

¹⁶ These two *tagliapietra* had worked together before on at least two occasions: at the Scuola Grande di S.Marco and at the Dormitory of S.Giorgio Maggiore (1494).

funerary monuments of doges Andrea Vendramin and Francesco Donato (or Donà) and of Giovanni Emo.¹⁷

The Altar of the Title of the Cross was originally located in front of the choir screen of the church of S. Maria dei Servi. Its altarpiece included four bronze reliefs and one bronze *sportello*. The four narratives represent *The Finding of the True Cross*, *The Proof of the True Cross*, *The Vision of Constantine*, and *The Victory of Constantine*. The *sportello* features *The Glorification of the Cross*, that is to say a relief showing a triumphal arch with the Cross presented by Angels and two small narrative scenes of the *Deposition* and *Lamentation* at the bottom. Two marble angels, attributed by Schulz to Giambattista Bregno, formed part of the original installation.¹⁸

The altar was destroyed in the early 18th century, when the bronze reliefs as its most valuable parts, in combination with other elements, were re-arranged on a new altar, dedicated to the Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order.¹⁹ In the early 19th century, the reliefs were brought to the Accademia di Belle Arti and from there to the Museo Archeologico. They are now exhibited in the Galleria Franchetti at the Ca' d'Oro.²⁰ Of the marble angels which subsequently adorned the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen in the same church (Catalogue no. 13), one is in the Staatliche

¹⁷ For the Vendramin monument see Sheard (1971); for the tomb of Giovanni Emo see A. Markham Schulz, 'A Portrait of Giovanni Emo in the National Gallery of Art', in Studies in the History of Art, IX, pp. 7-11. Washington, D.C., 1980.

¹⁸ Schulz (1991), p. 48f.

¹⁹ Vicentini (1920), p. 82.

²⁰ Valcanover (1986), p. 36.

Museen, Berlin, the other in the sacristy of SS. Giovanni e Paolo.

The narrative reliefs measure 38 (width) x 30 cm (height), each wing of the *sportello* measures 22 (width) x 88 cm (height). The Berlin angel measures 77.8 cm (height) x 53.7 cm (width), the Venice angel measures 78.2 cm x 56 cm.²¹

The bronze reliefs were first mentioned by Francesco Sansovino who described them as decoration on the altar for the Venetian noble Gabriello Garzoni, Cavaliere di Malta.²² However, Flaminio Corner pointed out that the relic of the Title of the Cross had been donated to the Servites by the Venetian patrician Girolamo Donato (1454-1511) in 1492.²³

The dating of the reliefs, which were made by Andrea Riccio, diverges. While some authors argue for a date shortly after the donation, others have dated them much later, towards the end of Girolamo's life. Since it is known that Girolamo died destitute, a late dating for the altar's making is unlikely. Pope-Hennessy convincingly argued on stylistic grounds that the reliefs were made during the last years of the Quattrocento.²⁴ Schulz thought that in 1511 the angels were begun but not finished.²⁵

²¹ Dimensions from Schulz (1991), p. 141.

²² Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 160.

²³ Corner (1749), II, p. 34.

²⁴ Pope-Hennessy (1968), pp. 176f.

²⁵ Schulz (1991), p. 48.

6. Venice, Museo Civico Correr. Two Reliefs of the Street Altar of the *Traghetto della Maddalena*.

Plates 104, 105; 106 (drawing)

The so-called *Altar of the Traghetto della Maddalena* was originally a *capitello*, or street altar, fixed to the exterior wall of S.Stae (Eustachio). Its name derives from the nearby ferry (*traghetto*) crossing between S.Stae and the church of S.Maria Maddalena.

Although the street altar has been dismantled, its appearance in the later 16th century can be reconstructed with the help of a watercolour illustration by Johannes Grevembroch of 1754. As can be seen, the altarpiece featured a Madonna and Child in the centre, while Sts. John the Baptist and Mary Magdalen were standing on the left and Sts. Sebastian and Mark on the right, accompanied on both sides by kneeling angels. An inscription (and probably the Madonna) dates from 1569.²⁶ Schulz noted that inscription and framework (slabs with gondolas) are kept in store rooms of Ca' Rezzonico.²⁷ The reliefs are made of Italian limestone. There are now no traces of polychromy or gilding.

The two reliefs measure 103 cm (height) x 55.6 cm (width) and 102.5 cm x 56 cm respectively.²⁸

The *capitello* was probably installed shortly after a decree of the Council of Ten of 23rd December 1479, which ordered the re-building of the portico of S.Stae, including

²⁶ The mutilated inscription on the slab below the Madonna was also transcribed by Grevembroch: "IN TEMPO D.CIPRIAN / DA CENEDA GAST E / ANZOLO FANTINATO / ANDREA PADOAN / COPAGNI / M D LXVIII." "

²⁷ Schulz (1983a), p. 163.

²⁸ Dimensions from Schulz (1983a), p. 163.

two tabernacles at the door of the church.²⁹ Schulz assigned the lateral reliefs to Antonio Rizzo and his workshop.³⁰

7. Venice, S.Alvise. Statue of St. Alvise.

Plate 177

The wooden statue of the Seated St. Louis (Alvise in Venetian) of Toulouse is situated on a stone altar of the 17th century on the right wall of S.Alvise. The figure is fully polychromed and is slightly larger than life-size. It is datable to the early 16th century.³¹

Nothing is known about the statue's original setting, but considering its subject it once decorated the High Altar of this church. In that respect it would have followed the wooden statues on the High Altars of S.Nicolò dei Mendicoli (plate 176) of the mid-15th century and of S.Cristoforo (Madonna dell'Orto) of ca. 1470 (Catalogue no. 44).

8. Venice, S.Francesco della Vigna. Triptych of the Giustinian Badoer Chapel.

Plates 41-49

The chapel is situated in the church's left transept. The marble altarpiece consists of two tiers with three relief niches on the main tier. They are occupied by high relief figures of St. Jerome (centre), Sts. Agnes and Michael (left niche), James and Anthony (right). The upper tier holds a relief of the Madonna and Child. The altar's predella and

²⁹ Schulz (1983a), p. 164 and p. 165, n. 4.

³⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 69f.

³¹ D. Aldo Schiavoni. Sant'Alvise e la sua Chiesa in Venezia. Venice, 1951/1980, pp. 25f.

antependium are decorated with narrative low reliefs, the former showing three scenes of the life of St. Jerome, the latter a *Last Judgement*. There are traces of polychromy on some of the saints' attributes, such as on the mouth of St. Michael's devil, or the lion's mouth and church model of St. Jerome. The entire composition is framed by an aedicula on doric columns of the period of the rearrangement of the chapel, around the year 1540. The aedicula's architrave is decorated with two reliefs depicting events from the Life of Christ.

The altarpiece's main tier measures 165 cm (at the lowest cornice) x 142 cm (from lowest cornice to entablature). The width of one bay at the base of the pilasters is 41 cm. The statuettes are approximately 54 cm high. The upper tier including the lunette measures 90 cm x 56 cm (width between pilasters). The narrative reliefs with scenes from the Life of St. Jerome measure each 41 cm x 23 cm (height). The relief of the Last Judgement on the antependium is 153 cm wide.

The making and decoration of the chapel and its altarpiece was supervised by several members of the Venetian Badoer family.³² The commissioning of the altarpiece was undertaken by Agnesina di Girolamo Badoer, acting as the trustee of her father's estate.

The chapel was decorated and altered several times during the late 15th and early 16th centuries. Its altarpiece was probably made shortly after 22nd December 1498, when Agnesina Badoer in a first version of her will referred to

³² For a detailed discussion of the chapel's patronage see Lewis (1983).

work to be done in her father's chapel. It was presumably finished by 17th August 1509, when neither chapel nor altar were mentioned in a further version of Agnesina's will.

The altar was probably made in the workshop of Pietro Lombardo. It was executed by at least two sculptors, one responsible for the finely carved St. Jerome (made of Carrara or Greek marble?), the other one executing the less animated remaining figures of saints, the Madonna and Child and angels. The exquisite *schacciato* reliefs of the predella (and the putti on the pilasters and architrave?) were possibly carved by a third sculptor.

9. Venice, S.Giobbe, De' Martini Chapel. Triptych.

Plates 23, 24

The marble altar is situated in the second chapel opening along the nave's left side wall. The three identical niches of the altar accommodate marble statuettes of Sts. John the Baptist (centre), Francis (left) and Anthony (right). Above these niches are two kneeling candelabre-holding angels to the side of a central rectangular field. This is framed by pilasters, ornamented as the pilasters below. It is now decorated with a modern mosaic. Two differently coloured stones have been used for the altar's architecture. There are no traces of polychromy or gilding.

The height of the entire altar measures 448.5 cm. The height of the altarpieces up to the main entablature measures 142.5 cm, that of the superstructure 176 cm. Each

niche is 33 cm wide. St. John the Baptist is 81 cm high, St. Antony 78 cm.³³

The altar was donated by Giovanni de' Martini, Venetian citizen and merchant. Its decoration was commissioned by Giovanni's Florentine wife Cornelia de' Pazzi from Antonio Rossellino and his workshop.

As emerges from documentary evidence, the chapel was under construction in 1475. Its altarpiece must have followed shortly afterwards.

10. Venice, S.Giobbe. Altar of St. Luke.

Plate 93

The Chapel of St. Luke is the first on the left, next to the Chapel of the de' Martini family. The altarpiece now features three niches. Its central niche, presumably the only original one, is decorated with a marble statue of the chapel's titular, St. Luke, accompanied by two angels in lateral niches. Some hems of draperies and the cover of St. Luke's book are gilded, but there are no traces of polychromy. On the antependium is a statuette of St. Peter.

The figure of St. Luke measures 131.5 cm in height (including its base), the angels 84 and 86 cm respectively (bases included).³⁴

Nothing is known about the altar's patron, but in view of the theological dispute mentioned in Chapter One, it may have been a clerical commission by the Franciscan friars of S.Giobbe themselves. The altarpiece must have been *in situ*

³³ Dimensions from the Soprintendenza ai Monumenti, from Apfelstadt (1987), p. 260.

³⁴ Dimensions from Schulz (1991), p. 200.

when the chapel was ceded to Venetian patrician Pietro Grimani in 1539 (who added the little marble statuette of St. Peter on the altar frontal). Judging from stylistic criteria, it was made at the beginning of the 16th century.³⁵

Schulz reinforced Burckhardt's attribution of the statue to Antonio Lombardo, drawing attention to the strong similarity between the statue of St. Luke and that of St. Peter Martyr from the High Altar of S.Giustina by Antonio Lombardo.³⁶ It is highly likely that, as Schulz surmises, the statue was begun by Antonio Lombardo, but never entirely finished.³⁷

11. Venice, S.Giovanni Crisostomo. Altar with the Coronation of the Virgin.

Plates 150, 151

The altar is situated in the chapel taking up the left arm of the former parish church of S.Giovanni Crisostomo which is built on a Greek Cross plan. The Chapel was erected by several stonemasons, including Pietro Lombardo and Giovanni Buora. The altar is decorated with a relief, consisting of two slabs of light grey marble, of the *Coronation of the Virgin*.³⁸ At its bottom ledge it is inscribed "TULLII LOMBARDI OPUS". There is no evidence of polychromy or gilding. The altarpiece is framed by speckled

³⁵ Paoletti (1893), II, pp. 201-02. A detailed discussion of the history of the church and chapel also in Schulz (1991), p. 201.

³⁶ Burckhardt (1909), p. 544.

³⁷ Schulz (1991), p. 202.

³⁸ See Wilk (1978), pp. 87 and 119-20.

marbles of various colours. Above it is an older (Byzantine ?) relief of the *Virgo Orans*.

The width at the base of the lower slab measures 198 cm, its height measures 162.5 cm (including the figures' base). The upper slab is of the same width, but slightly less high. The dossal behind the mensa measures 33 cm in height. The central figure of Christ measures 105 cm. The depth of the relief measures up to 17.5 cm.

The Chapel and its altar were erected by the Chapter General of the Scuola Grande della Misericordia with money from a bequest by Jacopo Bernabò, silk merchant and Venetian citizen.

The two marble slabs for the altarpiece were delivered and paid for on 7th December 1500. Both chapel and altarpiece were finished by 3rd November 1504.³⁹

12. Venice, S.Giovanni dei Cavalieri di Malta. High Altar from S.Geminiano.

Plates 54-56

This altar was formerly the High Altar of the parish church of S.Geminiano at the far end of Piazza S.Marco, which was destroyed shortly after 19th May 1807.⁴⁰ Rebuilding of that church had begun in 1505 by Cristoforo dal Legname, but was completed by Jacopo Sansovino in the 1550s. The altar was thus made for and situated in the rectangular presbytery that had been erected by Cristoforo. The altar is now in the church of S.Giovanni dei Cavalieri di Malta, where it was

³⁹ Sheard (1971), p. 156.

⁴⁰ Zorzi (1972), p. 334.

installed in 1842.⁴¹ A large central niche contains three small niches with the marble statuettes of Sts. John the Baptist (centre), Menna (left) and a canon saint (right). The statues are partly gilded. The altar's architecture is abundantly decorated with large inlays of colourful stones.

St. John the Baptist measures 66 cm in height, St. Menna 65 cm, the canon saint 63 cm.⁴²

Nothing is known about the altar's patronage. In 1525 the statuettes were referred to in a letter by Bernardo de' Marin as carved by the sculptor Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco.⁴³

The altar was completed before 17th June 1525, which is the date of Bernardo's letter. There, it is also stated that this commission followed the making of the statues on the High Altar of S.Rocco, which were nearly completed in 1521. Moreover, Bernardo de Marin wrote that the S.Geminiano altar was made before the statue of the Magdalen for an altar in S.Maria dei Servi, which was commissioned on 24th August 1524.

13. Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo. Altar of St. Mary Magdalen from S.Maria dei Servi.

Plates 94, 95

The Altar of the Magdalen was erected in the church of S.Maria dei Servi, where it was the fifth along the right wall. The altar's large niche was occupied by one sole life-

⁴¹ For the altar's history in the 19th century see Schulz (1984b), p. 262.

⁴² Dimensions from Schulz (1984b), p. 272, nn. 41, 43, 45.

⁴³ Last published by Schulz (1984b), p. 271, n. 3.

size marble statue of Mary Magdalen, probably set into a smaller niche. The statues of two kneeling angels, mentioned previously (see Catalogue no. 5), were located to the sides of the pediment.⁴⁴ After the demolition of the Servite monastery and church in the 1820s, the altar was moved to SS. Giovanni e Paolo, where the figure of the Magdalen was put on the altar of the Madonna in the second choir chapel on the right. The frame, on the other hand, was installed in the first bay of the left aisle and now contains a figure of St. Jerome (plate 103) by Alessandro Vittoria and a relief of the Assumption of the Virgin by the same sculptor. Of the two kneeling angels that once decorated the altar's pediment, one is in the sacristy of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, the other one in the Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin. The altar is made of marble with porphyry and serpentine inlays. The large niche was originally decorated with an alabaster window. The altar was surrounded by fresco paintings, its framework richly gilded.

The figure of the Magdalen measures 178 cm in height, including its base.⁴⁵ According to the contract, the height of the entire altar was to be "from the ground up to the apex of the pediment approximately 28 feet", or 974 cm, its width 556 cm.⁴⁶ These dimensions roughly correspond to the altar as built. The width of the bay (between the free-standing columns) measures 283 cm. The dossal measures 60 cm in width. The altar table is 107 cm high.

⁴⁴ See Soravia (1822), I, pp. 185f., who described the angels to the sides of a crucifix.

⁴⁵ Schulz (1984b), p. 273, n. 273.

⁴⁶ See Appendix I.

Altar and tomb were donated by Verde della Scala, noblewoman of Verona (d.1393). One hundred and thirty years after this donor's death, they were commissioned by the Procurators of S.Marco *de Citra*. This was recorded in an inscription on the wall to the side of the altar in its original location. The inscription read: "NE PRAESTANTISS. MATRONA IGNOTA INHUMATAQ. IACERET, PIENTISS. PROCURATORES DE CITRA, ARAM HANC, TUMULUMQUE POSUERE ANNO 1524."⁴⁷

As is evident from extensive documentation in the Archive of the Procurators of S.Marco *de Citra*, the altar and tomb were constructed between 1523 and 1525.⁴⁸ Guglielmo Bergamasco and his workshop designed and built the altar, while Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco carved the statue.

14. Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo. Triptych of the Madonna.
Plates 33-35

The marble triptych occupies the first apsidal chapel to the right of the presbytery. It is decorated with statues of Sts. Andrew and Philip in the lateral niches. A statue of the Madonna, which originally occupied the central niche, is lost. The present figure in this niche is Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco's statue of St. Mary Magdalen. The compartments of the upper tier, attic storey and lunette are decorated with reliefs of angels, God the Father and the Dove of the Holy Ghost. All figures and ornamented architectural elements are partially gilded, the figures' pupils were painted black.

⁴⁷ Recorded by Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 161.

⁴⁸ Partly published by Caffi (1884).

Sts. Andrew and Philip measure 139 cm and 137 cm in height respectively, the reliefs of the angels measure 62 cm x 48 cm, the relief of God the Father 85 cm x 81.5 cm (width), the lunette 39 cm x 83 cm (width).⁴⁹

The altar was built on behalf of Filippa Benedetti, Venetian citizen, who erected the altar in memory of her dead brother Andrea. It emerges from documents that the altar must have been made between 1478 and 1486.

Schulz argued on stylistic grounds that the altar was made in the workshop of the Lombardo after a design by Andrea Verrocchio. However, her comparison is tenuous. Can one really trace Verrocchio's design in a figure where "even the most Verrocchioesque portion of the apostle's cloak has suffered a reduction of its volume"?⁵⁰ In her discussion of the relief of God the Father, Schulz did not point out the similarity with Antonio Lombardo's relief of the same subject on the soffit of the Zen altar in S.Marco.

15. Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo and Seminario Patriarcale. Three statues from the High Altar from S.Marina.

Plates 50-52, 53 (reconstruction)

The parish church of S.Marina was suppressed in 1810 and demolished in 1820. Its High Altar was dismembered and the marble statues of Sts. Catherine and Mary Magdalen were brought to SS. Giovanni e Paolo to stand on the outer figure bases of the monument to Doge Andrea Vendramin, replacing its original statues of Adam and Eve. The figure of St. Marina, on the other hand, ended up in the Seminario Patriarcale. Of

⁴⁹ Dimensions from Schulz (1977a), p. 205.

⁵⁰ Schulz (1977a), p. 200.

the framework nothing remains, but the altar was described by Stringa in 1604, and in a manuscript of 1676, from which a rough reconstruction is possible.⁵¹

The statue originally at the centre was that of S. Marina. St. Mary Magdalen to the right and a figure of St. Catherine to the left were located slightly below the central saint. The height of the figures (including their bases) is as follows: St. Marina 169 cm; St. Catherine 164.1 cm; St. Mary Magdalen 157.8 cm.⁵²

The three statues are carved from white marble. Their attributes were originally gilded. The altar's framework consisted of porphyry and Greek marbles in various colours.

According to the 1676 manuscript, the altar, made by Lorenzo Bregno, was financed by the Venetian patrician family Bragadin.⁵³ It was probably erected between 1512, when St. Marina was made one of the patrons saints of Venice, and 1524, the year of Lorenzo Bregno's death.

16. Venice, S. Lio, Gussoni Chapel. Altar of the Pietà.

Plates 128-130

The altar is situated in a chapel to the right of the presbytery. The chapel is domed and richly decorated with reliefs of the Evangelists in the dome's spandrels and floral ornaments on the pilasters and the altar's frame. The altarpiece presents a rectangular low relief of the Madonna

⁵¹ See Schulz (1991), pp. 175f. and p. 176, n. 7. My reconstruction (plate 5) is modelled on the contemporary Tomb for Doge Giovanni Mocenigo (plate 72) and the (much smaller) High Altar of S. Sepolcro (Catalogue no. 31 and plate 69).

⁵² Dimensions from Schulz (1991), p. 174.

⁵³ *ibid.* See also Corner (1749, III, p. 255).

mourning the Dead Christ (centre) with Sts. Nicholas and Andrew (left), and James and Helen (right). Selvatico also described a free-standing statue of the Resurrected Christ on top of the altar.⁵⁴ The relief is made from two slabs of delicately veined Greek marble. Gilt is applied above all to the Cross, the Madonna's veil and girdle, Christ's loincloth, but also to the books the saints are holding. Moreover, an approximately 4 cm broad band of gilt runs as a frame along the relief's edges. Narrow balustrades to the sides of the altar mensa are decorated with the Gussoni family's coat-of-arms.

The relief proper is 170 cm high and 133 cm wide, the bases of each pair of pilasters are 41 cm wide, adding to a total width of 215 cm. The seated Madonna measures 95 cm in height.

Chapel and altar were made for Senator Jacopo Gussoni, Venetian patrician, probably shortly after 1479, the year of Gussoni's marriage with Donata Loredan.

Paoletti assigned the relief to Pietro Lombardo in collaboration with his son Tullio.⁵⁵ Similarly, Selvatico attributed the relief to a sculptor in the vicinity of Tullio Lombardo. Physical features and draperies are very similar to Pietro Lombardo's free-standing figures of the Corbelli altar in S. Stefano (Catalogue no. 39).

⁵⁴ Selvatico (1847), p. 236.

⁵⁵ Paoletti (1893), II, p. 222.

17. Venice, S.Marco, Chapel of St. Clement. Upper tier of the altar.

Plate 12

The upper tier of this altar consists of a relief representing a Madonna with Child in half-length, flanked by statuettes of Sts. Mark and Bernardino of Siena. This composition is now set on top of the altarpiece from the Chapel of St. Nicholas in the Ducal Palace (see catalogue no. 22). Originally it probably constituted the entire altarpiece. Gilt is applied to the saints' attributes, the Virgin's halo and the coffers of the background, and furthermore to the ornamental carving of the frame and the inscription at the bottom.

The relief of the Madonna, including frame measures 141.5 cm (height) x 85 cm (width). St. Mark measures 82.3 cm in height, St. Bernardino 84 cm.⁵⁶

The altar is one of three commissioned by Doge Cristoforo Moro who is remembered in inscriptions on all three altars. The inscription of this altar reads: "DUCE SERENISSIMO DNO CHRIST/OFORO MAURO MCCCCLXV". The date of this inscription, 1465, probably refers to the altar's completion.

As is documented by a record of payment of 28th June 1469, this and the two following altars (Catalogue nos. 18 and 19) were made by Antonio Rizzo.

⁵⁶ Dimensions from Schulz (1983a), p. 167.

18. Venice, S.Marco. Altar of St. James.

Plates 82, 83

19. Venice, S.Marco. Altar of St. Paul.

Plates 84-86

The altar of St. James is situated in the right transept of S.Marco. The round-arched aedicula is richly decorated with floral ornaments. It frames a shallow round-arched niche with the marble statue of St. James. Its counterpart, the Altar of St. Paul, is located in the left transept of the church. Its composition is analogous to its counterpart dedicated to St. James with a marble statue of St. Paul standing in the niche.⁵⁷ The major difference between the two is the decoration of the antependium, which on the Altar of St. Paul features a low relief depicting the *Conversion of Saul*. There is no trace of gilding or polychromy on either altar.

The statue of St. James measures 106.5 cm in height. The statue of St. Paul measures 111 cm in height. The antependium relief of the *Conversion of Saul* measures 65.5 cm (height) and 111 cm (width). The entire height of the Altar of St. James is 373.7 cm, that of the Altar of St. Paul 374.3 cm.⁵⁸

Like the altar in the Chapel of St. Clement, these two altars were made by Antonio Rizzo for Doge Cristoforo Moro.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Selvatico (1847), p. 192: "Questi panneggiamenti ed insieme le are de' volti, le estremità, e in generale le forme tutte, ricordano quelle maniere che allora vestivano d'ingenua bellezza anche i dipinti del Cima, del Carpaccio e dei due Bellini."

⁵⁸ Dimensions from Schulz (1983a), p. 167.

⁵⁹ Again, this is documented by two almost identical inscriptions on the altars. On the Altar of St. James it reads "DUCE INCLITTISSIMO ET PIENTISSIMO / DNO CRISTOFORO MAURO PRINCIPE".

The altars were made between 1465 (inscription on the previous altar) and 1469, when Rizzo received his final payment.

20. Venice, S.Marco. Altar of the Sacrament.

Plates 73-75

The Altar of the Sacrament was erected in the central apse and behind the High Altar of S.Marco. It is erected on an elevated platform and screened off by four free-standing twisted columns and two smooth columns leaning against the apse wall. They support an entablature which was originally surmounted by a dome of gilded bronze.⁶⁰

The altar is made of marble and other, semi-precious stones. In the centre of the tripartite composition is a bronze *sportello* with a relief depicting an *Allegory of the Redemption* by Jacopo Sansovino. Above it, in the low-relief coffered barrel vault, is a half-length figure of God the Father. The relief is framed by two praying angels in high relief. In the lateral niches are two free-standing statues of Sts. Anthony of Padua and Francis. The coffers of the central relief and the soffit of its aedicula are partially gilded, as is God the Father's halo. The capitals of the jasper columns framing the centre are also gilded.

The altar measures 262 cm in height and 247.5 cm in width. St. Francis measures 74.1 cm and St. Anthony 76.2 cm in height.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Meschinelli, (1753), p. 108. See also Caspary (1964), pp. 86f. and pp. 161f., n. 188.

⁶¹ Dimensions from Schulz (1991), p. 177.

The altar was commissioned by the Procurators of S. Marco *de Supra* who drew up the contract with the sculptor Lorenzo Bregno on 3rd March 1518.

21. Venice, S. Marco, Crypt. Lunette relief.

Plates 117-120

The relief in the crypt of S. Marco is situated behind an altar table and set into the arch in front of the tomb of St. Mark, thus being directly under the High Altar of the church. The high relief consists of five slabs of Greek marble with figures of the Enthroned Madonna and Child in the centre and Sts. Mark and Peter to her left and right. On the outer edges of the lunette are figures Sts. Ursula (left) and Catherine (right). All figures stand on a common base. The female saints, however, are represented on a smaller scale, more rounded than the male saints, less animated, and appear almost like an afterthought. While the three central blocks are of the same thickness, the outer blocks are thinner. As far as I could see from the edges of each block, the original composition merely consisted of the three central figures in a rectangular relief. Gilt is applied to the hems of the figures' draperies, their sandals and their attributes. The Madonna's throne is decorated with black inlays.

The Enthroned Madonna measures 106 cm in height (including the 13 cm high base), St. Peter on the right measures 104.5 cm, St. Ursula on the left 87 cm.

The stone, but also the delicacy of the reliefs, and the figures' draperies recall the altarpiece of the Gussoni chapel at S. Lio (See Catalogue no. 16). Other details, such as the drapery of the Madonna and the face of St. Mark are

almost identical with elements of the relief of the Pietà in the ante-sacristy of S.Maria della Salute. At the foot of the Madonna's throne an inscription reads: "MCCCCLXXXIII DIE PA MA/RCII EX HELIMOSINIS."

Does this mean that the altarpiece was made from pious donations? The 1st March 1494 marked the 400th anniversary of the transferral of the relics of St. Mark to this site in the crypt. Was the relief made to commemorate this historical event? According to Lorenzetti, the altarpiece belonged to the Scuola dei Mascoli, which had its seat there from 1222 until 1618, when the confraternity moved from the crypt into the so-called *Cappella dei Mascoli* in the left transept of S.Marco, which is decorated with the marble triptych of 1430 (plate 7).⁶²

22. Venice, S.Marco, Chapel of St. Clement. Altar. Devotional Relief of Doge Andrea Gritti.

Plate 13

The marble high relief once decorated the Chapel of St. Nicholas in the Ducal Palace. After the destruction of the chapel, it was installed as the lower portion on the altar of the Chapel of St. Clement in S.Marco.⁶³ This altar's upper part consists of the relief described above (see catalogue no. 17). The relief in question shows Doge Andrea Gritti presented by St. Andrew (right) to St. Nicholas (centre),

⁶² Lorenzetti (1926), p. 211. See also Muraro (1961b).

⁶³ Wolters (1983), p. 98, briefly mentioned the altar in the historical context of the decoration of the Ducal Palace. Schulz (1991), pp. 190-91, provided a analysis of the sculptures' style. Hubala (1977) was concerned mainly with the pictorial decoration by Titian (See Chapter Two, 5.2 *Painted Decoration of the Altars' Surroundings*).

plus St. James (left). There is no evidence of polychromy or gilding, but Sanudo described the altar as gilded, which may refer to the relief's original frame, which is lost.

The relief is 120 cm wide and 17.5 cm deep at its base. Including the entablature it measures 140 cm in height. The figure of St. Nicholas measures 112 cm in height (including 15.5 cm height of the socle).

The altarpiece was made for Doge Andrea Gritti in 1523, when it was seen and described as new by Marin Sanudo. It was assigned by Schulz to an anonymous Venetian sculptor.⁶⁴

23. Venice, S.Marco, Zen Chapel. Altar.

Plates 122-124

The Zen chapel is situated at the south end of the narthex of S.Marco. Its altar consists of a fully three-dimensional bronze canopy with three bronze statues representing Madonna and Child, Sts. Peter (left) and John the Baptist (right). The soffit of the canopy, carried by richly ornamented free-standing columns at the front and pilasters at the rear, is decorated with a half-length high relief of God the Father surrounded by angels. The altar's antependium is decorated with a bronze relief of the Resurrection.

The canopy's platform is 329 cm deep. The canopy's arch is 396.5 cm high and 258 cm wide. The relief of the antependium measures 84 cm (height) x 232 cm (width).⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Schulz (1991), pp. 190-91.

⁶⁵ Jestaz (1986), p. 119 and p. 138.

The chapel and its altar were built under the supervision of the Procurators of S. Marco *de Citra*, following the testamentary decrees of the Venetian patrician, Cardinal Giambattista Zen.

Zen's will and its codicils were written in April 1501. The contract for the chapel between the Procurators and Antonio Lombardo and Alessandro Leopardi was drawn up on 19th January 1504. The chapel was virtually complete, when the cardinal's corpse was transferred there on 26th March 1521. However, the altar was not consecrated until 1532, and its liturgical accessories were commissioned as late as 1552.⁶⁶

The altar was made by Antonio Lombardo (to whom Jestaz attributed the Seated Madonna with the Christchild and St. Peter), Paolo Savin and various other artists.

24. Venice, S. Maria dei Frari, Emiliani Chapel. Polyptych of St. Peter.

Plates 7, 8

The chapel was added to the main building of S. Maria dei Frari along the left aisle at the height of the choir screen (plate 9). Its stone polyptych has five pointed-arched niches on the main tier. They are occupied by free-standing stone figures of Sts. Peter (centre), Jerome (outer left), John the Baptist (inner left), Bartholomew or James (inner right) and Francis (outer right). Their attributes and the hems of their cloaks show traces of gilding. In the niches of the upper tier are half-length figures of the Madonna and Child at the centre and female Saints (from left to right) Lucy, Catherine, Mary Magdalen and Clare. The figures' niches were

⁶⁶ For a detailed account see Jestaz (1986), pp. 175-216.

originally painted dark blue and their ribs were gilded. Architectural details and figures' attributes and draperies were partially gilded. The hair of the female saints was originally polychromed or gilded.

The entire altar measures 385 cm in height and 313 cm in width.⁶⁷

The chapel was erected on behalf of Pietro Emiliani, Venetian patrician and bishop of Vicenza 1409-1433; after Pietro's death the project was taken on by Pietro's son Faustino. The statues of the main tier were perhaps commissioned by another Pietro Emiliani, the elder Pietro's grandson.

According to a recent publication by Samo Stefanac, the altar was erected between 1442/3 and 1449.⁶⁸ Wolters, on the other hand, suggested a later dating of about 1460.⁶⁹ Judging from the many differences between the figures of the upper and lower tiers (style, size, material, polychromy) it appears improbable that they were made at the same time. I suggest that the male saints were made in the 1460s, whereas the female saints belong to the 1440s or earlier.

Stefanac attributed the statues of the polyptych to the Florentine sculptor Agostino di Duccio, who is documented as having spent some time in Venice between 1442/3 and 1449. It is, however, quite evident, that the figures of each tier were made by different sculptors. Moreover, the statue of St. Peter in the central niche appears to be the work of a third artist.

⁶⁷ Stefanac (1990), p. 34.

⁶⁸ Stefanac (1990).

⁶⁹ Wolters (1976), I, p. 265.

25. Venice, S.Maria dei Frari, Sacristy. Tabernacle of the Precious Blood.

Plates 167-170

The little marble tabernacle, which once perhaps stood in the chapel of St. Michael in S. Maria dei Frari, is not strictly speaking an altarpiece, but a reliquary. It is now fixed into the wall on a rather high level in the sacristy of the same church. Strictly speaking, it probably did not serve the function of an altar, but of a reliquary. At the tabernacle's centre is a low relief representing a domed space with a tabernacle construction in the centre. The tabernacle is decorated with a bronze *sportello* with a relief of the Repenting Magdalen. To the sides of the relief are statuettes of Sts. John the Baptist and Francis. In a separate field above is a relief of the Dead Christ with Angels. Gilt is applied to the cornices of the relief. The figures, on the other hand, show no evidence of polychromy or gilding. The width of the tabernacle's measures 163 cm at its base.

The relic of the *Sangue Prezioso* was donated by the Venetian patrician Marchio Trevisan. It is likely that he also paid for the manufacture of the tabernacle. According to a passage in Sabellico, the altar was finished by 1488.

McAndrew attributed the tabernacle to Tullio Lombardo. B.C. Kreplin, interpreting the abbreviation "Mo Ci" on the socle of the figure of the Baptist as the sculptor's signature, suggested Marino di Marco Cedrini as the author of

the statuettes.⁷⁰ On the other hand, Kreplin assigned the tabernacle's remaining parts to a sculptor of the Lombardo workshop.

26. Venice, S.Maria dei Frari. Triptych of St. Michael.

Plates 28-31

The wooden triptych of St. Michael is situated in the second choir chapel on the left. Its frame consists of three polychromed niches of equal size, containing the polychromed and gilded figures of the Archangel Michael in the centre, and Sts. Francis and Sebastian on either side. The central figure, whose wings have been clipped to fit him into the niche, is probably not the original one, although it was carved at the same time as the lateral figures at the end of the 15th century.⁷¹ Instead, it probably served as a processional figure. However, there is no reason to believe that the original statue represented the Madonna. By the late Quattrocento, other saints could also occupy the centre of an altarpiece, such as on the Altar of St. Michael in the Cathedral at Chioggia.

It is not known whether the altar was surmounted by a superstructure or an upper tier. The three fields in the predella zone, which may originally have contained carved ornaments, are now plain. The lateral figures each measure 128 cm in height.

⁷⁰ McAndrew, (1980), p. 189; Kreplin in Th.-B., VI, pp. 261-262.

⁷¹ Communication from Dott. Luigi Sante Savio, restorer of the Soprintendenza ai Beni Artistici e Storici di Venezia.

In all likelihood, the figures were commissioned by the *Scuola dei Boccaleri*, the guild of the crockery sellers, whose patron saint was St. Michael and who held their functions in this chapel from 1420 onwards.

Nothing is known about the altar's making, but the altar's framework is very similar to that of Giovanni Bellini's Pesaro Triptych by Jacopo da Faenza in the sacristy of the Frari, which is dated 1488. This similarity and the figures' style, which is related to that of wooden figures from the Trentino and Friuli of the early 16th century, allow a hypothetical dating of the altar to the last decade of the 15th century.

27. Venice, S.Maria della Salute. Altar of the Pietà from S.Andrea della Certosa.

Plates 131, 132

The marble high relief represents a Seated Madonna with the Dead Christ in her lap, and Sts. Paul, Mark (both left), John, Nicholas (both right), and in profile Sts. Lorenzo Giustinian (right) and Anthony (left). There is no evidence of polychromy or gilding. This altarpiece, which is now in the small sacristy of S.Maria della Salute, once decorated an altar in S.Andrea della Certosa.

Without its frame, which is lost, the relief, made of one piece of white marble, measures 158 (height) x 175 cm (width).

Nothing is known with certainty about the relief's patronage. According to a reference by Cicogna, the patron of the relief was the *cittadino* Antonio Vinciguerra, secretary

of the Council of Ten.⁷² However, correcting himself following a conversation with Moschini, Cicogna claims that the altar belonged to the Giustinian family who had two chapels at S.Andrea. I suggest that the relief was made to decorate an altar for Antonio Surian, the prior of the Carthusian monastery, who from 1504 until his death in 1508 was also Patriarch of Venice. He was buried at S.Andrea della Certosa.⁷³ This would warrant the inclusion of the profile of St. Lorenzo Giustinian, the first Venetian patriarch, on the right, who had been a great benefactor of the Carthusians.⁷⁴ On the relief, Giustinian is looking at St. Anthony, the donor's name saint, on the left. Alternatively, the depiction of St. Lorenzo Giustinian suggests the patronage of a member of his family who had two chapels at the Certosa. The identification of the hill town, depicted in low relief, could be a clue to the altar's patronage.

A stylistic comparison with Tullio Lombardo's reliefs for the Santo in Padua does not support the attribution of the relief to Tullio Lombardo himself, which was proposed by Paoletti.⁷⁵ However, it was certainly produced in the

⁷² BMC, Codice Cicogna, busta 3233/3234, fascicolo 1, folio S.Andrea della Certosa, verso: "fu ultima d'esso la Cappella con altare alla Madonna della Pietà, scolpito in rilievo con altri santi, tutti d'un solo pezzo da famoso scultore e la fece erigere antico Vinciguerra... 1517."

⁷³ Corner (1758), p. 63.

⁷⁴ Lorenzo Giustinian on the relief can easily be identified since his features are nearly identical to those of a painting by Gentile Bellini of 1465 in the Gallerie dell'Accademia (see Jürg Meyer zur Capellen, Gentile Bellini, Stuttgart, 1985, pp. 136f. Although Lorenzo Giustinian is included among the saints of the Salute altarpiece, he was not beatified until 1524 and was canonised only in 1624.

⁷⁵ Paoletti (1893), II, p. 228.

sculptor's workshop.⁷⁶ Mariacher was little impressed by the work and dismissed it as "a work of no great quality".⁷⁷

Krahn dated the relief to ca. 1500.⁷⁸ Indeed, the many parallels between the Salute altarpiece, the lunette in the crypt of S.Marco of 1494 and Tullio Lombardo's *Miracle of the Severed Foot* in S.Antonio in Padua of 1505, suggest a dating of the *Pietà* to the first decade of the 16th century. Thus, this relief could have been made around the time of death of its potential donor, Antonio Surian.

28. Venice, S.Maria Mater Domini. Altar of the Trevisan Chapel.

Plates 125, 126

The Trevisan altar is the first in the right aisle in the small parish church of S.Maria Mater Domini. A tomb stone with inscription is placed in front of it.⁷⁹ The altarpiece is decorated with three statues of St. Andrew at the centre, with Sts. Peter and Paul to his sides, in an elaborate architectural relief, representing a coffered, barrel-vaulted space with apse. The latter is occupied by a relief of God the Father and cherubim. Whereas St. Andrew is free-standing, the other two saints are sculpted in high relief. Parts of the coffered vault, the apse relief and the frame's capitals are gilded, similarly to Lorenzo Bregno's Altar of the

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ Mariacher (1954), p. 369, n. 7.

⁷⁸ Krahn (1988), p. 94.

⁷⁹ The inscription reads: "ANDREAE TRIVISANO FILIO ET / HELENAE FILIAE ILLI BIMO HUIC / SEXENNI UTRISQ. ACERBE DEFUNCTIS / ET ANNAE UXORI INCOMPARABILI / CUM QUA IUCUNDISS. VIXIT ANN XIII / PAULUS TRIVISAN ANDREAE F. ET SIBI / ET POSTERIS VULT FIERI".

Sacrament in S.Marco (Catalogue no. 20). The altar's frame is richly encrusted with colourful stones, featuring the Trevisan coat-of-arms at the ledge behind the altar's mensa. The frame is identical with that of the opposite altar, which belonged to Girolamo Contarini.

St. Andrew measures 114.5 cm in height, Sts. Peter and Paul 106.5 and 105 cm respectively (including figures' bases).⁸⁰

As is recorded by the inscription on the slab in front of it, the altar was made for the Venetian patrician Paolo Trevisan in memory of his son Andrea who had died at the age of six, and furthermore to Paolo's daughter Elena, and his wife Anna.

