

Spring 2010

## Sant'Antonio di Castello

Erin Cusac  
*Macalester College*

Katharine Heg  
*Macalester College*

Valencia Whitehurst  
*Macalester College*

Alberto Rios de la Rosa  
*Macalester College*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/artvenice>

---

### Recommended Citation

Cusac, Erin; Heg, Katharine; Whitehurst, Valencia; and Rios de la Rosa, Alberto, "Sant'Antonio di Castello" (2010). *Art and Architecture of Early Modern Venice: Research and Reconstruction*. 2.  
<http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/artvenice/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Art Department at DigitalCommons@Macalester College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Art and Architecture of Early Modern Venice: Research and Reconstruction by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Macalester College. For more information, please contact [scholarpub@macalester.edu](mailto:scholarpub@macalester.edu).

**Macalester College**

**Art and Architecture of Early Modern Venice**

**Kristin Huffman Lanzoni**

**Group Project: Reconstructing a no longer extant monument**

**Chiesa di Sant'Antonio di Castello**

**Erin Cusac**

**Katharine Heg**

**Valencia Whitehurst**

**Alberto Rios de la Rosa**

### *Sant'Antonio di Castello*

The church of Sant'Antonio di Castello (also known as Sant'Antonio Abate or Sant'Antonio a Venezia) was located in the district of Castello (the largest of the six *sestieri*, which covers the long “fish tailed” eastern section of the island) next to the Island of Sant'Elena and adjacent to the Convent delle Cappuccine. As seen in Merian's view of Venice (Fig 1), Sant'Antonio was also situated near the domed structure of the church of San Nicolo and San Domenico. Even though the church was demolished in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by order of Napoleon to build the public gardens, its renovation was a matter of major importance for the city during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. A contemporary source describes the prominence of the church to those arriving in Venice, and the impact that Sant'Antonio di Castello had on them:

*“Whoever arrives to Venice by way of sea, who passes by the Ledo Harbor, and travels past the island of Certosa, past the island of Sant'elena will see the urban nucleus of the city within a vast lagoon. The city will be presented to them with the façade of the church of Sant'Antonio Abate, also known for its location as Sant'Antonio di Castello.”*<sup>1</sup>

As one of the first faces of Venice, the church of Sant'Antonio di Castello was crucial for the statement of Venice as a grandiose city. In this project, we intend to reconstruct various features of the church such as the remodelled façade and the interior architecture and decorations based on study maps, images of the church, literary passages and descriptions (such as the one from Boschini) as well as a paintings by Carpaccio and Jacopo Tintoretto.

#### **External Views and History**

The church was situated at the very edge of the city, but today subsequent development has placed the location of the Giardini Pubblici further inland. Several maps from the sixteenth century onwards show the church in its original context. A 1550 map by Sebastian Munster (Fig.

---

<sup>1</sup> Concina, Ennio. *Venezia: Le Chiese e Le Arti*. Udine/Magnus, 1995.

2) labels “S. Antonio” on the southeast corner of the city. Other maps from this time period plan the city the same way, but none are as accurate or comprehensive as the one by Matthaeus Merian (Fig. 1) Dated around 1650, the map is a detailed engraving that shows the architecture of Venice, as well as a somehow detailed drawing of the exterior body and the campanile in relationship with the adjacent convent and the entrance to the Grand Canal (**See Detail in Power Point**). Another map, J. Stockdale’s “A Plan of the City of Venice” (Fig. 3) divides the island cartographically and depicts the church of Sant’Antonio as a well-recognized landmark of Venice.

