Marine Hybrids, the Lombardo Workshop and the Immaculate Virgin of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice

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Marine Hybrids, the Lombardo Workshop and the Immaculate Virgin of
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ABSTRACT

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Santa Maria dei Miracoli was the first church in Venice to be explicitly dedicated to the Immaculata and the iconographic program inside the church features inventive imagery, inspired by antiquity, which glorifies the purity of the Virgin. Marine hybrids, figures that are part human and part fish, flank a miraculous painting of the Madonna and Child. This thesis explores questions regarding why and how these carved figures of marine hybrids are appropriate adornment for a chapel dedicated to the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception. I will prove that Tullio, Antonio and Pietro Lombardo created a proper shrine for the image. Moreover, because of the freedom they were allowed in the design, execution and collaboration in this project, Tullio and Antonio developed their characteristic styles, emotive classicism in a Venetian dialect.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

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INTRODUCTION

At the Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Venice, the Lombardo shop carried out an architectural and sculptural program that created a glowing, radiant house for the Virgin Mary. Venetians believed they could find the Virgin at the Miracoli, as her miracles confirmed she appeared at this site. From the moment Venetians and visitors to the city caught view of the building, they must have thought they had come a little nearer to what the Virgin embodied: chastity, purity and love. The Virgin Mary offered hope and guidance, and the Miracoli in its brilliance signified a beacon to the faithful, who left votive gifts at her door in the name of Holy Mary of Miracles.

The building of the Santa Maria dei Miracoli employed the talents of many members of the Lombardo workshop, guided chiefly by Tullio, Antonio and Pietro. To accomplish such a church as the Miracoli, the Lombardi chose various techniques and revived historical styles to best suit the nature of the commission for which they were employed. They reconciled humanist interest in all’antica decoration within a devotional program that honors and glorifies the Madonna and Child. Importantly, the iconographic program developed by the Lombardo shop gives expression to the doctrine of the chaste Virgin Mary and works to glorify her cult and presence in the church. I will prove that the iconography of the sculpture reliefs surrounding the image of the miracle-working painting of the Madonna and Child enhances the dedication of the church to the Immaculate Virgin. Also an important part of this study is an account of the history of the foundation of the Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli because it contextualizes the meaning and significance of miracles in the lives of Quattrocento Venetians.
Tullio’s and Antonio’s designs for four base reliefs, those that feature marine hybrids, which might not seem appropriate decoration for this church, express the connection between the church’s dedication to the Immaculata and its setting in Venice (Figures 1 and 2). The imagery derives from their common understanding and study of both antique and contemporary visual motifs. The size and the placement of the reliefs make them special, as they provide part of the framework for the miraculous image of the Madonna and Child. This investigation of the motif of marine monsters at the base of the pedestals of the triumphal arch framing the high altar chapel of the Miracoli reveals the sophistication of the iconographic program that relates the hybrids to the miraculous image. Through sumptuous materials and rich, lively marble carvings, the Lombardo workshop gave visual presence to the idea of the Immaculata.

This was a formative period for the brothers, who worked jointly on this project. While their individual contributions to the Miracoli cannot easily be separated, the works they carried out after the Miracoli reflect ideas generated by the Miracoli project (see Appendix C: Chart of the Lombardi Commissions). Tullio emerged from this project as the preeminent artist within the workshop. One prominent example of the stylistic developments that followed the work at the Miracoli is Tullio’s *Tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin* (now in Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice). This funerary monument explicitly shows a response to the desire of humanists to evoke a sense of the past (antiquity) in a modern system. His monumental architectural wall tomb refers to both ancient Roman triumphal arches and the contemporary painting practices of the Bellini and Giorgione. It combines marine hybrids, heads of Roman emperors, Minerva, Perseus and armed
warriors with Virtues, the Annunciation, Judith with the head of Holofernes, and a medallion with the Christ Child blessing the Doge, who kneels before the Madonna and is presented to the holy figures by Saint Mark. Both the tomb and the four marine reliefs at the Miracoli incorporate symbolic content from antique and Christian sources. In addition, both combine imagery that borrows from the earlier Quattrocento tradition of his father, Pietro Lombardo, and a classicizing orientation that is taken in a new direction.
CHAPTER 1: THE MIRACOLI AND LOMBARDO STUDIES

Until recently, scholars have not attempted to interpret or place the marine hybrids of the Miracoli in a context other than a chronological one. Alison Luchs will be the first writer to discuss the Lombardo and their sculpture at the Miracoli in its relationship to the miracle-working Madonna and Child.¹ In her previous study of Tullio’s work Luchs dealt with the iconographic meaning of the marine hybrid reliefs and their importance within the work of Tullio and Antonio.² Luchs also closely investigated the iconography of a pair of double portrait bust-length reliefs by Tullio. She believes these reliefs combine influences from antiquity, Northern Europe and the works of literary figures active in Venice.

Besides Alison Luchs, Sarah Blake McHam, Sarah Wilk, Debra Pincus and Wendy Stedman Sheard have all made very significant art historical contributions to understanding different aspects of the Lombardo workshop’s production, with a specific focus on Tullio Lombardo, the son of Pietro and elder brother of Antonio.

The major publication in English to date concerning the Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli is a dissertation by Ralph Lieberman, in which he focuses on the

¹A forthcoming book by Alison Luchs, Mermaids of Venice: Fantastic Sea Creatures in Venetian Renaissance Art, will analyze the relationship between the Miracoli and the marine hybrids. For the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., Luchs organized the first solo exhibition of Tullio’s work, which was on display from 4 July to 31 October, 2009. The exhibition and an accompanying catalog were titled “An Antiquity of Imagination: Tullio Lombardo and Venetian High Renaissance Sculpture.” Featured in the exhibit were small-scale works by Tullio and Antonio Lombardo as well as works by other artists, such as Giambattista Bregno, Antonio di Giovanni Minello, Simone Bianco, and Giammaria Mosca.
²Alison Luchs, Tullio Lombardo and Ideal Portrait Sculpture in Renaissance Venice 1490-1530 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 35.
architectural elements of the church. He recorded the dimensions and proportions of the building, sorted out primary documents related to the Miracoli and has proposed that the construction was undertaken in two separate phases. Lieberman’s focus is primarily on the architectural design and history of the church, but he does briefly address the four reliefs featuring marine hybrids, describing the seams in the four carved faces and the lack of rhythm flowing around the corners of the pilaster bases.3 For Lieberman, the sculptures at the bases of the pilasters framing the high altar area may contain no iconographic significance.

Suggesting the absence of an iconographic program is more reasonable than promulgating a totally arbitrary one, and it is probably better to conclude that the pedestal sculptures belong in the same category as the sculpted pedestals of the main portal of the Scuola Grande di San Marco, which are also decorated with putti, although without the mermen and mermaids.4 To say the reliefs in the Miracoli (and on the Scuola Grande di San Marco) have no meaning, despite admission of their notable proximity to the Madonna and Child painting and their prominence within the scheme of the church, omits much and betrays the author’s estimation of the Lombardi.5 Concerning the prominence and proximity of the

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3 Ralph Lieberman, *The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1986), 366. L’Architettura e La Scultura del Rinascimento in Venezia, (Venice, 1893), 212, reviews the historiography of the reliefs, citing the thesis of Pietro Paoletti, who wrote that the four seasons were represented on the four sides of the two pilaster bases. Lieberman believes that Paoletti’s assessment is based more on the number of sides than any intrinsic visual evidence that would suggest the seasons are depicted.


5Ibid., 379. Lieberman concluded that the Lombardi did not conceive the design of the Miracoli due to its mathematical complication and references to contemporary theories about architecture. Instead, he credited Codussi with the conception of the design and considered all three Lombardi as mere laborers capable only of the execution of Codussi’s design. According to Lieberman, if Pietro were credited with
chancel reliefs to the miraculous image it seems highly probable that these reliefs were created with an intended content and not designed to be purely decorative elements that lack iconographic meaning. In his conclusion, Lieberman stated that the sophistication of the design of the chancel in the Miracoli was unlike anything seen in the Lombardo oeuvre prior to its construction, and he proposed that Mauro Codussi (1440-1504) must have therefore designed it.