The altar was commissioned shortly before Lorenzo Bregno's death in early 1524. It was not yet finished in 1526, when a payment was made to Antonio Minello.⁸¹

Sansovino reported that the statues had been begun by Lorenzo Bregno but finished by Antonio Minello. However, Schulz identified the sculptor of Sts. Peter and Paul as Antonio Minello, collaborating with anonymous sculptors who carved the statue of St. Andrew and the relief of God the Father.⁸²

⁸⁰ Schulz (1991), p. 209.

⁸¹ Sartori/Fillarini (1976), p. 163. See also Schulz (1991), pp. 210f.

⁸² *ibid.*

29. Venice, S.Maria Mater Domini. Altar of the Sacrament from S.Maria Maggiore.

Plates 77-79

After the suppression of S.Maria Maggiore in 1806 the little tabernacle altar was transported from the convent to S.Maria Mater Domini, where it now occupies the chapel to the left of the presbytery. When Moschini described the altar in 1815, it was already in place at its new location.

The structure of the altar is tripartite. While two figures of Sts. John the Evangelist and Mark stand in niches of the protruding lateral parts, a repository for the host or a relic opens in the receding central section. Although the altar's framework is almost certainly a pastiche of the 17th century, this tripartite type of Sacrament altar certainly existed in the early 16th century, as we can see on the High Altar of S.Sepolcro. On the object from S.Maria Mater Domini, the central portion is certainly not the original one. The positions of the statuettes of the saints, however, take into account an intended space between them. The statues are made of white marble. The architecture of the altar is richly inlaid with variegated marbles and porphyry. The fringes of the figures' drapery and the niches behind the figures bear traces of gilding.

Nothing is known about the patronage of the altar. While Paoletti proposed Lorenzo Bregno as the author of the two statuettes, Schulz assigned the figures to the Paduan sculptor Giovanni Maria Mosca, which implies that they were

carved before 1530, when the sculptor left Venice for Cracow.⁸³

30. Venice, S.Maria Mater Domini. Altar of St. Francis from S.Maria Maggiore.

Plates 101, 102

The chapel with altar and sepulchre was originally situated to the left of the presbytery in the Franciscan nunnery of S.Maria Maggiore.⁸⁴ The church had eleven altars. None were added according the regulations in the will of Alvise Malipiero (see below), who at the beginning of the 16th century had financed most of the building of the church. The altar was brought to its present location in the chapel to the right of the presbytery of S.Maria Mater Domini in 1829.⁸⁵

The marble statue of St. Francis stands in a round-arch niche behind the mensa. A predella relief represents five figures: in the centre St. Louis of Toulouse (in Venetian Alvise), on the right side Sts. Clare and Elisabeth of Hungary, on the left-hand side Sts. Bernardino and Anthony of Padua.

The Venetian patrician Luigi (Alvise) Malipiero financed much of the edifice of the church and its interior, including

⁸³ Paoletti (1893), II, p. 275; Schulz (1991), p. 57. Tramontin (1962), p. 35, commented: "...costruito ancora secondo gli schemi della rinascenza anche se un po' tardi; in esso sono notevoli le due piccole statue di S.Marco e di S.Giovanni forse di Lorenzo Bregno."

⁸⁴ The monument is illustrated in Cicogna, III, opposite p. 429.

⁸⁵ Tramontin (1962), p. 35.

the Chapel of St. Francis.⁸⁶ He took it over in 1533 from Alvise Polani, who had previously patronised the chapel. It emerges from Alvise's will that it was not allowed to erect further tombs or altars in the church without the explicit permission of Alvise or his heirs, as he had acquired the *jus patronatus* over the church.

Although a lost inscription referred to the completion of the presbytery of the church in the year 1536, the altar's ornamentation appears to have been made a few years earlier.⁸⁷ The large floral patterns on the pilasters of the altar's aedicula frame recall the pilasters of the S.Giobbe presbytery of the late 15th century. The quality of the statues is so inferior that they defy attribution.

While Lorenzetti assigned the altar's antependium to Lorenzo Bregno, the rest of the altar has escaped notice in art-historical literature.⁸⁸ The altar was not considered by Schulz in her recent monograph on Giambattista and Lorenzo Bregno.

31. Venice, S.Martino di Castello. High Altar from the church of S.Sepolcro.

Plates 69-71

The High Altar of the church dedicated to the Holy Sepulchre is situated in the left transept of S.Martino di

⁸⁶ Cicogna, III, pp. 418-419. See also Tafuri (1986), pp. 42-44, on Alvise's personality and his role in the building of S.Maria Maggiore.

⁸⁷ The inscription, recorded by Cicogna, III, p. 418, read: "ALOYSIO MARIPIETRO, QUI TEMPLUM HOC DIVAE MARIAE MAIORI DICATUM AERE SUO A FUNDAMENTIS EXTRUENDUM CURAVIT, H.M.H.N.S. PRAETER UXOR. MDXXXVII."

⁸⁸ Lorenzetti (1926), p. 471.

Castello. It has a triptych-cum-triumphal-arch structure with Sts. John the Baptist (left) and Peter (right) in lateral niches and a tabernacle in the centre. The lunette above the tabernacle features a half-length figure of the dead Christ. Originally a figure of the Saviour stood on the altar's upper tier. The gilded bronze *sportello* (now lost) of the central portion represented the *Liberation of the Souls of the Holy Fathers from Limbo*, as described by Martinioni (see below). The altar is made of marble with inlays of various semi-precious stones. The figures are carved from Carrara marble. Traces of gilding can be found on the hems of the figures' draperies and on some cornices.

The altar is 230 cm high and 184.8 cm wide (at the lowest cornice). The statuette of St. Peter measures 48 cm in height, that of St. John the Baptist 47.5 cm.⁸⁹

Although the history of church and altar is obscure, Sanudo mentioned the former as completed on 10th March 1511, while Stringa's and, later Martinioni's editions of Sansovino gave detailed descriptions of the latter.⁹⁰ Nothing is known about the altar's patronage. Schulz dated the figures to 1509/1510, that is to say around the time of the church's completion.⁹¹

According to Schulz the statuettes of Sts. Peter and John the Baptist are works by Lorenzo Bregno. The altarpiece, which Schulz also assigned to Bregno, is closely related to the Lombardos' tomb of Doge Giovanni Mocenigo in SS. Giovanni

⁸⁹ Dimensions from Schulz (1991), p. 197.

⁹⁰ Sanudo, *Diarii*, XII, p. 35. Sansovino/Stringa, c. 131 recto f.

⁹¹ Schulz (1984a), p. 166.

e Paolo, which warrants its attribution to the workshop of Tullio Lombardo.

32. Venice, S.Michele in Isola, Emiliani chapel. High Altar of the Annunciation.

Plates 143-146

33. Venice, S.Michele in Isola, Emiliani chapel. Altar of the Adoration of the Shepherds.

Plates 139, 140

34. Venice, S.Michele in Isola, Emiliani chapel. Altar of the Adoration of the Magi.

Plates 141, 142

The Emiliani Chapel is built on an hexagonal plan and situated to the left of the façade of the church of S.Michele. The exterior (plate 148) is made from Istrian stone. Seen from the ideal viewpoint, as one approaches the main entrance to the chapel from the water, the façade consists of two lateral intercolumnations with their niches and statues of saints joining the central section with the door and an inscription above it to form a tripartite front, which, in a sense echoes the tripartite façade of the church. To emphasise this effect, the statues' heads are turned from the narrow sides towards the broad centre. The chapel is crowned by a high double-shelled dome. On one side it is connected with the vestibule of the church by a pentagonal porch. There are three doors (plate 147) alternating with the three altars of the chapel, so that each altar is on one axis with one of the doors. On one axis with the main door is the main altar of the chapel, dedicated to the Annunciation of the Virgin.

The side altar to the right of the chapel's main altar is decorated with a marble high relief of the *Adoration of the Shepherds*. The second side altar, to the left of the main altar, is situated opposite the vestibule that connects the chapel with the church. The marble altarpiece is carved in high relief and represents the *Adoration of the Magi*. Both these altars echo on a smaller scale the shape of the free-standing High Altar in S.Salvatore (see also catalogue no. 36), which presumably was being made at the same time.

The main altarpiece measures 187 cm from the main base on which figures and columns are set to the main architrave. The niches are each 66 cm wide. The figure of the Angel is 91 cm high, that of the Virgin 104 cm (including bases). The height of the *Adoration of the Shepherds* is 177 cm from the bases of the columns and the relief to the main architrave. The relief is 121 cm wide and 33 cm deep. Like its counterpart, the altarpiece of the *Adoration of the Magi* is 177 high (from base of relief and columns to main architrave). The relief is 119 cm high and 31 cm deep. None of the altars are polychromed or gilded.

The Emiliani Chapel was founded by Margherita Vitturi Emiliani, Venetian patrician, putting the Procurators of S.Marco *de Citra* in charge of its building and decoration. It derives from extensive documentation in the Archives of the Procurators of S.Marco *de Citra* that the chapel was begun immediately after the contract had been drawn up between the Procurators and the designer and chief architect Guglielmo Bergamasco on 1st January 1529. While the altars' framework was also designed by Guglielmo, the three altarpieces were

carved in 1530 by the little-known sculptor Giambattista da Carona.⁹²

35. Venice, S.Rocco. High Altar.

Plates 58-63

The richly decorated marble altar is constructed in a way analogous to Renaissance funerary monuments with a tall central arch and triangular pediment and two storeys of niches to the sides of the main arch. The latter contains a sarcophagus with the saint's relics, supported by a rectangular base and two putti. The front of the sarcophagus is decorated with a painting representing scenes from the life of St. Roch. A marble figure of the saint is displayed on top of the sarcophagus. The niches contain marble statues of saints on different scales: in the lower niches Sts. John the Baptist (left) and Sebastian (right); in the upper niches on a slightly smaller scale Sts. Pantaleon (left) and Francis (right); above the second storey, to the sides of the pediment, the Angel (left) and the Annunciate Virgin (right) on a smaller scale. Above the pediment, surrounded by seraphim, is a half-length figure of God the Father, on the same scale as the figures of the Annunciation. The altar's antependium is richly inlaid with colourful stones. Gilt is applied to the niches behind the figures.

It was not possible to obtain precise measurements of the altar. The figures of the main tier measure approximately three quarter life-size.

⁹² These documents were known to and partly published by Meneghin (1962), pp. 333-39.

The altar was commissioned by the Chapter General of the Scuola Grande di S.Rocco. The project of the altar is first mentioned by the Banca on 8th June 1516. The contract with the stone mason Venturin Fantoni dates from 29th March 1517. The altar was installed incomplete in 1520, and finished in 1522.

The altar's architecture was designed by Venturin Fantoni. The statues were carved by Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco and Gian Maria Mosca of Padua (?).⁹³

36. Venice, S.Salvatore. Altar of St. Jerome.

Plates 99, 100

The Altar of St. Jerome is still in its original location in the third bay along the left aisle of S.Salvatore. A broad, round-arched niche, framed by three columns on either side, is inserted into a large aedicula with triangular pediment. The niche features one sole marble statue of St. Jerome. The apse above the figure of the saint is filled with a relief of God the Father accompanied by angels. Statue and relief are made from white marble, while the rear wall of the niche, the six columns which support the entablature and the architrave are made from or revetted with veined orange marble. The altar's predella zone and antependium are decorated with inlays of the same orange marble, porphyry and verd antique. The antependium's central disk features a coat-of-arms.

⁹³ For a concise history of the statues' attribution see Schulz (1984b), p. 261. See also Schulz (1991), p. 87, n. 33.

The width of the niche's bay measures 174 cm, its height (up to the entablature, but not including the lunette) 237 cm. The height of the statue is 187 cm.

The coat-of-arms is that of the patrician Priuli family. The altar was founded by Girolamo Priuli who also sponsored the adjacent Merceria portal of the same church in 1530.⁹⁴ His tomb slab is situated in front of the altar, which is inscribed with "HIERONYMO DE PRIOLIS LAURENTII... OBIIT MDXLVII DIE VII IULII".

The altar was almost certainly begun during the 1520s by Guglielmo Bergamasco.⁹⁵ On 4th December 1524, Guglielmo had already been commissioned to make the framework for the High Altar of S.Salvatore, which had a silver *pala* of the late 13th century at its centre. Work was not completed by 4th December 1528.⁹⁶ Possibly Guglielmo started work on the St. Jerome altar shortly after completion of the High Altar.⁹⁷ As Boucher surmised, the statue and apse relief by Tommaso Lombardo, a pupil of Jacopo Sansovino was not made until 1547, by which time Girolamo had died.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Boucher (1991), p. 148.

⁹⁵ Temanza (1778), p. 129, first mentioned Guglielmo as the architect of this altar.

⁹⁶ Cecchetti (1886 b), p. 497.

⁹⁷ Angelini (1961), p. 138, on the other hand, dated Guglielmo's work to 1540.

⁹⁸ Boucher (1991), p. 68.

37. Venice, S.Sofia. Four statues from the Altar of the Scuola dei Barbieri at S.Maria dei Servi.

Plates 15-18

The altar of the Barbers' guild was originally the second along the right wall in the church of S.Maria dei Servi. It was removed when the church was destroyed in the 19th century. The altar's setting is lost. The stone statues of the altar are now in the church of S.Sofia. Sts. Cosmas and Damian are standing on corbels on the church's inner façade. The statues of Sts. Luke and Andrew have been put on the High Altar. Traces of pigments show that they were originally partly polychromed and gilded.

The height of the figures, including their bases, is as follows: St. Cosmas 110 cm, St. Damian 116 cm, St. Andrew 114 cm, St. Luke 112 cm.⁹⁹

The altar was commissioned by the Barbers' Guild. Permission to decorate an altar was given to the barbers in 1469. The altar was mentioned as finished on 10th August 1490. In a recent catalogue entry on the restoration of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, the statues were dated to 1470-1474.¹⁰⁰ Schulz assigned the statues to the workshop of Antonio Rizzo, following an attribution by Paoletti.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Dimensions from Schulz (1983a), p. 180.

¹⁰⁰ Merkel in Restituzioni (1991), pp. 42-44.

¹⁰¹ Schulz (1983a), p. 181, and Paoletti (1893), II, p. 150.

38. Venice, S.Stefano. Altarpiece of Jacopo Surian.

Plates 109-111

The bronze relief for Jacopo Surian is fixed into the wall on the right aisle of the church, near the door leading into the Sacristy. Originally, it was located on an altar next to the funerary monument to Jacopo Surian to the left of the main entrance. Grevembroch, who illustrated the monument, recorded that this altar was originally dedicated to the *Madonna della Neve*, of the Snow, and to Sts. James Major and Minor.¹⁰² Accordingly, the relief depicts a *Sacra conversazione* with the Madonna and Child on a throne, at the sides of which stand St. James the Elder and St. James the Younger. In front of the saints kneel the patron, Jacopo Surian, Venetian citizen, physician, and his wife.

The relief is 120 cm wide. The Madonna and Child, including the throne, measure 100 cm in height. The figure of St. James behind the kneeling Jacopo Surian measures 89 cm, the figure of the patron 49 cm in height.

The altarpiece was made between 1488, when Surian planned to have an altar erected in S. Maria dei Frari, and completed and installed by 1493, when it was mentioned by Marin Sanudo.

Paoletti rejected an attribution to Alessandro Leopardi on the grounds of the relief's artistic inferiority.¹⁰³ Lorenzetti assigned the work to a "Lombard master".¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Grevembroch, III, c. 61: "che altre volte... fu Altare dedicato alla Madonna della Neve e ai santi Apostoli Giacomo il Maggiore ed il Minore."

¹⁰³ Paoletti (1893), II, p. 286.

¹⁰⁴ Lorenzetti (1926/1974), p. 503.

39. Venice, S.Stefano. Three marble statues from the Altar of St. Nicholas of Tolentino.

Plates 20-22

The three marble statues of Sts. Nicholas of Tolentino (centre), Andrew (left) and Jerome (right) are situated on the third altar on the church's left aisle. Gilding was once applied to the hems of St. Nicholas's cloak and to his girdle, to the stone in St. Jerome's right hand, and probably also to the figures' bases. St. Andrew's book was originally painted black. Nothing remains of the altar's original framework. Documents in the Archives of S.Stefano refer to its re-building in the years 1584-85, when a painting was installed.¹⁰⁵ The altar was again altered at the beginning of the 18th century, when the frame was given its present Baroque structure (plate 19).¹⁰⁶

St. Andrew measures 114 cm in height (including his base), St. Jerome measures 112 cm (including base).

The altar belonged to the Venetian citizen family of the Corbelli. The rights to it were acquired by Andrea Corbelli in 1441. The statues, however, evidently date from the last quarter of the 15th century.

The base of St. Jerome is inscribed with Pietro Lombardo. The high quality of the other two figures suggests that these were equally made by Pietro Lombardo.

¹⁰⁵ ASV, S.Stefano, busta 9, fascicolo 48.

¹⁰⁶ ASV, S.Stefano, busta 24, fascicolo 363, c. 44 verso.

40. Venice, Seminario Patriarcale. Altar of the Nativity.

Plates 134-136

The low relief of the Nativity was originally located in a chapel in S.Andrea della Certosa. It depicts the scene in a detailed and pictorial setting. Following the suppression of the monastery in 1810, the altarpiece was brought to the Seminario Patriarcale, where it was seen by Moschini in 1819.¹⁰⁷ The relief is made of Istrian stone and was originally fully polychromed.

The dimensions of the altarpiece are approximately equal to those of the Altar of the *Pietà* in S.Lio (Catalogue no. 16).

Nothing is known about the relief's patron. Possibly, this work decorated the altar of the funerary chapel of the procurator Orsato Giustinian, which was commissioned by Orsato's nephew Marino after the former's death in 1464.

The relief is normally dated to the period before Pietro Lombardo's activity at S.Maria dei Miracoli (1480-89). However, I suggest that the altar's simple frame and the landscape background, which resembles that of the relief of the *Three Maries* on the monument for Doge Pietro Mocenigo in SS. Giovanni e Paolo, point to a later dating of ca. 1483.¹⁰⁸

Many minor shortcomings of the relief, such as the figures' proportions or their little convincing positions (especially that of St. Joseph) do not point to Pietro Lombardo's authorship, but rather to the Lombardo workshop.

¹⁰⁷ Moschini (1819), p. 55.

¹⁰⁸ See also Sheard (1984a), p. 169, n. 9.

41. Venice, Seminario Patriarcale. Chapel of the SS. Trinità. Marble triptych.

Plates 36-39

The triptych in the chapel of the Seminario Patriarcale at S.Maria della Salute was originally situated in the Oratory of the Benedictine monastery of S.Cipriano di Murano, the former seat of the Seminario Patriarcale. The niches of the altar formerly accommodated three marble statues of Sts. Benedict at the centre, Sts. John the Baptist (left) and Jerome (right). The statue of St. Benedict was removed after it had lost its head. The compartments of the altar's upper tier are now decorated with 19th century paintings. Nothing is certain about their original decoration, but in 1808 Moschini suspected that the paintings replaced three reliefs.¹⁰⁹

Sts. John and Jerome each measure 118 cm in height including their bases. The height of the main tier (from figure platform to architrave) measures 154 cm.

The altar's pilasters are decorated with the Trevisan family's coat-of-arms, pointing to the abbot of S.Cipriano Giovanni di Andrea Trevisan between the years 1501 and 1524.

Schulz attributed the statues to Giovanni Buora.¹¹⁰ A *terminus post quem* for the triptych is 3rd September 1501, when Giovanni was appointed abbot of S.Cipriano. Presumably the altar was completed before 1524, when Giovanni abdicated in favour of his nephew. If the altarpiece was made by

¹⁰⁹ Moschini (1808), p. 77.

¹¹⁰ Schulz (1983b), p. 61.

Giovanni Buora, it must have been finished by 1519, when the sculptor was no longer alive.¹¹¹

42. Venice, Seminario Patriarcale. Chapel of the SS. Trinità. Tabernacle Altar from S.Nicolò di Castello.

Plate 121

The marble tabernacle was originally one of three altars in S.Nicolò di Castello, "Seminario Ducale e Ospedale dei Marinai", where it originally occupied the chapel to the left of the presbytery.¹¹² The church, dedicated to St. Nicholas of Bari, was consecrated on 25th March 1503. It was suppressed in 1806 and demolished in 1810. The altarpiece, carved in high relief, depicts the kneeling figures of the Virgin Mary on the left and, most probably, the Magdalen on the right. They adore the Eucharist, represented by a tabernacle structure in the centre, above which hovers the Holy Dove. Selvatico, who identified the relief as an Annunciation, also mentioned a sculpture of God the Father above the relief, which may be identical with a half-length relief in the Seminario Patriarcale.¹¹³ He further emphasised the elaborate architectural framework, which, however, no longer exists.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Paoletti (1893), II, p. 116, doc. 105.

¹¹² Cicogna, II, p. 357: S.Nicolò "era una chiesa grande, sullo stile de' Lombardo, di assai nobile architettura con cupola e tre altari". The three altars were an Annunciate Virgin by Francesco Vecellio (Accademia ???), a Resurrection with Sts. Nicholas and Joseph by Pietro Ricchi Lucchese, and the above relief, which Cicogna entitles an *Annunciation*.

¹¹³ Selvatico (1847), p. 239.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*: "moltissimi fregi architettonici aggiungono pregio a questa composizione."

The base of the relief is 144 cm wide. The figure of the Virgin measures 75 cm in height, that of St. Mary Magdalen 73 cm.

Nothing is known about the altar's patron. Presumably the relief was made at the time of the completion of the church in 1503. The high quality of the relief and its strong resemblance to the relief of the Coronation of the Virgin in S. Giovanni Crisostomo (Catalogue no. 11) support an attribution to Tullio Lombardo.

Part II

43. Chioggia, Cathedral. Triptych of the d'Arnolfo Chapel.

Plate 32

Although this altar no longer exists, a preparatory drawing and several related documents, including the contract, survive.¹¹⁵ From these it emerges that the altarpiece consisted of a rectangular field, which was decorated with three figures in mezzo rilievo: St. Michael at the centre and Sts. Jerome and Peter on the left and right. A triangular pediment, ornamented with creepers, featured a half-length figure of God the Father. The altar was made of Istrian stone. There are no references to polychromy and gilding.

The figures (without bases) each measured approximately 4 Venetian feet in height, which equals approximately 139 cm.

Chapel and altarpiece were donated by Piero d'Arnolfo of Chioggia. Although, at first, the sole executor of d'Arnolfo's estate was Niccolò Boza, a canon of the Cathedral, its administration was put in charge of the Procurators of S. Marco *de Ultra* in 1459.

Chapel and altar were made by the stonemason Jacopo de Lazaro who lived in the Venetian parish of S. Pantaleone. The contract for the chapel of 6th September 1458 predates the procurators' intervention. A final payment was made to Jacopo on 19th October 1468 and the altar was installed in the following year.

¹¹⁵ The drawing and most relevant documents were first published by Paoletti (1893), I, p. 53. The project was discussed more recently by Connell (1976), p. 202 and pp. 211-12.

44. Venice, S.Cristoforo (Madonna dell'Orto). Statue of St. Christopher.

Although the wooden statue of St. Christopher was destroyed during restoration in the late 19th century, we know from documents that it originally stood on the High Altar of the homonymous church.¹¹⁶

The statue measured 15 Venetian feet in height, which equals approximately 520 cm.¹¹⁷

Saccardo published a document which recorded the donation of one hundred and fifty ducats for a statue of St. Christopher by the Venetian patrician Marco di Matteo Trevisan in 1429.¹¹⁸

According to Sansovino, the relic of St. Christopher's knee-cap was brought to Venice in 1470. From its proportions, the "life-size" statue of the saint was re-constructed. This must have happened before 1472, when Gasparo Moranzone, the woodcarver responsible for the work, was no longer alive.

45. Venice, S.Fantin. High Altar.

The project of the High Altar of the parish church of S.Fantin was planned and described in 1501. As is known from documents, it was to be decorated with five large bronze figures, probably following the example of Donatello's Paduan

¹¹⁶ Sansovino/Martinioni, pp. 163-64, and Lino Moretti, The Church of the Madonna dell'Orto, Venice, 1982, s.p.

¹¹⁷ See Paoletti (1893), I. p. 80.

¹¹⁸ Re-published in Paoletti, I, p. 80.

altar.¹¹⁹ However, the altar was not executed (in a very different form) until 1572.

The project originated in a codicil of the will of Cardinal Giambattista Zen of 27th April 1501 (See catalogue no. 23), in which the testator bequeathed 10,000 ducats for the re-building of this church.

46. Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo. High Altar.

On 28th February 1517 an agreement between the Venetian patrician Lorenzo Loredan, son of Doge Leonardo, and the Chapter of SS. Giovanni e Paolo planned the building of a new High Altar for the Dominican church. This was to be combined with the Leonardo Loredan's funerary monument. However, this plan was not executed, and the tomb that was finally installed, although still in the church's presbytery, did not incorporate the High Altar.

From documents of the 1530s it emerges that the altar was to be adorned with three figures and surmounted by pyramid. The monument was to comprise architecture, sculpture and painting. A wide range of different materials was to be used. Apart from figures of saints, the documents also mention a marble pyramid, at the summit of which a crystal vessel containing the host was to be installed.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Vio (1977).

¹²⁰ The documents were referred to by Da Mosto (1966), pp. 274-75.

47. Venice, S.Maria della Carità. Chapel and Altar of the Saviour.

Plate 89

The Chapel of the Saviour was added to the main body of the church of S.Maria della Carità at the end of the left aisle and next to the campanile. It was destroyed in 1807, but recorded as early as 1493 by Marin Sanudo.¹²¹ In the early 16th century it was described by Marc'Antonio Michiel who mentioned the bronze statue of the Resurrected Christ.¹²² The only object which is generally assumed to have survived from this chapel is the bronze statue of the Resurrected Christ, now in the Museo Poldi Pezzoli in Milan.¹²³ The statue measures 138 cm in height.¹²⁴

The chapel was erected for Domenico di Piero, Venetian citizen, jeweller and *guardian grande* of the Scuola Grande di San Marco.

Construction of the chapel dates between 1488, when the Chapter of the Carità ceded the chapel to Domenico, and 1493, when it was described by Sanudo. The installation of altar and altarpiece went ahead after a further agreement of 6th April 1494.

Generally, the statue has been attributed to an anonymous master of the Venetian or Paduan Schools. Sheard suggested a relationship with figures of the Lombardo.¹²⁵ In the new catalogue of the Museo Poldi-Pezzoli it has been

¹²¹ Sanudo/Aricò (1980), p. 50.

¹²² Frizzoni (1884), pp. 231-32.

¹²³ *ibid.*

¹²⁴ Dimensions from Poldi Pezzoli (1987), p. 198.

¹²⁵ Sheard (1985), p. 435.

assigned to Severo da Ravenna (active 1496-1525, died before 1538).¹²⁶

48. Venice, S.Spirito in Isola, Altar of the Nativity.

We know of the existence of the Altar of the Nativity through Sansovino's description of 1581.¹²⁷ It was a high relief, made of polychromed terracotta by Niccolo dell'Arca. Nothing is known about the altarpiece's size nor its exact location or patronage.

49. Venice, Scuola Grande di S.Marco, Chapter Hall. Altar.

The altarpiece for the Chapter Hall of the *Scuola Grande di S.Marco* was to consist of three large compartments or *campi*. The left one of these was to be decorated with a relief made of Carrara marble, depicting a scene from the life of St. Mark. It was not completed, after a committee with members of the confraternity had criticised its inferior quality.

As specified in the contract, the full-length figures were to be 5 Venetian feet high (approximately 174 cm), while the entire relief in its frame was to measure 13 Venetian feet in height (approximately 452 cm).

The altarpiece was commissioned by the Chapter General of the *Scuola Grande di S.Marco*. The contract with the sculptor Giovanni Dalmata da Trau dates from 22nd October 1498. The project was abandoned in 1499.

¹²⁶ Poldi Pezzoli (1987), p. 198.

¹²⁷ Sansovino/Martinioni, p. 230.

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Abbreviations

ASV	Archivio di Stato, Venice.
BMC	Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, Venice.
BNM	Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice.
KHI	<u>Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz.</u>
LCI	<u>Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie</u> , 8 vols., Stuttgart, 1968 - 1976.
Oxford Companion	Osborne, H. (ed.) <u>The Oxford Companion to Art</u> . Oxford, 1970.
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THE SCULPTURED ALTARPIECE IN RENAISSANCE VENICE,
CA. 1460 - 1530.

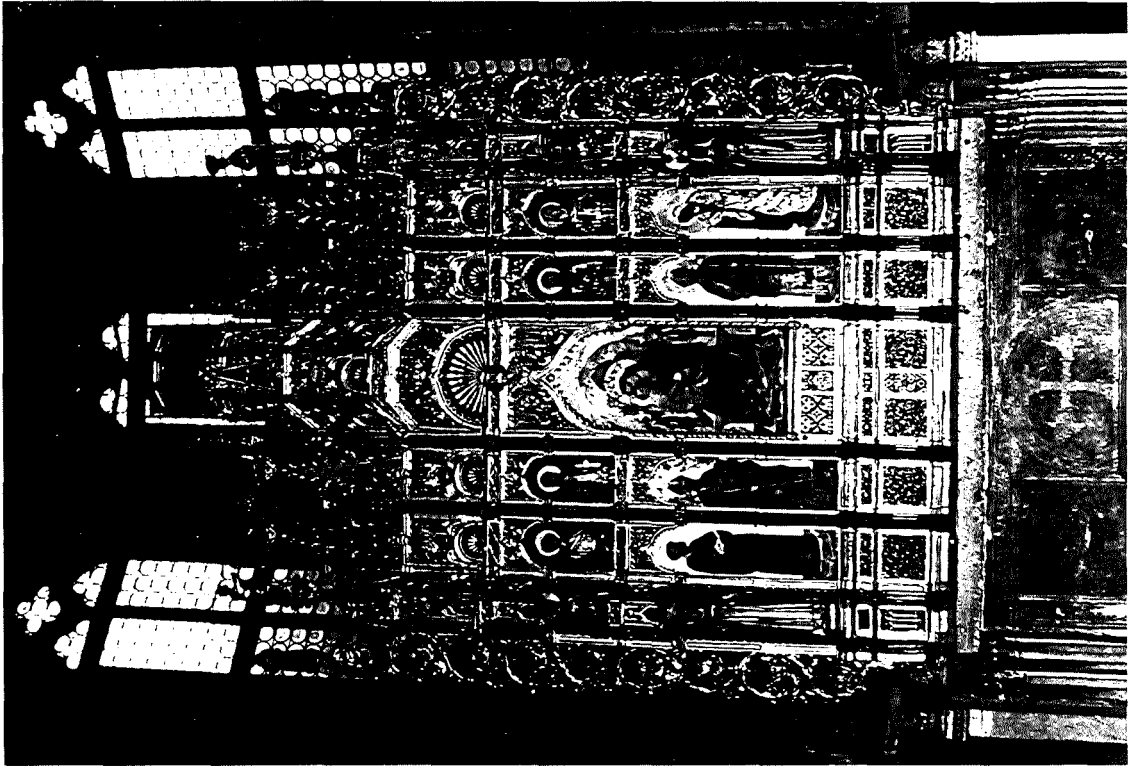
JOACHIM STRUPP

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September 1992

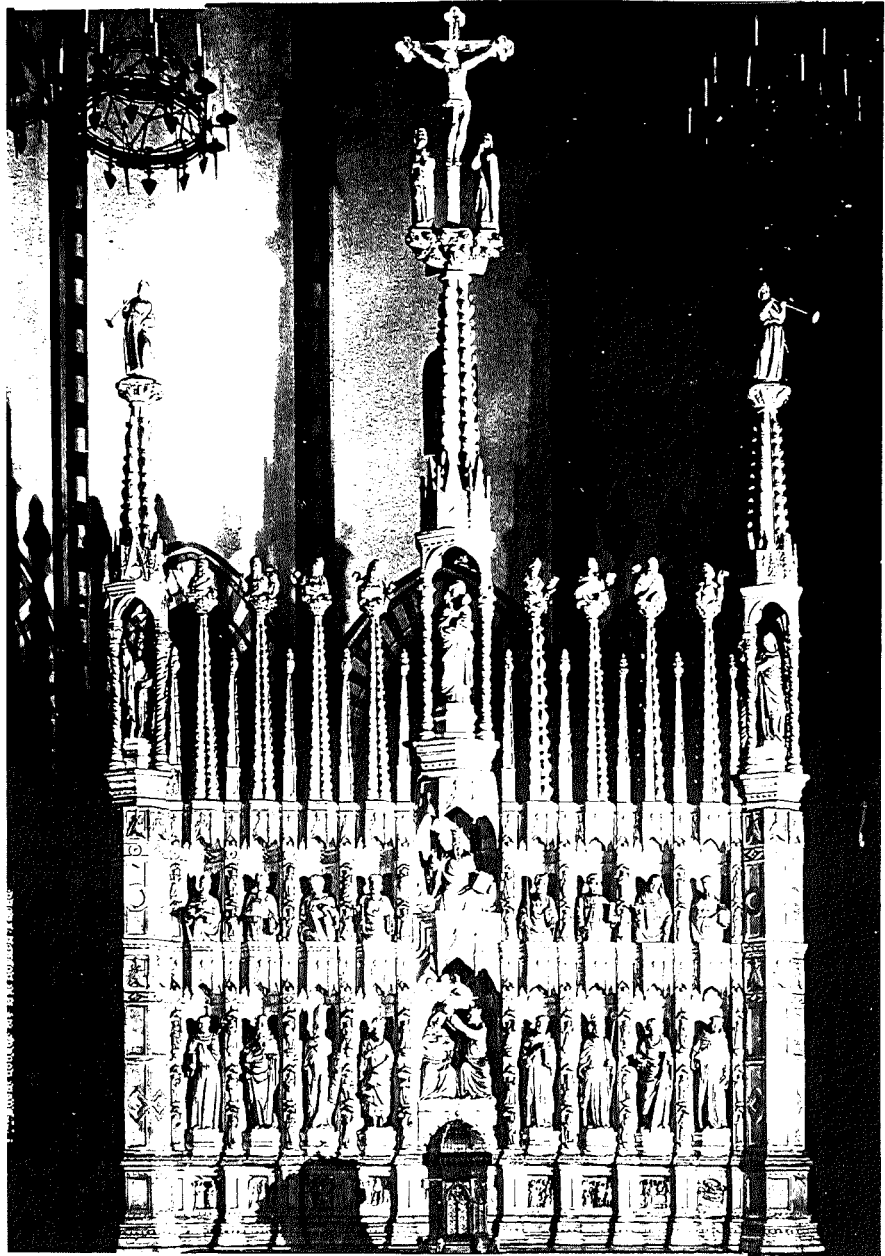
Volume Two: Plates



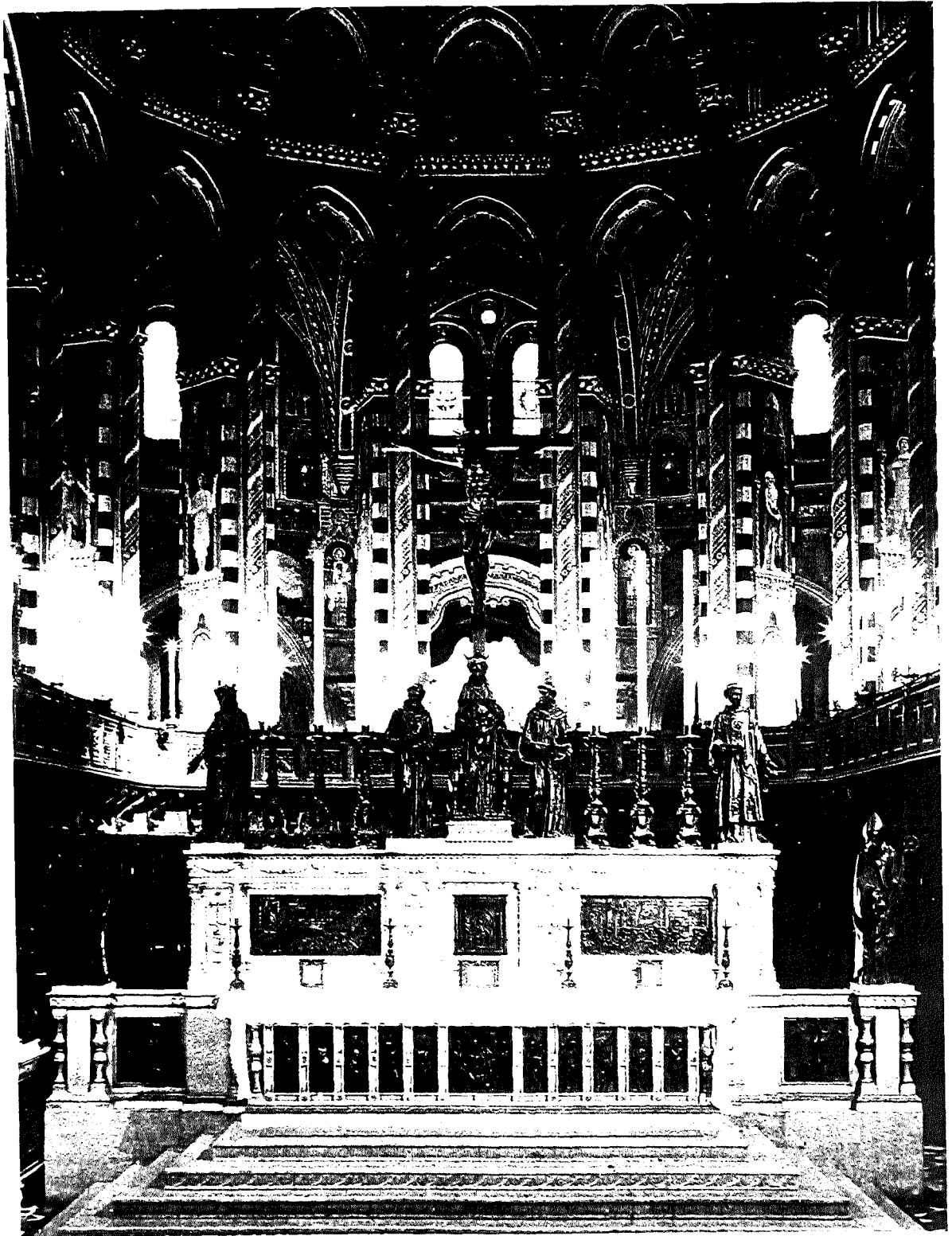
1. Antonio Vivarini and Giovanni d'Alemagna. High Altar of the Chapel of S. Tarasio. Venice, S. Zaccaria.



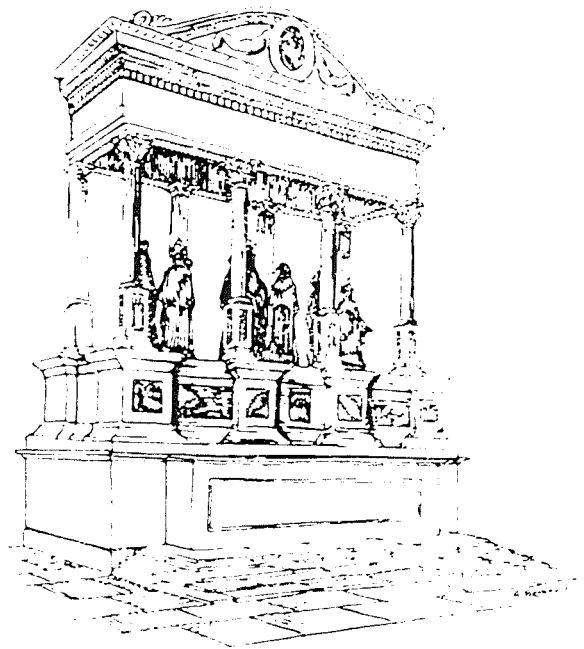
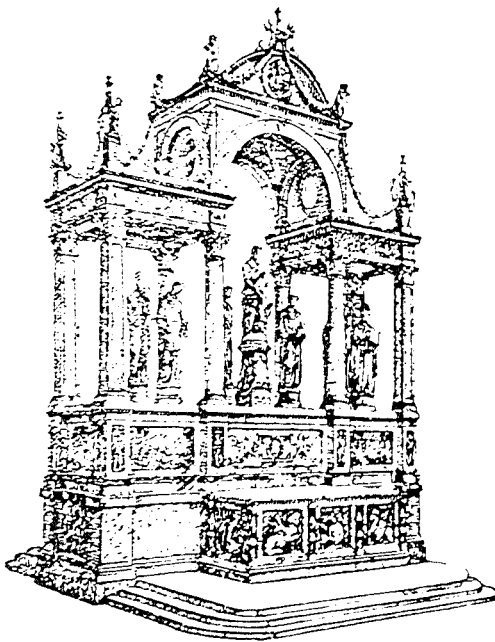
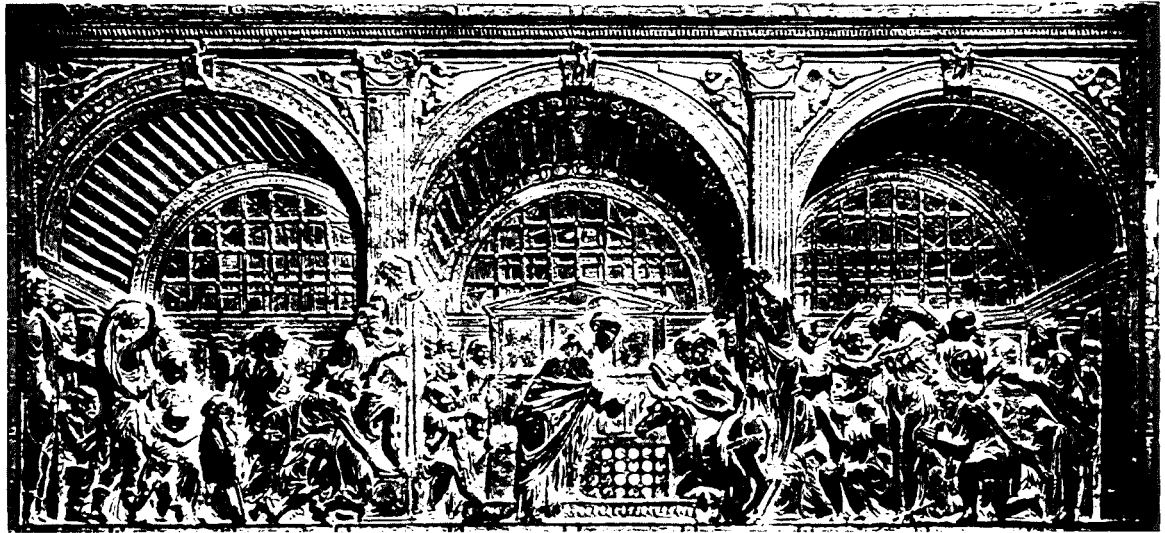
2. Antonio Vivarini and Giovanni d'Alemagna. Altar of the Resurrection. Venice, S. Zaccaria, Chapel of S. Tarasio.