According to Vasari and other documents, Giacomo Lanfrani was the original architect of the church, designed in the second half of the Trecento The architecture of the church in the 14th century was in the binary order, with lateral windows and an oculus at the center of the facade. Even though there were certain Early Renaissance aspects such as the volutes on the facade, Lanfrani’s design was predominately Gothic. (Fig 4) The frontage was later remodeled in the 16th century to make the church a suitable location for the tomb of Marco Grimani (the son of Doge Antonio Grimani). In 1518 Vincenzo and Girolamo Grimani assigned the commission of the design of the facade and the tomb of Doge Antonio Grimani to Jacopo Sansovino (which was later completed by Tullio Lombardo after Sansovino’s death). However, by 1544 Vettor Grimani transferred Sansovino to work on San Francesco della Vigna because of complications with the Sant’Antonio project. In 1548 Vincenzo and Vettore Grimani assigned Francesco Quattrini to complete the design under the supervision of Sansovino. The frontispiece of the façade (Fig. 5 &6), carved by Francesco Quattrini in Istrian stone, contains an inscription as well as four columns and the Grimani *stemma*.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2 2</sup> Concina, Ennio. *Venezia: Le Chiese e Le Arti*. Udine/Magnus, 1995.

Even though the church was a prime landmark in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, its importance declined in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when all the texts and books within the convent collection were destroyed in a fire. On September 7, 1768 the church was given to a priest and the monastery was closed. In 1781 the monastery became a hospital and institute of charity and by the 18<sup>th</sup> century the convent & monastery were transformed into a hospital. In 1807 Sant'Antonio di Castello was demolished to build the Giardini Pubblici, or public gardens. With its demolition, many of the artworks from the church were transferred to the Seminary Collection and to other churches in Venice (works by Vettor Pisani were taken to the church of Giovanni e Paolo). The demolition was commissioned by Viceroy Eugenio di Beauharnais and completed by the architect Gian Antonio Selva. The Correr family lobbied for the rights of Sant'Antonio and particularly for the Lando chapel until February 1809. They sold the rights for 3.950 lire on the condition that the statue in the chapel was placed in the gardens under a Doric arch made of Istria stone (Fig.7), which remains in the public gardens nowadays.<sup>3</sup>

### **Interior and artworks**

Similar to other churches in Venice, Sant'Antonio di Castello was in constant transformation and adaptation since its construction in the 14<sup>th</sup> century until its demolition in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Prominent patrician families, namely the Grimani or the Lando, commissioned several architects and artists (From Sansovino to Lanfrani and from Carpaccio to Tintoretto) to design and create artworks for their chapels and the interior of the building.

Vittore Carpaccio's painting, the *Apparition of the Ten Thousand Martyrs* c. 1515 (Fig. 8), provides a well-studied depiction of the interior of Sant'Antonio. The subject matter of the scene provides a visual re-enactment of the vision had by Francesco Antonio Ottobon, a patrician

---

<sup>3</sup> Zorzi, Alvise. *Venezia Scomparsa. Repertorio degli edifici veneziani distrutti, alterati o manomessi*. Milano: Electa Editrice, 1972.

who commissioned a chapel for the church. Ottobon detailed his account in a manuscript record<sup>5</sup>, describing that he had fallen asleep on an altar in Sant'Antonio while praying for the monastery to be delivered from the plague. In his dream he saw the ten thousand martyrs of Mount Ararat proceed into the church of Sant'Antonio and receive blessing from St. Peter. Next, a voice issuing from the statue of St. Anthony told him to not fear for the health of the monastery, for they would be saved from the pestilence. The painting depicts the right side of the long choir structure during the *quattrocento*, with some features reminiscent of the *cinquecento* style. We know that his depiction of the interior of the church is true to form for several reasons. First, his placement of the familial altarpieces is not idealized or systematic, for they are positioned asymmetrically along the wall. Second, his placement and scale of the side aisle windows and the oculus of the façade is consistent with later engravings that depict the exterior of the church.

The Carpaccio painting shows three chapels in the church. As we enter the main nave, the first chapel on the right belonged to the Cappello family (Fig. 9). Their altar displayed a panel by Bonifacio de Pitati called The Virgin with Saint Nicolo, Vincenzo and Domenico, and musician animals which was commissioned by Nicolo di Cappello, a *capitano da mar* or general captain of the sea. The following altar belonged to the Pasqualigo family, which had a marble crucifix dedicated to Pietro Pasqualigo, an ambassador to Francis I of France who died in 1515. The chapel was renovated in the 18th century, a commission by Vincenzo Pasqualigo. The Ottobon family (same family that assigned the Carpaccio painting) commissioned the third chapel depicted in the painting. The Ottobon were connected to the Senate Secretary, Cardinal Pietro, who later became Pope Alessandro VIII. The Ottobon family erected the most lavish, “rich in

---

<sup>5</sup>Fortini-Brown, Patricia. *Venetian Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio* (Yale University Press, 1988) 186-188.

style, marble and gold”, of the familial altars at Sant'Antonio, with a painting of the Crucifixion and Apotheosis of the Ten Thousand Martyrs by Tintoretto (Fig 10).