Sarah Blake McHam has published an important study on the Altar of Saint Anthony in the Santo, Padua. Tullio and Antonio determined the overall design for the votive chapel and were responsible for producing three of the monumental reliefs in the chapel (Figures 3, 4 and 5). Other artists involved with the project include Jacopo Sansovino and Antonio Minello, but they were involved after the Lombardo brothers had established the design of the chapel. In writing about the reliefs by the Lombardo brothers in Sant’Antonio, Padua, McHam demonstrated the symbolic nature of the imagery of marine hybrids. She recognized in the Santo plinths and pilasters a visual and symbolic similarity with the Miracoli reliefs. Referring to the relationship between the imagery of the almost square plinths that appear above the marine hybrid reliefs of the

"the design of the first project for the Miracoli, he created a work which reveals a level of inspiration, intelligence, and insight he was never to demonstrate again. Such qualities, in contrast, are characteristic of the work of Coducci.” I propose that the inspiration, intelligence and insight probably did not come from Pietro, the patriarch of the family, but from the modern and robust artistic aspirations of his sons, Tullio and Antonio, and the broader workshop. After all, Tullio was working in Treviso at this time (a contract was signed in 1488) to rebuild the cupola of the cathedral that had been built on Pietro’s design but had collapsed only a few years after its completion.

triumphal arch in the Miracoli, McHam observed that the combination of pagan and Christian religious symbols was intentional. “Hybrid forms generally convey the protean power of nature to transform and renew itself.” The rich context of the watery hybrids and their entourage refer to a soul’s passing to heaven after death and hybrids function as talismans against ever-present evil. The hybrids represent renewal and transformation and are exactly what pilgrims who went to the Miracoli to see the miracle-working painting would have sought: a renewed sense of protection and closeness to the Madonna.

Sarah Wilk’s research has concentrated on the variety of sources Tullio employed and the inventive iconography that can be seen in such works as the *Tomb of Giovanni Mocenigo* (Figure 6) and two double portrait reliefs. Wilk cited two contemporary Venetian sources for the mythological figures and ornamentation depicted in the Miracoli: the woodcuts illustrating the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* and the decoration in the Palazzo Ducale of the Montefeltro in Urbino. Wilk shared Lieberman’s view that Codussi conceived the design of the Miracoli because of its similarity to other Venetian churches designed by him. She further agreed with Lieberman that there is no cohesive

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7 See also Luchs, *Tullio Lombardo and Ideal Portrait Sculpture*, 67-82, in which Luchs discusses the portraits.
8 Sarah Wilk, *The Sculpture of Tullio Lombardo: Studies in Sources and Meaning* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978), 17. The *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, or Strife of Love in a Dream, was published by 1500 by the famed Venetian publisher, Aldus Manutius. The text was available to Tullio as early as 1494 from the author, Francesco Colonna, who was a friar at Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari. Although the date of publication is not firmly known, it seems reasonable to imagine that Tullio and Colonna had access to the same material. At the Palazzo Ducale, the motif of a drilled rosette molding at the top of the socle reliefs may show a link between the work at the Urbino Palace and the work in the Miracoli, where the same motifs appear. (See Figures 28, 30 and 31 of this text).
9 Ibid., 16.
iconographic theme within the Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli and that elements were combined to create an aura of generalized classicism. Her coverage of the Miracoli project is cursory but she rightly observed that Tullio drew selectively from many sources and from many periods of art and that rather than copying antique style in an unthinking mimetic way, his sculptures are “creative and profound transformations of many types of earlier art.”

Debra Pincus made an important link to the art of antiquity in Tullio’s work when she proposed that he restored sculptures from antiquity as part of his workshop practices. As the demand from patrons for classicizing sculptures increased in Venice, so did Tullio’s services to an elite society that included the Doge. Being so closely involved with these works from antiquarian collections, Tullio absorbed and transformed the antique style and technique to suit his own work.

Perhaps the most notable evaluation of Tullio’s work in both the Tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin and the Scuola Grande di San Marco was carried out by Wendy Stedman Sheard (Figures 7 and 8). She eloquently described the pictorialism of the monumental Scuola reliefs and believed the Lombardo workshop was responsible for disseminating and revitalizing an interest in monumental reliefs in Venice. Sheard wrote that the Lombardi employed pictorial strategies of perspective on the façade of the Scuola

10 Ibid., 4.
San Marco and that color played a large role in both the Vendramin tomb and the façade of the Scuola San Marco. She also pointed out that the workshop employed color to emphasize the geometrical and mathematical proportional harmony of the architectural elements.

Many authors have trouble analyzing the work of the Lombardi because their work does not move along a linear progression of development from more archaic or medieval form towards greater and greater naturalism. While the urge to enforce a chronology on artists persists, their work was designed to satisfy the tastes of their various patrons.

Despite the resurgence in studies concerning the Lombardi since the 1970s, there is still much confusion and obscurity about their work. Pope-Hennessy wrote the merits of Tullio’s work have been underestimated and that the career of Antonio has been inadequately documented.\(^1\) It is my hope that this work moves one step closer to furthering the field of study concerning Venetian Renaissance sculpture and the role of the Lombardi in shaping the visual world in their adoptive city, Venice.

CHAPTER 2: A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA DEI MIRACOLI, VENICE

The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli was erected with funds collected solely from private donations, with no money for the construction of the church coming from the Venetian government or from the Roman Catholic Church. Whether the account of its funding is myth or truth, even before its completion, the church became an extraordinary sight for Venetians and for visitors who marveled at its beauty. In 1484, for instance, when the German Friar Felix Fabri saw the Miracoli on his return trip from the Holy Land, he remarked that “no prince in Germany could afford such a building.” About two decades later, Marc’Antonio Sabellico, who wrote about the Miracoli in his De Situ Urbis Venetae of 1502, considered the church to be “a magnificent work that except for the Church of Gold [S Mark’s] surpasses all in workmanship, cost of materials, and beauty.”

Most churches in Venice built before the late Quattrocento were situated within small campos and usually squeezed up against other ecclesiastical buildings. In contrast, the Miracoli is freestanding and is bordered on one flank by a rio, or canal (Figure 9), and on the other by a calle, or sidewalk (Figure 10).

While chapels or shrines were usually built within or appended to larger religious structures, from its inception the Miracoli was built to stand alone. Due to the limited amount of available land in Venice, most churches did not have enough physical space to

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15 In Venice, two such buildings, which precede the Miracoli in date, are the churches of San Zaccariah and Santi Giovanni e Paolo.
be freestanding, and as a result were absorbed into, or were built very nearby, larger structures. But at the Miracoli space was created for such an important building. This was made possible because several houses were demolished for the site of the Miracoli, which appears to be supported by, and rise from, the water on one side (Figure 11). Its main entrance is on the south side, where visitors enter the church from a very small irregular campo. Approaching the church from the backside, the north end, by walking through the small *Campo dei Miracoli*, allows for a vista of the domed high altar chapel area and octagonal bell tower (Figures 12 and 13). For those walking along the narrow alleyway, the *calle*, to the front of the church, the south façade is abruptly revealed as they arrive at the main entrance (Figure 14). Visitors have a similar response to the façade when approaching the church from a small footbridge that leads to the front of the building. From the vantage point of the bridge, the semicircular south façade looms high overhead, and while the other sides of the building are fully covered in marble, this main façade displays the richest mantle of costly materials made of serpentine, Parian, Carrara and Verona marble.

The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli is nestled among residential dwellings in the *sestieri* of Cannaregio. Yet the church is physically isolated from these dwellings by the canal and the modest pedestrian walkway, which make the Miracoli a tiny island within the district. Due to its size and brilliance, the church defines the space of the

16 Examples of domed chapels absorbed into larger structures in Venice include the Cornaro Chapel of Santi Apostoli, the Gussoni chapel of San Lio and the chapels on the south flank of San Giobbe. These chapels share the same votive function as the Miracoli.

surrounding area in such a way that everything in its immediate vicinity is seen and understood in relation to the church of the Miracoli. The prominence of the Miracoli is especially apparent in an aerial view of the church and the surrounding area, as seen in Jacopo de’Barbari’s woodcut, *View of Venice*, dated about 1500 (Figure 15). The church is equally picturesque when approached from either end, and along both flanks a rhythmic patternization of the lower register Corinthian pilasters generates forward motion for those traveling by water or by foot.