3. Jacobello and Pierpaolo delle Masegne. High Altar of S. Francesco, Bologna.

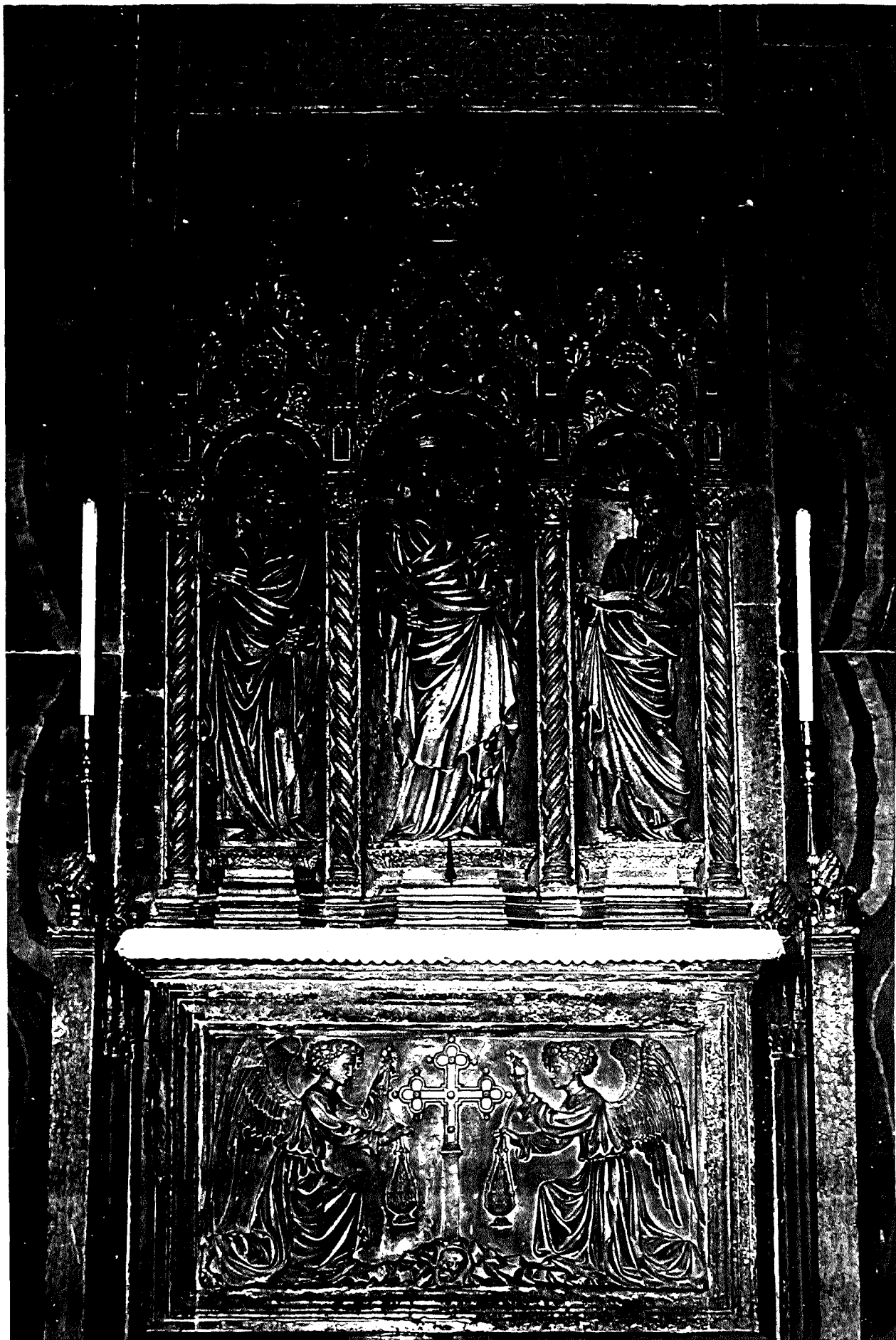


4. Donatello. High Altar of S. Antonio, Padua.

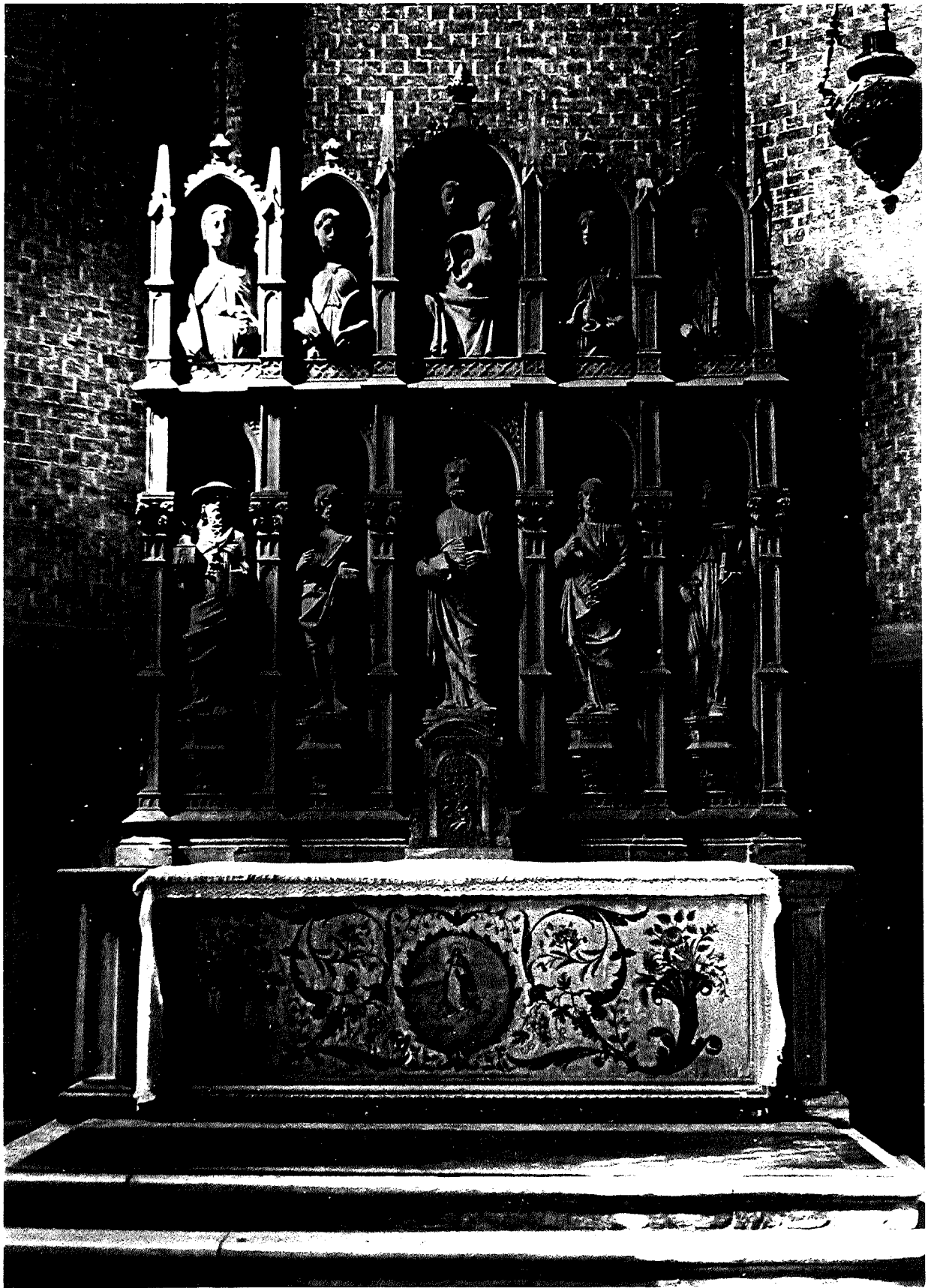


5. Donatello. Relief of the *Miracle of the Mule*. Padua, High Altar of S. Antonio.

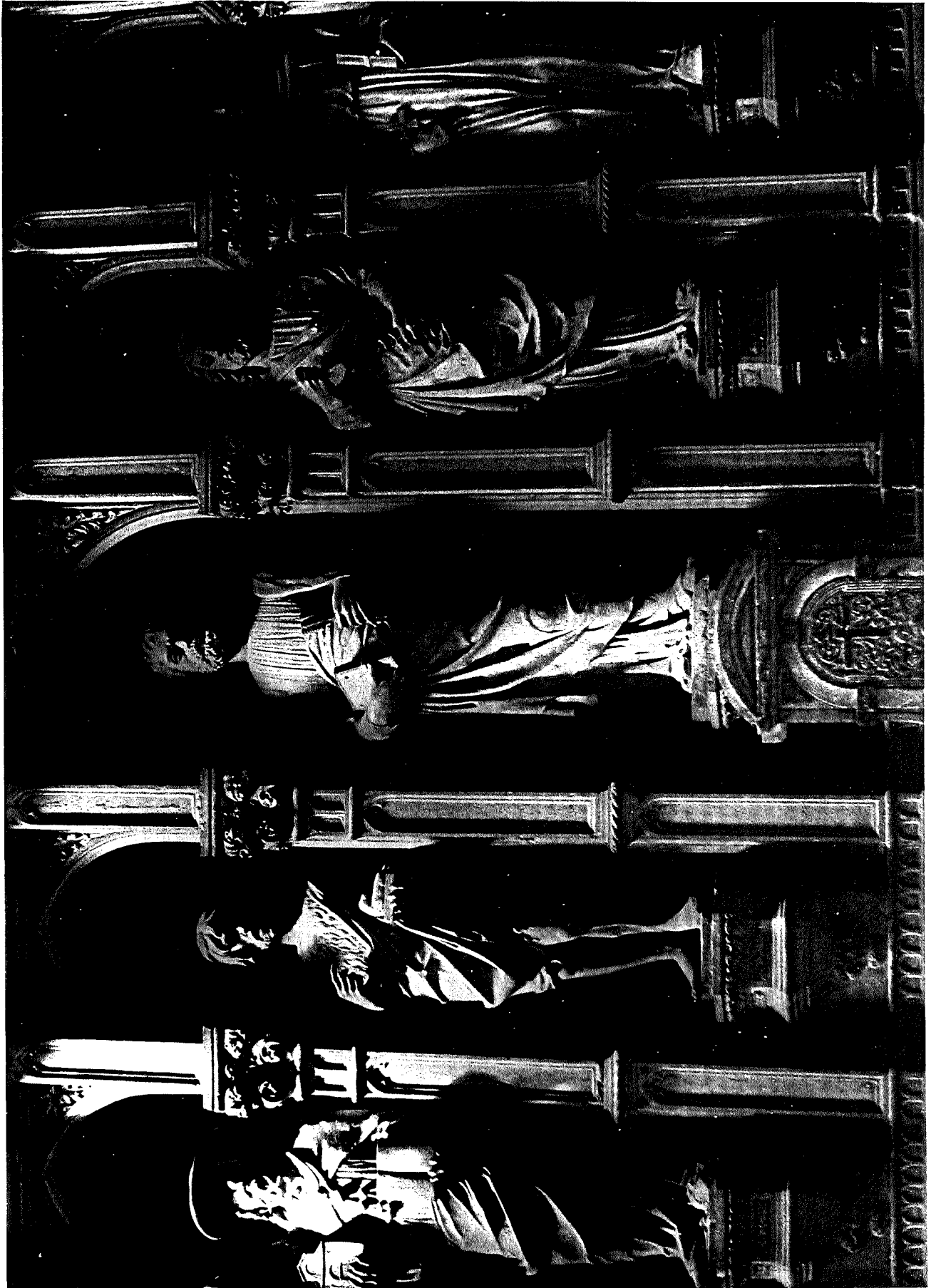
6. Two reconstructions of the High Altar of S. Antonio (by Cordenons and von Hadeln).



7. Venice, S.Marco. Mascoli Chapel, triptych.



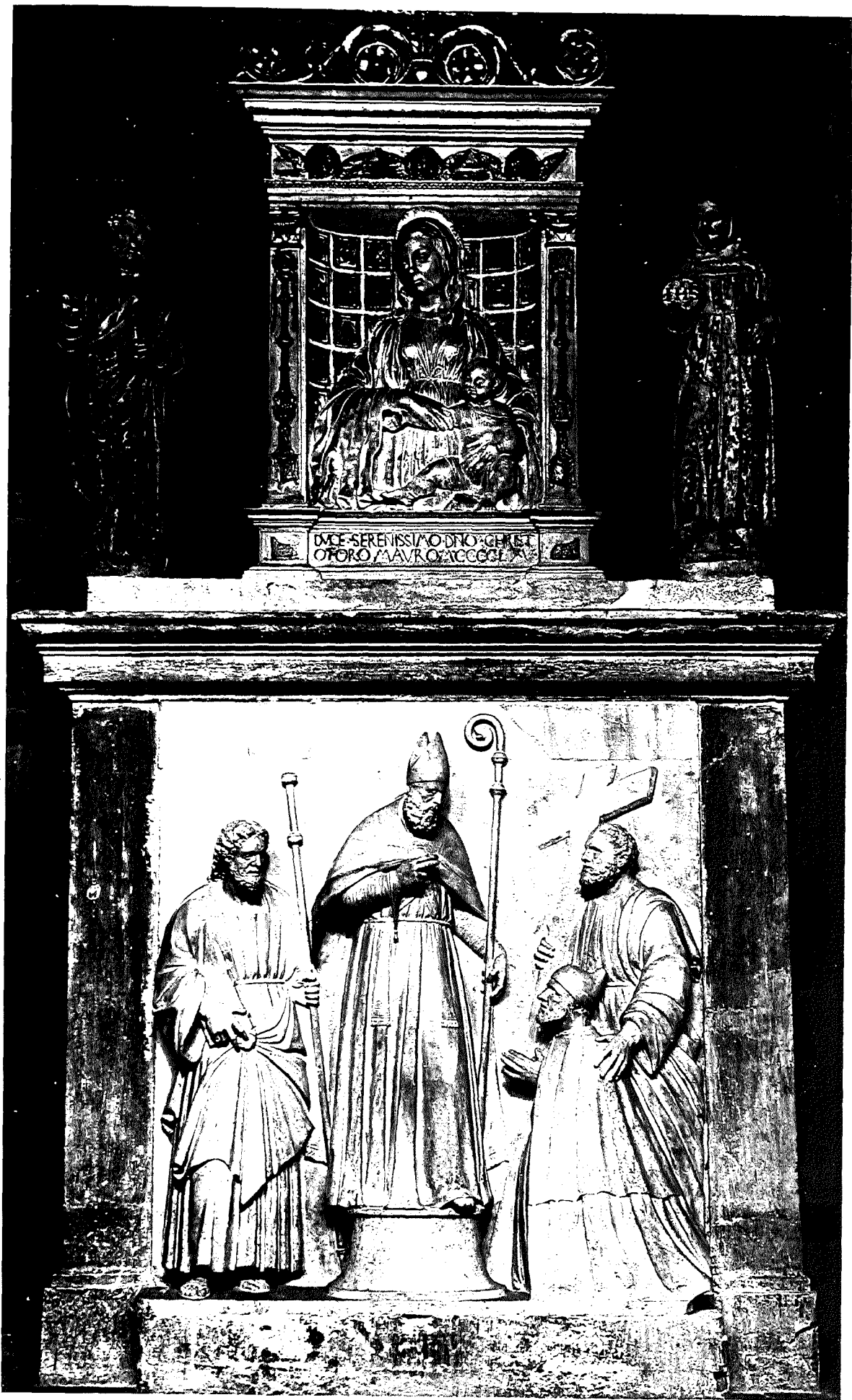
8. Polyptych of St. Peter. Venice. S.Maria dei Frari.
Emiliani Chapel.



9. Polyptych of St. Peter, main tier. Venice, S.Maria dei Frari. Emiliani Chapel.



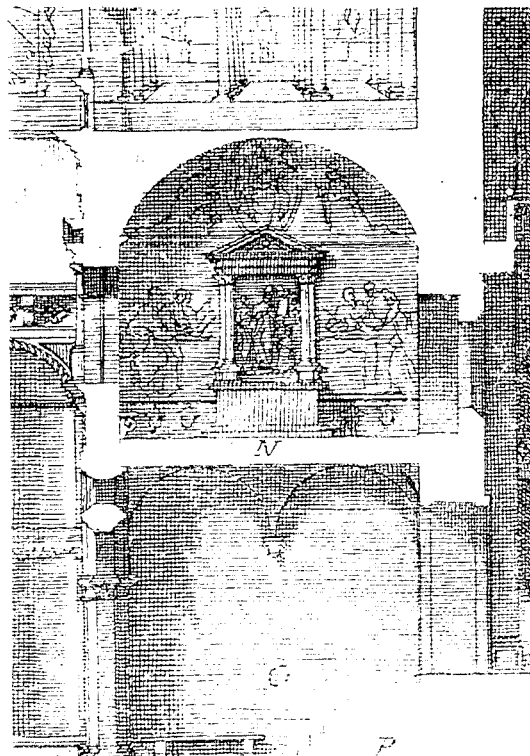
10. Venice, S. Maria dei Frari. Emiliani Chapel, façade.



11. Chapel of St. Clement, view of altar. Venice, S. Marco.

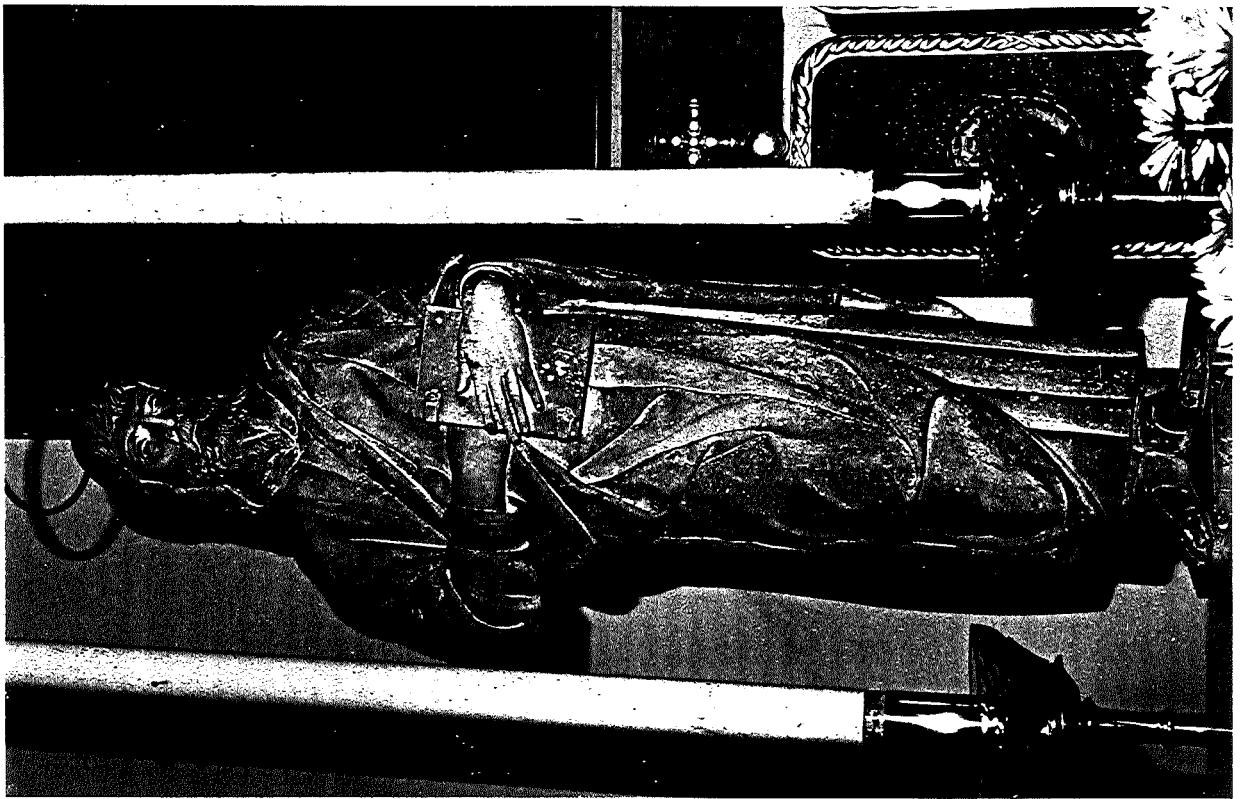


12. Antonio Rizzo. Relief of the Madonna and Child with
statuettes of Sts. Mark and Bernardino of Siena. Upper part
of the altar in the Chapel of St. Clement (plate 11). Venice,
S.Marco.



13. Altar in the Chapel of St. Clement (plate 11), lower part of the altar with devotional relief of Doge Andrea Gritti. Venice, S.Marco.

14. Antonio Visentini. Engraving of the Chapel of St. Nicholas and its altar in the Ducal Palace.



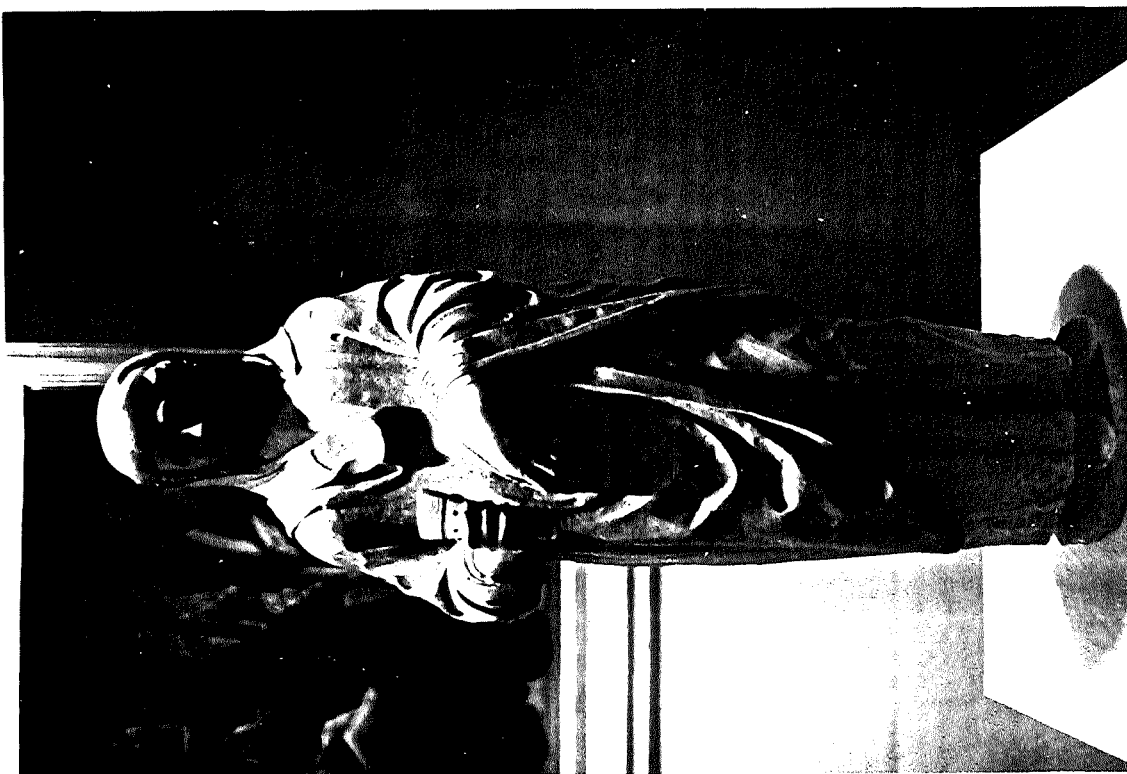
15. Antonio Rizzo (workshop). Statue of St. Luke. Venice, S.Sofia, High Altar.



16. Antonio Rizzo (workshop). Statue of St. Andrew. Venice, S.Sofia, High Altar.



17. Antonio Rizzo (workshop). Statue of St. Cosmas. Venice, S.Sofia, interior façade.



18. Antonio Rizzo (workshop). Statue of St. Damian. Venice, S.Sofia, interior façade.



19. Altar of St. Nicholas of Tolentino. Venice, S. Stefano.



20. Pietro Lombardo. Statue of St. Andrew from the Altar of St. Nicholas of Tolentino (plate 19). Venice, S. Stefano.



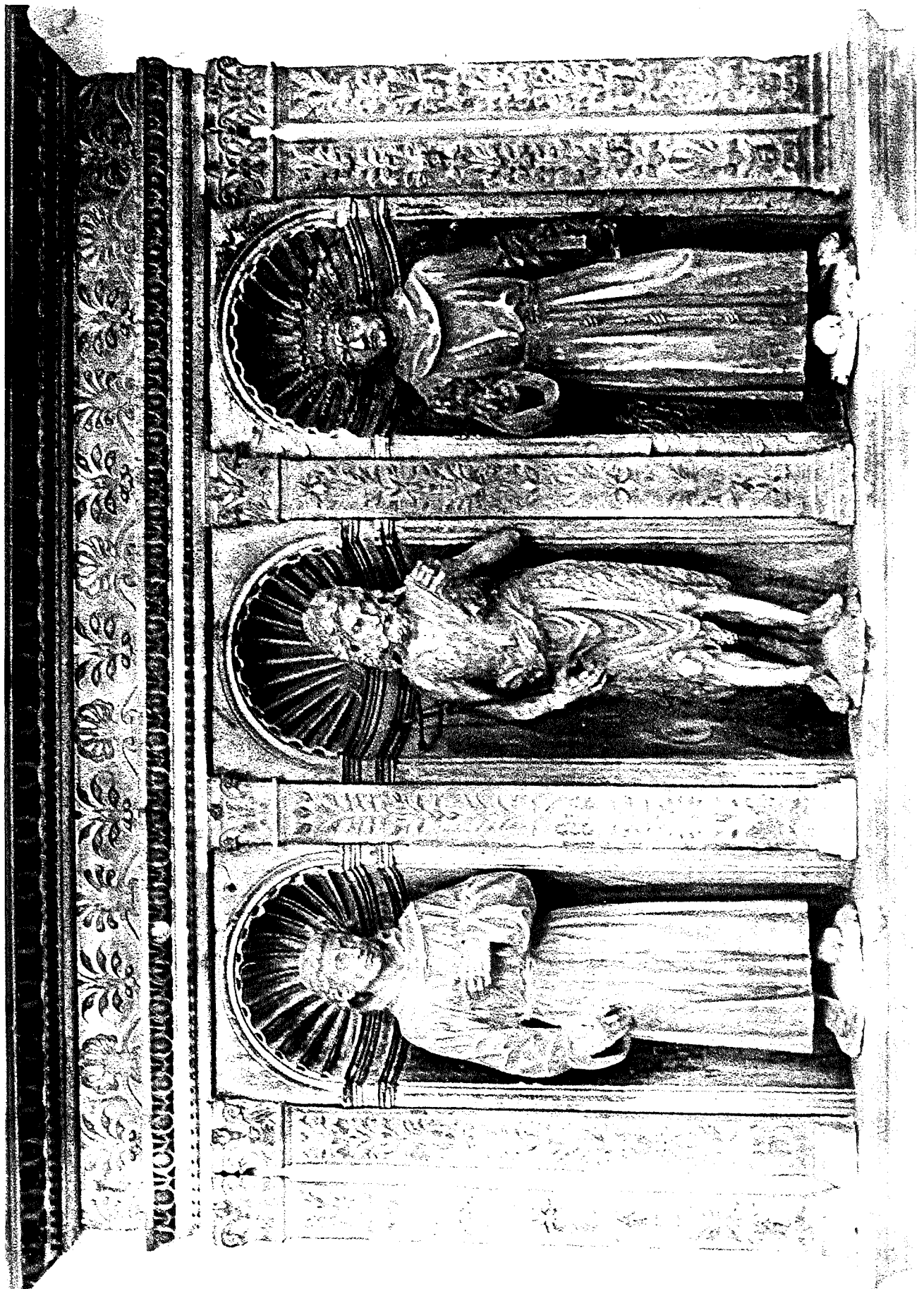
21. Pietro Lombardo. Statue of St. Nicholas from the Altar of St. Nicholas of Tolentino (plate 19). Venice, S. Stefano.



22. Pietro Lombardo. Statue of St. Jerome. Altar of St. Nicholas of Tolentino (plate 19). Venice, S. Stefano.



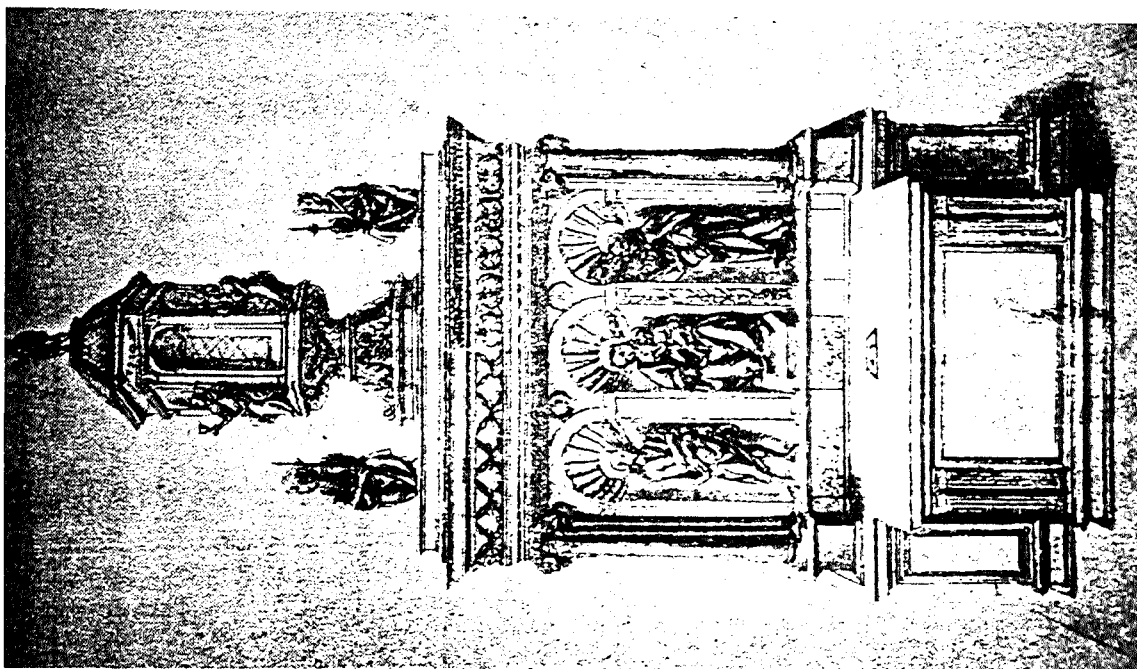
23. Antonio Rossellino and workshop. Altar of the De' Martini Chapel. Venice, S. Giobbe.



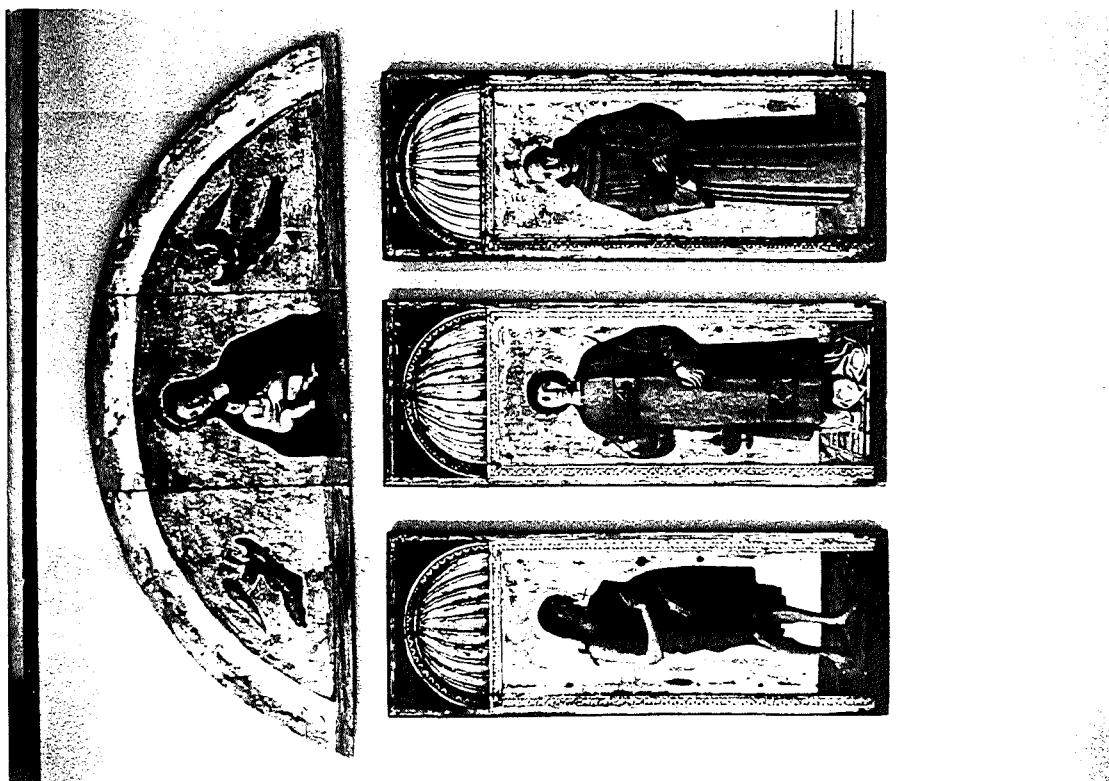
24. Main tier of the De' Martini Altar (plate 23) with Sts. Francis, John the Baptist and Anthony of Padua. Venice, S.Giobbe.



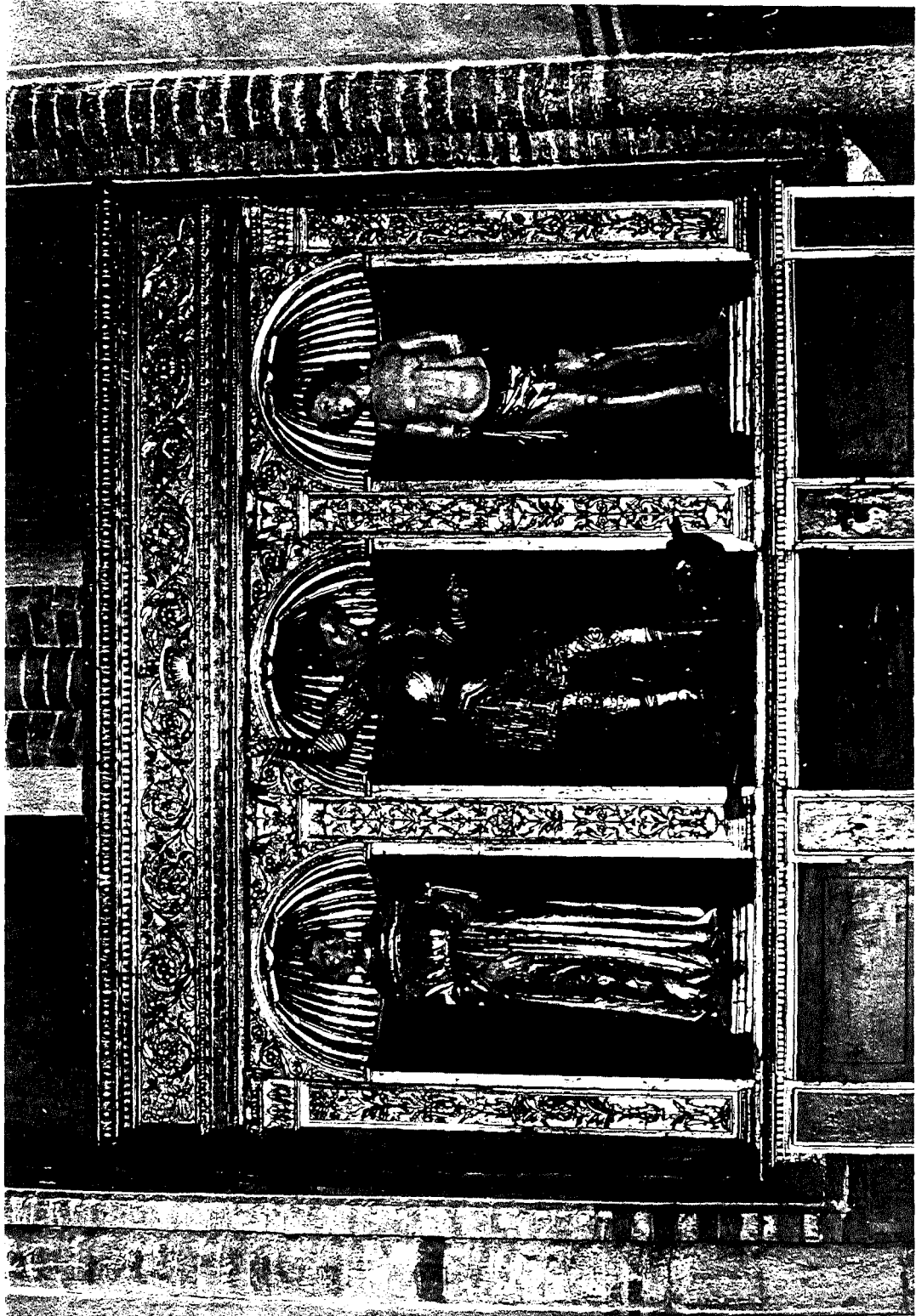
25. Della Robbia workshop. Detail of the enamelled terracotta ceiling in the De' Martini Chapel. Venice, S.Giobbe.