There are other altarpieces that were commissioned for the church and that cannot be seen in Carpaccio's painting. The Querini family altar was located in the right side of the nave closer to the main altarpiece; it was made by Palma the younger and supported a panel made by Palma Vecchio, The Marriage of the Virgin.<sup>6</sup> The Querini family probably commissioned a low-relief carving that shows St. Antonio Abate with the inscription “FRTER GOTVS PRIMVS PRIOR,” which remains in the Museo del Seminario Patriarcale. The Lando family chapel (Fig. 11), dedicated to the Madonna, was located on the left side of the nave. This chapel was commissioned by Doge Pietro Lando (d.1545) and constructed in Istrian stone. The Maddona chapel had an impressive entrance arch, constructed by Michele Sanmicheli, contained a statue of Doge Lando sculpted by Pietro da Salo, a bust of the procuratore Antonio Lando (who died in 1618), as well as busts of Senator Giovanni and Vitale. The altar of this chapel contains several different artworks that included the altarpiece panel by Marco Vecellio Saint Vescovo and St. Katherine Catherine, which was accompanied by St. Vescovo, St. Katherine and St. Agrese by Pietro Malombra and St. Michael Archangel by Pietro Mera.

The high altar housed a monument to the sea captain Vettor Pisani who won over defeated the *Genovesi* (Genoa) over a *baldacchino*. Pietro Lombardo rebuilt the refectory in 1480 with a sculpture entitled *Priore Grimani Kneeling in Front of the Virgin*, located in the lunette of the door. The inscription “PETRVS GRIMANI PRIOR VNGARIAE” on the façade, below the lunette, informs the viewer of Pietro Grimani's wish to be buried in the church, which can be seen in a watercolour by Grevembroch. The Querini family also commissioned a low-

---

<sup>6</sup> Rylands, Philip. “Palma Vecchio's ‘Assumption of the Virgin’” In *The Burlington Magazine* 119 (Apr., 1977) 245-250.

relief carving that shows St. Antonio Abate (Fig. 12) with the inscription “FRTER GOTVS PRIMVS PRIOR”. A bewailing group, Deposizione di Cristo (Burial of Christ), by Guido Mazzoni (Fig. 13) was located on the left side of the chapel, and is now located in the Museu Civico in Padua.

The Lion Polyptych, (Fig. 14) commissioned by Domenico Lion, was painted by Lorenzo Veneziano and adorned high altar of Sant'Antonio from the time of its completion c. 1537 until the demolition of the church in 1807. The central image of the polyptych shows the Annunciation scene, which functions to both underline the privileged relationship between Venice and its patroness the Virgin as well as to provide an allusion to the foundations of the city itself. The artisan Zanino crafted the frame. This structure was moved to the sacristy in the 15th century and a panel by Giuseppe Angeli replaced the previous panel.

The work of Marco Vecellio, Pietro Mera, Bonifacio dei Pitati, and Jacopo Palma Vecchio in San Antonio di Castello exemplifies a different class of painters not easily defined in the Venetian art world. Their names are the footnotes within the success stories of more celebrated artists rather than their own, a part of the setting not the focus. Their work in San Antonio di Castello and other places adds complexity to the conception of the Venetian painting world. Marco Vecellio (1545- 1611) was also known as Marco di Tiziano because he was related, if somewhat distantly, to Titian. Vecellio worked in Titian's workshop and it was here that he gained the privilege of signing his works di Tiziano.<sup>12</sup> Pietro Malombra (1556-1618) was a pupil of Giuseppe Porta (Salviati) who was a pupil of the Salviati school founder Francesco de' Rossi (Salviati).<sup>13</sup> Pietro Mera (1574/5-1645) is believed by some to have been a