Ennio Concina has commented on the jewel-like appearance and resemblance of the Miracoli to an elaborate reliquary, and he proposed that the design derives from Ravennan sarcophagi. While the Lombardi creatively included elements of many works from antiquity found in cities near Venice, Concina is right in recognizing that among their formal sources for the design of the Miracoli were likely early Christian Ravennan sarcophagi having particular architectonic features: rectangular structures with barrel vaults, columns and relief carvings. The Lombardi furthermore mined a variety of antique works for emblems and ornaments they could adapt to their design of the Miracoli, as can be seen in the confronted griffins on the south façade.

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18 See Concina, *A History of Venetian Architecture*, 127. In support of his argument, Concina stated the following. “This is proved conclusively by the drawings of the Modena manuscript of Marcanova which attempt an imaginary reconstruction of Roman antiquities. One of them, for example, reuses the barrel vaulting of a large sarcophagus placed over the imaginary tomb of Romulus to roof the *aula* of the Therma Diocletiani and the palace of Cicero, not without similarities to the building of the Miracoli.” Concina’s observations are valuable but limited because he understates inventive elements that appear in both the architecture and the sculpture of the Miracoli.
Why the Miracoli resembles a sarcophagus or a reliquary is chiefly related to the miraculous painting it enshrines. Our knowledge of the origin of the building and purpose of its creation is based partly on documents provided by the Venetian Angelo Amadi. According to one record, Angelo’s kinsman Francesco Amadi commissioned a triptych from “Maistro Niccoló” (Master Niccoló), which he paid for in the summer of 1409. The panels were to include an image of the Virgin and Child flanked by Saint James the Apostle and Saint Anthony, but only the panels of the Virgin and Child exist today (Figure 1). The rich bourgeois Amadi family, who were then living in the Santa Marina parish near the Santa Maria Nuova parish, had Master Niccoló’s painting placed on an exterior wall near their house, but on a property owned by the Barozzi family. Francesco Amadi chose to hang the painting on the Barozzi property because it was better exposed to the public on their property than on his property, Ca’Amadi, which was situated on an interior street near the Rialto that did not have much pedestrian traffic. Not wanting to keep the painting only for himself but to share it with the people of Venice, he

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19 Scholars agree that “Masitro Niccoló” must have been Niccoló di Pietro, active in Venice 1394-1440. Lieberman, The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, 32, noted that in the summer of 1409 Francesco Amadi paid 14.95 lire for the painting.
20 According to Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, Venice Triumphant: The Horizons of a Myth (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 69. The Barozzi family were wealthy Venetians with former land holdings on Santorini. Chambers and Pullan, Venice: A Documentary History, 26, n. 42, include the Barozzi in the list of the original twenty-four patrician families of Venice. They likely were one of the original twenty-four patrician families of Venice and therefore likely owned many properties throughout the city. The Ca Barozzi was not near the area of the Miracoli, but much closer to San Marco and was on the Grand Canal near S Moise. So it is therefore likely that the miraculous image was never hung on the major Ca Barozzi but on a lesser property owned by the Barozzi family near the present site of the Miracoli.
chose to hang it on a more populated thoroughfare.\textsuperscript{21} The present location of the Miracoli is very near the large Dominican church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, which was an important destination in Venice for many pilgrims and visitors.

The Master Niccoló painting that Amadi commissioned was originally part of a utilitarian altar that could be seen at night. It has been a traditional practice in Venice to provide public lighting in the narrow alleyways by means of devotional altars with candles, oil lamps and today electric lamps. In Amadi’s Venice, the light provided security and created a sense of community. It was one shopkeeper’s responsibility to maintain the light and to make certain that the image was properly taken care of and adorned with seasonal decorations.\textsuperscript{22}

On 18 July 1480 the shopkeeper Marco di Rasti, who was the image-tender of the nearby Amadi painting, was talking with customers in his shop when a rich gentleman, accompanied by his four servants, entered the shop and prophesized the future structure that would be built on the site of Marco di Rasti’s store. Not long afterward, miracles began to take place in front of the Master Niccoló painting.\textsuperscript{23} By the mid 1480s, the

\textsuperscript{21} Lieberman, \textit{Santa Maria dei Miracoli}, 37. Lieberman refers to the Amadi manuscript, Amadi ms, 1, throughout his dissertation as one of two primary documents concerning the Miracoli. In this Amadi manuscript, Angelo stated that the painting was hung “in our street in our Venetian fashion, in the corner hanging at the house of m. Alvise Barozzi.”

\textsuperscript{22} In Venice, images of saints were erected in pedestrian walkways. Such images were set into the walls and frequently featured paintings of the Virgin and Child. According to Patricia Fortini Brown, the outdoor tabernacles, called \textit{capitelli}, were “thought to inspire reverence and to discourage anti-social behavior, as well as to protect and comfort.” See \textit{Art and Life in Renaissance Venice} (Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997), 94.

\textsuperscript{23} Lieberman, \textit{The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli}, 40.
church of the Miracoli was erected where Marco di Rasti’s store had been standing, confirming the prophesy of the rich gentleman.

The first of the miracles occurred on 23 August 1480 and began a surge of devotion for the Madonna. It concerned an employee of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi (German merchants’ building) who stabbed his sister-in-law. The woman was dramatically attacked with a knife and struck to the ground. As she lay on the ground, her eye happened upon Master Niccolò image of the Madonna and she cried out for Mary’s help. Neighbors ran to the woman and discovered that she miraculously had no wounds and her clothes were not torn. The next day, the woman told her story to a large crowd of people, who then knelt in prayer and praised the intercession of the Virgin Mary. Soon afterward, the Amadi purchased the nearby buildings, built a connecting bridge to accommodate easy views of the image and generally facilitated glorification of the image.

In his dissertation Lieberman cites two main sources regarding the history of the Miracoli, the Amadi family records and a collection of documents from an author known only as D.S.R., which are dated around 1664. Both D.S.R. and Angelo Amadi recount

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24 Lieberman, The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, 42. For the primary sources concerning the Miracoli, see D.S.R., Chronichetta dell’Origine, Principio, e Fondazione della Chiesa, & Monasterio della Madonna de Miracoli di Venetia (Venice, 1664) and Flaminio Corner, Ecclesiae Venetae, antiquis Monumentis nunc etiam primus editis illustratae ac in decades distributae (Venice, 1749). Corner's Ecclesiae Venetae is a collection of documents from various periods and includes D.S.R.’s Chronichetta. One of the documents is Angelo Amadi’s firsthand account of the major events surrounding the creation of the chapel including the provenance of the image, the first miracles it purportedly performed, the money donated in its honor as well as the building project up until 1489. My access to these documents is through Lieberman’s translations in The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, 9-10.
the same tale of the stabbed woman with slight variations. D.S.R. wrote that on 23 August 1480 Francesco Bendi, a senor at the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, stabbed his sister-in-law over a disagreement regarding a legal matter. Bendi left her for dead after she fainted, but she survived and was quickly discovered unharmed in a dark corner of the Santa Marina parish. She had no wounds on her body and her garments showed no evidence of an attack. The day following the incident, a large crowd gathered beside the miraculous image as the grateful woman donated her garments to the Virgin. This was the first miracle to occur at the site of the Amadi painting, according to D.S.R. In Angelo Amadi’s account, he listed this miracle as the sixty-sixth in a long series of miracles, but did not include a date for its occurrence. The placement of the account in his manuscript makes it seem to have occurred between 3 July 1483 and March 1484. Still, the date of the stabbing most likely occurred on 23 August 1480 because elsewhere in his manuscript Amadi states that the Miracoli saga began with a miracle that took place on this date and that on 24 August 1480 many people assembled around the image.

Angelo Amadi’s lack of clarity about the date of the stabbing miracle raises questions concerning whether he had a reason to hide or confuse the date and details of this miracle if it really had been the first to have taken place at the site of his devotional painting. Was the miracle perhaps staged? If it had been, who would have benefitted from the staging of a miracle at the site of the Amadi painting? The answer is not knowable.