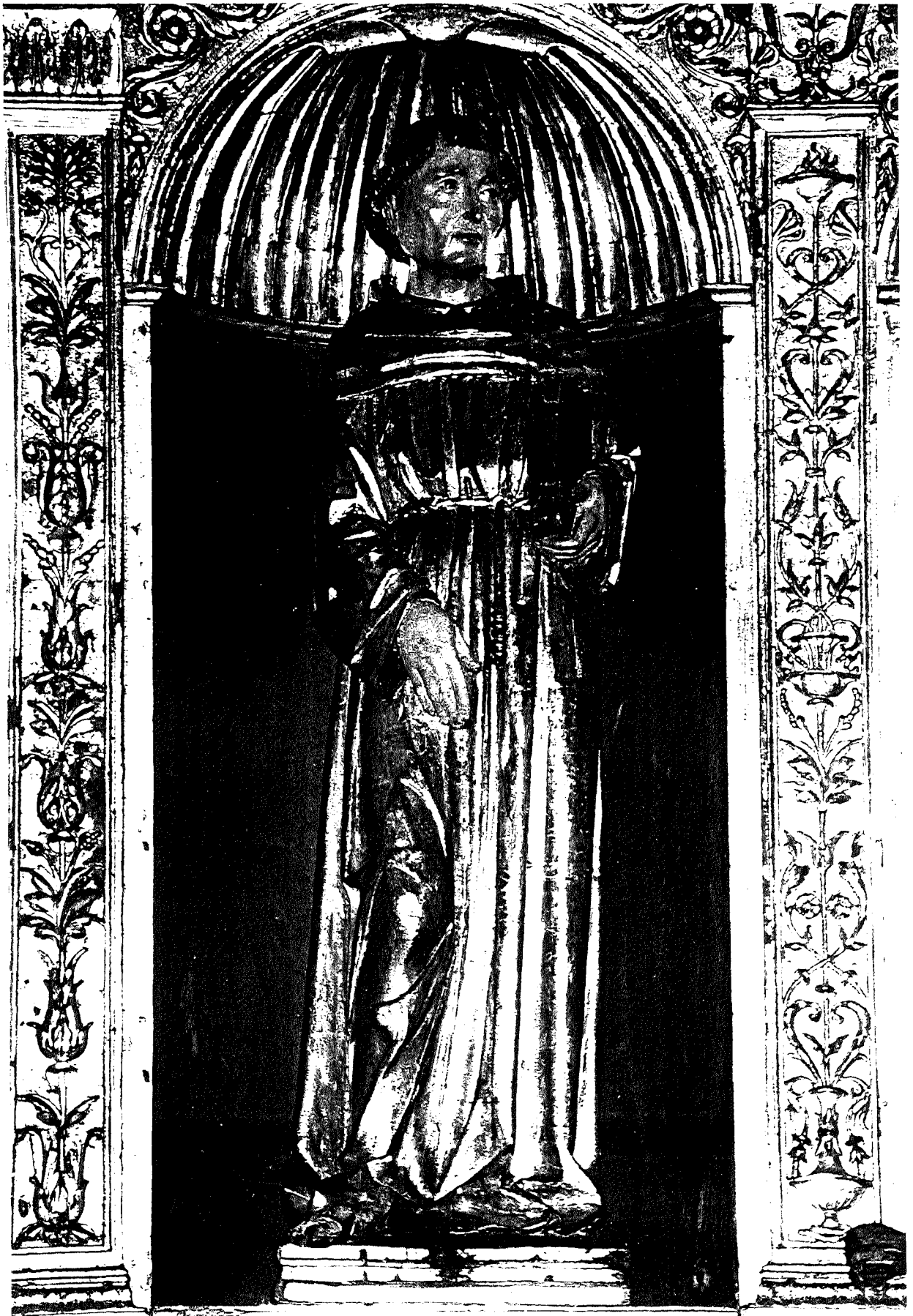
26. Florence, Uffizi. Drawing of a Florentine altarpiece.



27. Bellini workshop, *Triptych* from S. Maria della Carità. Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia.



28. Triptych of St. Michael. Venice, S. Maria dei Frari, Chapel of St. Michael.



29. Triptych of St. Michael (plate 28), detail of left niche, statue of St. Francis. Venice, S. Maria dei Frari.



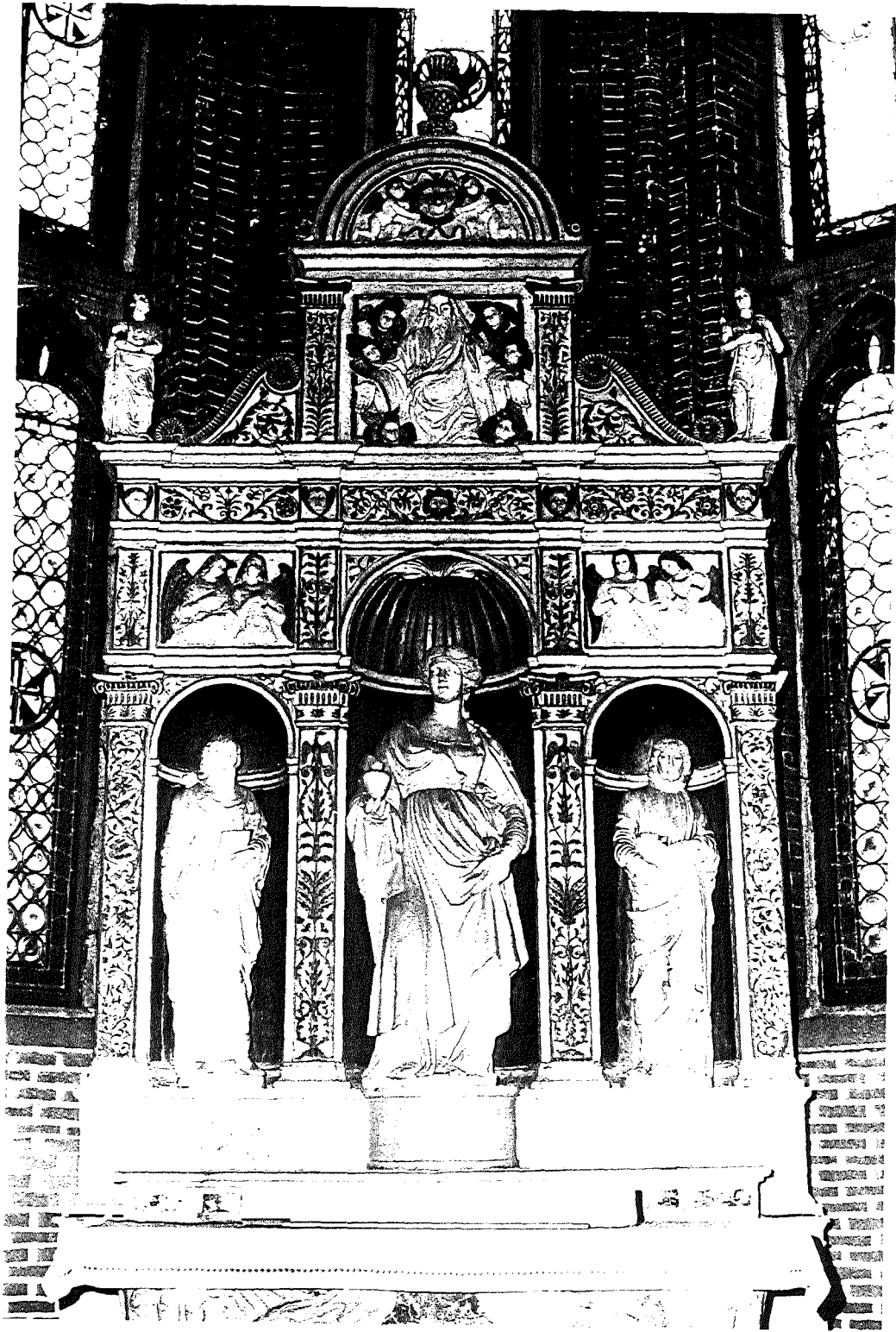
30. Triptych of St. Michael (plate 28), detail of central niche, statue of St. Michael. Venice, S. Maria dei Frari.



31. Triptych of St. Michael (plate 28), detail of right niche, statue of St. Sebastian. Venice, S. Maria dei Frari.



32. Giacomo di Lazzaro. Preparatory drawing for the Altar of St. Michael in the Cathedral of Chioggia. Venice, Archivio di Stato.



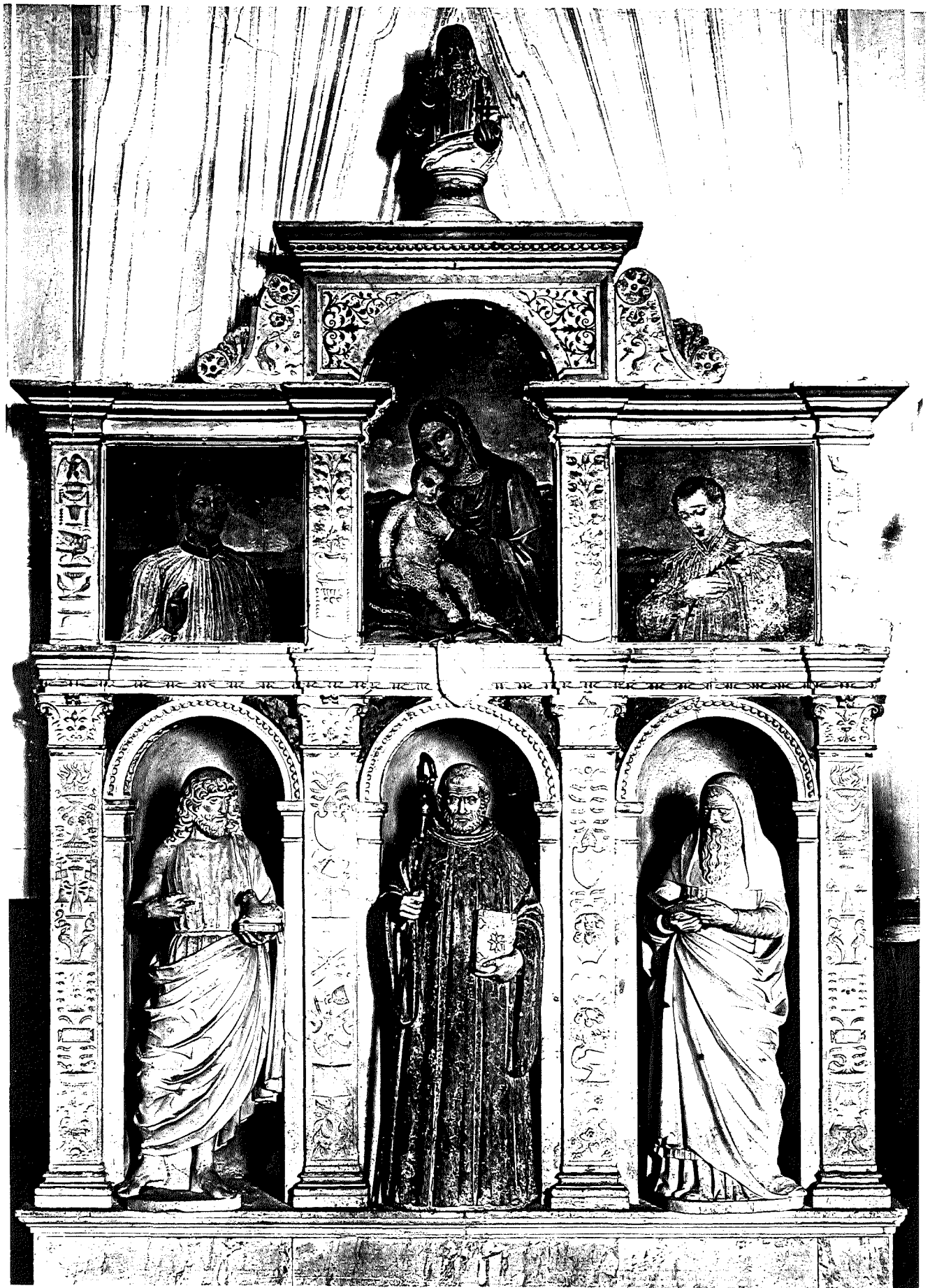
33. Altar of the Madonna. Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo.



34. Altar of the Madonna (plate 33), left niche with statue of St. Andrew. Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo.



35. Altar of the Madonna (plate 33), right niche with statue of St. Philip. Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo.



36. Trevisan Triptych. Venice, Seminario Patriarcale, Chapel of the SS. Trinità.

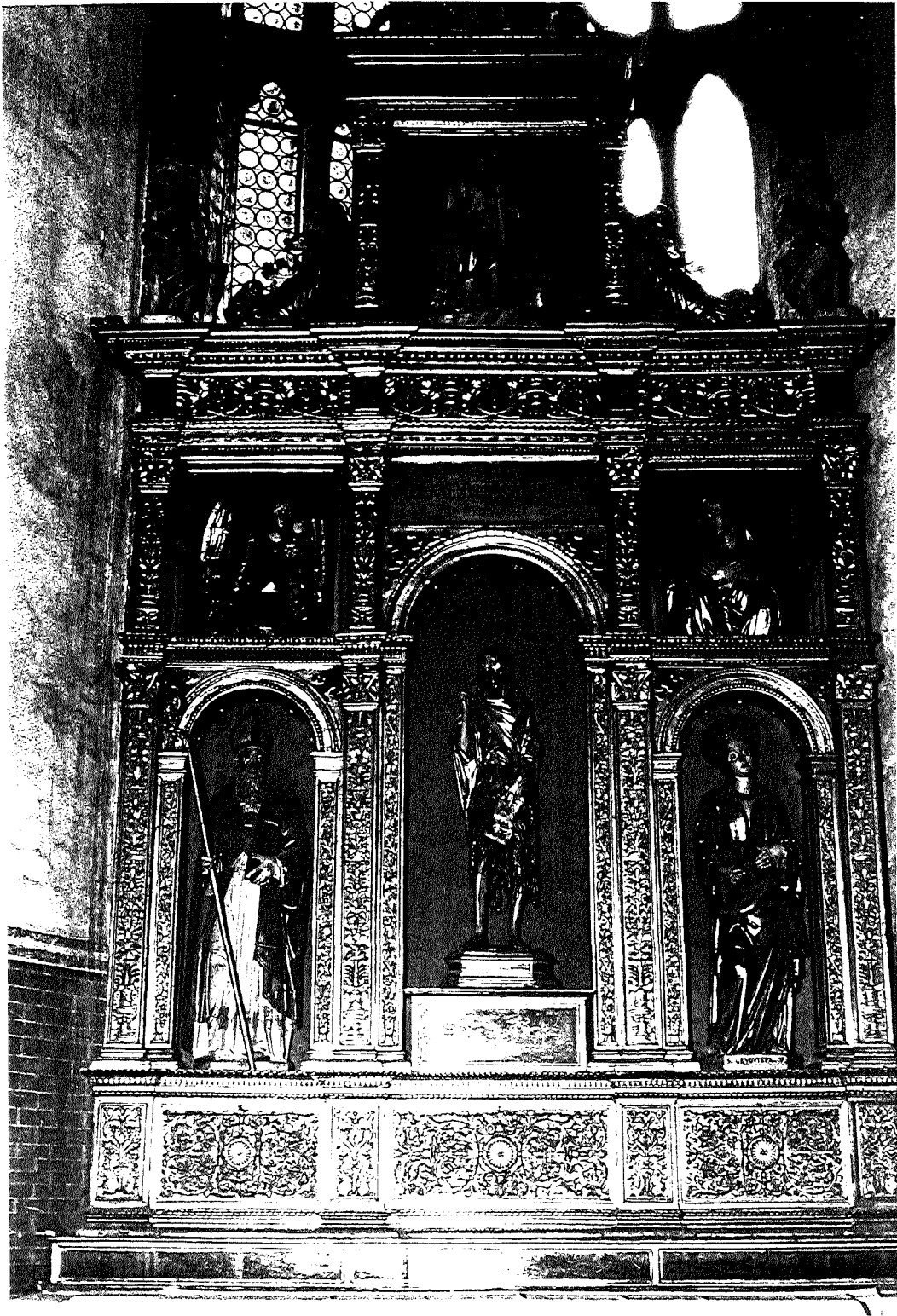


37. Giovanni Buora. Statue of St. John the Baptist in the left niche of the main tier of the Trevisan Triptych (plate 36). Venice, Seminario Patriarcale.

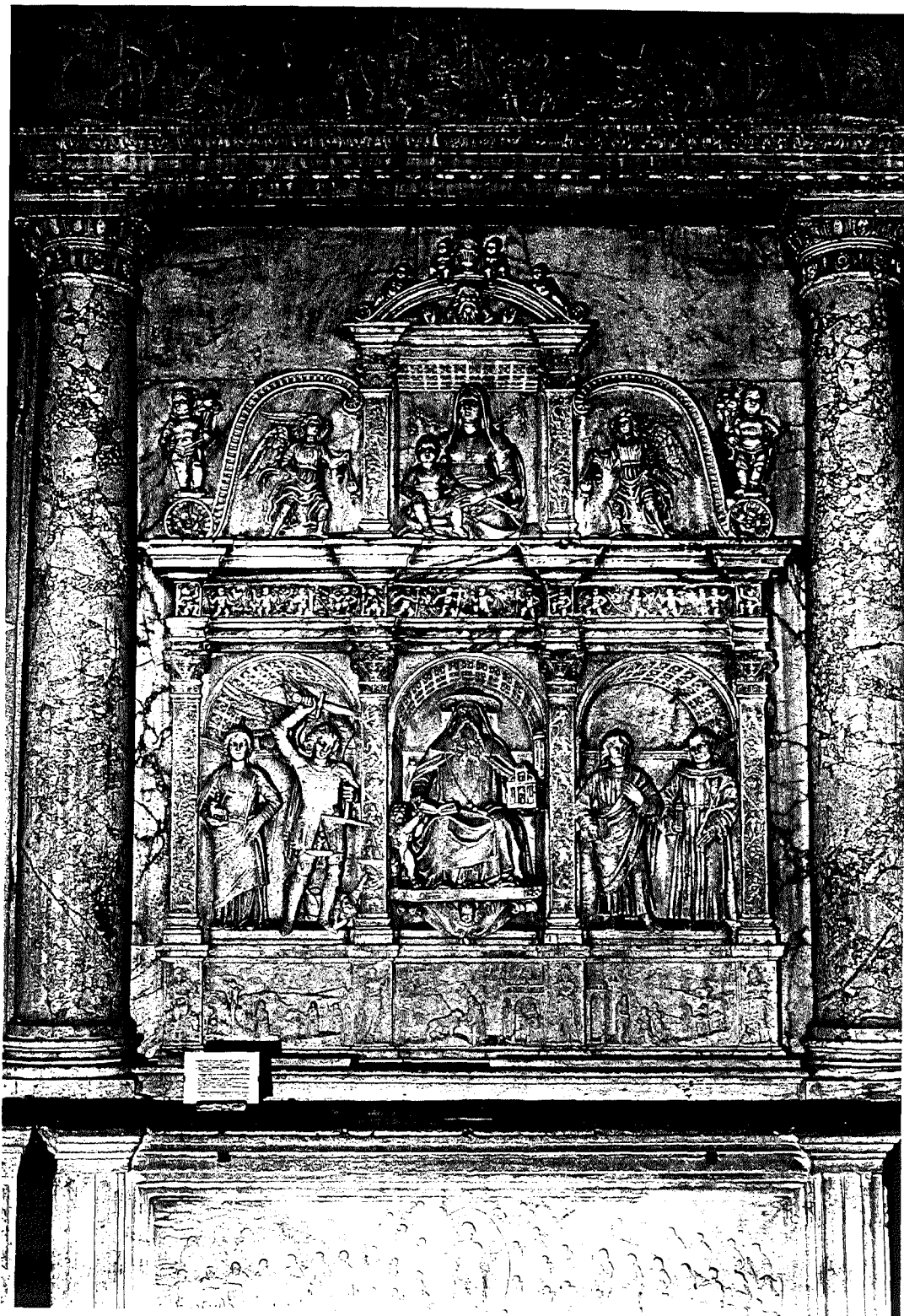
38. Giovanni Buora. Statue of St. Jerome in the right niche of the Trevisan Triptych (plate 36). Venice, Seminario Patriarcale.



39. Trevisan Triptych (plate 36), detail of pilaster decoration with coat-of-arms. Venice, Seminario Patriarcale.



40. Altar of the Florentine Community. Venice, S. Maria dei Frari.



41. Lombardo workshop. Altar of St. Jerome. Venice, S. Francesco della Vigna, Badoer Chapel.



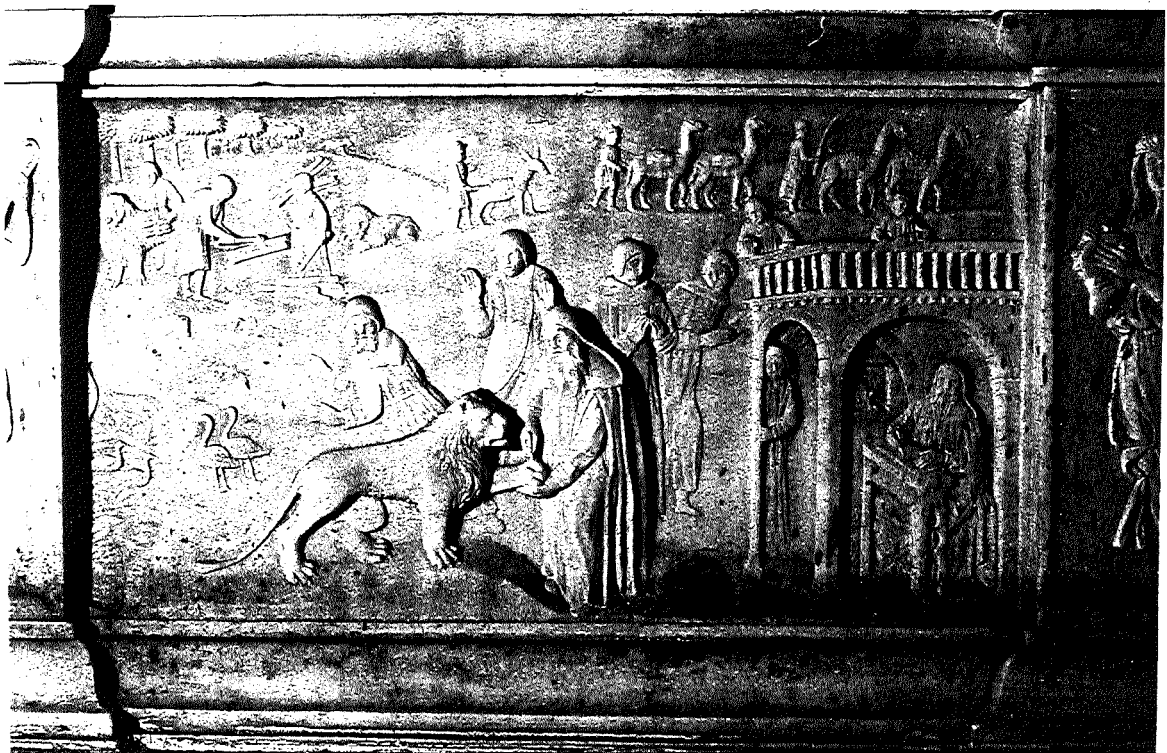
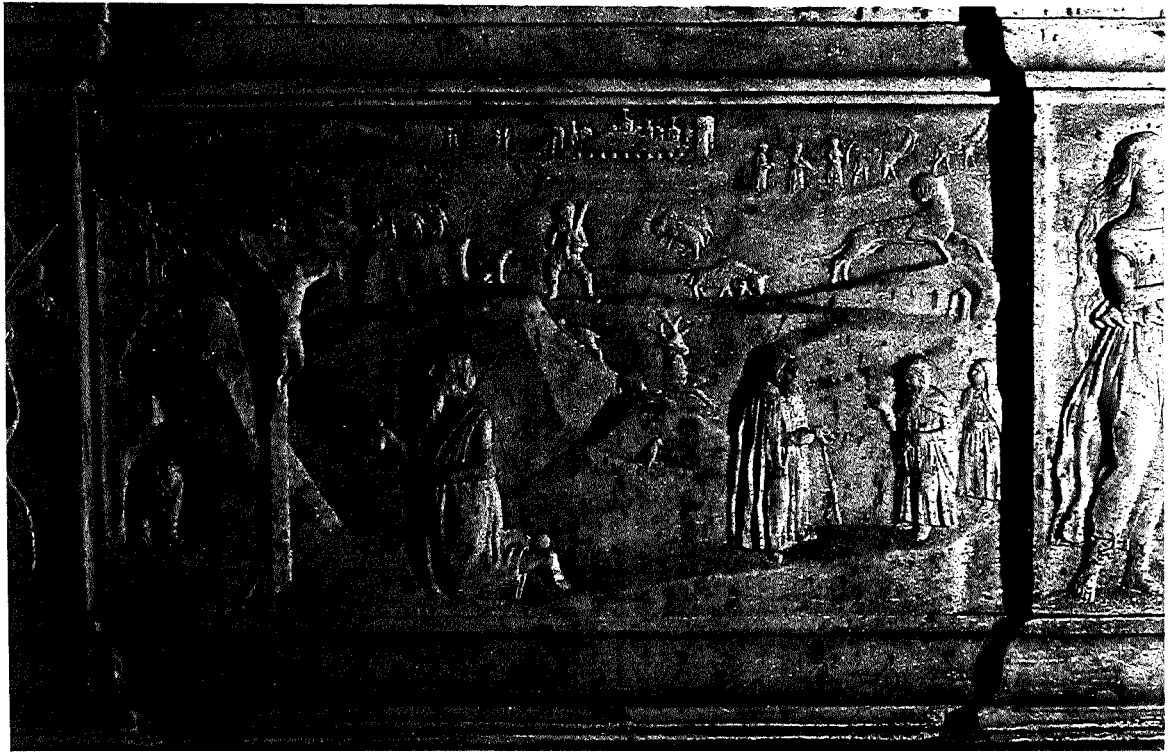
42. Altar of St. Jerome (plate 41), detail of main tier, left niche with Sts. Agnes and Michael. Venice, S. Francesco della Vigna, Badoer Chapel.



43. Altar of St. Jerome (plate 41), detail of main tier, central niche with St. Jerome. Venice, S. Francesco della Vigna, Badoer Chapel.

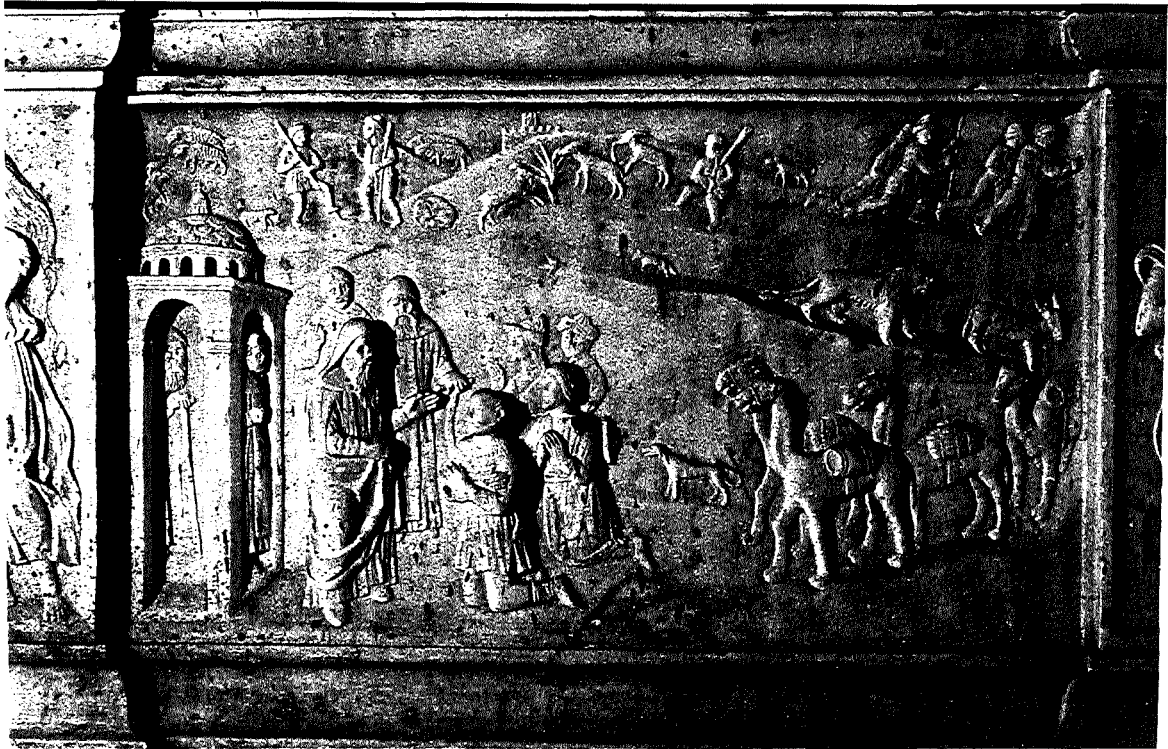


44. Altar of St. Jerome (plate 41), detail of main tier, right niche with Sts. James and Anthony of Padua. Venice, S. Francesco della Vigna, Badoer Chapel.



45. Altar of St. Jerome (plate 41), detail of predella, left compartment, relief of the *Penitent St. Jerome*. Venice, S. Francesco della Vigna, Badoer Chapel.

46. Altar of St. Jerome (plate 41), detail of central compartment, relief of *St. Jerome and the Lion*. Venice, S. Francesco della Vigna, Badoer Chapel.



47. Altar of St. Jerome (plate 41), detail of right compartment, relief of *St. Jerome Blessing the Merchants*. Venice, S. Francesco della Vigna, Badoer Chapel.

48. Altar of St. Jerome (plate 41), detail of frame. Venice, S. Francesco della Vigna, Badoer Chapel.



49. Altar of St. Jerome (plate 41), detail of antependium. Venice, S. Francesco della Vigna, Badoer Chapel.



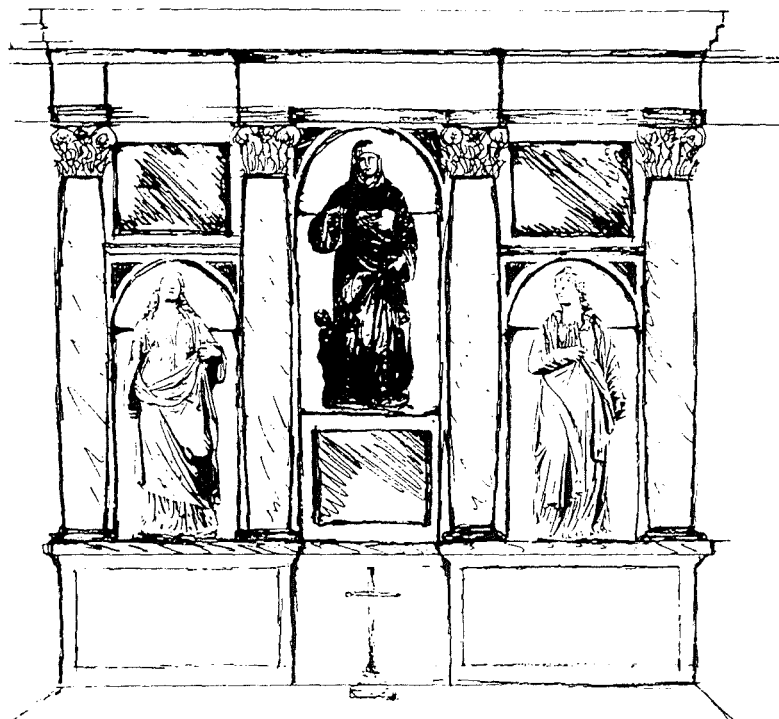
50. Lorenzo Bregno. Statue of St. Marina from the High Altar of S. Marina. Venice, Seminario Patriarcale.



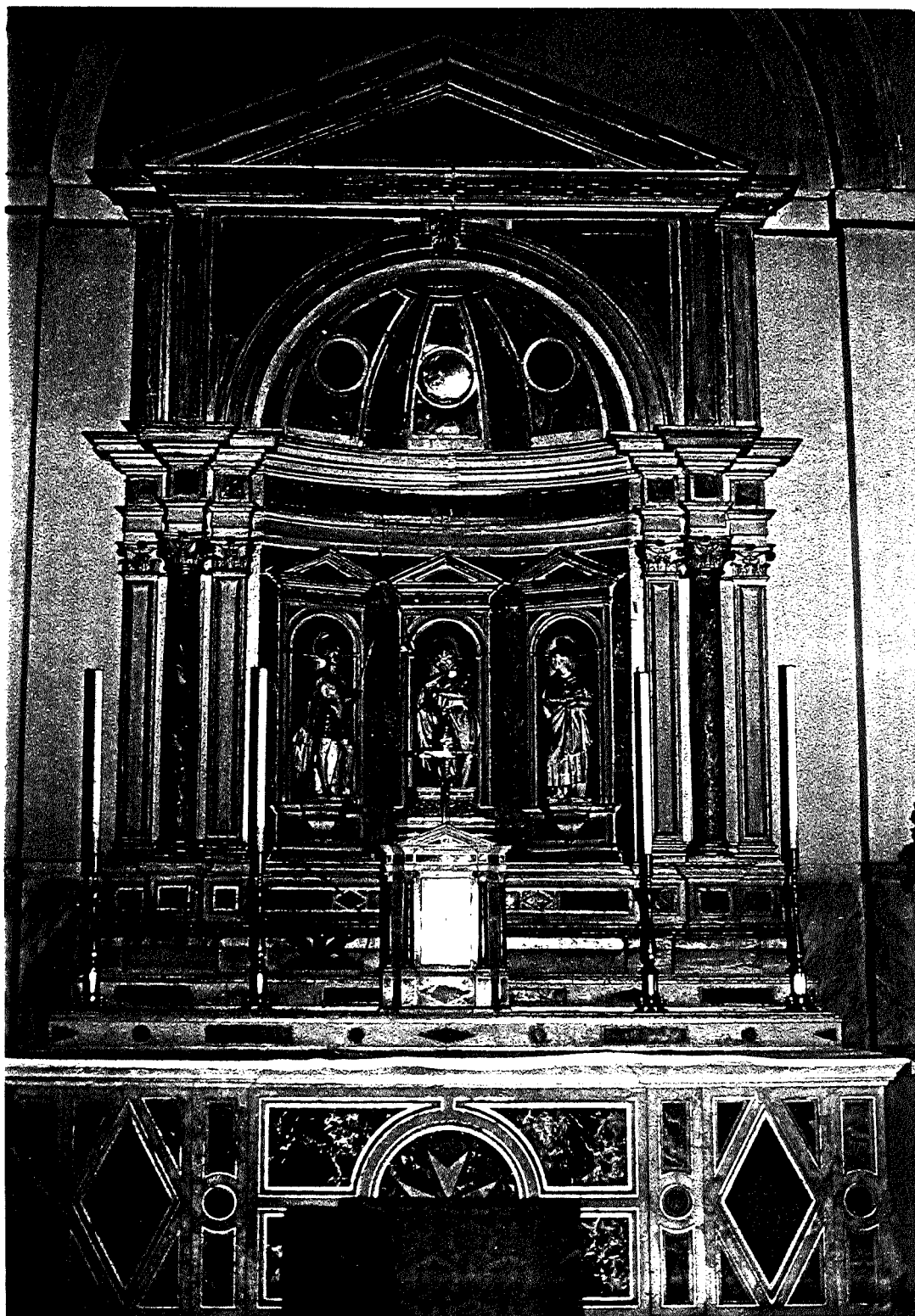
51. Lorenzo Bregno. Statue of St. Catherine from the High Altar of S. Marina. Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo, tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin.



52. Lorenzo Bregno, Statue of St. Mary Magdalen from the high Altar of S. Marina. Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo, tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin.



53. Suggested re-arrangement of the statues on the High Altar of S. Marina.



54. High Altar from S.Geminiano. Venice, S.Giovanni dei Cavalieri di Malta.



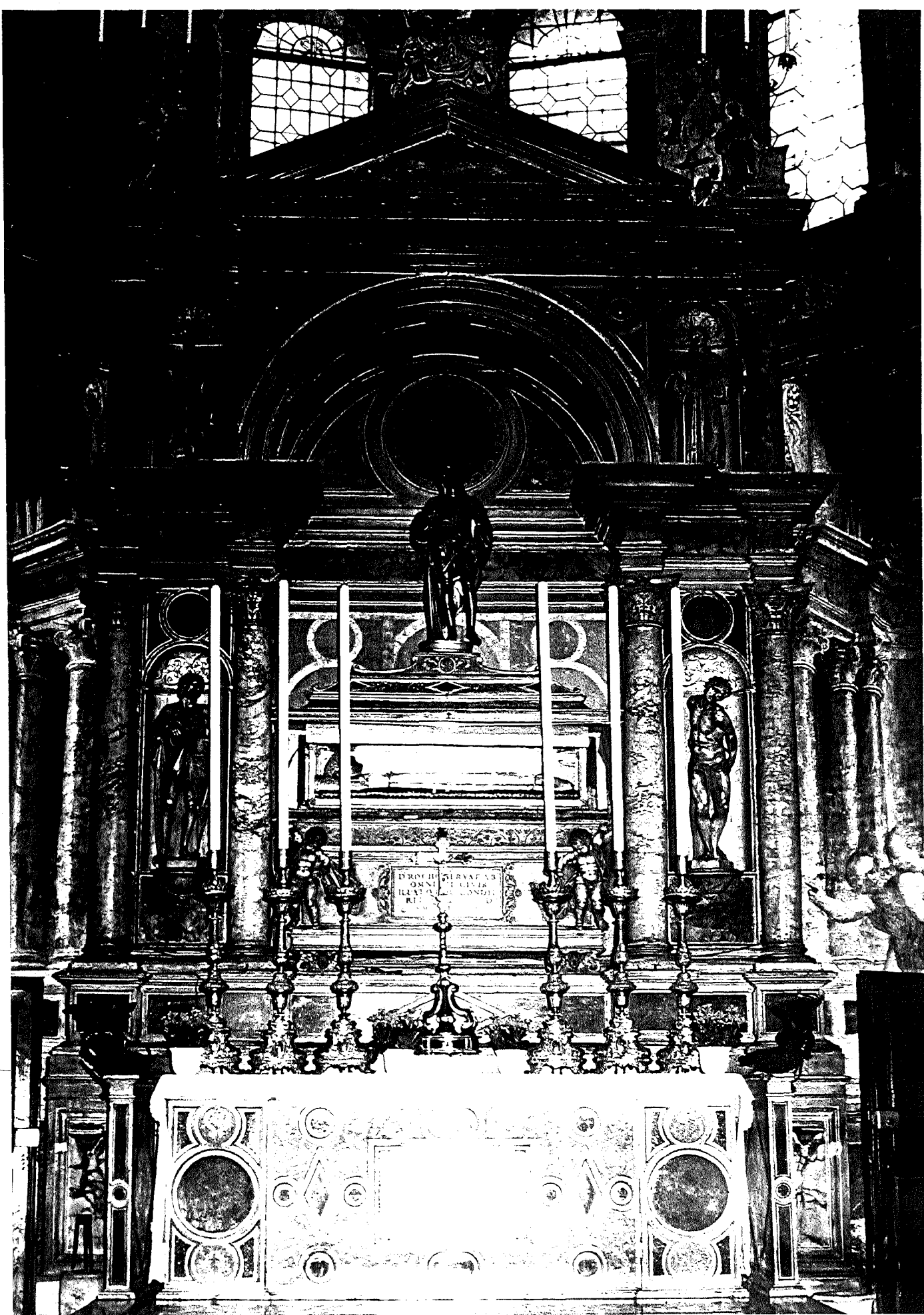
55. Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco. Niches with statues from the High Altar from S. Geminiano (plate 54). Venice, S. Giovanni dei Cavalieri di Malta.