---

<sup>12</sup> Sergio Claut. "Vecellio." In *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T088390pg4> (accessed March 30, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> James, John T. "The Italian Schools of Painting with Observations on the Present State of Art." <http://books.google.com/books?id=prEZAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA144&dq=pietro+malombra&hl=en&ei=IGixS6KgH4>



pupil of Antonio Vassilachi who was called Aliense.<sup>14</sup> Where Bonifacio dei Pitati (1487-1553) spent his days as a pupil are undocumented some believe he worked in Vecchio's workshop but this information is unavailable. However, Bonifacio's inability to command the prices of contemporaries like Titian and Palma is his legacy.<sup>15</sup> Jacopo Palma Vecchio (1479/80-1528) had a more successful career than the four previous painters. Andrea Previtali who studied under Giovanni Bellini is Vecchio's supposed master but this too is contested.<sup>16</sup> Vecchio's name is entrenched in a historical narrative attentive to success, he is always marked as Palma the younger so as not to confuse him with the more successful painter with the same first name.

Now in the Civic Museum in Padua is Guido Mazzoni's bewailing group. The sculpture that once adorned the left side of Sant'Antonio di Castello came at an unusually high price. On May 19<sup>th</sup> 1485 Mazzoni signed a contract with the monastery of Sant'Antonio to model eight figures in two years for a price of six hundred ducats, which was to be paid over the next four years.<sup>17</sup> On April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1489 Mazzoni revised the contract making over two hundred ducats of his fee a votive gift to the church in exchange for a display of his name and arms on the bewailing group, which had already been finished. Mazzoni was deeply pious and successful throughout Europe. In October of 1496 Mazzoni was knighted by Charles XVIII of France and enjoyed his favor until the king's death in 1498.<sup>18</sup> Guido is also referred to as "painter and sculptor to King

---

rcNdO-

wPAD&sa=X&oi=book\_result&ct=result&resnum=6&ved=0CEwQ6AEwBQ#v=onepage&q=pietro%20malombrafal se (accessed March 29, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Borean, Linda. "Bernardo Strozzi's portrait of a collector as Perseus in Dijon" In *The Burlington Magazine* 142. 1168 (2000), 429-33, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/888799>. (accessed March 30, 2010).

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Nichols. "Pitati, Bonifazio de'." In *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T067950> (accessed March 30, 2010)

<sup>16</sup> Philip Rylands. "Palma." In *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T064911pg1> (accessed March 30, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> pp. xxxi Verdon, Timothy. *The Art of Guido Mazzoni. Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1978.

<sup>18</sup> pp. xxxii Verdon

Louis XI<sup>19</sup>. The bewailing group at Sant'Antonio di Castello puts Mazzoni in the Venetian context and raises many questions about the relationship between the artist, work, and patron.

### **Reconstruction**

Working with several engravings of Sant'Antonio and Carpaccio's painting of the interior we were able to reconstruct Sant'Antonio di Castello in Google Sketch Up. We also used another church, San Francesco della Vigna (which had been designed by Jacopo Sansovino) as a model and reference. We had two slightly different floor plan images, and using both of them, as well as Jacopo Barbari's engraving of the exterior of the church we built the basic church structure. From Jacopo Barbari's engraving and Carpaccio's painting we determined window size and placement. This aspect was especially complex because the window size and placement had to align with images of the both the exterior and the interior of the church. That is, they needed to be balanced architecturally as well as maintain relationships with features inside the church, for example that the Ottobon altarpiece should be located between the first and second windows.

The façade was constructed using both an engraving of Jacopo Sansovino's design of the façade and San Francesco della Vigna as references. The interior of the church was created using Carpaccio's painting as a guide. We modeled the wall texture after his image and recreated his depiction of the Ottobon, Capello and Pasquali family altars. The floor texture used was a photograph of the tile in San Francesco della Vigna, which is consistent with the floor design shown in Carpaccio's painting, and that is often seen in Venetian churches. A basic colonnade was obtained from google sketchup's 3D warehouse, and we modified this to fit the specifications and known details of our church. We had two engravings of the choir, which we modeled this design upon. Overall the reconstruction process was an intense project that required

---

<sup>19</sup>pp. xxviii Verdon

many hours of careful and detailed effort. However, having a three dimensional visual representation of the structure is an invaluable aid for understanding details about the building, as it would have existed in a way that would not be possible otherwise.