D.S.R. states the following in reference to the woman. “Because she was in the right, things went very badly for the senser, but she hoped to have a ruling against…” “perche la donna haveva piu ragione andavano molto male le cose del senser, che pero sperava haver la sentenza contro...” Lieberman, *The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli*, 42.
yet it seems possible that a fraud could have been perpetrated by a group of neighbors intending to bring prestige to their parish. The prophesy of the gentleman who visited Marco di Rasti’s store might also have been fabricated to this end. If fraud did take place, however, I posit that it was most likely the Amadi family who orchestrated the event. They would have immediately gained prestige through their ownership of a miracle-working painting. Acceptance into the upper echelons of Venetian society was difficult to achieve, but any elevation in stature was seen as a positive step in that direction. Crouzet-Pavan describes how ownership of such a revered image equated to power and position.²⁶

Less than one month after the miracle of the Madonna’s intervention to save a woman from stabbing occurred, a project to protect and venerate the painting was begun, and it progressed quickly. By 5 September 1480, five procuratori had been selected to oversee the erection of a shrine to protect the image.²⁷ On 6 September, four houses were purchased from Daniele Bembo, providing the site for the shrine.²⁸ Soon after, on 28 September 1480, two consequential events took place. First, the Collegio ruled on a case between the Amadi family and the Barozzi family regarding the ownership of the image. The Barozzi claimed the painting because it resided on their property but the six members of the Collegio unanimously voted on behalf of Angelo Amadi because of the documents

²⁷ John Martin, *Venice’s Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City* (Berkley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1993), 168. The patrician involvement in the project to build a shrine suggests to Martin that, “the church was built largely to bring a popular Marian cult under patrician control.”
²⁸ Lieberman, *The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli*, 56. Marco di Rasti’s shop is one of the houses purchased.
he provided proving that his relative, Francesco Amadi, had commissioned the painting.\textsuperscript{29}

Second, the four houses that had been purchased earlier in the month were torn down after news of the litigation results reached the site.\textsuperscript{30} In a very short time, more than seven hundred ducats had been paid out for the destruction of the houses, which implies that a large amount of money was already available between late August and late September. These two events indicate that the procuratori wanted to move without delay, and they may have known that Amadi would be proven right in the ruling by the Collegio, for they acted quickly after the ownership dispute was settled when they ordered the immediate destruction of the buildings on the future site of the shrine.

The five procuratori selected to oversee the building of the shrine included two members of the Amadi family, Angelo and his brother Alvise, as well as Francesco Zen, Marco Soranzo (who was later succeeded by his brother Agostino) and, perhaps the most respected among them, Francesco Diedo, who was a doctor. The primary documents refer to Diedo as the figurehead of the organization.\textsuperscript{31} The five procuratori, who had a broad range of duties, had to make the major decisions regarding the architectural commission, the acquisition of a site and the management of the huge amount of money donated by

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item Ibid., 63-64. Lieberman noted that the decisive family documents were provided by Angelo Amadi’s mother, who was ninety-six years old at the time.
  \item Ibid., 67.
  \item D.S.R. Chronichetta, 1664, 9, in Lieberman, 51. Men of illustrious Venetian families volunteered to serve as procuratori at the Miracoli; besides the original five procuratori and their heirs, the best known of the procuratori at the Miracoli are Marco Tazza, Leonardo Loredan and Tomaso Contarini.
\end{enumerate}
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those who came to witness the Virgin’s miracles. They functioned as private citizens who supervised a private fund that was publicly supported.32

On Saturday, 21 October 1480, four of the five procuratori appeared before the Patriarch Maffeo Gherardi to receive their license. At this meeting, the procuratori swore to never allow the chapel to fall into disrepair, thereby disgracing the cult of the Virgin, and to pass the responsibility for the perpetual maintenance of the chapel to their progeny.33 In this document the project, which would become the church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, is described as a chapel, capella, that would be independent of its local parish and was to be dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. The dedication was determined first in the license of the Patriarch and it was then was reiterated by Pope Sixtus IV, who as a Franciscan believed that the Virgin was Immaculate from her Conception.34 Although this was a heated ecumenical issue during this time, the Franciscans who believed that the Virgin’s birth was without Original Sin promoted the doctrine. Only five years prior to ordering the dedication of the Miracoli to the

32 Lieberman, *The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli*, 66. Because the Church was forbidden from purchasing property, for land to be obtained legitimately, a public purchase could be made for pious purposes.
33 Lieberman, *The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli*, 70, observed that at the October meeting the procuratori appeared without Marco Soranzo. Lieberman further noted that on 6 Jan 1481, an organ was purchased for twelve ducats. This is an interesting entry because it shows the procuratori spending money on an organ for a church that did not yet exist and for which they had not yet employed an architect. It was stylish in Venice to own an organ and so it would have been yet another important symbol of stature and wealth. Lieberman (91) posited that the procuratori were likely moving quickly to enable a swift process and to allow more pilgrims to donate their prayers and their money to the shrine.
34 The patriarchal license is housed in the Archivio Patriarcale, Lib. Div., c, folio. 34 r. Passages from “Notizie Storiche estratte dall’archivio Patriarcale a Cura di G. B. Scomparin” are quoted in Lieberman, *The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli*, 72, note 70.
Immaculate Conception, Sixtus had instituted the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, in 1475. Franciscan doctrine held that the Madonna’s Immaculate Conception was crucial to her role as a redeemer on the same level as Christ and this was stressed in the Miracoli project.

In the Bull that Sixtus IV issued on 13 Jan 1481, in which he reiterated the license of the Patriarch, Pope Sixtus referred to the shrine as a chapel where two masses were to be said daily and ten priests were to be stationed. The Miracoli was the first church in Venice dedicated to the Immaculate Virgin. Pope Sixtus IV’s earlier Bulla Aurea (Golden Bull) of 1479 was significant for its creation because the Bull granted indulgences to

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35 According to McAndrew, Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance, 154, the physical embodiment of this doctrine can be seen in the sculpture on the balustrade closest to the miracle-working painting at the Miracoli. To the left is the annunciate Gabriel and on the right is Mary, distantly receiving the news; because they are separated by the staircase between them, the emphasis is on the void between the two figures and the role the viewer plays in the drama of the Incarnation. Rona Goffen pointed out that the Annunciation was politically potent in Venice because it coincides with the idea of the Origin of Venice (25 March is the feast of the Annunciation and the legendary founding of Venice was on 25 March 421), and she noted that while imagery depicting the Annunciation is featured on important monuments, such as the façade of San Marco and on the arch of the Rialto Bridge, it is most forcefully presented in Bonifacio dei Pitati’s paintings for the Magistrato della Camera degli Imprestidi. In these paintings, Gabriel and Mary flank the image of “God the Father who is shown blessing the Piazza San Marco: the foundation of Venice is thus compared to the Incarnation of Christ” (See Piety and Patronage in Renaissance Venice: Bellini, Titian, and the Franciscans [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986], 139).

36 Goffen, Piety and Patronage in Renaissance, 61. For a discussion of the interactions between Pope Sixtus IV and the Venetians pertaining to the major Franciscan church in Venice, Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, see Goffen, 60-61. Sixtus, who lived at the Frari from 1439-1441, had a special devotion to Mary; it is not surprising, therefore, that he awarded favors to the church of Mary of the Franciscans in Venice during his papal tenure (1471-1484). During the war between Venice and Ferrara I 1483, he imposed an interdict requiring the friars in Venice to leave the convent.

37 Lieberman, The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, 91.
those who gave financial or material support to the building and maintenance of mendicant churches and chapels. The historical underpinnings of the feast and doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which were put into practice in England in the early eleventh century were based in part on an older Byzantine tradition. Dom Gregory Dix has observed that in the eleventh century, there was greater respect for the role of women in Anglo-Saxon society than elsewhere in Christendom, and that in this environment of tolerance the “chivalrous doctrine that the Mother of God was never under the guilt of original sin” first emerged as a principle to arouse devotion to the purity and sanctity of Mary. When Sixtus instituted the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, he was responding to decades of traditional practice that already upheld this doctrine, and his official sanction transformed local doctrine into widespread doctrine.