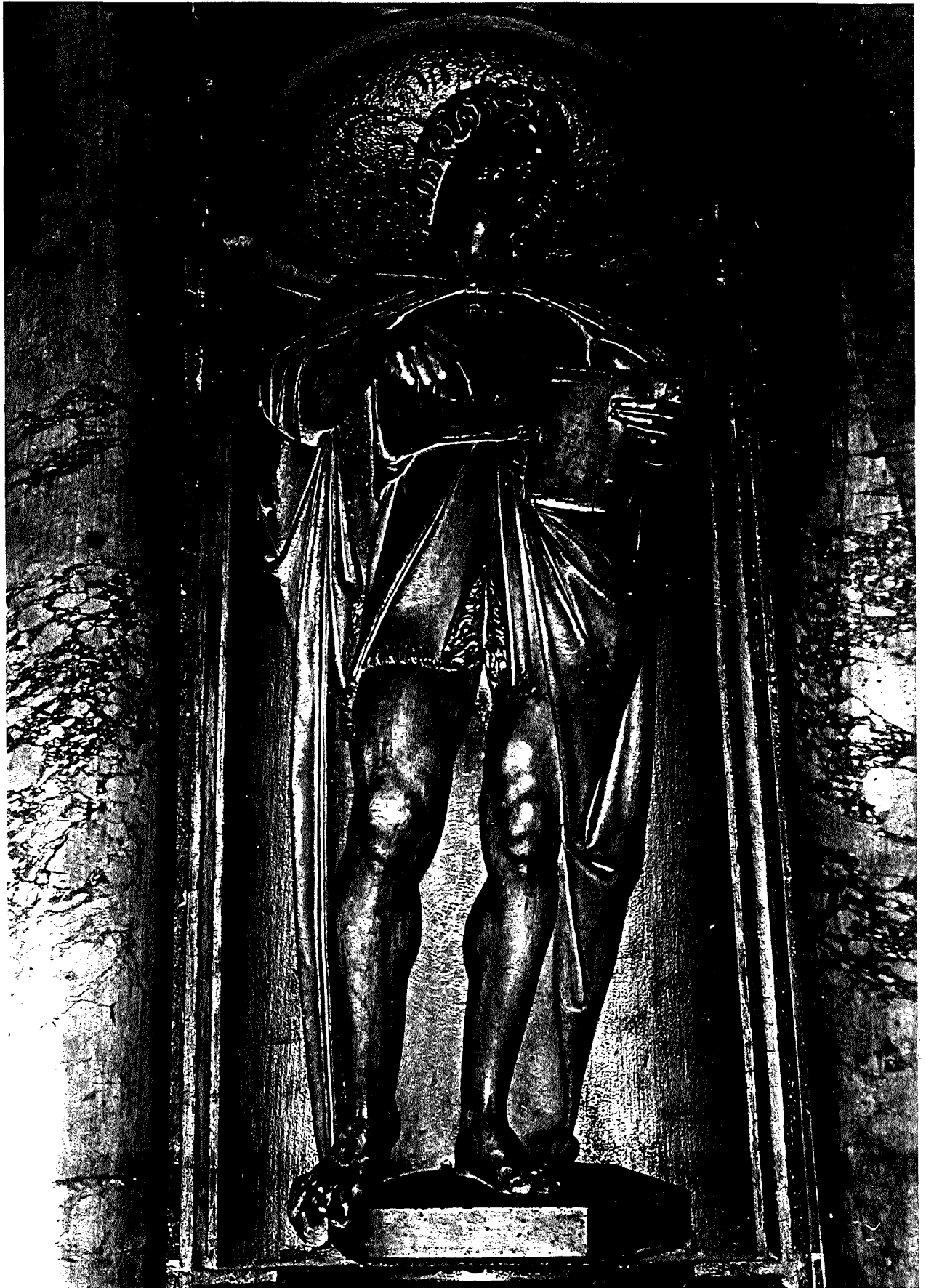
56. Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco. Statue of St. John the Baptist from the High Altar of S.Geminiano (plate 54). Venice, S.Giovanni dei Cavalieri di Malta.



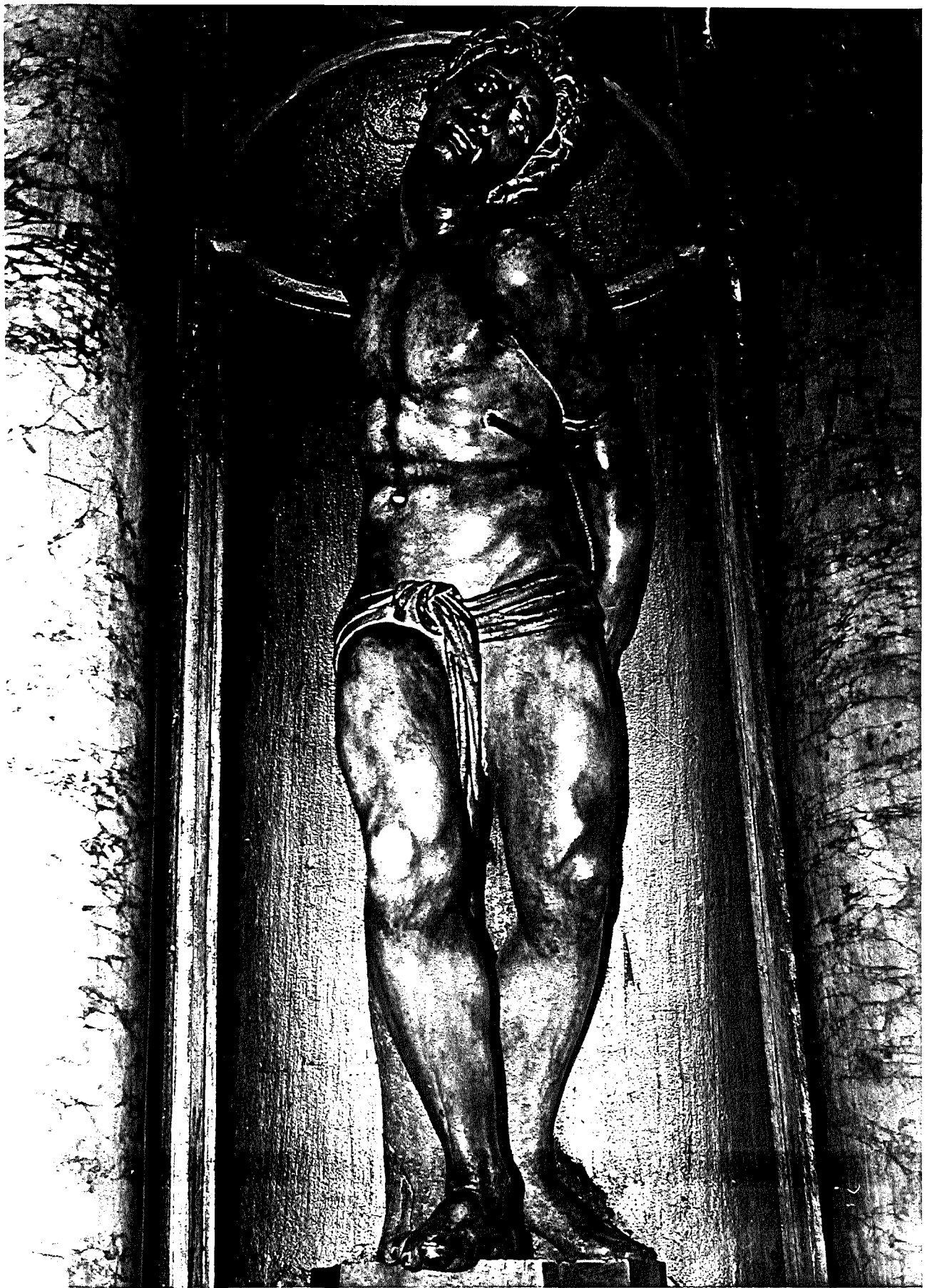
57. Doorway. Venice, Scuola Grande di S. Giovanni Evangelista.



58. High Altar. Venice, S.Rocco.



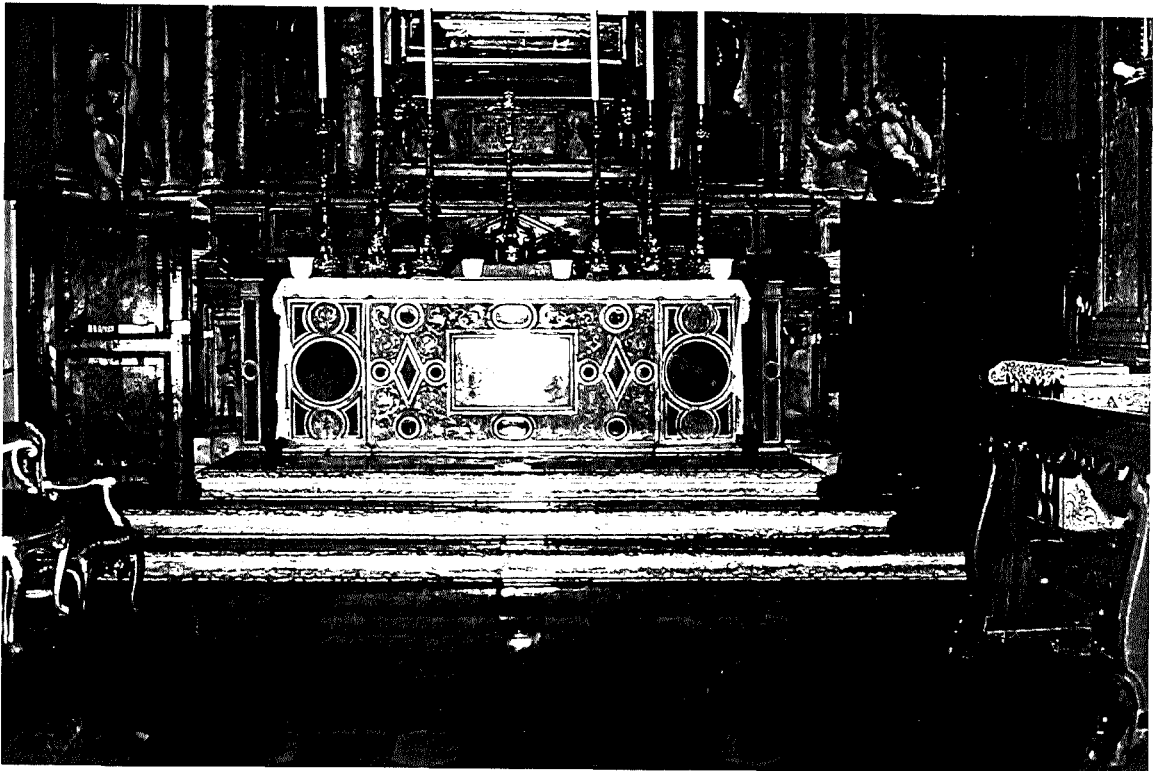
59. Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco (?). Statue of St. John the Baptist on the High Altar of S.Rocco (plate 58), main tier, left niche. Venice, S.Rocco.



60. Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco (?). Statue of St. Sebastian on the High Altar of S.Rocco (plate 58), main tier, right niche.

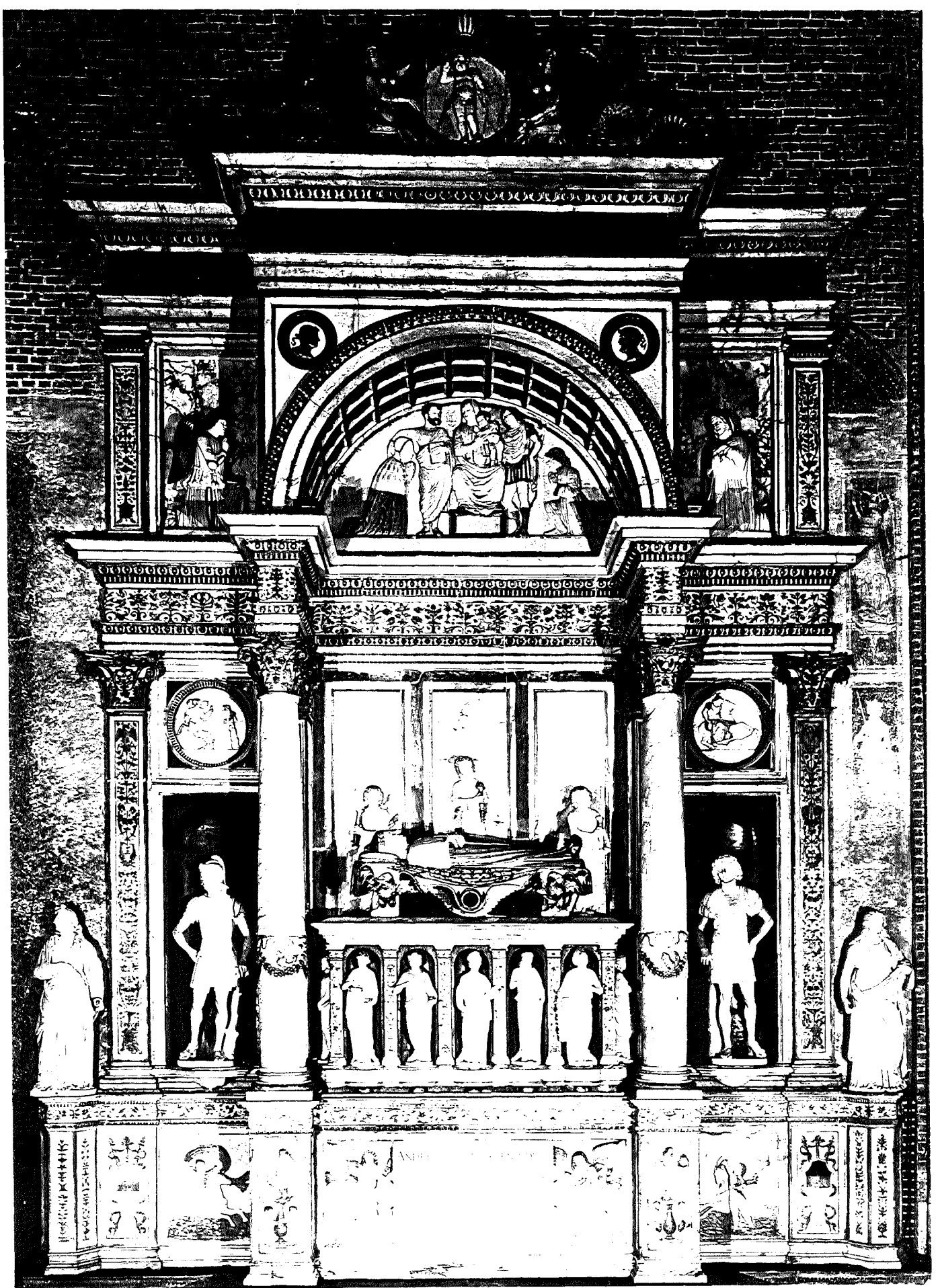


61. Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco (?). Statue of St. Roch on the High Altar of S.Rocco (plate 58), centre. Venice, S.Rocco.



62. High Altar of S.Rocco (plate 58), detail of frame and fresco decoration. Venice, S.Rocco.

63. High Altar of S.Rocco (plate 58), antependium. Venice, S.Rocco.



64. Tullio Lombardo and workshop. Funerary monument of Doge Andrea Vendramin. Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo.



65. Triptych of S.Liberale. Torcello, Cathedral S.Maria Assunta.



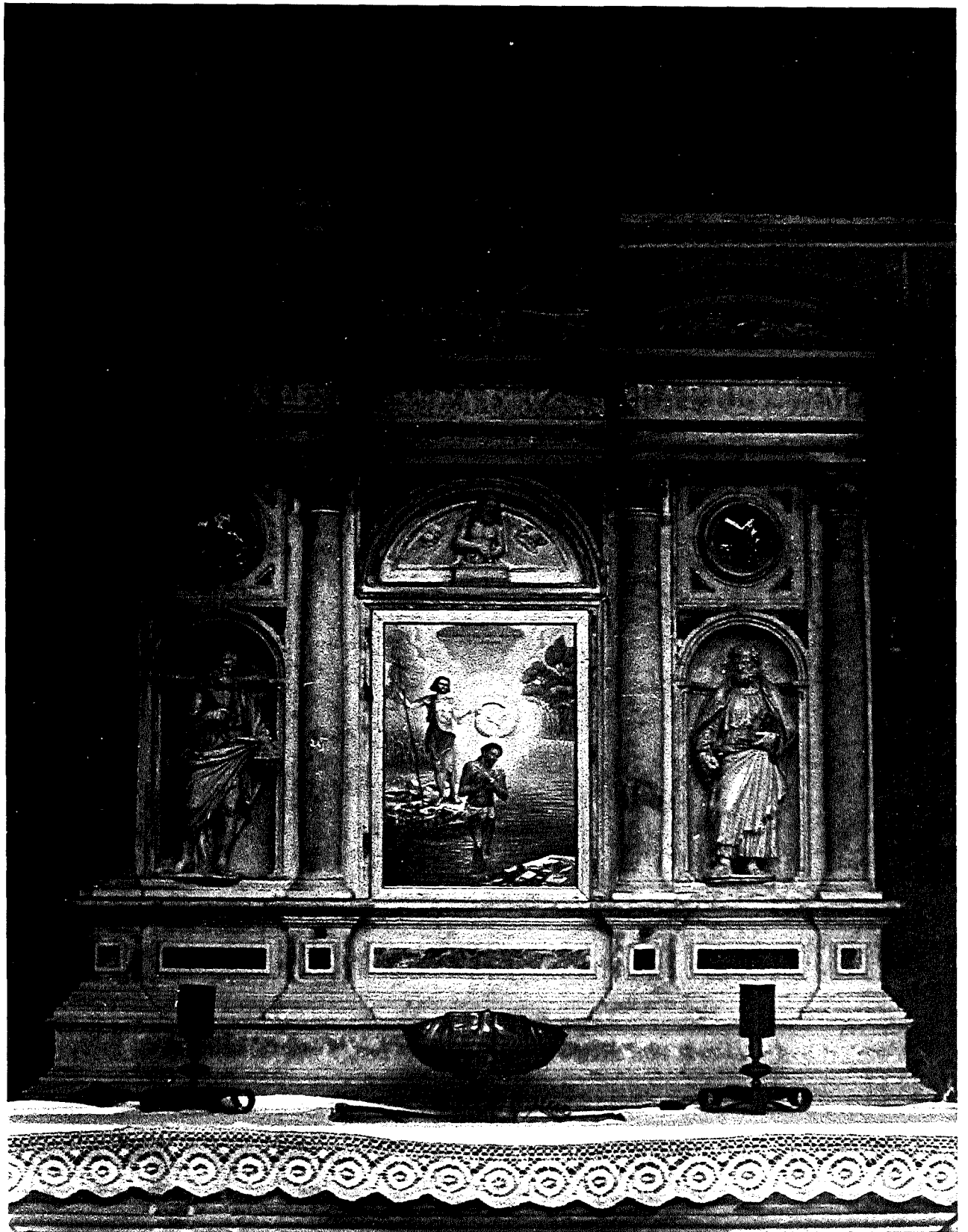
66. Triptych of S.Liberale (plate 65), detail of predella.
Torcello, Cathedral S.Maria Assunta.



67. Triptych of a bishop saint. Torcello, Cathedral S.Maria Assunta.



68. Triptych of a bishop saint (plate 67), detail of predella. Torcello, Cathedral S.Maria Assunta.



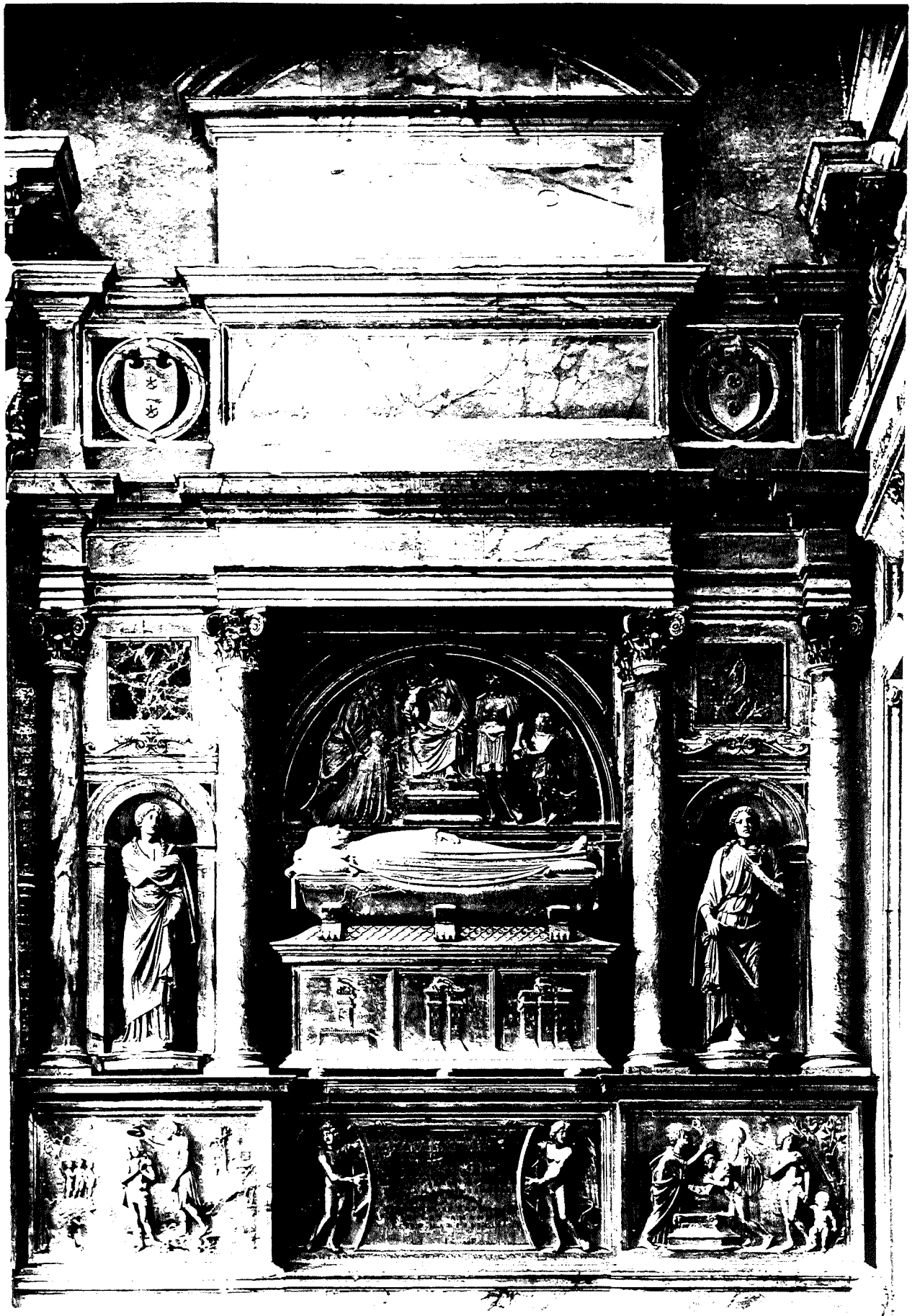
69. Tullio Lombardo (?). High Altar from S. Sepolcro. Venice, S. Martino di Castello.



70. Lorenzo Bregno (?). Statuette of St. John the Baptist in the left niche of the High Altar from S. Sepolcro (plate 69). Venice, S.Martino di Castello.



71. Lorenzo Bregno (?). Statuette of St. Peter in the right niche of the High Altar from S. Sepolcro (plate 69). Venice, S. Martino di Castello.



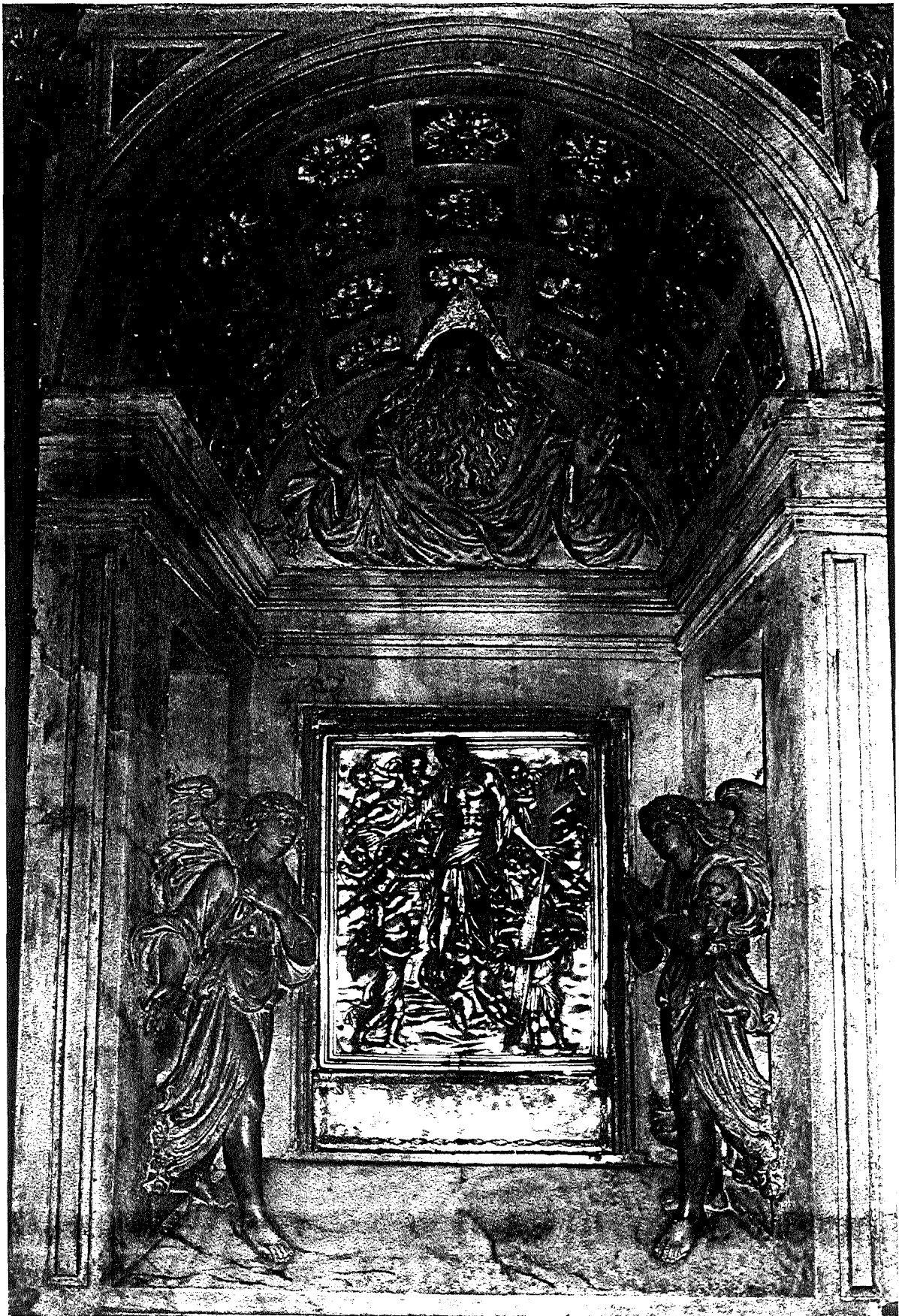
72. Tullio and Antonio Lombardo. Funerary monument of Doge Giovanni Mocenigo. Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo.



73. Lorenzo Bregno. Altar of the Sacrament. Venice, S.Marco.



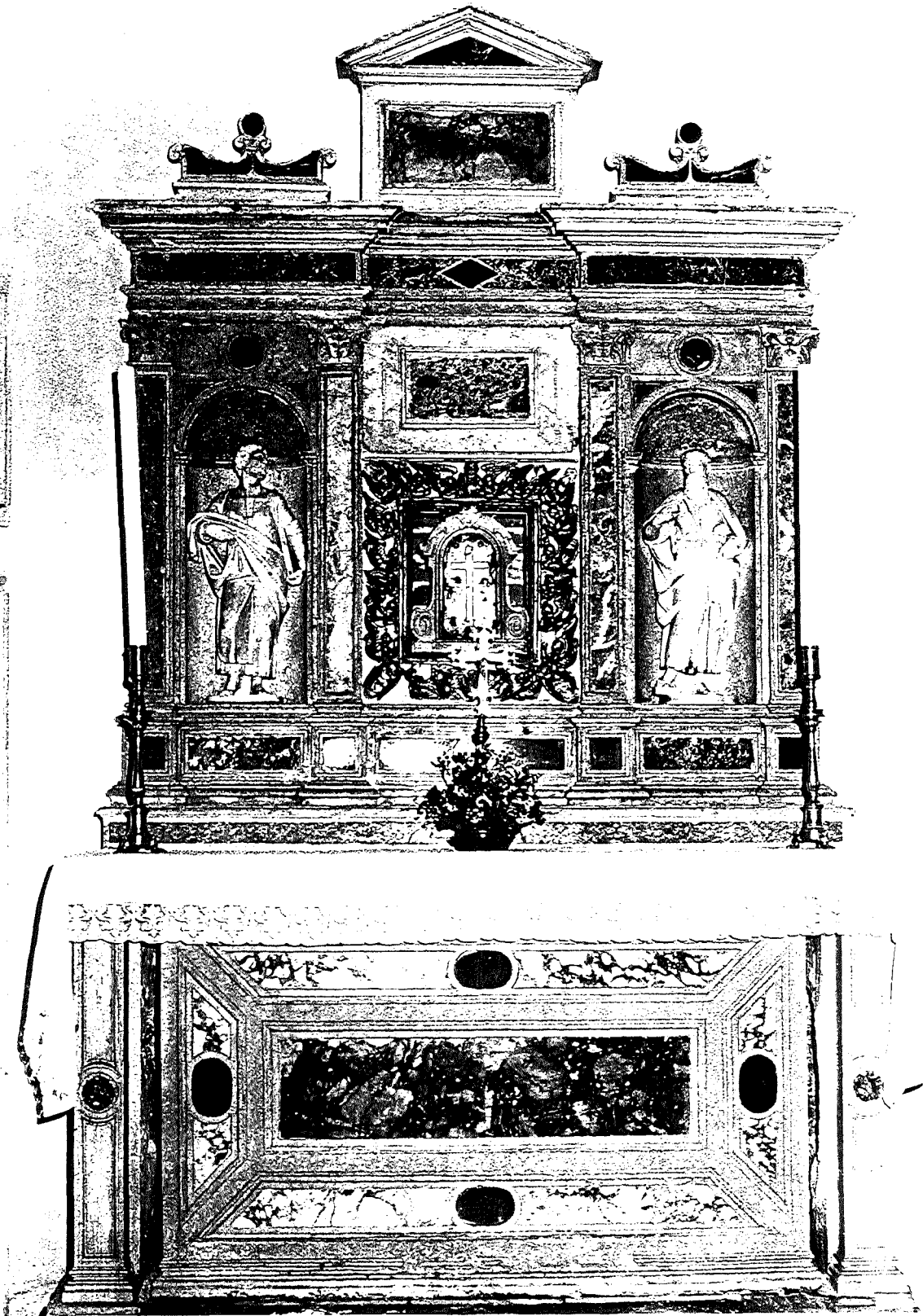
74. Lorenzo Bregno. Statuette of St. Francis in the left niche of the Altar of the Sacrament (plate 73). Venice, S.Marco.



75. Lorenzo Bregno. Central niche with bronze sportello by Jacopo Sansovino of the Altar of the Sacrament (plate 73). Venice, S.Marco.



76. Lorenzo Bregno. Statuette of St. Anthony in the left niche of the Altar of the Sacrament (plate 73). Venice, S. Marco.



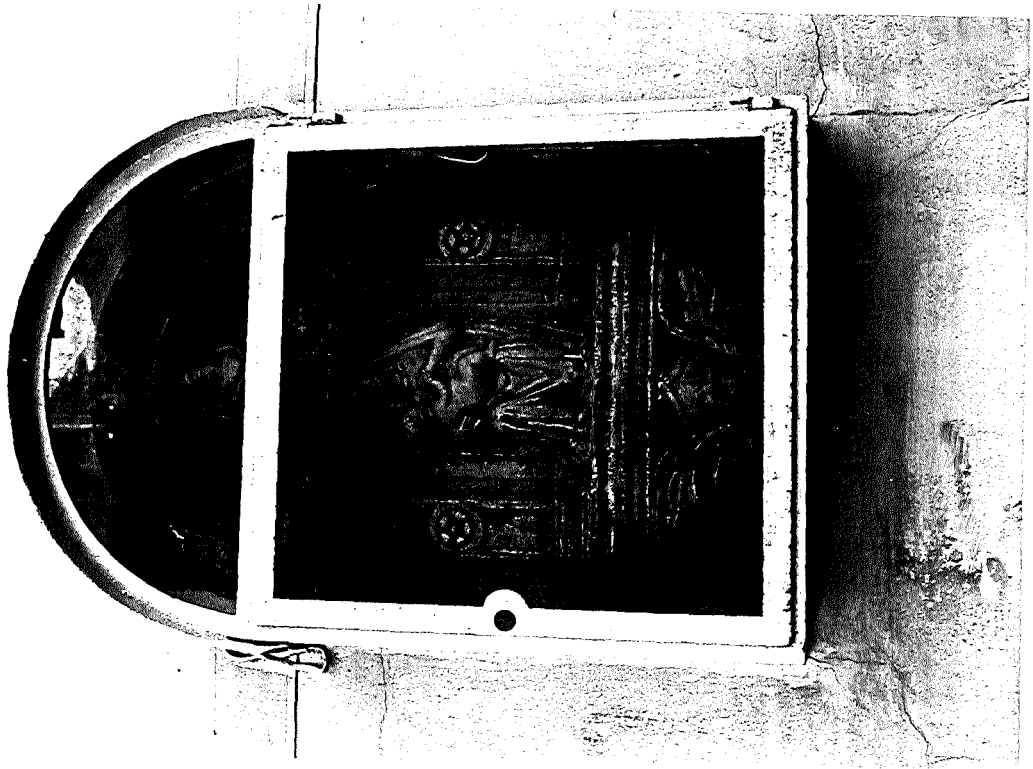
77. Altar of the Sacrament. Venice, S. Maria Mater Domini.



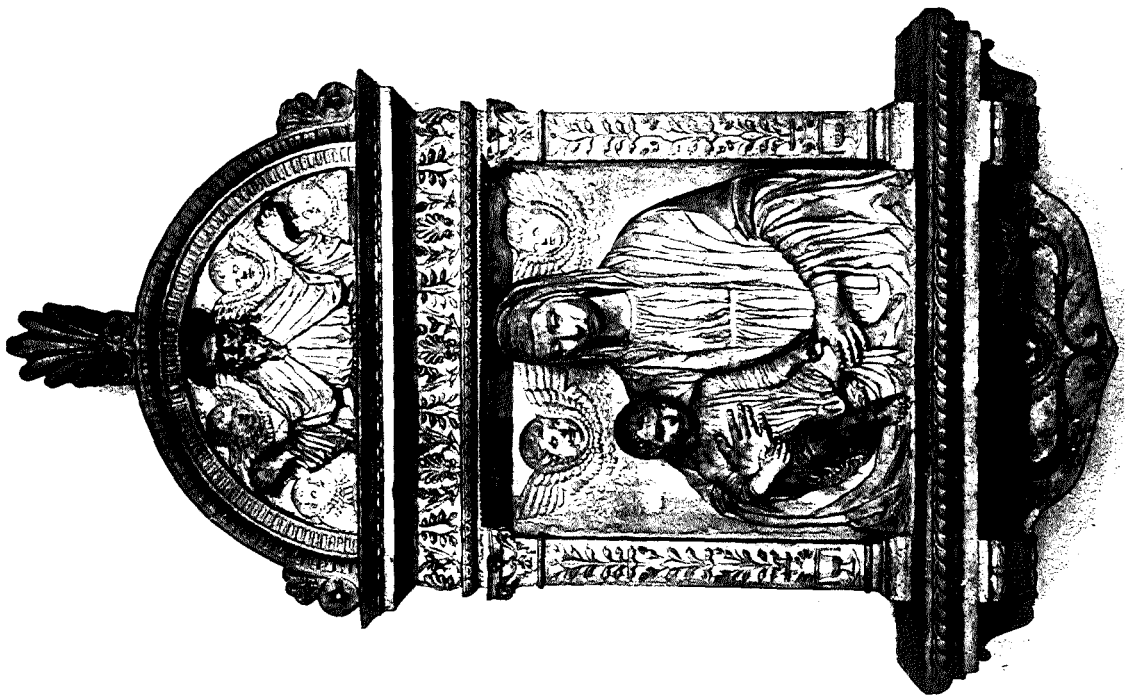
78. Gian Maria Mosca (?). Statuette of St. Mark in the left niche of the Altar of the Sacrament (plate 77). Venice, S. Maria Mater Domini.



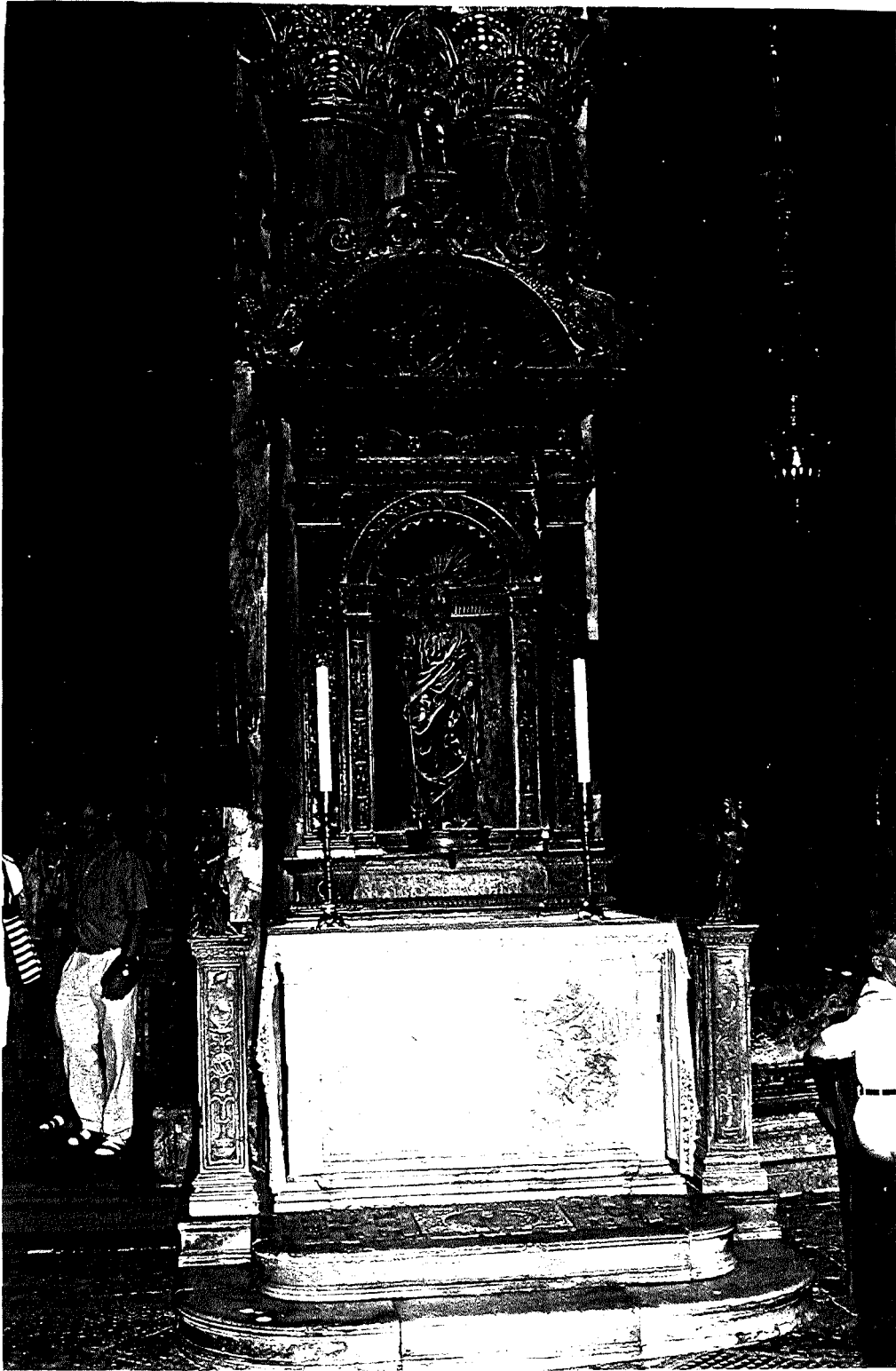
79. Gian Maria Mosca (?). Statuette of St. John ev. in the right niche of the Altar of the Sacrament (plate 77). Venice, S. Maria Mater Domini.