Space is a valuable commodity on the island city of Venice, and many structures have been demolished over the years to make way for new buildings. Often, not much information has been preserved about these important ecclesiastical spaces, and what does exist is contained primarily in Italian sources. Reconstructing some of these especially significant monuments can provide valuable insight and establish a basis for scholarship on this and other structures.

**Bibliography:**

Brown, Patricia Fortini. *Venetian Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio*. Yale University Press, 1988.

Calvillo, Elena. "Romanità and Grazia: Giulio Clovio's Pauline Frontispieces for Marino Grimani" *The Art Bulletin* 82, no.2 (Jun. 2000): 280-297.

Carlevariis, Luca. Veduta della chiesa di Sant' Antonio Abate e il suo Monasterio. Da l Forestiero Illuminatio. 1740 Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, Venice

Carpaccio, Vittore. The Ten Thousand Martyrs on the Mount Ararat. Tempera on canvas, c. 1515 (307 x 205 cm) Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.  
<http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?html/l/lorenzo/venezian/1lion2.html>

Concina, Ennio. *Venezia: Le Chiese e Le Arti*. Udine/Magnus, 1995.

Cooper , Tracy Elizabeth. *Palladio's Venice: architecture and society in a Renaissance Republic*. New Haven : Yale University Press, 2005

Cotton, Jeff. "The Churches of Venice." <http://churchesofvenice.co.uk/demolished.htm>  
(accessed February 15, 2010).

Cottrell, Philip. "The Artistic Parentage of Palma Giovane" *The Burlington Magazine* 144, no. 1190 (May 2002): 289-291.

Guerra , Andrea. "Movable Facades: Palladio's Plan for the Church of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice and its Successive Vicissitudes." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 3, no. 61 (Sep 2002): 276-95. JSTOR. [Online.]

Lotz, Wolfgang. "The Roman Legacy in Sansovino's Venetian Buildings" *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 22, no.1 (Mar. 1963): 3-12.

Martin, Thomas. "Grimani Patronage in S. Giuseppe di Castello: Veronese, Vittoria and Smeraldi" *The Burlington Magazine* 133, no. 1065 (Dec. 1991): 825-833.

Mazzoni, Guido, Frammenti della Deposizione di Cristo. Padova, Museo Civico. Proveniente della chiesa di Sant'Antonio di Castello

Merian, Matthaeus. *Map of Venice*. Map. 1650. From the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Jewish National and University Library.  
[http://www.atozmapsonline.com/whc\\_detail.php?sku=merian\\_1650\\_venice\\_b](http://www.atozmapsonline.com/whc_detail.php?sku=merian_1650_venice_b)  
(Accessed February 15, 2010)

Munster, Sebastian. *Map of Venice*. Map. Basel, 1550. From the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and The Jewish National and University Library. [http://www.atozmapsonline.com/whc\\_detail.php?sku=munster\\_lat\\_1550\\_158\\_b](http://www.atozmapsonline.com/whc_detail.php?sku=munster_lat_1550_158_b) (accessed February 15, 2010).

Perry, Marilyn. "Cardinal Domenico Grimani's Legacy of Ancient Art to Venice" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 41 (1978): 215-244.

Perry, Marylin. "Wealth, Art and Display: The Grimani Cameos in Renaissance Venice" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 56 (1993): 268-274.

Rylands, Philip. "Palma Vecchio's 'Assumption of the Virgin'" *The Burlington Magazine* 119, no.889 (Apr. 1977): 245-250.

Stockdale, J. *Map of Venice*. London: Piccadilly, 1800. From the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and The Jewish National and University Library. [http://www.atozmapsonline.com/whc\\_detail.php?sku=stockdale\\_1800\\_venice\\_b](http://www.atozmapsonline.com/whc_detail.php?sku=stockdale_1800_venice_b) (accessed February 11, 2010).