Not long after the papal approval of the construction of the chapel, the painted image was transferred from its temporary location in the cortile, or courtyard, of Ca’Amadi to the building site. To make this journey the painting by Master Niccoló was hoisted on an elaborate golden litter with a silver umbrella. The procession of the painting would have appeared much like that of Gentile Bellini’s transportation of the relic in Procession in Piazza San Marco 1496 (Figure 17) or perhaps even more like that of Giovanni Mansueti’s Miracle at the Bridge of S. Lio c.1494 (Figure 18), where a smaller group of people is depicted and the setting is similar to the houses in the Santa Marina parish. Members of various Scuole, the procuratori, cavalieri, dottori and

38 Goffen, Piety and Patronage in Renaissance Venice, 60.
40 Ibid., 433.
Signoria escorted the image, while the Patriarch, Cardinal Maffeo Gherardi, followed behind. This procession, which is recorded on 25 February 1481, took the painting by Master Niccoló from the Ca’Amadi to the church of Santa Marina before it was transported down the Calle del Paradiso and over to the church of Santa Maria Formosa. It was afterward taken to Santi Giovanni e Paolo and Santa Maria Nuova and then carried past the church of San Canciano before it arrived back at the worksite of Santa Maria dei Miracoli via the new footbridge built to facilitate visitors to the shrine (See Appendix B for a map of this processional route). There was a temporary wooden structure erected to shield the painting from the elements while the building was under construction. The Council of Ten ordered all of the Scuole Grandi to join the cult that celebrated the image in this temporary shelter.

After a competition for the design of the Miracoli was held and models were submitted, the procuratori initially engaged Pietro Lombardo as a contractor to construct their chapel, specifying in a contract dated 4 March 1481 that he was to be the executor.

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41 Concina has noted that the procession forecast the importance that the Church of the Miracoli was to have for Venice and the people of Venice, for the church became “an example of the architectural expression of public piety.” See *A History of Venetian Architecture*, 127.

42 According to Lieberman, *The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli*, 92, the Scuola di San Rocco (founded in 1478) took the opportunity to lead the procession of the Scuole. This was because San Rocco was the newest scuola in Venice and as such members of this scuola were the only ones to flagellate themselves in the procession. Edward Muir has pointed out that religious and civic processions were a crucial part of the Venetian calendar and marked the passage of time throughout the year. (*Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981], 138-141).
The contract does not name Pietro as the architect. And while it is not clear whether Pietro submitted the model that was ultimately selected by the procuratori, he was instructed to follow the model. There are no extant records of what the model looked like or who submitted the winning model, but there was nothing in the first phase of the chapel that compares to any work Pietro had done of this scale to this date. Until 1480, Pietro’s work (mostly tombs and decorative works) would hardly have established him as an architect. At the end of 1480 the documents refer to him as maestro, which does not mean architect but could be, in this instance, best interpreted as foreman.

Donations continued to accumulate for the project as devotion to the image persisted and ownership issues were settled. Not one, but three collection boxes were set up, each with its own key and attendant. At some point in 1484 it was decided to expand the project. In a contract of 16 February 1485, Pietro is named proto, or architect, and ordered to erect a chancel. Since the site was limited in width by a canal on its west flank and by residential dwellings that front a pedestrian walkway on the east, Pietro

43 Lieberman, *The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli*, 97, and McAndrew, *Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance*, 153, posited that if someone other than Pietro (like Rizzo or Codussi) had made the winning model, that person would most likely have received the commission.


45 In his book, *The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli*, 67-68, Lieberman wrote that the three keys were held by Angelo Amadi, Marco Soranzo and Marco Tazza and that the collected money was deposited in the “banchi communi” at the Rialto in a personal account of the procuratori. Furthermore, Domenico Malipiero in his *Annali*, dated to 1480, recorded the approximate rate of donation at 400 ducats per month for several years after the first miracle. “Annali Veneti dall’Anno 1457 al 1500,” ed. Francesco Longo with preface and annotation by Agostino Sagredo, *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 1843-44, part 2, 672.

46 McAndrew, *Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance*, 155. See Appendix C of this text for this contract.
added height to the building. His novel plan involved placing the sacristy just two steps below the level of the church and placing above the sacristy an elevated chancel crowned by a hemispherical dome on pendentives. This inventive arrangement creates a sacristy that is a pseudo-crypt because it is not fully below ground level but occupies instead the space beneath the elevated chancel. In general terms, a sacristy is a sacred place of preparation for liturgical purposes. Building it below ground would have been inappropriate as well as impossible, since Venice cannot support basements due to its watery environs. Most important about the new addition is that the elevated chancel area would provide for an all-important processional hierarchy that places the venerated image at the top of the stairs and at the apex of the shrine, where it is surrounded by the most intricate marble work of the chapel (Figure 19).

This newly expanded project was outlined in a new contract (February 1485), which made special adjustments to the language of the 1481 document. While at first the procuratori had only a votive chapel in mind to house the miracle-working painting, the immense surge of devotion and donations had expanded the project, and with the expansion a new idea surfaced: a convent with Franciscan sisters would be enlisted to care for the image and the nuns would use the chapel for their daily observances. Pietro’s role in the first contract had been that of a builder, but with the 1485 contract he had become the proto.\textsuperscript{47} The revisions of the project resulted in a new opportunity for the

\textsuperscript{47} Pietro and his workshop agreed to three contracts. The first followed directly after the model competition in 1480. The second contract, dated 1481, which stated that Pietro was the builder, was specific about materials. The third contract (dated February 1485) named Pietro as proto. Pietro and his workshop agreed to three contracts. The first followed directly after. At the time of this third contract the
workshop to exercise its skill and mastery in marble carving and architectural design, which they used to highlight the sacred area around the miracle-working painting. Indeed, the high altar area of the chancel above the sacristy is the most richly decorated part of the Miracoli.

On 30 December 1489, the triptych was carried in procession and placed on the altar of the chancel. The following day, 31 December, the church was consecrated and twelve Poor Clares were officially transferred from Santa Chiara on Murano. The church was joined to the convent by means of an overhead closed bridge, or barco, connected to the raised area above the main entrance, where the organ is today, to maintain the sisters’ clausura (Figure 20). “The Miracoli is the earliest known example in Venice of the use of a closed bridge to connect a church and a convent.”

This is significant because due to being a cloistered community the sisters were prohibited from walking across the street from the convent to the church. The novel arrangement of the covered overhead walkway thus had be envisioned. There were up to seventy nuns associated with the church at its height during the Cinquecento, but they were not the procuratori voted to buy adjacent land to build a convent (McAndrew, *Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance*, 155).

Ibid., 156. McAndrew pointed out that Cardinal Maffeo Ghirardi appointed his sister as the abbess of the newly formed community at the Miracoli. McAndrew refers to Pietro Chechia’s (*Chroniche dell’origine e fondazione del monastero e chiesa della B Vergine dei Miracoli*, 1742) description of their arrival: “Veiled in black to the ground, the nuns from Murano arrived by gondola on the thirty-first, moved into their new convent, and heard their first Mass in their new church at midnight on New Year’s Eve,” in 1489.

Lieberman, *The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli*, 247.
only active sect of Poor Clares in Venice. Other highly decorated churches (such as S Giobbe and S Francesco della Vigna) supported members of the order.\(^{50}\)

The church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli was in continual use during the centuries leading up to the invasion of Napoleon. In the meantime, the church underwent the usual accretions of a church in use: the additions of side altars and redesigned frames for the Madonna and Child. The high altar was first rebuilt in 1606, barely over a century after its construction. An image of the baroque altar can be seen in Cicognara’s plan of the high altar chapel (Figure 21).\(^{51}\) Two bronze angels, dated 1606, with mermaid’s tails were also inserted into the altar, undoubtedly a reference to the sea creatures in the reliefs that flank the altar. During the eighteenth century, the painting was described as concealed behind a gilded grill (Figure 22).\(^{52}\) Indeed zealous devotion to the image may have helped accelerate its deterioration,

By the eighteenth century masses endowed for the souls of dead Venetians were recited at the rate of about 40 a day, or 13,000 a year. So many prayers and inscriptions were attached to the walls of the church by the visiting faithful that this practice had to be forbidden by the Procurators who administered the building, on account of the damage they caused.\(^{53}\)

\(^{50}\) Other churches besides the Miracoli that supported Observants in Venice include S Francesco della Vigna, S Giobbe, S Francesco del Deserto, S Chiara in Murano and Venice, S Francesco della Croce, S Maria Maggiore, S Sepolcro and the Miracoli. For more information on these churches, see Goffen, *Piety and Patronage in Renaissance Venice*, 165-166, note 8.