80. Street tabernacle. Venice, S.Maria Mater Domini. Exterior wall.



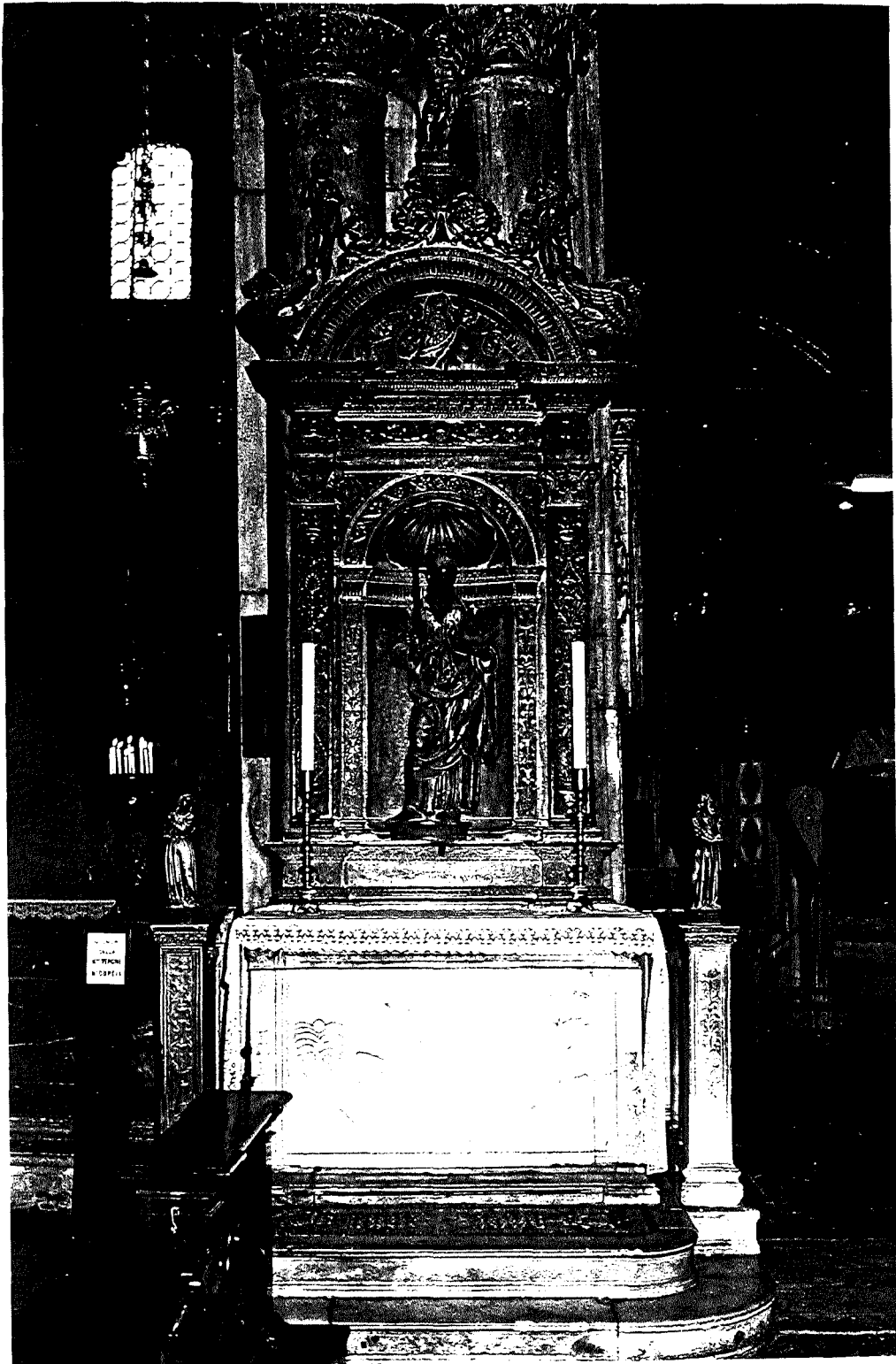
81. Devotional relief of the Madonna from S.Francesco della Vigna. London, Victoria and Albert Museum.



82. Antonio Rizzo. Altar of St. James. Venice, S. Marco.



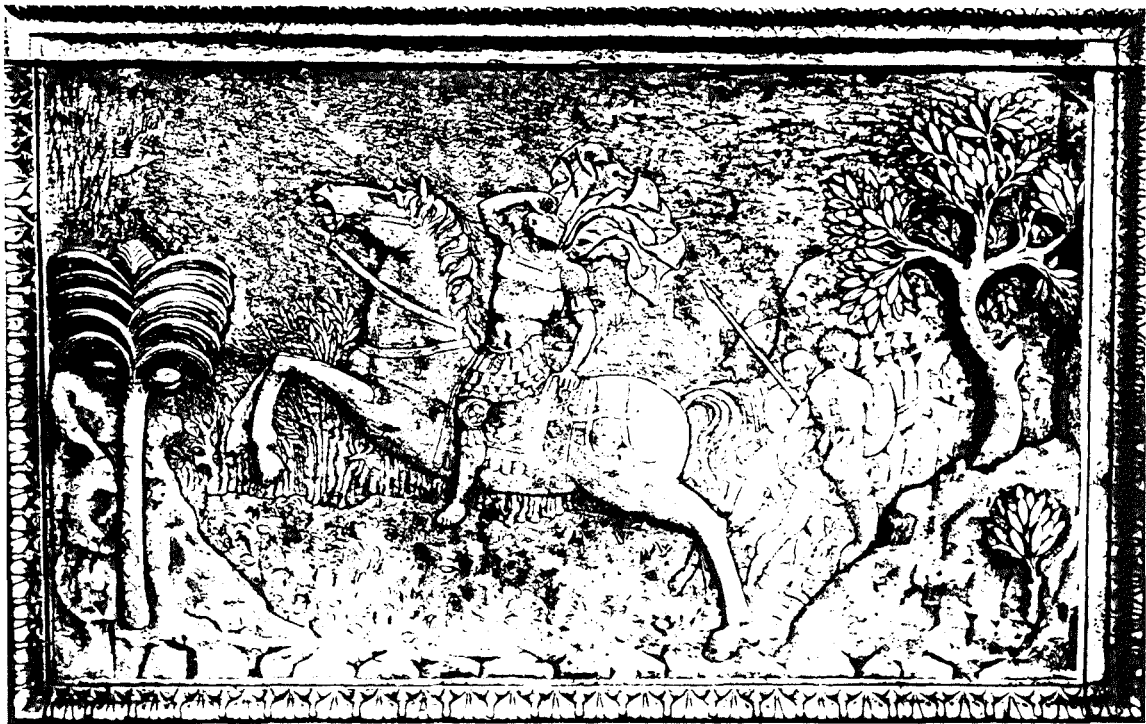
83. Antonio Rizzo. Altar of St. James (plate 82), statue of St. James. Venice, S.Marco.



84. Antonio Rizzo, Altar of St. Paul. Venice, S. Marco.

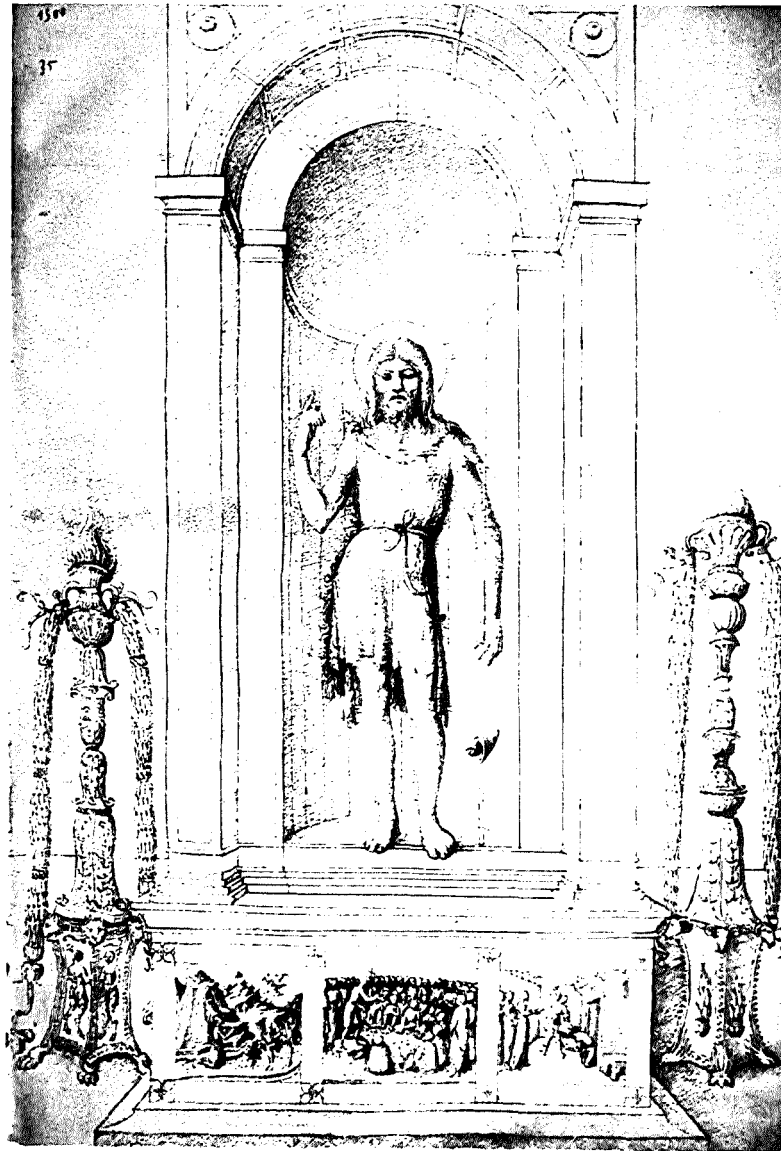


85. Antonio Rizzo. Altar of St. Paul (plate 84), statue of St. Paul. Venice, S.Marco.



86. Antonio Rizzo. Altar of St. Paul (plate 84), detail of antependium. Venice, S.Marco.

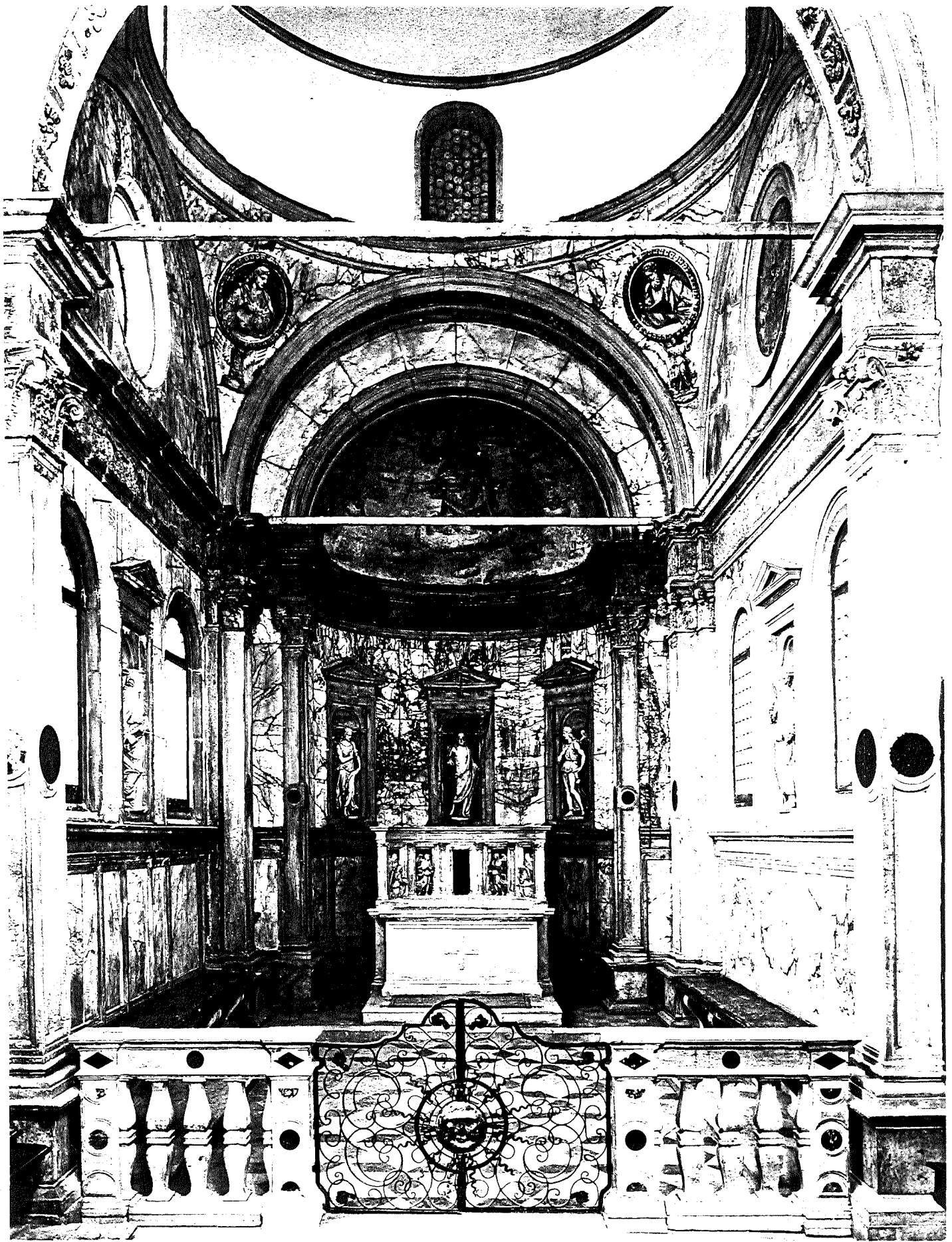
87. Altar of St. Paul (plate 84), detail of coat-of-arms on the balustrade. Venice, S.Marco.



88. Jacopo Bellini. Drawing of *St. John the Baptist in a Niche*. Paris, Musée du Louvre.



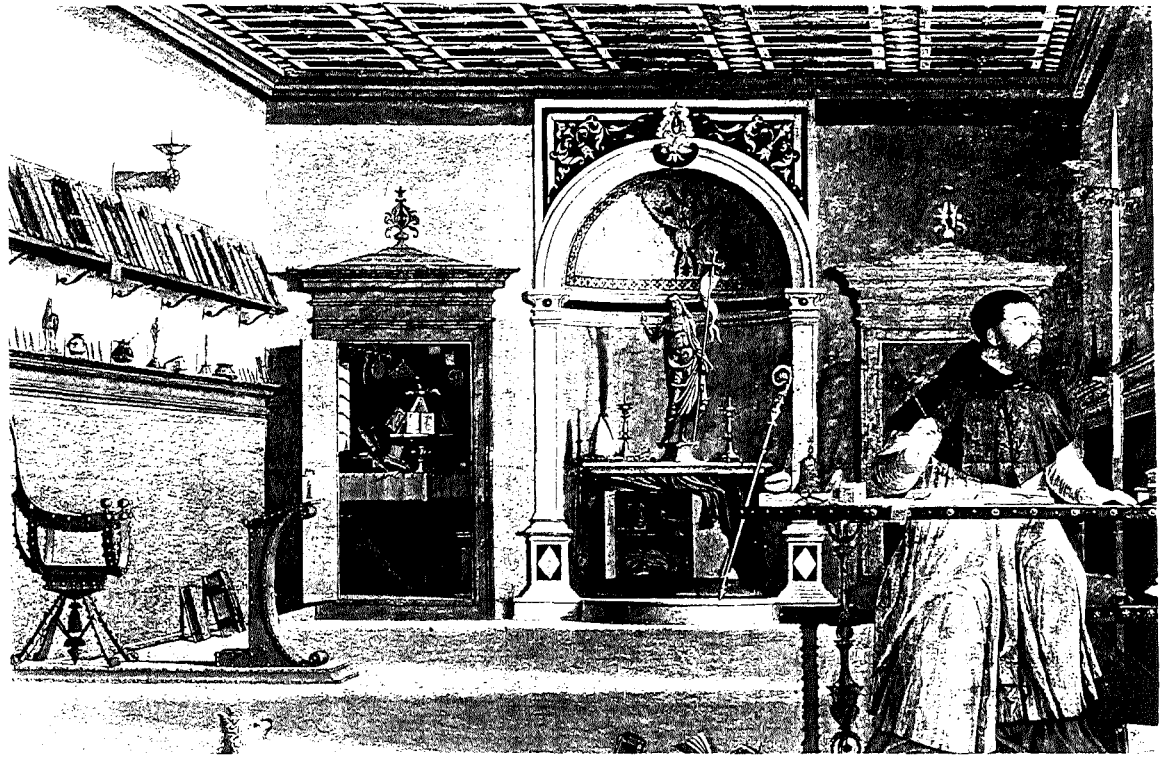
89. Statue of the Resurrected Christ. Milan, Museo Poldi Pezzoli.



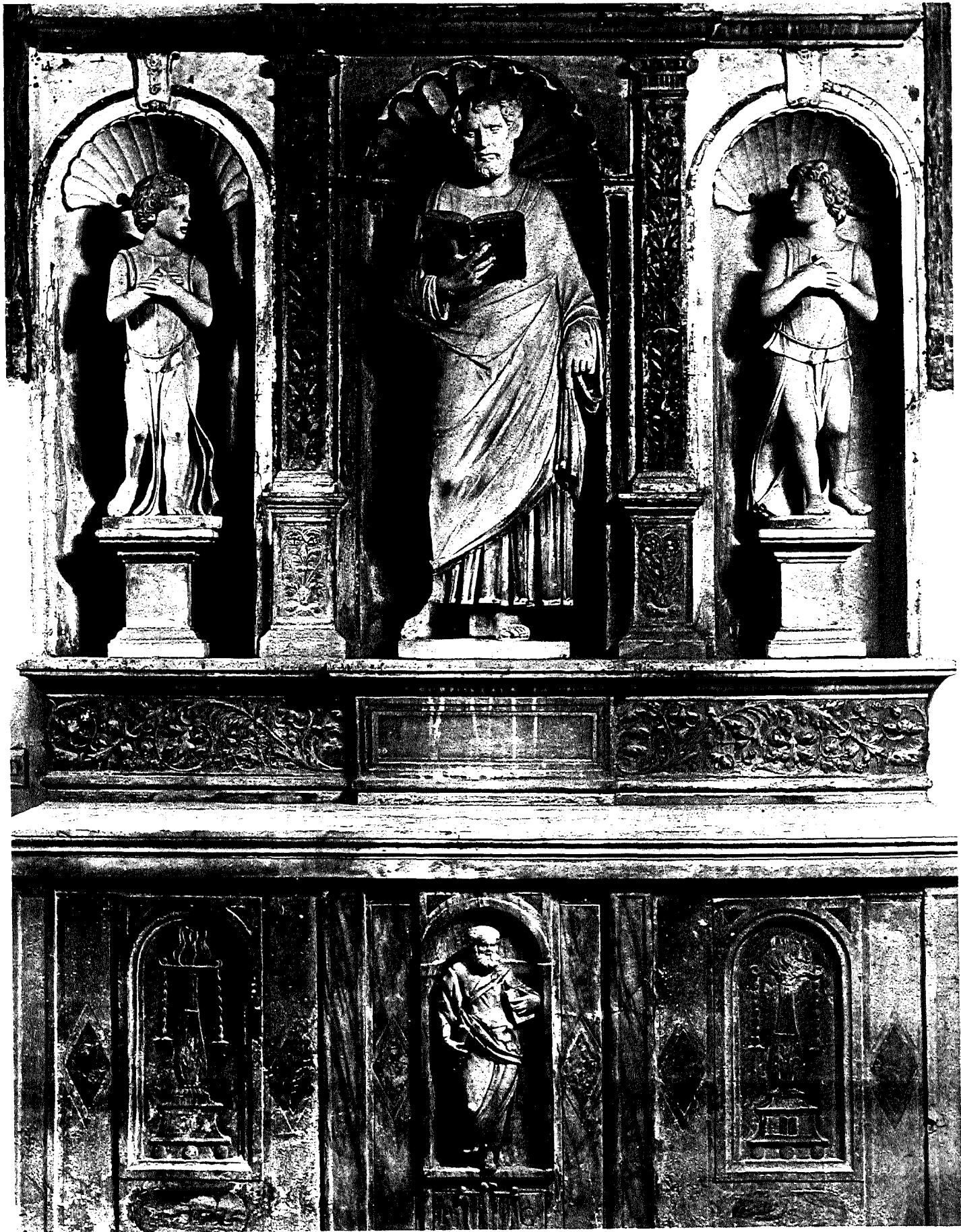
90. Giambattista and Lorenzo Bregno. Chapel of the Sacrament.
Treviso, Cathedral.



91. Giambattista Bregno, Statue of the Resurrected Christ in the Chapel of the Sacrament (plate 90). Treviso, Cathedral.



92. Vittore Carpaccio, *Vision of St. Augustine*. Venice, Scuola di S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni.



93. Antonio Lombardo (workshop). Altar of St. Luke. Venice, S. Giobbe.



94. Guglielmo Bergamasco. Altar of St. Mary Magdalen, frame.
Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo.



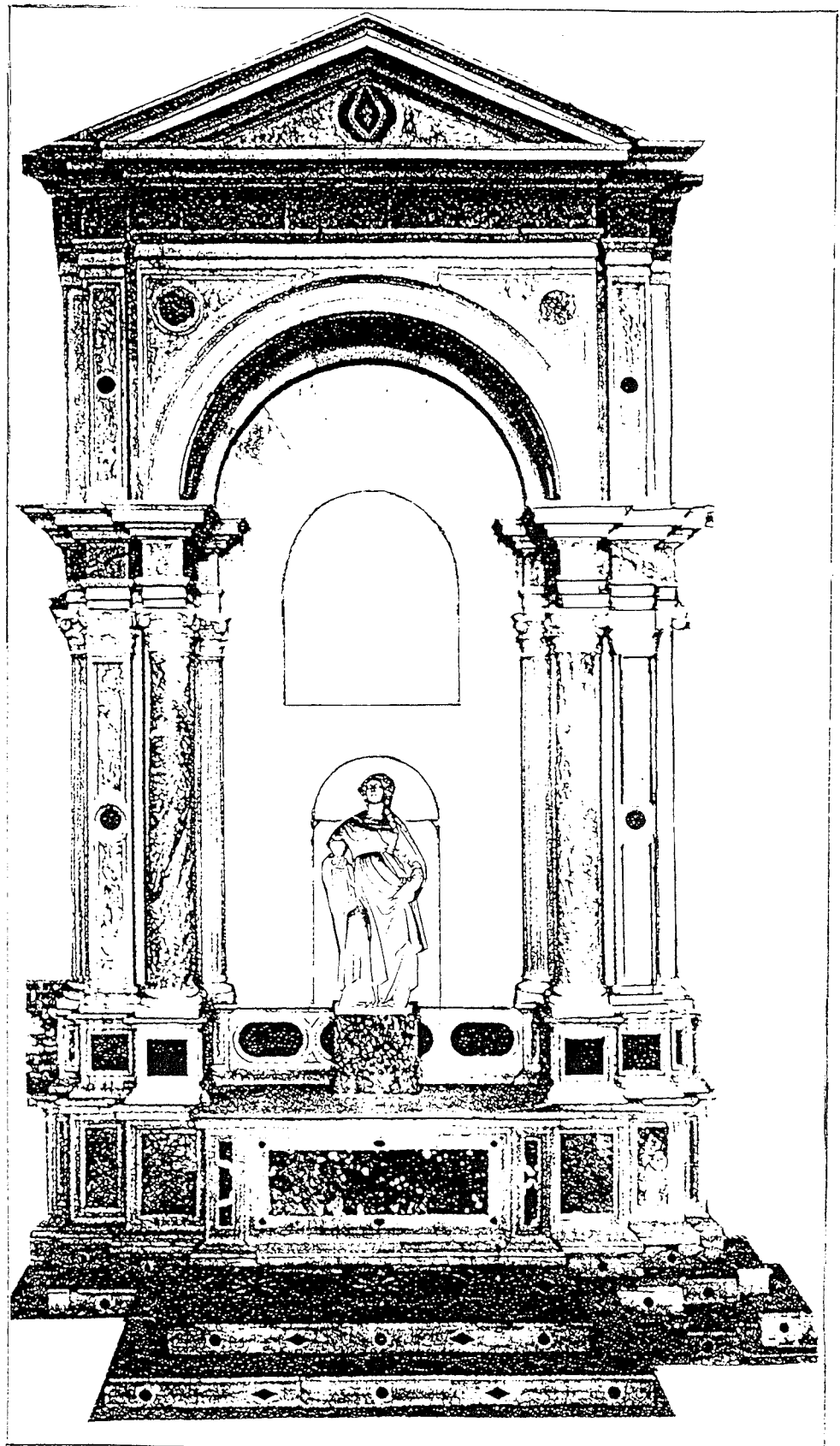
95. Bartolomeo di Francesco Bergamasco. Statue of St. Mary Magdalen from the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen (plate 94) on the Altar of the Madonna (plate 33). Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo.



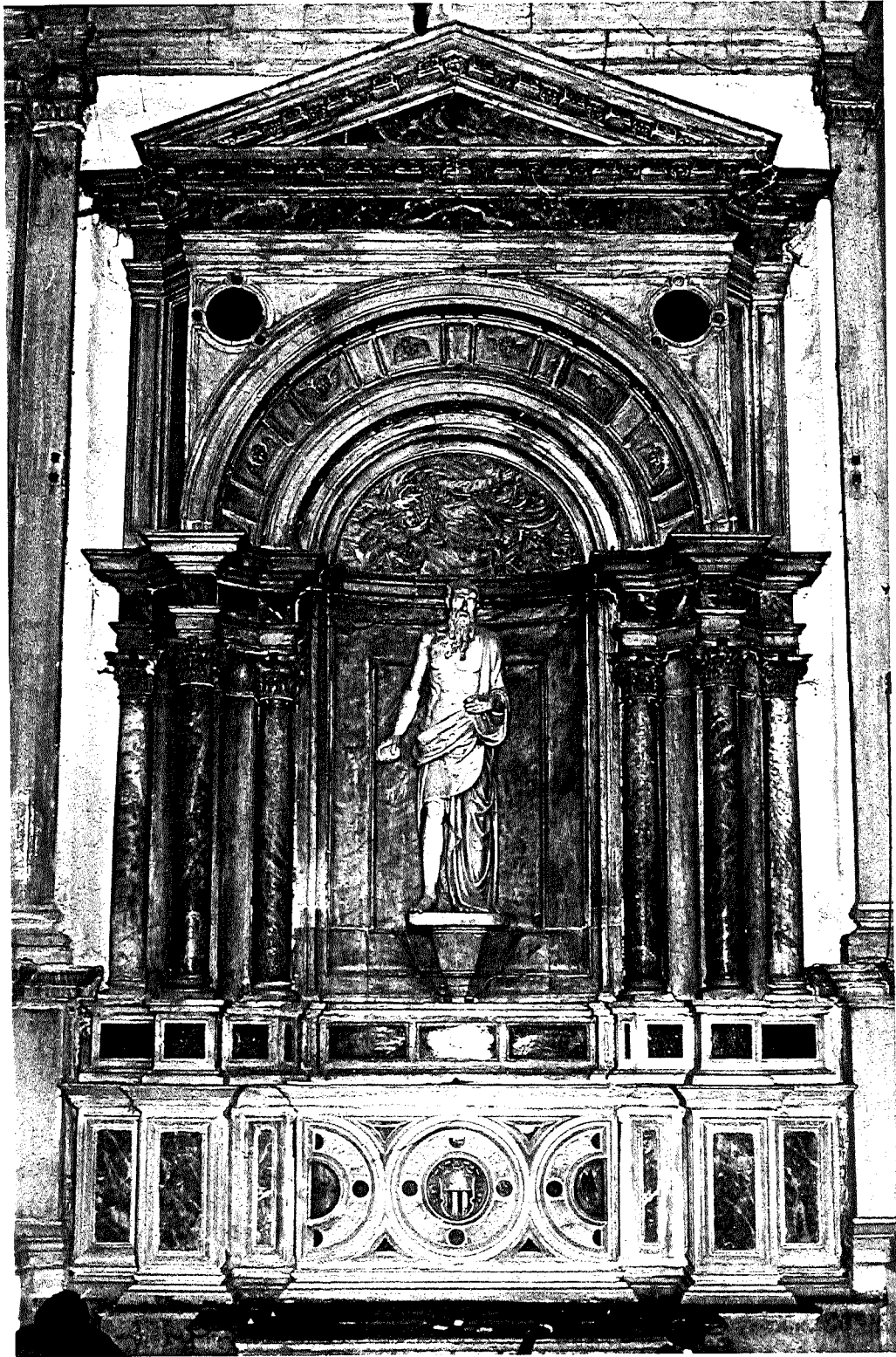
96. Giambattista Bregno (?). Kneeling Angel. Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo, sacristy.



97. Giambattista Bregno (?). Kneeling Angel. Berlin, Staatliche Museen.



98. Reconstruction of the Altar of St. Mary Magdalen.



99. Guglielmo Bergamasco (architecture) and Tommaso Lombardo (sculpture). Altar of St. Jerome. Venice, S. Salvatore.



100. Guglielmo Bergamasco. Altar of St. Jerome (plate 99), detail of frame. Venice, S.Salvatore.



101. Altar of St. Francis from S. Maria Maggiore. Venice, S. Maria Mater Domini.



102. Altar of St. Francis (plate 101), detail of antependium. Venice, S. Maria Mater Domini.

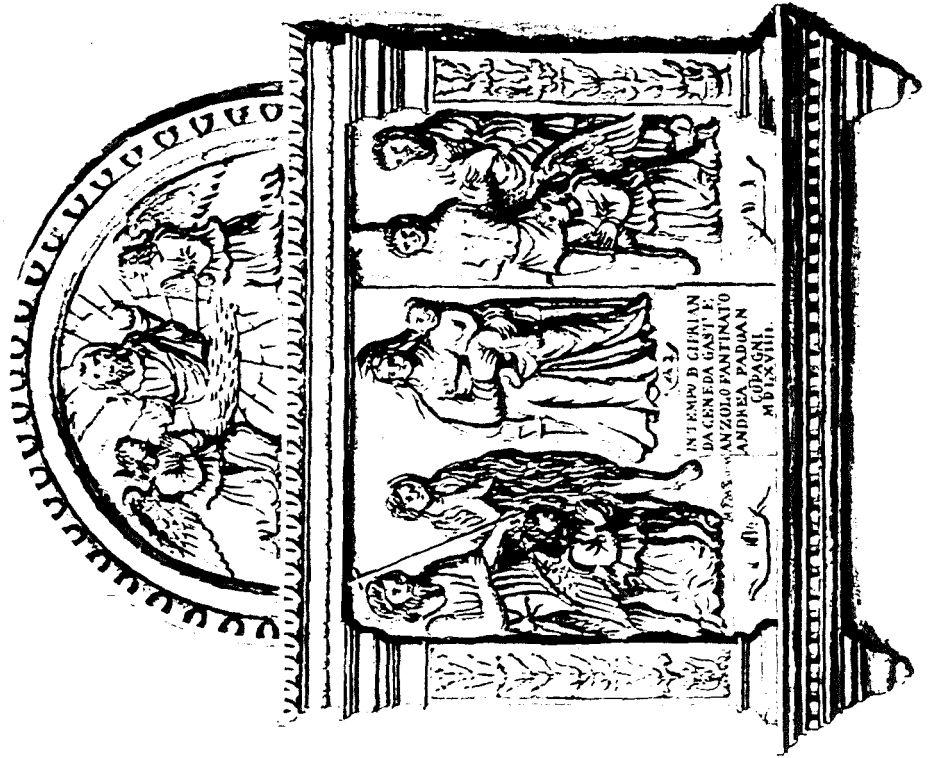


103. Alessandro Vittoria. Statue of St. Jerome. Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Altar of St. Mary Magdalen.

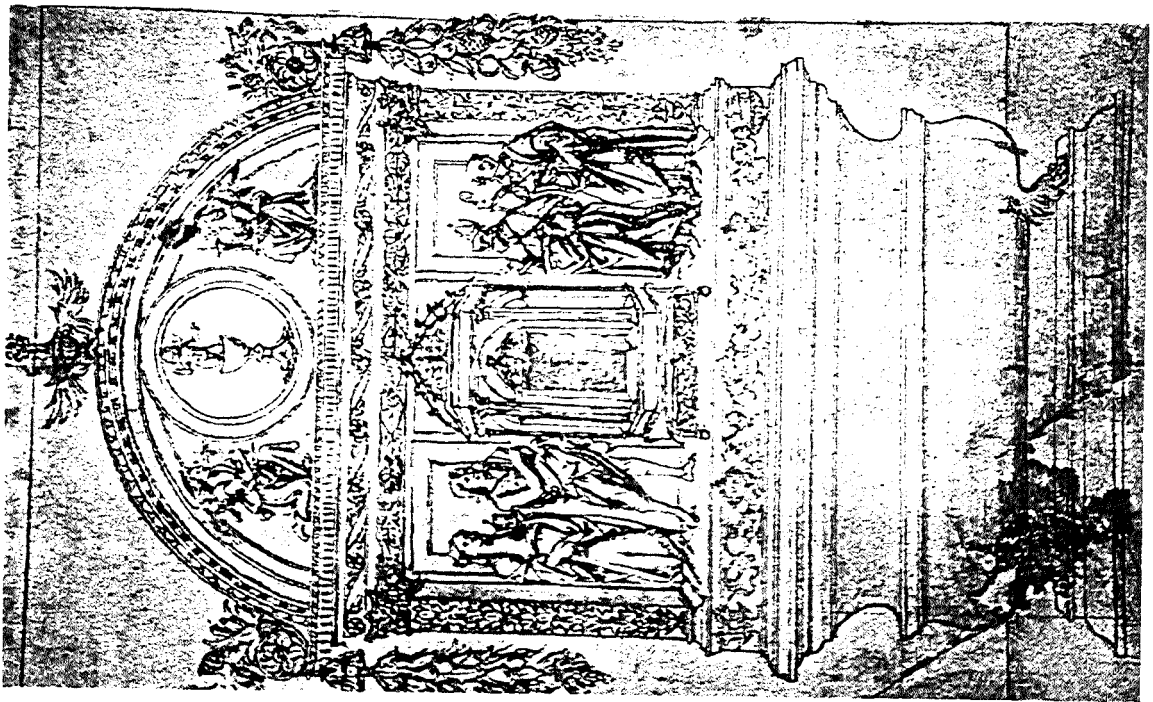


104. Antonio Rizzo (workshop). Street tabernacle of the *Traghetto della Maddalena*, left wing. Venice, Museo Civico Correr.

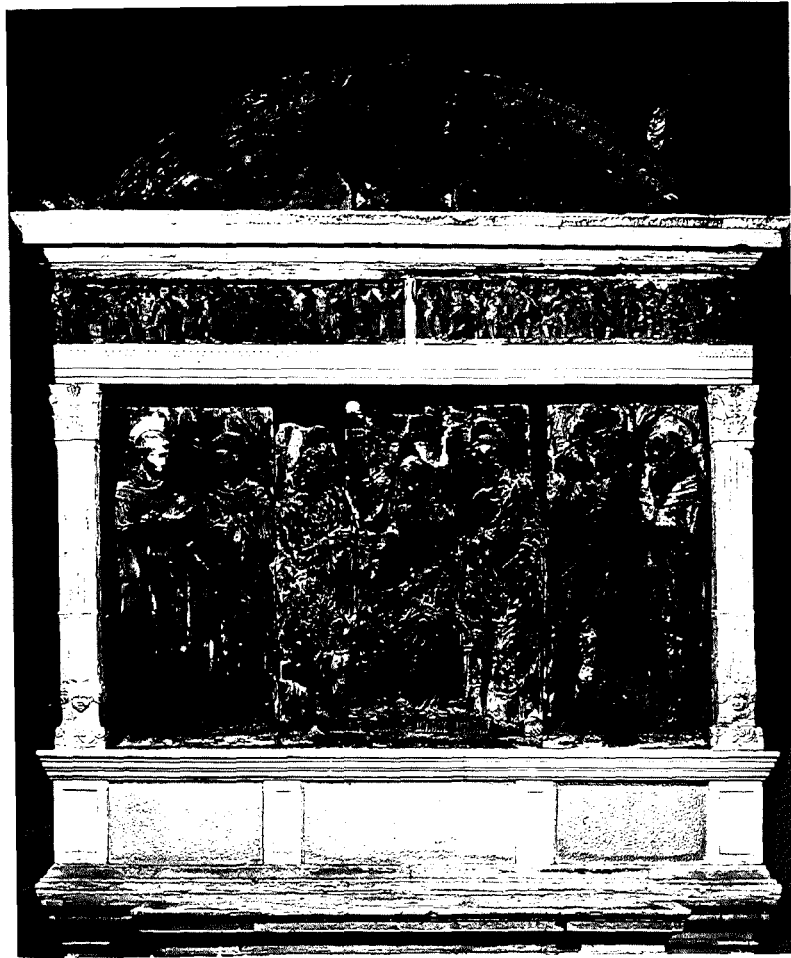
105. Antonio Rizzo (workshop). Street tabernacle of the *Traghetto della Maddalena*, right wing. Venice, Museo Civico Correr.



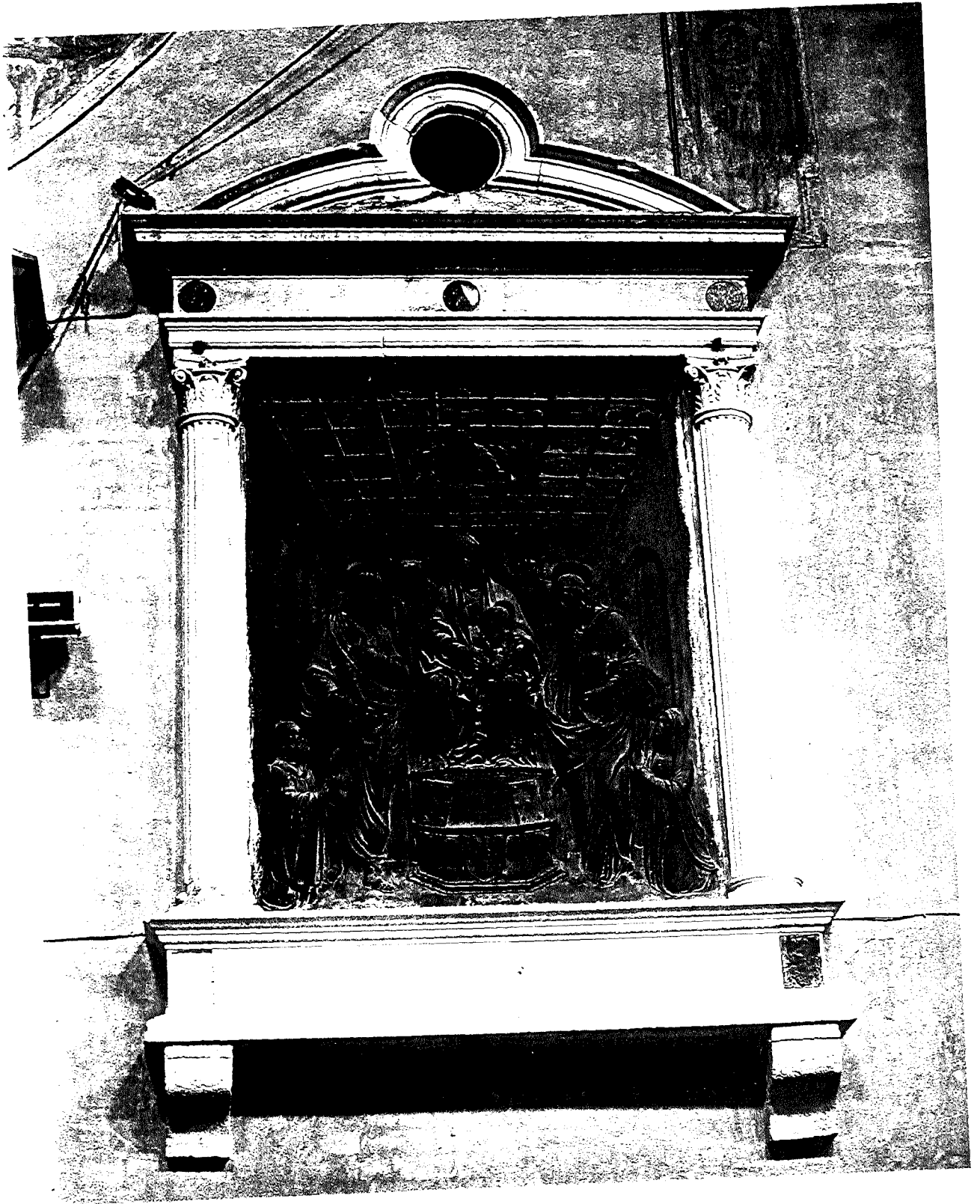
106. Johannes Grevembroch. Watercolour of the street tabernacle of the *Tragheto della Maddalena*. Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr.