Tintoretto. The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand. Oil on panel, c. 1538 (138 x 218 cm) Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.  
[http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/t/tintoret/1\\_1540s/1martyrd.html](http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/t/tintoret/1_1540s/1martyrd.html)

Unknown Artist, Low-relief with Sant'Antonio and disciples (Bassorilievo del secolo XIV con Sant' Antonio e devoti) Museo del Seminario Patriarcale. S. XIV

Veneziano, Lorenzo. *Lion Polyptich*. Panel, c. 1357. Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.  
<http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/l/lorenzo/venezian/1lion2.html>

Verdon, Timothy. *The Art of Guido Mazzoni*. New York: Garland Publications, 1978.

Zorzi, Alvise. *Venezia Scomparsa. Repertorio degli edifici veneziani distrutti, alterati o manomessi*. Milano: Electa Editrice, 1972.



Figure 1

Map of Venice, ~1650, Matthaeus Merian

**Published in:** 1650

**Date Notes:** 1650

**Language Notes:** Language: Italian

**Collection Source:** The Hebrew University of Jerusalem & The Jewish National & University Library



Figure 2

Map of Venice, 1550, Sebastian Munster

**Published in:** Basel, 1550

**Notes:** Imprint: H. Petri

**Collection Source:** The Hebrew University of Jerusalem & The Jewish National & University Library



Figure 3

Map of Venice, 1800, J Stockdale

**Author, Publisher & Printer:** J. Stockdale, Piccadilly, Publisher

**Published in:** London, 1800



Figure 4

Luca Carlevarijs, View of the Chiesa and the Monasterio, 1740



Figure 5

View of the Chiesa di Sant'Antonio, 1512

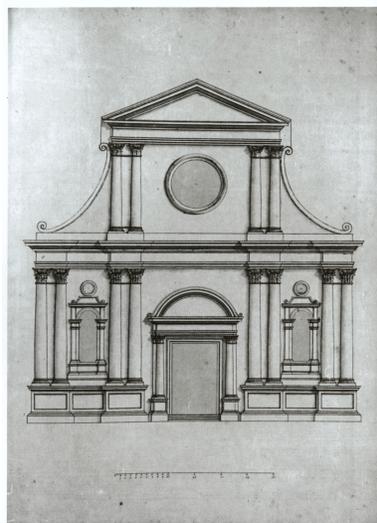


Figure 6

Façade of the Church of Sant'Antonio di Castello



Figure 7

A photograph of the arch of the Madonna Chapel as it stands in the public gardens today



Figure 8

Carpaccio, The Vision of Prior Ottobon in Sant'Antonio di Castello

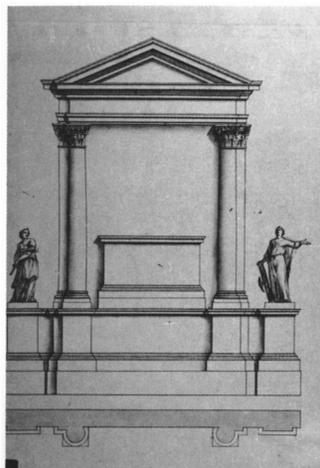


Figure 9

Engraving of the Capello family altar





Figure 10.

Tintoretto, Jacopo The Ten Thousand Martyrs on the Mount Ararat (1515). Tempera on canvas, 307 x 205 cm. Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice

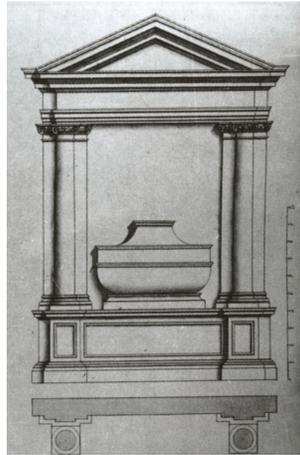


Figure 11

Engraving of the Lando family chapel



Figure 12

Low-relief with San Antonio and followers, s.XIV, Museo del Seminario Patriarcale



Figure 13

Guido Mazzoni, Deposizione di Cristo (Lamentation of Christ), 1485



Figure 14

Lorenzo Veneziano, The Lion Polyptych, 1357