\(^{52}\) Deborah Howard, “The church of the Miracoli in Venice and Pittoni’s St Jerome Altar-piece,” *The Burlington Magazine* 131, no. 1039 (1989): 685. The organ is also visible on the left in Figure 22.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 684-5. In her article, Howard quoted a passage from Don P. Chechia’s, *Chroniche dell’Origine, e Fondazione del Monastero, e Chiesa della Beata Vergine de Miracoli*, Venice, 1742, 43-44.
An attempt at purification, or stripping down, of the church was undertaken during the Austrian restoration under Queen Margherita, when all side altars as well as the large baroque main altar were removed. During the massive restoration by the Austrians, from 1865 through 1873, many of the exterior and interior marble panels were replaced.\textsuperscript{54} The church was used from the time of its consecration until the submission of Venice to Napoleon.\textsuperscript{55} The Miracoli was suppressed on 25 April 1810.\textsuperscript{56} Since the convent attached to the Miracoli was disbanded, the functional overhead walkway was no longer needed; the walkway fell into disrepair and was torn down in 1865 and by that year the Parish Church of San Canciano was using the building as an oratory.\textsuperscript{57} The organ, which had shutters painted by Giovanni Bellini and was located on a side-wall of the church was moved to the area above the entrance where the nuns had previously worshipped after entering through the closed barco. The Bellini organ shutters were moved to the Accademia, where they can be found today (Figures 23 and 24).

Although the Church now houses only one painting (except for the panel paintings in the coffers of the ceiling), it was once the repository for works by Giovanni Bellini, including the triptych of \textit{Saint Jerome in the Desert} flanked by images of \textit{Saint Francis} and \textit{Saint Clare} and a panel depicting the \textit{Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist, Saint Clare, and a Female Donor with a Small Child}. There was also a Mary

\textsuperscript{54} McAndrew, \textit{Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance}, 151.
\textsuperscript{55} The Miracoli did not suffer the heavy damage of other monastic churches.
\textsuperscript{56} Archivio di Stato di Venezia, \textit{Direzione generale del Demanio, busta 403 Miracoli, fascicolo 2/34}, “Inventario no. 5.” This source is cited in Howard “The Church of the Miracoli in Venice and Pittoni’s St Jerome Altar-piece,” 688.
\textsuperscript{57} McAndrew, \textit{Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance}, 150.
Magdalen by Titian and an image of Christ by Pietro Vecchia inside the church.\textsuperscript{58} The fixed and movable altars that were once along the nave walls with paintings by such illustrious Venetians as Bellini and Titian were eliminated during the Austrian revision. Deborah Howard has accurately commented that the Austrians removed “the accretions of centuries of religious fervour.”\textsuperscript{59}

In our time, the decision of nineteenth-century restorers to clad the Miracoli entirely in marble has proven disastrous. Since the walls are sealed from both sides by marble, there is no opportunity for water to seep or evaporate; as a result, severe deterioration has occurred. Furthermore, in the major flood of 1966 salt water seeped up through the brick core.\textsuperscript{60} Most notably, however, at the time of its construction the Miracoli was the only structure in Venice, except for the massive Doge’s chapel (the Basilica of San Marco), to be fully clad, inside and out, with large bookplate marble revetment.\textsuperscript{61}

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{58}] Howard, “The Church of the Miracoli in Venice and Pittoni’s St Jerome Altarpiece,” 685.
\item[\textsuperscript{59}] Ibid., 687.
\item[\textsuperscript{60}] McAndrew observed that the walls were damaged not only by the salt water but by the retention of that salt water because metal and plastic plates were inserted into the walls as an attempt at stemming the flow of water up into the wall. This eventually forced the water out through the mortar joints or elsewhere directly through the surface of the marble (Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance, 151).
\item[\textsuperscript{61}] Only two other churches in Venice stand free on all sides, S Zulian and the Angelo Raffaele (McAndrew, Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance, 156). The Miracoli is clad inside and outside in marble today, but there is visual evidence indicating the interior may not have been originally entirely clad in marble. In the former nun’s loft, behind the organ that was relocated in the 1800s, there are stuccoed panels painted with false marble veining. Below the main cornice of the interior, the marble is most likely original, but the upper zone was altered in a subsequent restoration, perhaps the extensive purist restoration of the nineteenth
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As recently as 1998 a major cleaning and desalinization was completed by Save Venice, an International philanthropic organization. The marble and istrian stone on the exterior had turned black with exposure to atmospheric pollutants and mineral salts from the canal that flanks the church (Figure 25).

The restoration carried out in the nineteenth century accelerated decay, since the marble panels removed for cleaning were then fixed with cement. It would have been better to use bronze rods, as in the fifteenth century, for the cement subsequently crumbled to dust and the brickwork was directly exposed to the elements.62

During this phase of restoration, the marble panels were again cleaned and removed. Portions of the structure or sculptures that were crumbling were either reinforced or replaced by imitative copies executed in the manner of Quattrocento style and practices.

The early restorers, who possibly inserted marble panels and definitely used cement instead of bronze bars to secure the marble, have caused permanent harm to the structure. When the lead roof was replaced with a new one, it destroyed the ingenious drainage system that was inserted within the bricklayers of the wall. Formerly, nesting glass cones that fit inside each other drew water out and away from the building. Covering over this drainage system has led to the constant retention of water. Many years

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of change to the Miracoli’s exterior and interior have made it difficult to understand the original intentions of the design as implemented by the Lombardi workshop. However, the recent cleaning of the Miracoli has helped reveal the delicacy and sophistication of the carving, both inside and out (Figure 26).

The church has been praised since before it was completed and it remains a popular site for weddings (both for Venetians and, increasingly, for foreigners). Its sumptuous materials, association with miraculous healings and central location near the Rialto ensure that it will continue to be included on itineraries of Venice.
CHAPTER 3: MARINE HYBRIDS

In late fifteenth-century Venice, Santa Maria dei Miracoli was an exceptional church in a city with over one hundred churches. It stood out because miracles were associated with the image it enshrined, and because of these miracles, the church acquired its extraordinary appearance. It was the only religious building in town besides the Ducal Chapel (Basilica of San Marco) to be adorned fully on its exterior walls with marble revetment. Such lavish treatment of the building was meant to show the devotion Venetians had for the Virgin Mary, whose aid to them was evidenced by the miracles associated with the image.

The contractual changes authorized by the procuratori in 1485 reflect a desire to create a more splendid house for Mary. An elevated chancel allowed for the Madonna and Child painting to be seen more easily from the main entrance, with the stairs leading up to the painting creating separation between the common area of the nave and the sacred area of the high altar chancel. Elevated both literally and symbolically above the worshipper, the image provided a lofty focal point. Decoration of the church interior encouraged worshippers to glide visually and physically through the rectangular form of the narrow nave (the first contract) to move forward and upward toward the sacred setting, whose architectural and sculptural environment was created by the Lombardo shop. That the shop had a continued presence and great responsibility for the adornment of the church is verified by Pietro Lombardo’s contract of 1485.

The sculptural and architectural framing of the space constituted by the expanded elements of the project, namely the tripartite area of sacristy, chancel and dome (the
additions of the 1485 contract) serve to visually contain the idea of the Virgin’s divine presence in the church. Such a sumptuous space allows mortals to move from the busy, dirty and loud marketplace surrounding the church into refined elegance, a fitting realm in which to find and interact with the Virgin, whose divinity was praised perpetually at this site. The Virgin exemplified chastity. She was free of original sin and thus a pure vessel for the son of God, according to Franciscan doctrine. This is the message of the Miracoli. The Lombardi fashioned through marble the proper residence for the Virgin.

From the entrance, it is clear that the church is oriented for the single purpose of directing attention toward the painting on the elevated high altar. A giant triumphal arch, whose entire surface is richly carved, frames this sacred space (Figure 27). The faces of the pilasters that constitute this arch are richly adorned with urns, abundant foliage, fantastical creatures, ribbons, festoons of garland and countless other minutiae (Figure 28). The effect is similar to that of light on water; light shimmers on the reliefs and it creates pockets of light and dark that playfully shift as one moves around the space, as is apparent in the pedestal bases (Figure 29). The interplay between the large planes of subtly veined marble and the heavily carved pilasters and the entablature that runs along the chancel creates balance between active and restful, or dimensional and flat, surfaces. This harmonious counterbalance reflects the material reality of Venice; the immateriality of the ebbs and tides is measured against the solidity of the stone and marble architecture that makes up the church.