107. Chatsworth. Drawing of a Florentine altarpiece.



108. Nicolò Pizolo. Terracotta altar in the Ovetari Chapel. Padua, church of the Eremitani.



109. Altar for Jacopo Surian. Venice, S. Stefano.

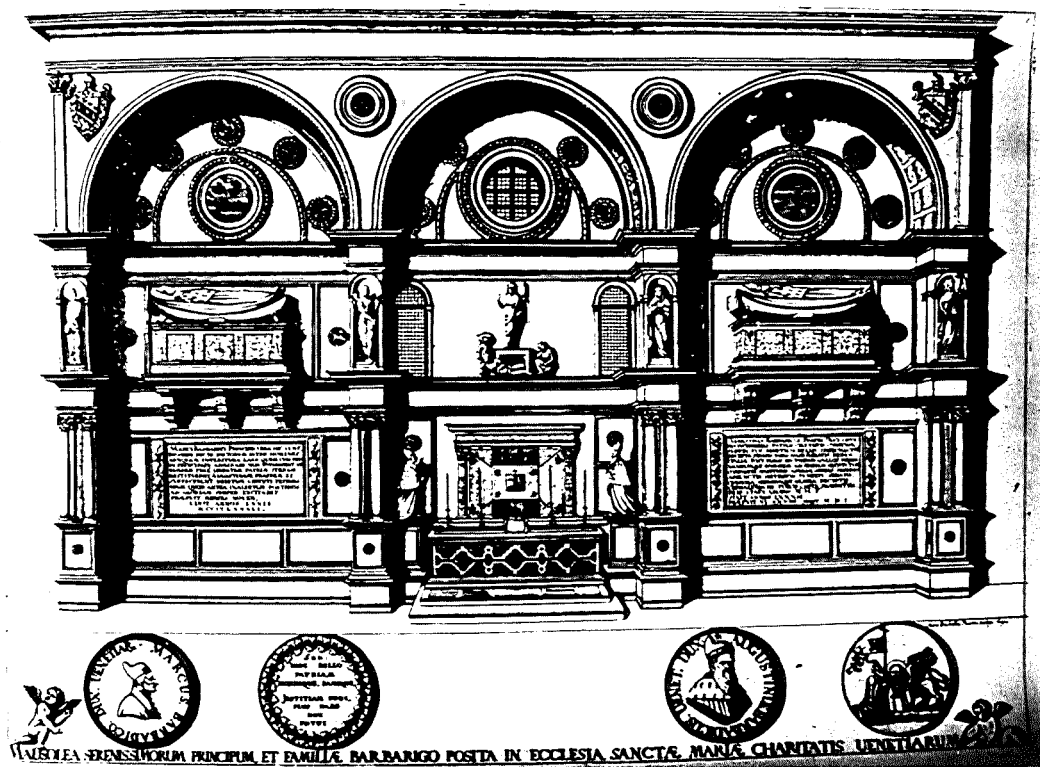


110. Altar for Jacopo Surian (plate 109), detail of Jacopo Surian. Venice, S.Stefano.

111. Altar for Jacopo Surian (plate 109), detail of Surian's wife. Venice, S.Stefano.



112. Giovanni Buora (?). Funerary monument of Jacopo Surian.
Venice, S. Stefano.



113. Isabella Piccini. Engraving of the Barbarigo monument from S. Maria della Carità.



114. Three reliefs of the *Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin* from the Barbarigo monument. Venice, Ca' d'Oro, Galleria Franchetti.



115. Giovanni Buora. Relief of the *Resurrection* from the Barbarigo monument. Venice, Scuola di S.Giovanni Evangelista.



116. Antonio Rizzo. Statue of the kneeling Doge Agostino Barbarigo. Venice, S.Maria della Salute, ante-sacristy.



117. Lunette relief. Venice, S.Marco, crypt.



118. Lunette relief (plate 117), detail of the Madonna and Child. Venice, S.Marco.



119. Lunette relief (plate 117), detail of St. Mark. Venice, S.Marco.



120. Lunette relief (plate 117), detail of St. Catherine. Venice, S.Marco



121. Tullio Lombardo. Tabernacle altar from S.Nicolò di Castello. Venice, Seminario Patriarcale, Chapel of the SS. Trinità.



122. Antonio Lombardo and Paolo Savin. Altar of the Zen Chapel. Venice, S. Marco.



123. Altar of the Zen Chapel (plate 122), side view. Venice, S.Marco.



124. Paolo Savin (?). Antependium with relief of the *Resurrection* from the altar of the Zen Chapel (plate 122). Venice, S.Marco.



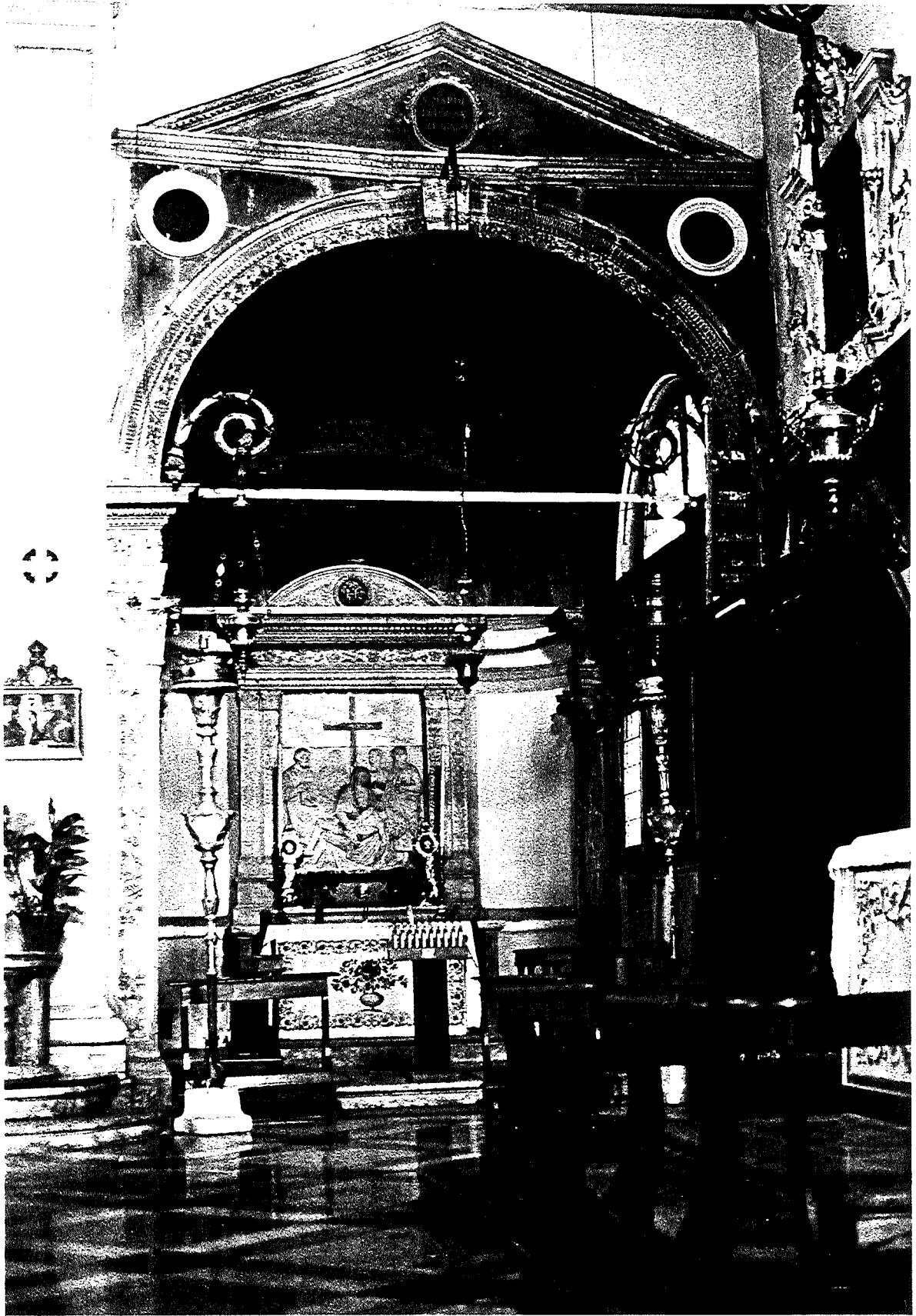
125. Lorenzo Bregno and Antonio Minello. Trevisan Altar.
Venice, S. Maria Mater Domini.



126. Lorenzo Bregno and Antonio Minello. Detail of figures on the Trevisan Altar (plate 125). Trevisan Altar. Venice, S.Maria Mater Domini.



127. Venice, S. Maria Mater Domini. Apse.



128. Venice, S.Lio. Gussoni Chapel, view.



129. Pietro and Tullio Lombardo (?). Altar of the Gussoni Chapel (plate 128). Venice, S.Lio.



130. Pietro and Tullio Lombardo (?). Altarpiece of the Gussoni Chapel (plate 129) with relief of the *Pietà*. Venice, S.Lio.



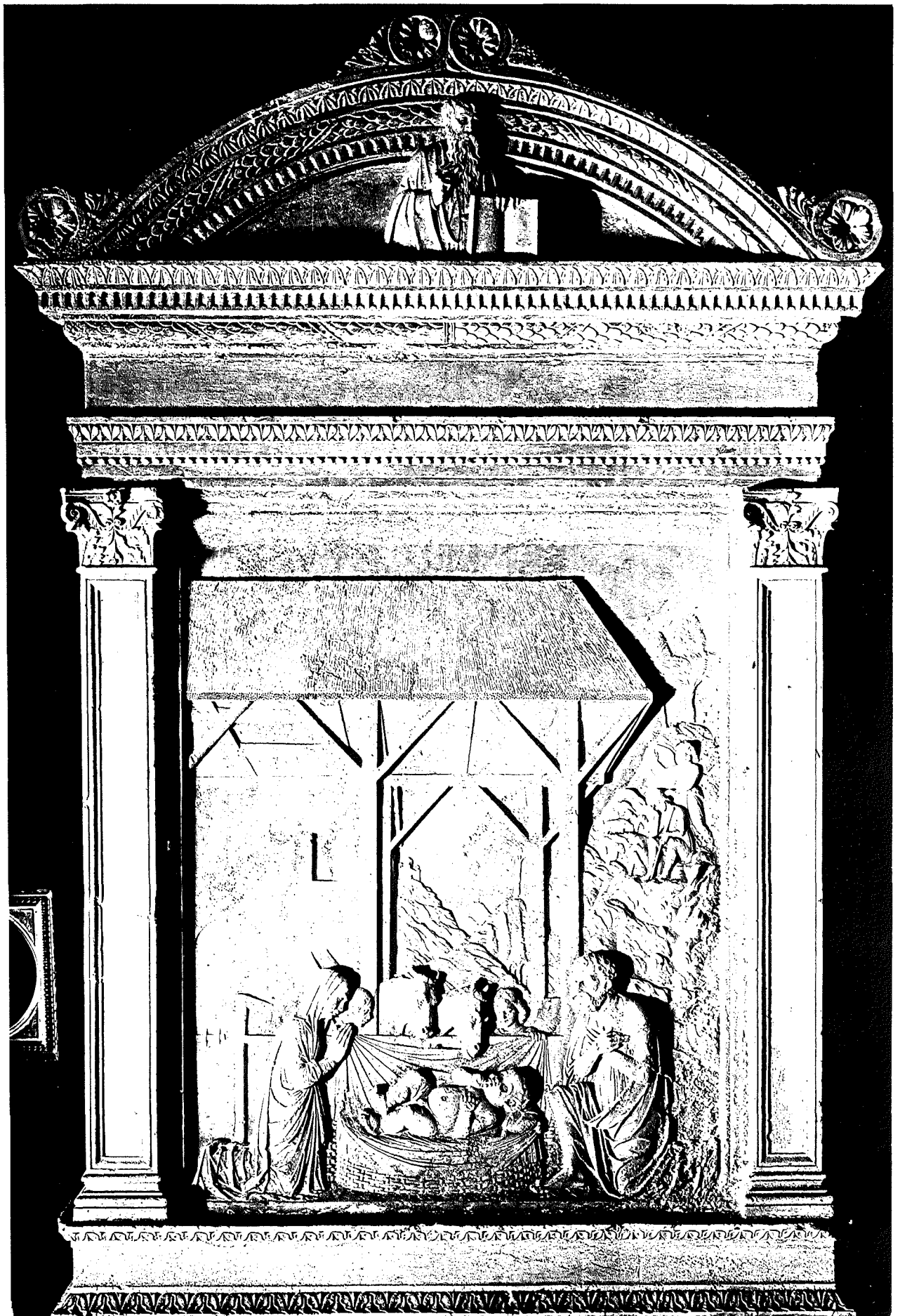
131. Tullio Lombardo (workshop). Altar of the *Pietà* from S. Andrea della Certosa. Venice, S. Maria della Salute, antecapella.



132. Tullio, Lombardo. Altar of the *Pietà* (plate 131), detail of Madonna with the Dead Christ. Venice, S.Maria della Salute, ante-sacristy.



133. Tullio Lombardo. Madonna with the Dead Christ. Rovigo, S.Francesco.



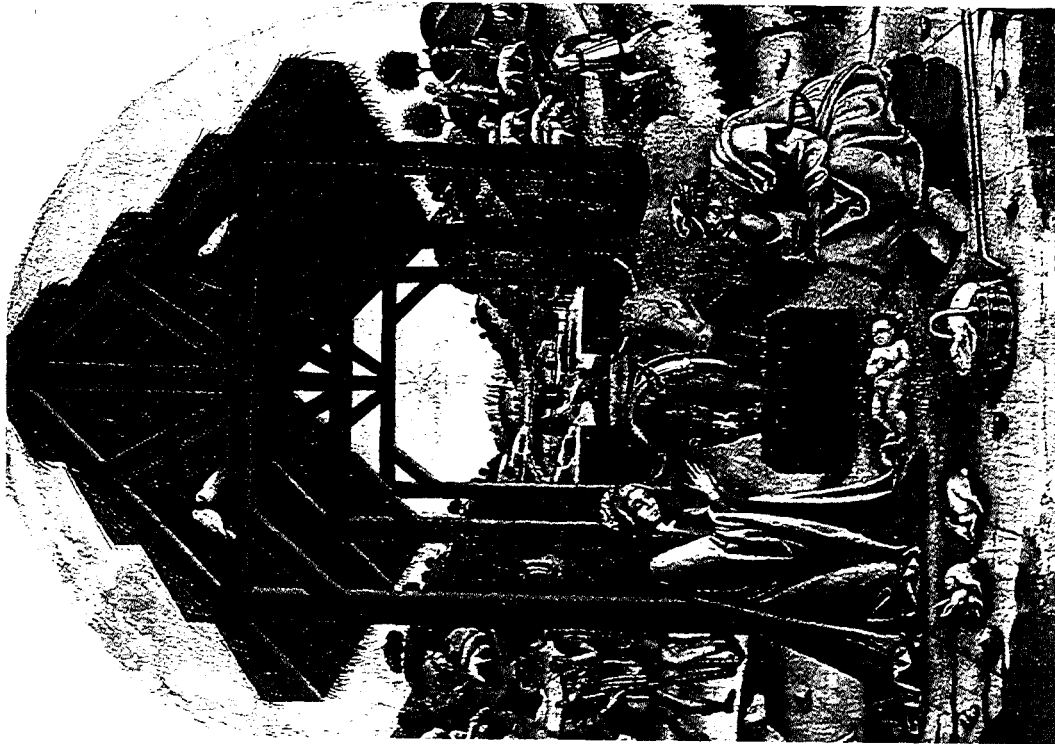
134. Pietro Lombardo (?). Altar of the *Nativity* from S. Andrea della Certosa. Venice, Seminario Patriarcale.



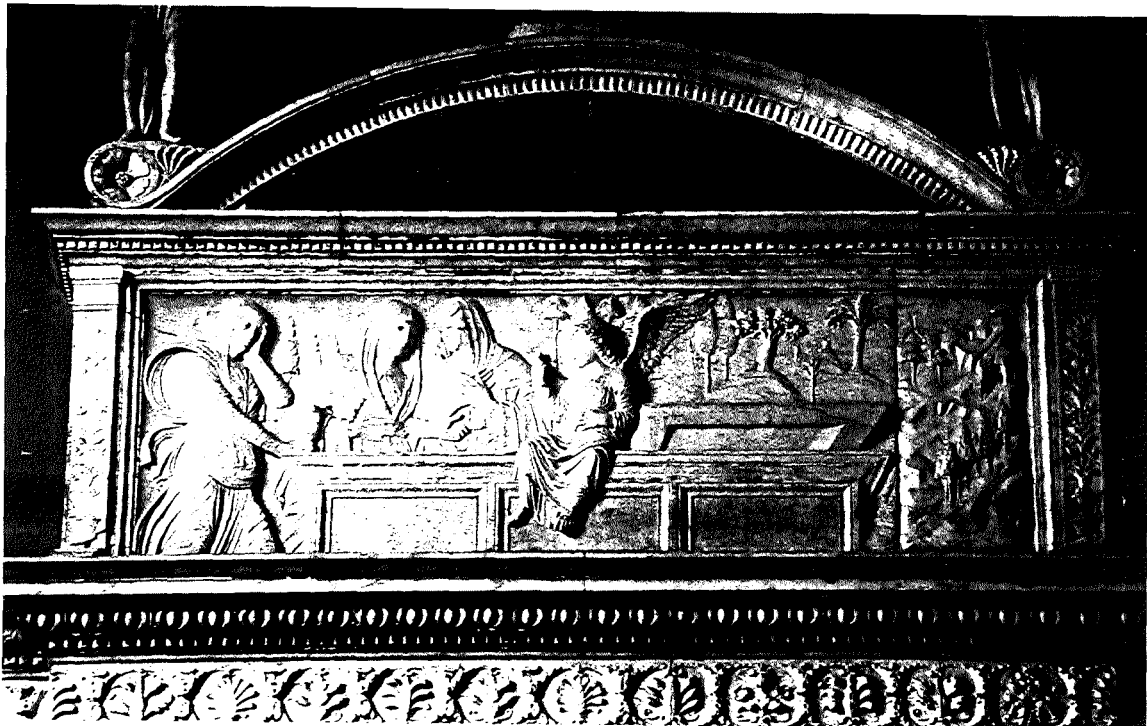
135. Pietro Lombardo (?). Altar of the *Nativity* (plate 134), detail of main scene. Venice, Seminario Patriarcale.



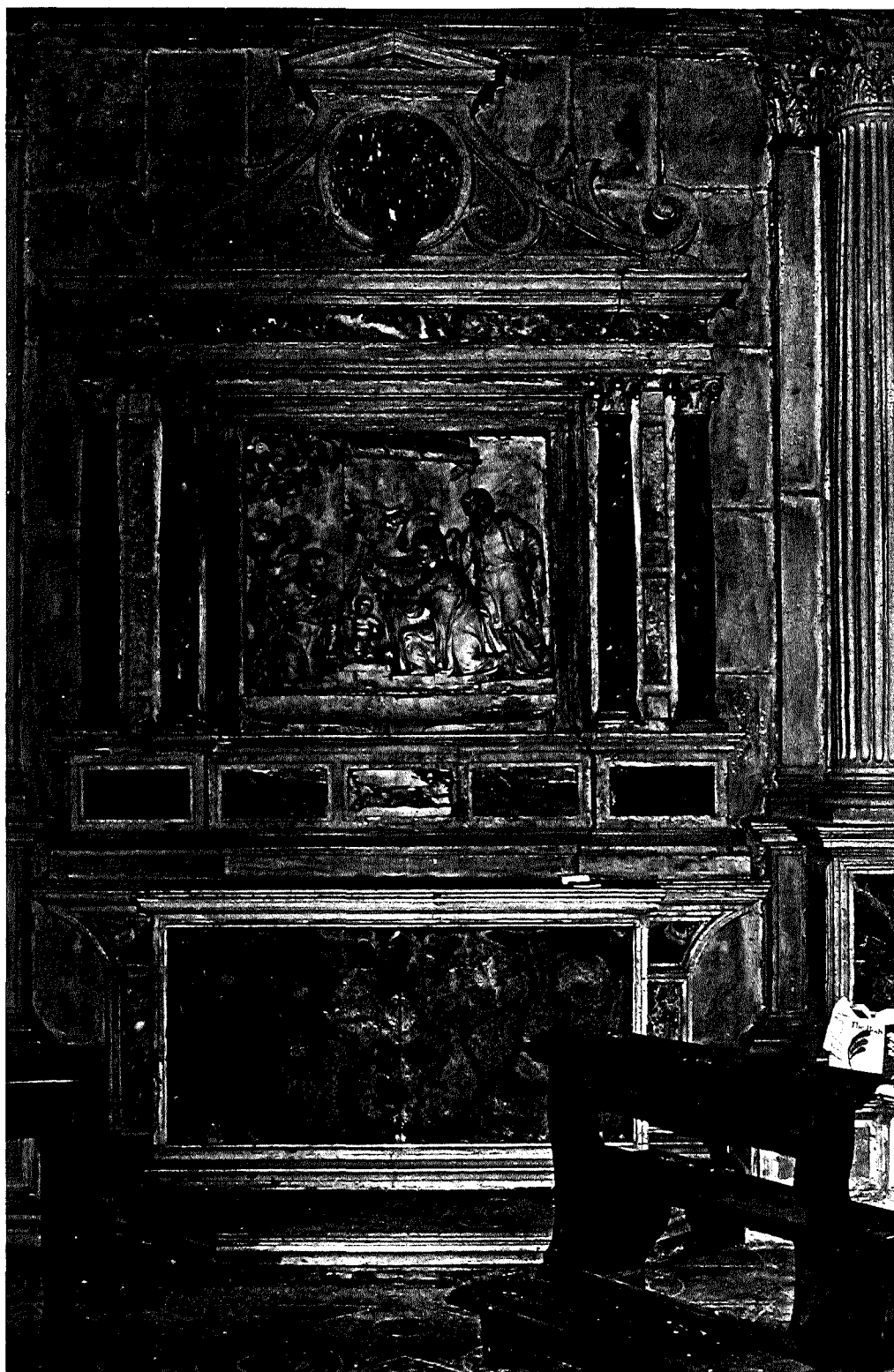
136. Pietro Lombardo (?). Altar of the *Nativity* (plate 134), detail of the *Annunciation to a Shepherd*. Venice, Seminario Patriarcale.



137. Leonardo Boldrini. *Nativity*. Venice, Museo Civico Correr.



138. Pietro Lombardo. Relief of *Three Marias and an Angel at the Tomb*. Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo, funerary monument of Doge Pietro Mocenigo.



139. Guglielmo Bergamasco (architect) and Giambattista da Carona (sculptor). Altar of the *Adoration of the Shepherds*. Venice, S.Michele in Isola, Emiliani Chapel.



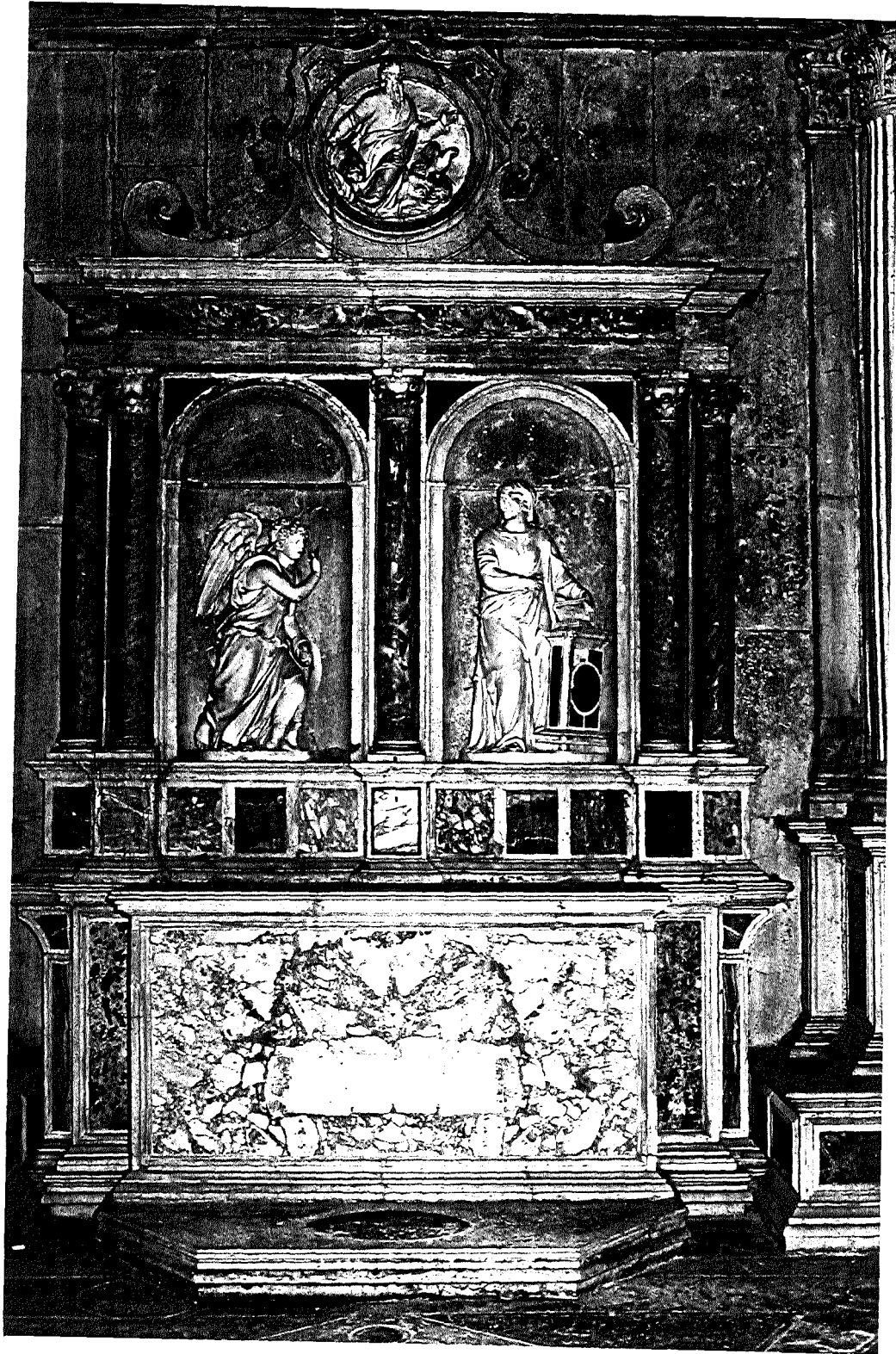
140. Altar of the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (plate 139), detail of the altarpiece. Venice, S.Michele in Isola, Emiliani Chapel.



141. Guglielmo Bergamasco (architect) and Giambattista da Carona (sculptor). Altar of the *Adoration of the Magi*. Venice, S.Michele in Isola, Emiliani Chapel.



142. Altar of the *Adoration of the Magi* (plate 141), detail of the altarpiece. Venice, S.Michele in Isola, Emiliani Chapel.



143. Guglielmo Bergamasco (architect) and Giambattista da Carona (sculptor). Altar of the *Annunciation*. Venice, S.Michele in Isola, Emiliani Chapel.



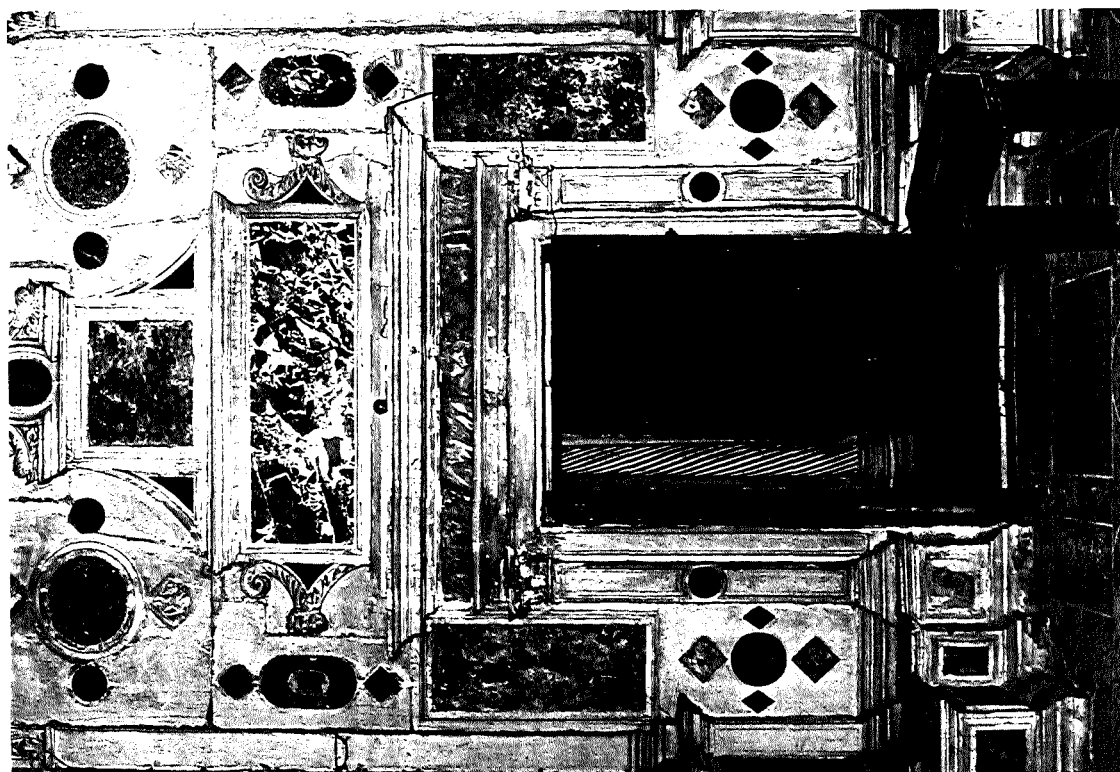
145. Altar of the *Annunciation* (plate 143), detail of the Annunciate Virgin. Venice, S.Michele in Isola, Emiliani Chapel.



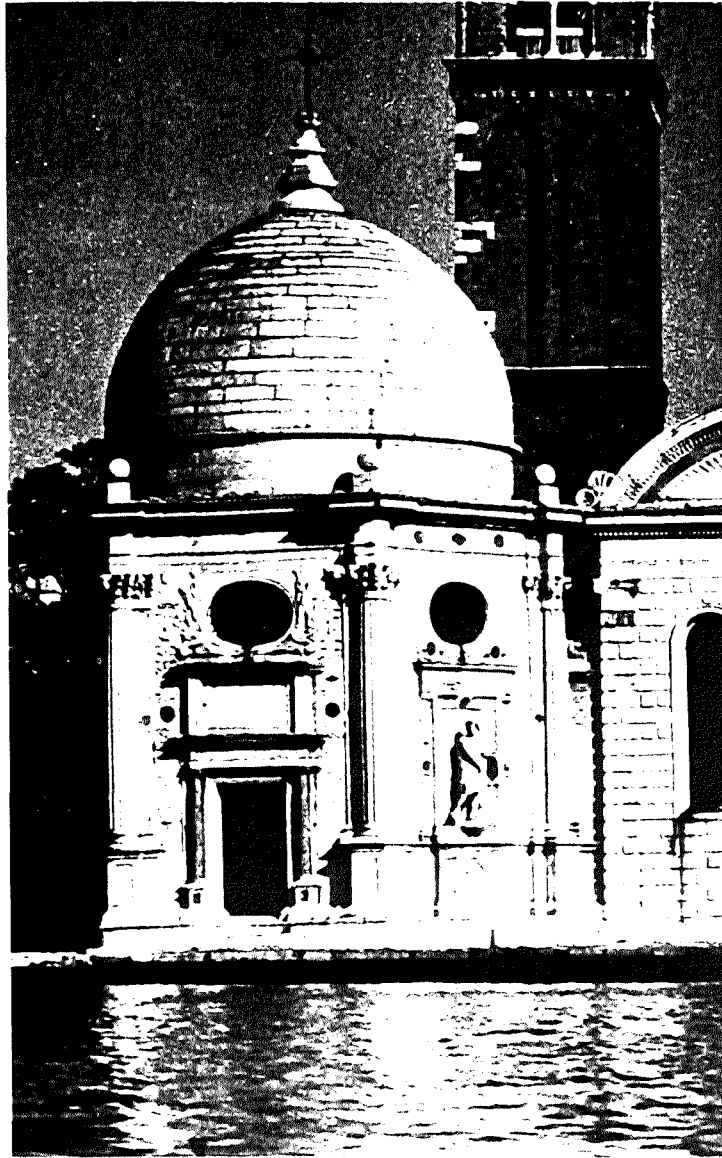
144. Altar of the *Annunciation* (plate 143), detail of the Annunciating Angel. Venice, S.Michele in Isola, Emiliani Chapel.



146. Altar of the *Annunciation* (plate 143), detail of the antependium. Venice, S.Michele in Isola, Emiliani Chapel.



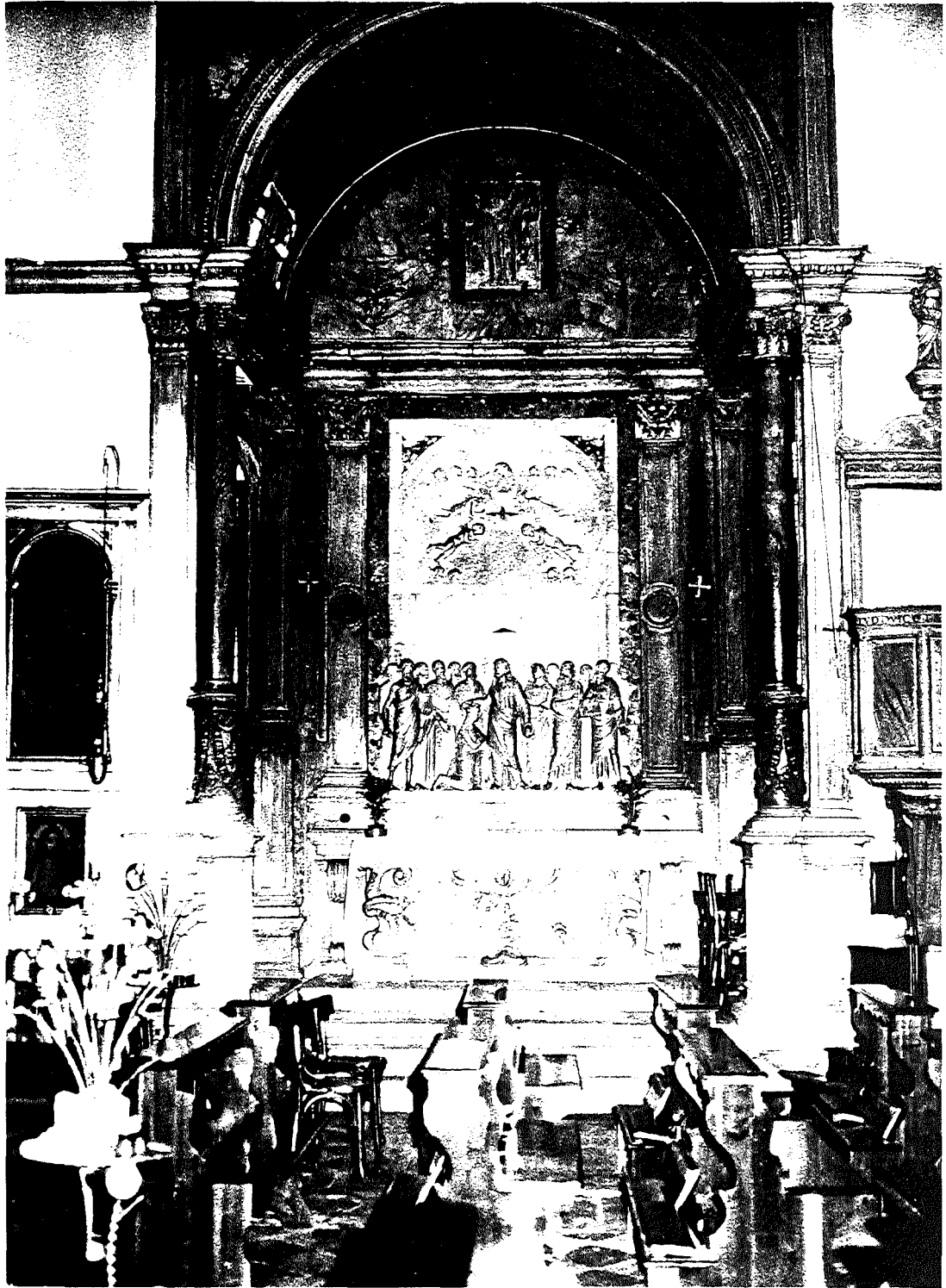
147. Decoration of interior wall. Venice, S.Michele in Isola, Emiliani Chapel.



148. Emiliani Chapel, view of exterior. Venice, S.Michele in Isola.



149. Giambattista da Carona. Statue of St. John the Baptist. Venice, S.Michele in Isola, Emiliani Chapel, exterior.



150. Bernabò Chapel with Tullio Lombardo's *Coronation of the Virgin*. Venice, S. Giovanni Crisostomo.



151. Tullio Lombardo. Altarpiece of the *Coronation of the Virgin* in the Bernabò Chapel (plate 150). Venice, S.Giovanni Crisostomo.

152. Jacopo Bellini. Drawing of the *Twelve Apostles*. London, British Museum.

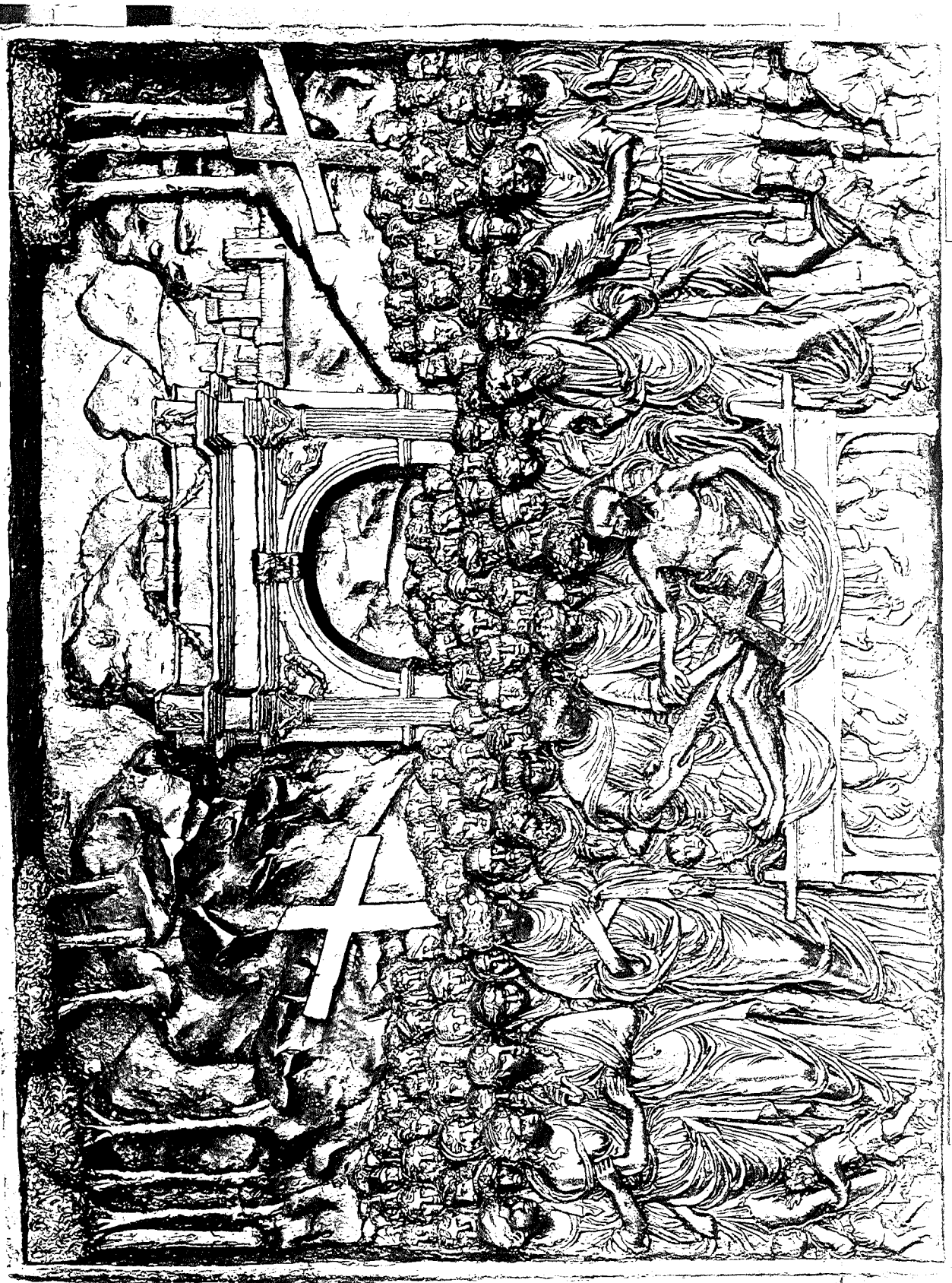


153. Venice, Scuola Grande di S. Marco, façade.

154. Relief of *St. Mark healing Anianus* on the tympanum of the main entrance. Venice, Scuola dei Calegheri.



155. Andrea Riccio. Relief of *The Finding of the True Cross* from the Altar of the Title of the Cross from S. Maria dei Servi. Venice, Ca' d'Oro. Galleria Franchetti.



156. Andrea Riccio. Relief of *The Proof of the True Cross* from the Altar of the Title of the Cross. Venice, Ca' d'Oro, Galleria Franchetti.