A spindle balustrade that designates the area as reserved for the clergy, the major patrician donors or the penitent, surrounds the steps leading to the altar. This novel use of
the spindle set between square piers at intervals of every fourth spindle demonstrates some of the innovations of the Lombardo workshop, for this is one of the earliest uses of the spindle shape which was first popularized in Venice.63

The most playful and idiosyncratic elements of sculpture are to be seen at the pedestal bases of the large framing triumphal archway, and I propose that they were designed by Tullio and Antonio Lombardo. These bases are found at the top of the stairs where they flank the balustrade that surrounds the high altar and the image of the Madonna and Child. The material presence of the figures represented in these high reliefs serves to further glorify the image. The marine hybrids’ swirling tails, delicately gossamer wings carved in low relief and sprays of foliage are revealed only as one ascends the stairs. Four reliefs fold around two faces of the each pedestal base, two reliefs face the painting of the Madonna and Child and two face out into the nave (Figures 30, 31 32, 33).64 The richness of this area corresponds with the depth of devotion of the penitent and represents a celebration of Mary’s presence in the Miracoli.

Near the high altar and the miraculous image are the most unusual and most intricate marble carvings of the chapel. The four rectangular reliefs that wrap around each of the two pedestal bases of the arch are carved with several creatures that at first glance

63 In McAndrew’s estimation, *Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance*, 179, the inner balustrade that frames the image exhibits a high level of carving with a pierced marble parapet that feature tridents, dolphins, porphyry discs, and perhaps the highest order of angels. He posited that it is “part of the original furnishing of white marble with colored inlays.” The Carafa Chapel in Santa Maria Sopra Minerva in Rome also featured a spindle balustrade around 1488.
64 Note in the images of the west pedestal base (Figure 30) that the grey stone on which the marine hybrids and babies stand was originally carved as a fictive pillow. Subsequent damage has left the grey stone broken and irregular (Figure 29).
do not seem to relate to either the Virgin or the Child, and this is particularly evident in the figures of marine hybrids. Intermingled with the marine creatures are coils of leaf decoration and the display of wings and tails. There are amoretti, or small cupids, some naked and others clothed, and winged babies that are fully clothed and stand upright. Some of the marine creatures with wings are like Christian angels; as such, they would represent agents of a greater divinity, but these figures are instead more likely intended to be pagan sea babies associated with antiquity. These sea creatures might in this instance be related to Diana and refer to her relationship with Cupid. Diana was the Roman goddess associated with the moon. She was vehemently chaste, and expected the same of her nymphs. Cupid, usually represented with wings or as a playful toddler, was irascible and the bane of Diana and her nymphs, who would destroy his bow, arrows and quiver because of the torment they caused to others. In the Miracoli reliefs, if we interpret the winged babies as little amoretti, we can place them in league with the watery hybrids that cry out to and transport the amoretti. Cupid, who represented earthly desires, was punished by the chaste goddess Diana; in a similar vein, the marine hybrids at the Miracoli appear to defer to the power of the chaste and pure Madonna.

But what of the other babies without wings or the marine hybrids that have wings? I propose that the non-winged babies in this context represent the idea of classical antiquity, or restraint. The marine hybrids are like Pan, representative of earthly love, and some little babies symbolize the power of sacred love with which they are more

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65 Sarah Blake McHam commented that the hybrids that turn into rinceaux could be apotropaic. *The Chapel of St. Anthony at the Santo and the Development of Venetian Renaissance Sculpture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 74.
commonly associated. This duality between sacred and profane love is evidenced in the adolescent and infant human figures. The reliefs are a conflation of Roman *genii* (guardians of one’s soul through life with the ultimate goal of Paradise) and Greek *erotes*, who similarly acted as guardians of the soul. They simultaneously represent pagan antiquity and early Christian ideologies. The arrangement of figures across the entire plane of the four reliefs can be considered as sets of paired figures whose gestures refer to the counterpart in their pair. Circular compositions are created within the larger isocephalic friezes. These pairs consist of either a winged baby paired with a non-winged marine hybrid or a non-winged baby paired with a winged hybrid, with some important exceptions.

In the two outermost figures, furthest away from the Madonna and Child and the closest to the viewer on each side of the chancel are single figures who are, both wearing armor and their bodies are not addressing a pair; they appear to serve instead as watchful guardians (Figures 34 and 35). They may represent or be intended to evoke the idea of one of the lower orders of angels, the Powers, who wear armor and govern the elements, but in these reliefs they are hybrids. The second exception is found on the east pedestal base. In the middle of the frieze (of the side that faces inward) is a baby’s head with wings, carved in high relief and surrounded by heavily undercut foliage (Figure 36). This type of figure may represent the Christian seraphim, which is among the highest choir of

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66 Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubenstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1986), 88. The putto was appropriated by early Christians for use on funerary sculpture (sarcophagi) and in catacombs. The same idea of transportation of the soul was used in both pagan and Christian contexts.
angels, and closest to God. I suggest that the leafy patterns make it remindful also of fertility and that it is an adaptation of pagan Roman images of foliate genii or amoretti as well as of early Christian imagery.67 At the center of the composition, the winged head is the most important figure of the relief. As a seraphim, it represents divine love and in this carved image the head is shown smiling, as though in adoration of the Virgin Mary who favored and appeared at this holy site. Another exception to the pairs of figures is the standing child holding something in his hand that resembles a piece of fruit; he faces the seraphim and may also represent an angel, although this is unclear (Figure 37).68 These two reliefs are the most visible to worshippers in the chancel who have climbed the steps in their devotion to the Virgin to pray before the image of the Madonna and Child.

The marine hybrids relate closely to the Marian painting they are designed to glorify. As the Mother of God, Mary was assigned many roles by humanity. She was

67 Ibid., 92. Often, as in the church of San Clemente, Rome, foliate motifs represent fecundity, abundance and the heavenly realm. The apse mosaic at San Clemente was designed to look like an early Christian apse decoration, and the inscription in the apse of San Clemente explains why the foliate motif was appropriate as an adaptation of early Christian imagery. "This vine shall be a symbol of the Church of Christ, which the law makes wither but which the Cross brings to life." There is also a connection between the vine and the Eucharist.

68 The significance of children in a society with a relatively high mortality rate cannot be underestimated. Because of the frequent waves of persons infected with plague, Venetians were particularly apt to plead for intervention against contamination. In addition, promotion of charity, good deeds and devotion were central elements to the function of the Church as a place where donations were gathered for the needy and redistributed, on behalf of the Madonna and Child. Severe outbreaks of the plague swept through Venice, and between 1456 and 1528 there were fourteen outbreaks. Interestingly, the first line of the Senate’s decree of 17 April 1464 stated that, "Every possible measure must be taken against the plague, and the first of such remedies is to beg for the grace and mercy of our God and savior Jesus Christ" (Chambers and Pullan, eds. Venice: A Documentary History 1450-1630 [Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992], 114-115).
the holy saint, governess of the celestial bodies whom Venetian merchant mariners invoked for protection against natural calamity while carrying out their trading ventures. As the Queen of Heaven, she was mediator between humanity and God, and became associated with a long line of lunar female divinities. She was considered the Star of the Sea, or Stella Maris, as a result of a medieval mistranslation, and Venetians were particularly apt to invoke the Virgin as protectress to calm the waters and grant their vessels safe passage throughout the Mediterranean.69 Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) especially liked the imagery of Mary as Star of the Sea and used it aptly in his Homily no. 2: "If the winds of temptation arise, if you are diving upon the rocks of tribulation, look to the star, invoke Mary. If you are tossed upon the waves of pride, of ambition, or envy, or rivalry, look to the star, invoke Mary."70 The interrelationship between the moon and lunar control of the ebb and flow of the tides was well known by the late Quattrocento. Saint Bernard’s homilies evoked visual imagery of Christian souls tossed about on stormy seas and his writings were widespread by the time the Lombardi created the imagery for the Miracoli. Because publications of Bernard’s writings were both popular and available in Venice by the 1480s, it seems

69 Marina Warner, Alone of all her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), 262. When Saint Jerome translated the Gospel, he equated the name Miriam with stilla maris, or a drop of the sea. Sometime between Saint Jerome’s translation and the Quattrocento a scribe unwittingly miscopied the word stilla as stella.