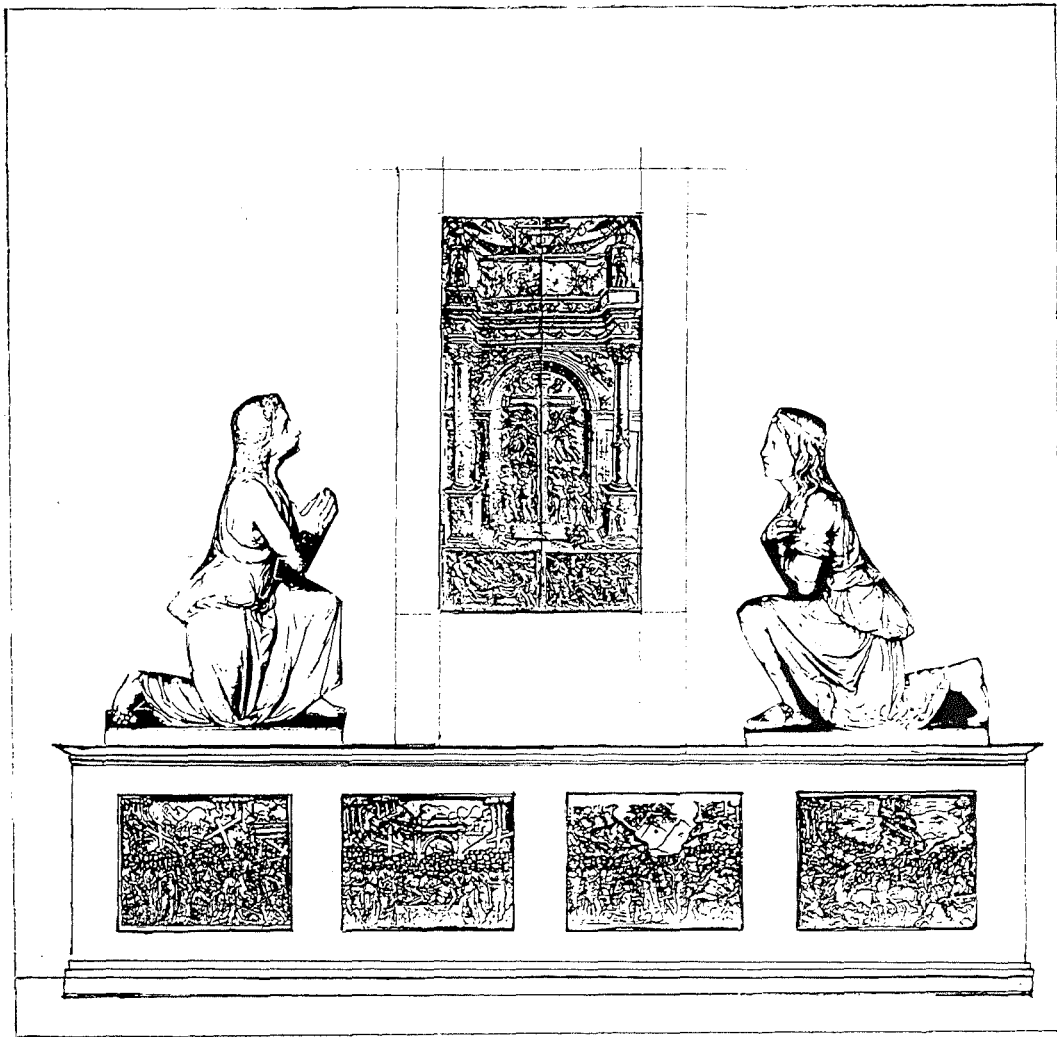
157. Andrea Riccio. Relief of *Constantine's Vision of the Cross* from the Altar of the Title of the Cross. Venice, Ca' d'Oro, Galleria Franchetti.



158. Andrea Riccio. Relief of *The Victory of Constantine* from the Altar of the Title of the Cross. Venice, Ca' d'Oro, Galleria Franchetti.



159. Andrea Riccio. Bronze *sportello* from the Altar of the Title of the Cross. Venice, Ca' d'Oro, Galleria Franchetti.



160. Suggested re-arrangement of the bronze reliefs and angels from the Altar of the Title of the Cross.



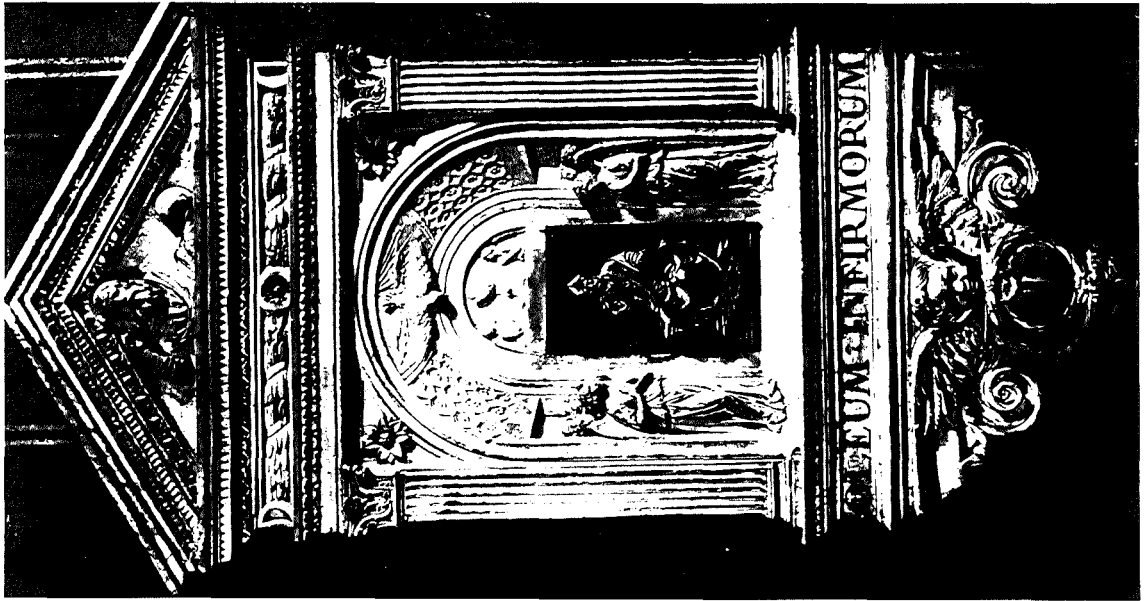
161. Antonio Rizzo (?). Three reliefs on the antependium of an altar. Venice, S. Trovaso.



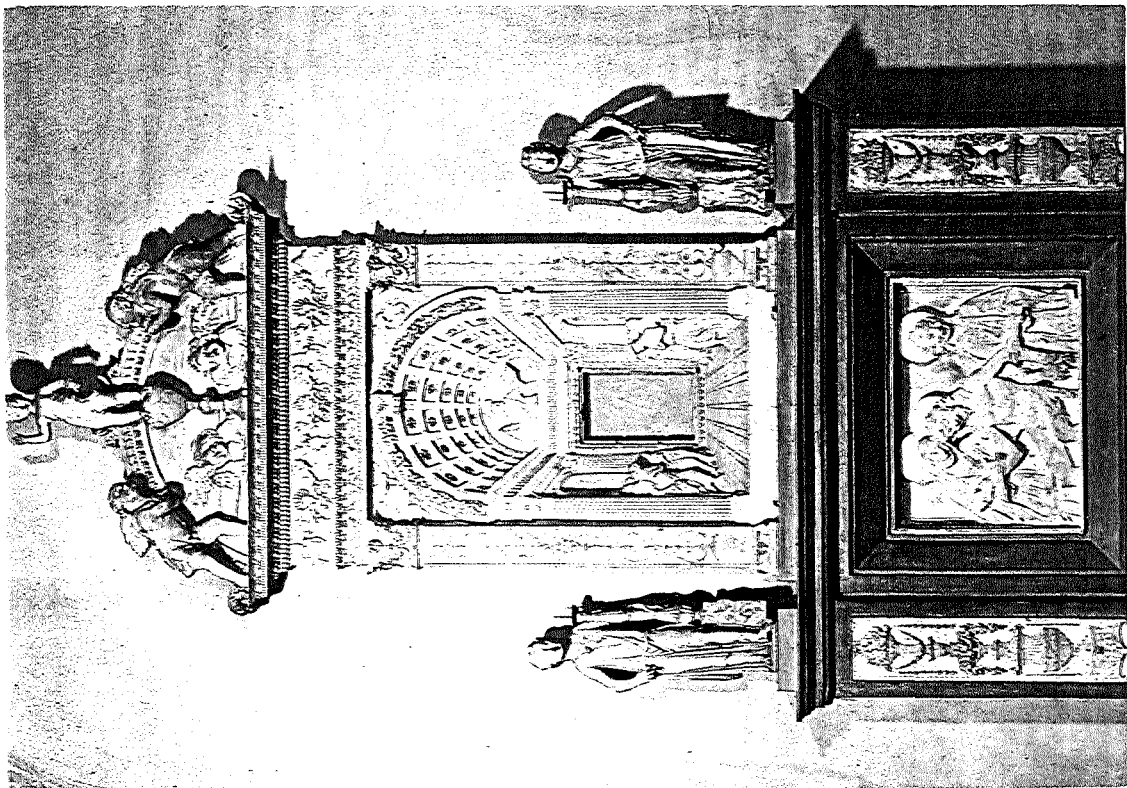
162. Milan, Castello Sforzesco, relief from a tabernacle altar.



163. Giambattista Bregno. Altar relief of the *Visitation*. Treviso, Cathedral.



164. Bernardo Rossellino. Tabernacle altar. Florence, S.Egidio.



165. Desiderio da Settignano. Altar of the Sacrament. Florence, S.Lorenzo.



166. Lombardo workshop. Tabernacle. Venice, S.Maria dei Miracoli, choir.



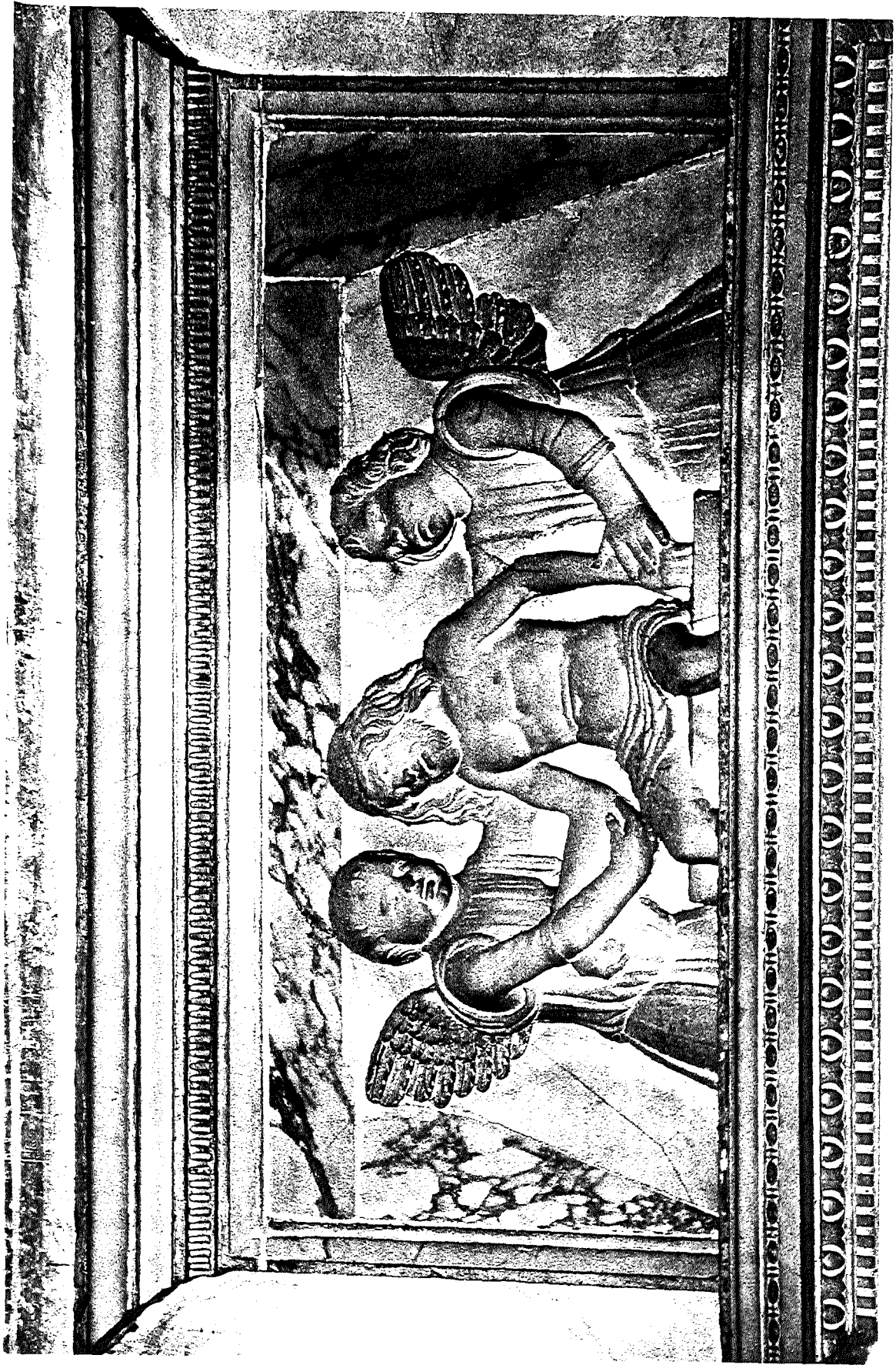
167. Tullio Lombardo (?). Tabernacle of the Precious Blood. Venice, S.Maria dei Frari, sacristy.



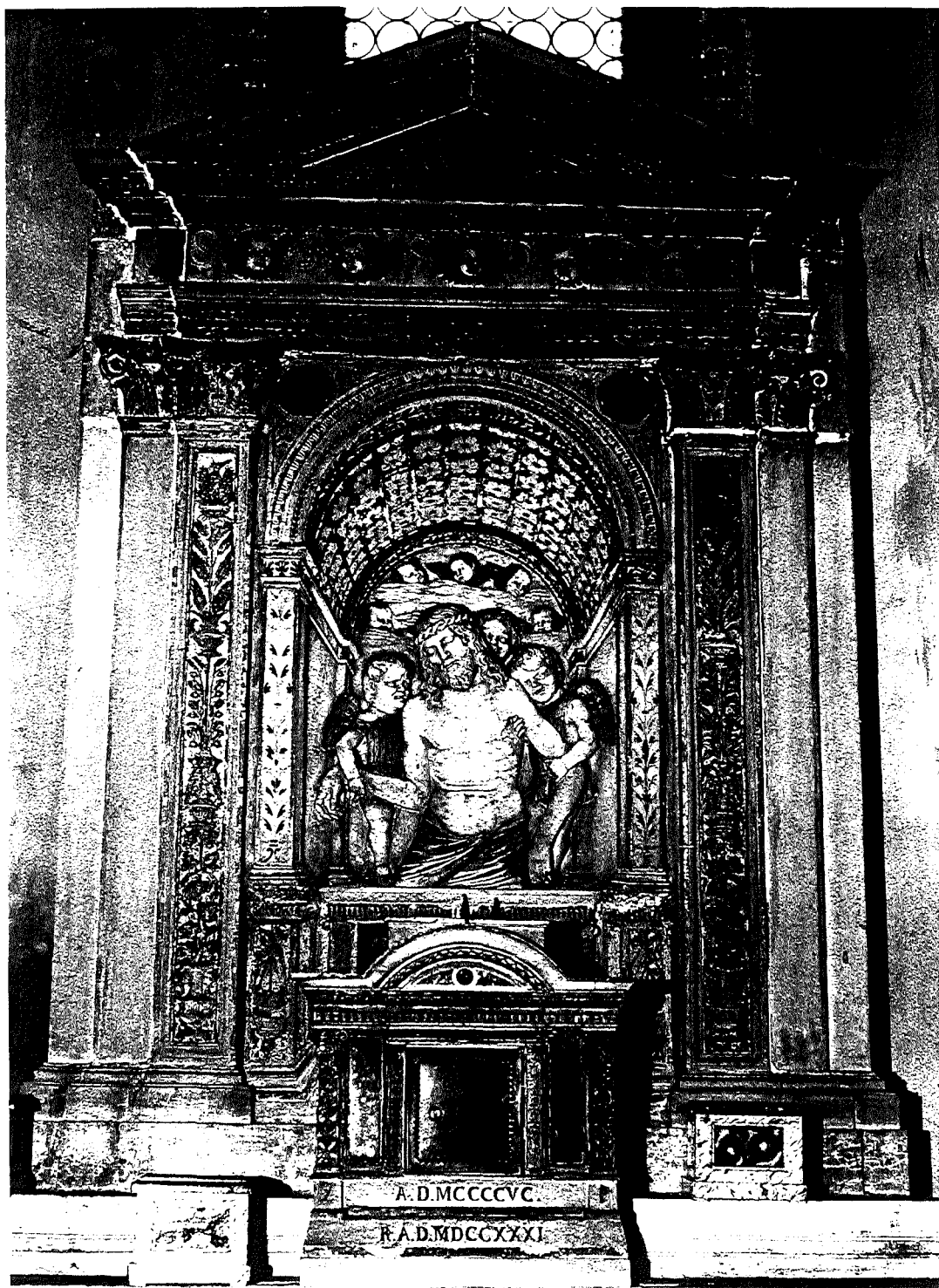
168. Tullio Lombardo (?). Statuette of St. John the Baptist on the left of the Tabernacle of the Precious Blood (plate 167). Venice, S.Maria dei Frari.



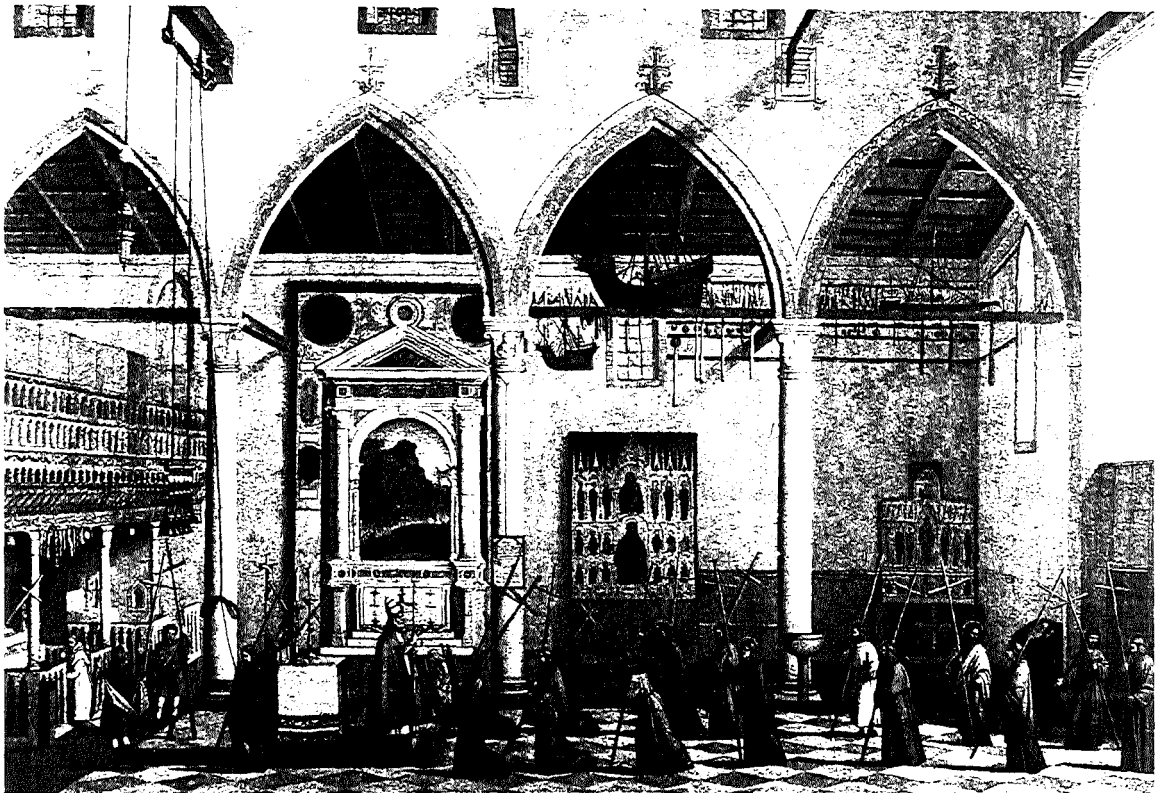
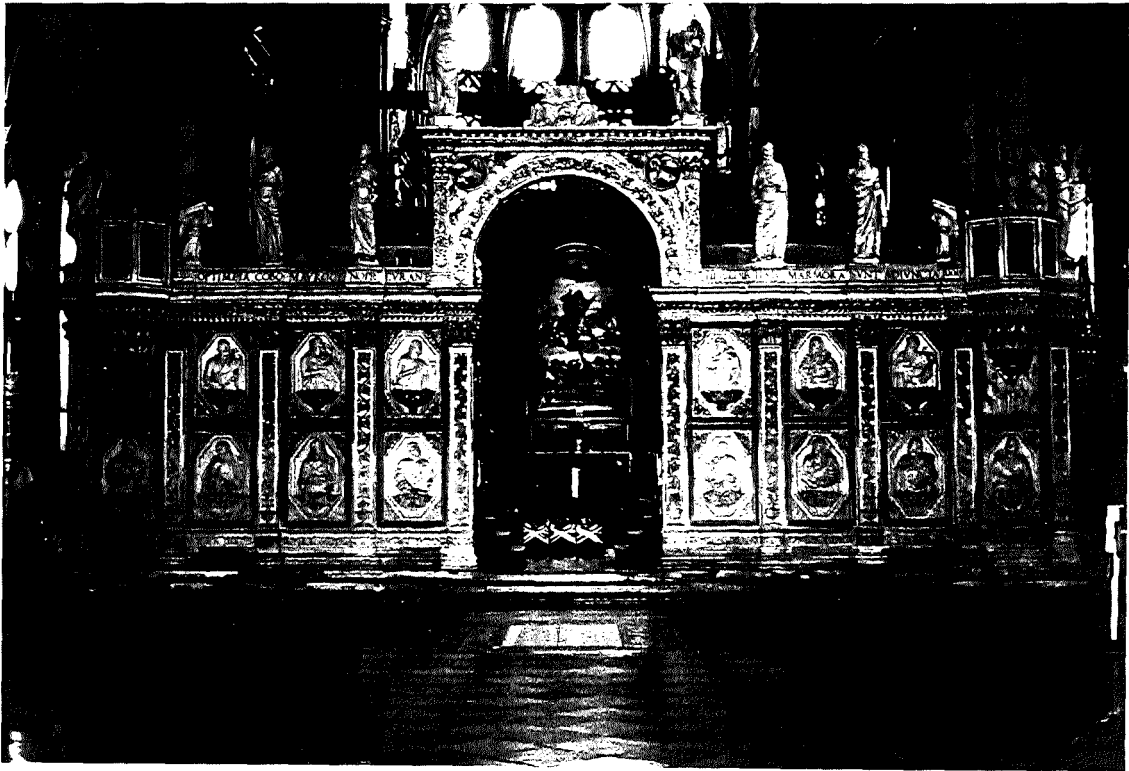
169. Tullio Lombardo (?). Statuette of St. Francis on the right of the Tabernacle of the Precious Blood (plate 167). Venice, S. Maria dei Frari.



170. Tullio Lombardo (?). Relief of *Christ Mourned by Angels* on top of the Tabernacle of the Precious Blood (plate 167). Venice, S. Maria dei Frari.



171. Murano, S. Pietro Martire, Altar of the Sacrament.



172. Venice, S. Maria dei Frari. Choir screen.

173. Vittore Carpaccio, *Vision of Francesco Ottobon*. Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia.



174. Lazzaro Bastiani, *Donation of the Relic of the True Cross*. Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia.

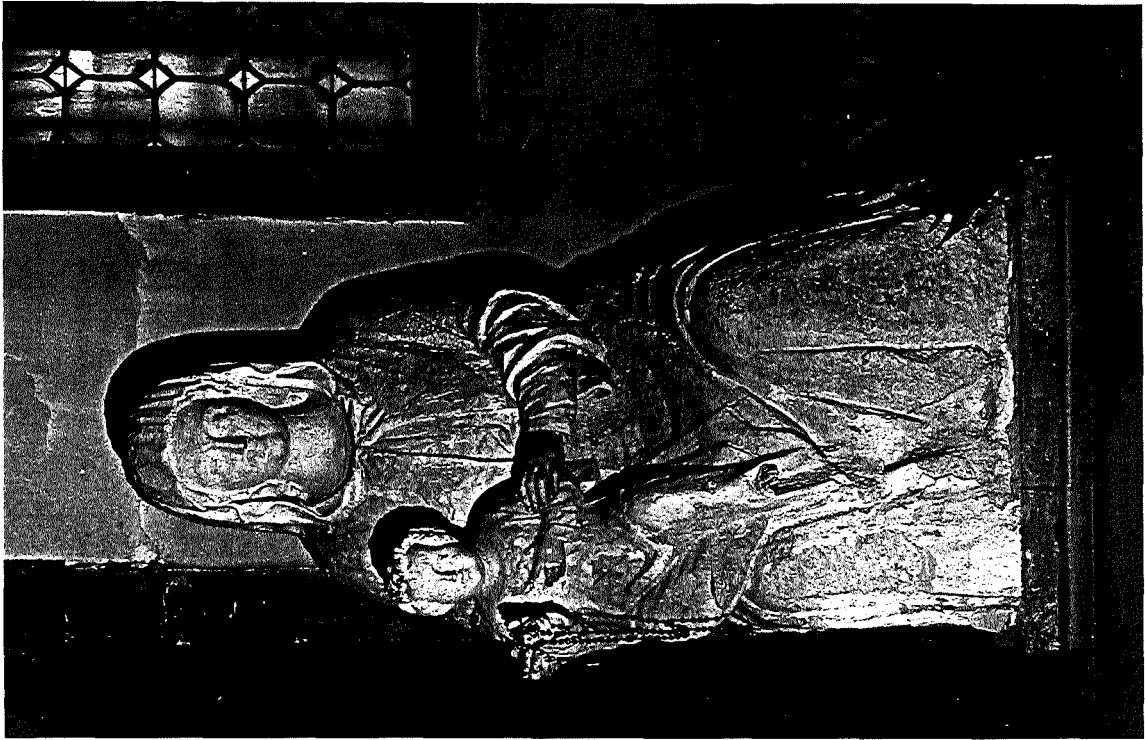
175. Domenico di Tolmezzo. *Altarpiece of St. Roch* from Ileggio. Venice, Ca' d'Oro, Galleria Franchetti.



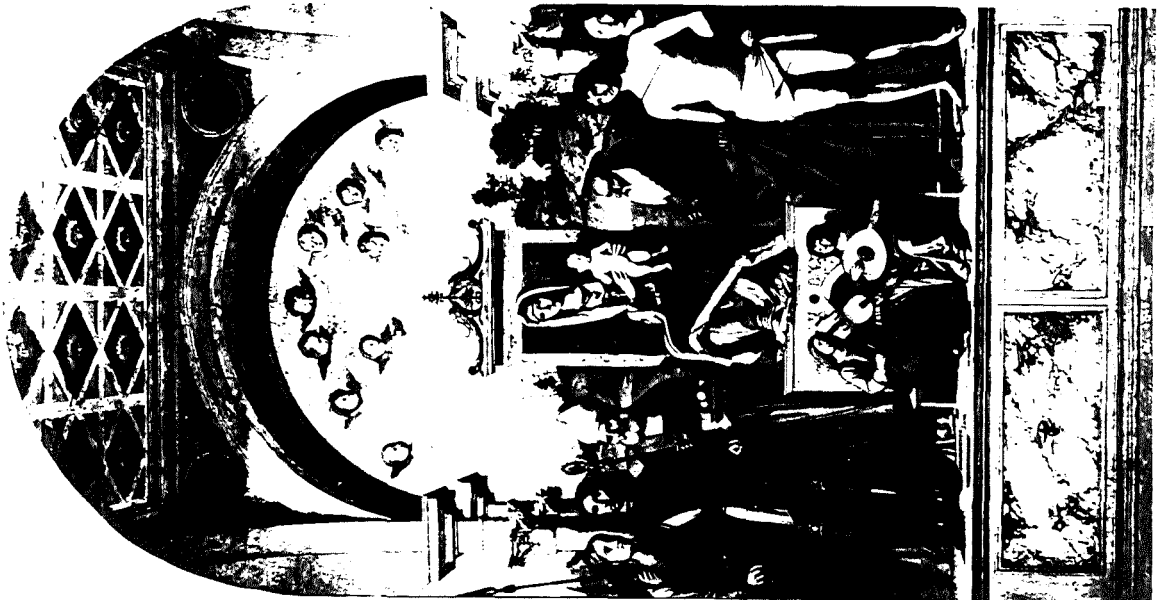
176. Wooden statue of St. Nicholas of Bari on the High Altar of S. Nicolò dei Mendicoli, Venice.



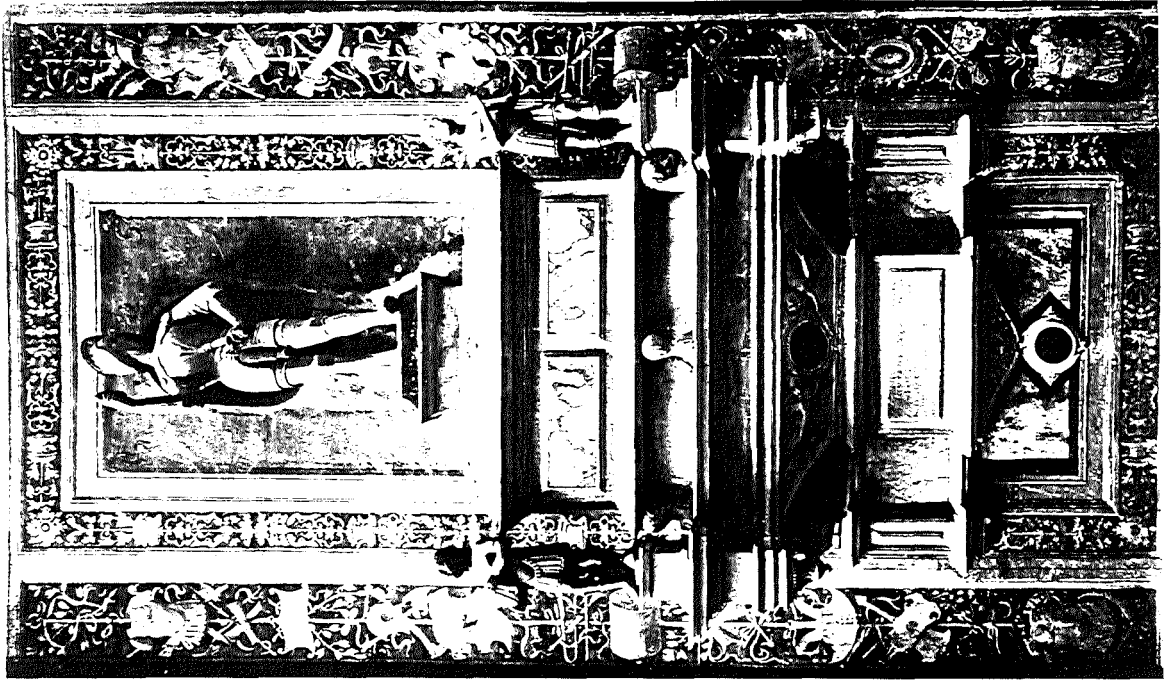
177. Altar with wooden statue of St. Louis of Toulouse.
Venice, S. Alvisè.



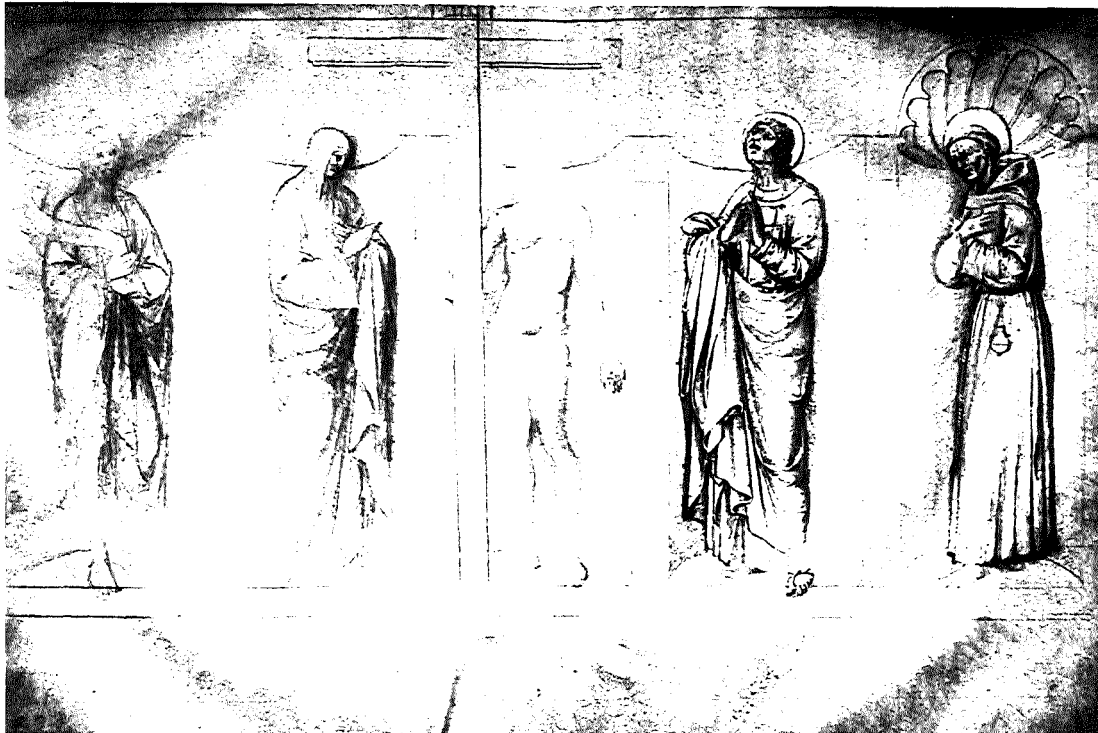
178. Giovanni de Santis. Statue of the *Madonna dell'Orto*. Venice, Church of the Madonna dell'Orto (S.Cristoforo).



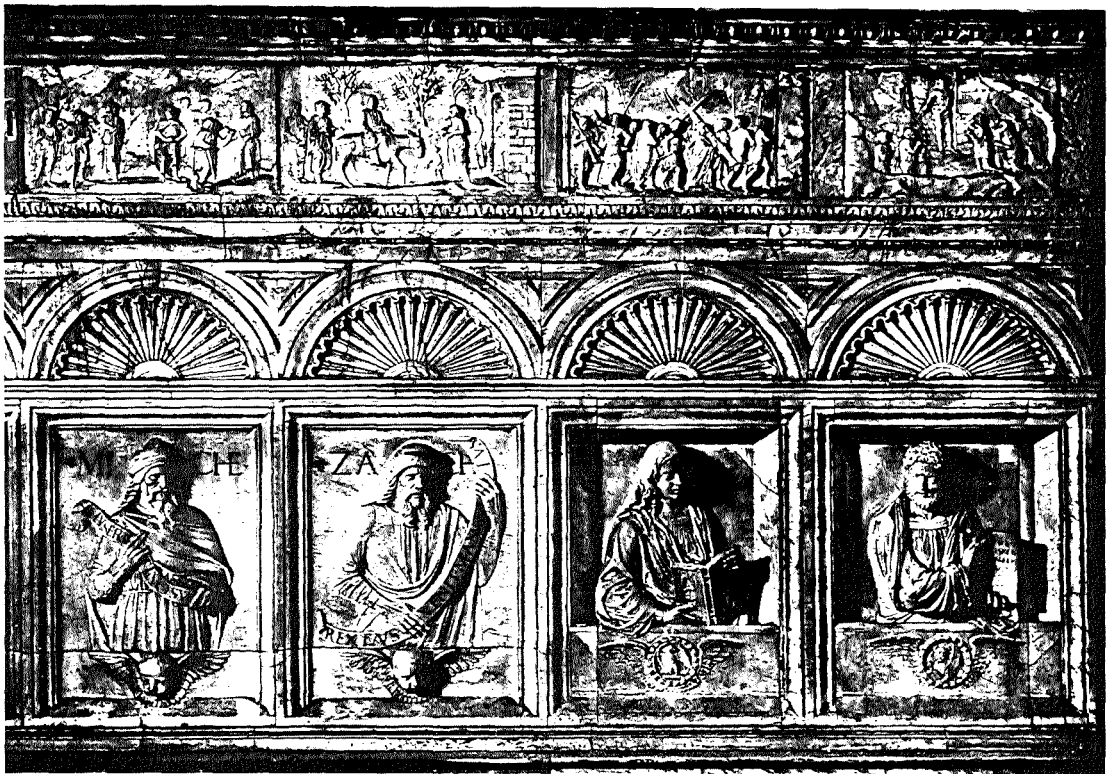
179. Cima da Conegliano, *Sacra Conversazione with St. George* from the Dragan Chapel at S.Maria della Carità. Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia.



180. Funerary monument of Melchior Trevisan. Venice, S. Maria dei Frari.



181. Jacopo Bellini. Drawing of a carved polyptych. Paris, Musée du Louvre.



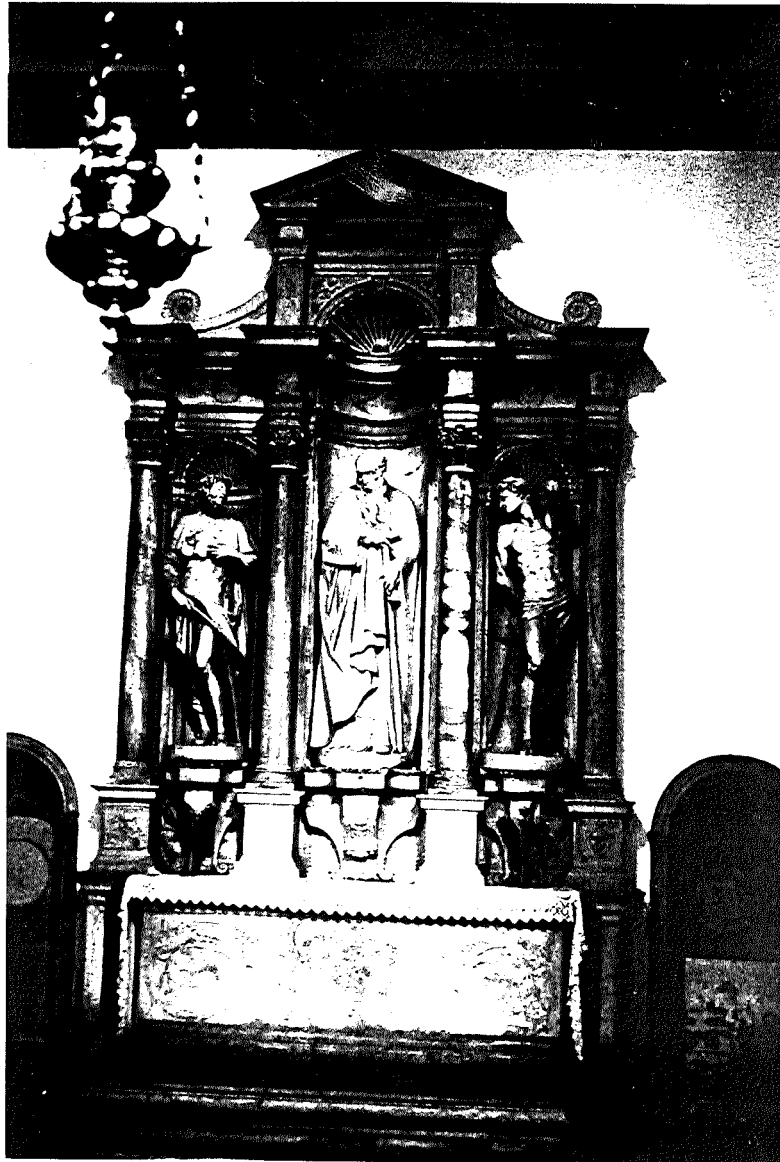
182. Relief with two putti from the *Throne of Saturn*. Venice, Museo Archeologico.

183. Lombardo workshop. Wall decoration of the Badoer Chapel. Venice, S. Francesco della Vigna.



184. Palazzo Gussoni, façade on the Rio della Fava, Venice.

185. Palazzo Gussoni, detail of the façade on the Rio della Fava, Venice.



186. Alessandro Vittoria. Triptych of St. Anthony Abbot. Venice, S. Francesco della Vigna.