70 For translations of Bernard’s verses, see In Missus Est, in Mabillon, ed., Oxford Book of Medieval Latin Verse (Oxford, 1928), 162-4,
reasonable to imagine that Bernard’s writings directly inspired the imagery at the Miracoli.71

Devotion to the Virgin Mary considered her the embodiment of several lunar properties: fertility, constancy and tidal control.

Unchanging and precise, yet in constant flux, the moon vividly symbolizes the idea of eternity; therefore, when adopted by the Virgin, it stands for both her eternal predestination in the creator’s scheme and for the undying and invincible existence of the Church…. the Virgin was associated not only with the moon, but also with other planets of the firmament…. Mary appears as the ocean’s guide, the pole star, winking benignly overhead to make life’s journey safe.72

In the creation of four pedestal reliefs, members of the Lombardo shop, but primarily Tullio and Antonio Lombardo, seized the opportunity to express deep, complex ideologies about Mary’s place within the mythology of Venice concerning the city’s link to the sea as well as its mythical foundation on 25 March, the day of the Annunciation. As the framing imagery of a miracle-working painting of the Madonna and Child, the potent symbolism of the reliefs is uniquely Venetian.

Among Venetian sailors who wrestled with the forces of the sea was the belief that their only salvation from its destructive whims would come from divine intervention. The reliefs may be understood in this sense: they deliver a message of Christian salvation in Venetian dialect. The triumph of Christianity is thus commemorated in the sea reliefs of the Miracoli. This triumphal message is perhaps signified through not only the relief

71 See Benjamin Paul, “Jacopo Tintoretto and the Church of San Benedetto in Venice,” Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz (2005), 377-78 and note 11. Bernard is linked to the monastery of San Benedetto in Chioggia, a part of the Venetian holding of the terrafirma. San Benedetto was taken over by the Chiarvalle del Colomba, of which Bernard was founder and first Abbot.
72 Warner, Alone of all her Sex, 261-262.
imagery but also the shape and ensemble of the reliefs on the arch framing the high altar area. Perhaps most importantly, the imagery is connected to the idea of Mary as Stella Maris, whose guidance protected them, a seafaring people.

The pedestal relief facing outward into the raised chancel on the west side of the Miracoli represents the eternal human struggle with the temptations and difficulties of the wildness of nature. One winged baby seems to be pulling the hair of the marine creature. Another figure appears to be blind and searches for support (Figure 38). Interestingly, Tullio and Antonio left the iris uncarved on this figure, suggesting an inner emotional dimension. It presses its hand to the chest of a baby in a gesture that appears to be either seeking assistance from or pushing away the child.

The other pedestal relief that faces out into the raised choir area on the east side of the Miracoli exhibits an aura of calmness and submission. Here, nature and humanity have achieved a harmony, with the wildness of the sea creatures tamed by the humanness of the babies, suggesting that the forces of nature are controllable only through the intervention of God. Christian Venetians would have been intimately familiar with this idea. “The use of mythological creatures, half human and half animal, to indicate

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73 Debra Pincus wrote about the impression that an uncarved iris was intended to make in reference to the figure of Justice on the Andrea Vendramin Tomb, now in Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice, which she believes was directly inspired by a figure of a Kore at the Museo Archeologico. See “An Antique Fragment as Workshop Model; Classicism in the Andrea Vendramin Tomb,” Burlington Magazine 939 (1981): 345. In reference to the figures of Virtues on the Tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin, Luchs wrote that the carved irises contribute to the emotive expressive elements of the sculpture and that they were derived from both antique Hellenistic and modern Venetian sources (Tullio Lombardo and Ideal Portrait Sculpture, 50).
mankind’s baser nature was common in the Renaissance.” If one visually reads the reliefs together from left to right (or west to east), the way they relate to each other seems significant. On the left, nature and humanity are at odds, but the conflict is subdued by the presence of Mary, as manifested by the miraculous painting, and an amenable relationship appears to be resolved. The sea creatures would have been understood by Venetians as symbols for worldly dangers, particularly sea dangers, while the seraphim would have been understood as symbolic evidence of a divine presence in the Miracoli, which was verified through the miracles performed by Mary. Countless devotees through their faith, insight and revelation felt the reality of Mary’s presence.

In the extraordinary illusionism of the reliefs at the Miracoli the figures emerge from nonrepresentational backgrounds. The omission of background detail serves to call attention to the actual blocks from which the reliefs were carved. In these examples, the

75 Luchs interpreted the emotion expressed by the sea creatures as “the pain of exclusion from paradise.” The hybrid creatures are not admitted entrance into paradise because of their dual species, and perhaps as an extension of a denial to the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church, (Tullio Lombardo and Ideal Portrait Sculpture, 50). Mantegna’s Expulsion of the Vices from the Garden of Virtue, c.1500, is an example of this idea of the expulsion of a vice, depicted as a hybrid human, in this case a centaur, who is prominent amongst the cast of characters being expelled. Interestingly, he and a she-goat are half submerged in water in the foreground, an allusion to the wickedness that dwells in the untamed water. The unknown world was still a frightening space. In Tullio and Antonio’s time the Mediterranean was a volatile body of water.
76 Wendy Stedman Sheard, “The birth of monumental classicizing relief in Venice on the onore di Michelangelo Muraro, 1984, 158, wrote about the figures that they, “project outwards toward us from a neutral limit . . . we might think of this effect as forward or volumetric as opposed to inward or spatial illusionism. It is a sculptural, plastic kind of . . . effect, the opposite of the kind . . .that is drawn fundamentally from painting.”
figures come forward from the plane of the relief as opposed to creating a sense of recession behind an imaginary plane. The hybrids are in extraordinarily high relief, especially in contrast to the bas-relief of the pilasters and plinths above the marine hybrid reliefs.

While this dimensionality may be due to the desire to make the sea creatures more visible from a distance, as the reliefs are small in relation to the scale of the church, other reasons may have determined their appearance. For one, the bulky sea figures draw attention to the flatness of the large planes of marble around the chancel area that form the arch, the imagery of which seems orderly in contrast to the writhing figures of the bases. This distinction between the quieter upper level reliefs and the more chaotic atmosphere depicted in the pedestal reliefs may allude to the orderliness Christians imagined heaven would offer.

I believe that the vibrant, lyrical figures of the bases have certain features that are linked to antique pagan and early Christian sources and that the imagery is compounded of a variety of meanings. Of lesser significance than their primary function to glorify the Virgin and Child, the marine hybrids might also refer to a legendary mythological race of sea monsters from Rhodes, the Telchines. Ancient authors such as Strabo and Suetonius wrote about their precociousness and the traditional mythology characterizes them as a destructive breed that attacks nature. They were renowned for their accomplished skills as sculptors, their deficiency in poetry and mischievous personality. When they recited their poetry, they were so loud and bombastic that
the words were rendered ineffective.\textsuperscript{77} As sculptors, their works were so lifelike that they were continually running away from them; this is “an example of the type of anecdote beloved by Renaissance artists.”\textsuperscript{78} It is tempting to suggest that the Lombardo brothers intended the analogy to be drawn between themselves and the Telchines, for they may have considered themselves as lively as their creations and also to be inventive sculptors whose envious competitors belittled their works and abused their reputations.\textsuperscript{79} The Lombardi wanted to align themselves with the artists of antiquity, specifically Greek antiquity, and perhaps they went as far back as the legendary source of their discipline. In this sense, the Lombardo can also be considered engaged in the artistic argument that characterized the Renaissance and later periods, the \textit{paragone}. If the marine figures are carved poetry, the implied statement is that poetry is closer to sculpture than to painting and that sculpture is better suited to convey poetic themes.

A possible reference to the creative art and prowess of the Telchines can be seen in the figures of a marine monster with a headband and a winged amoretto, which appears on the west pedestal base (Figure 39). The hybrid has carved irises, an indication that the

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\item \textsuperscript{77} Gregory Crane, “Tithonus and the Prologue to Callimachus’ “Aetia,”” \textit{Zeitschrift fur Papyrologie und Epigraphik} 66 (1986): 278.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Jacobsen, “The Meaning of Mantegna’s Battle of Sea Monsters,” 625.
\item \textsuperscript{79} See Strabo, \textit{Geography} xiv. 2 and x. 3, (Loeb Classical Library, trans. H.L. Jones) in Jacobsen, “The Meaning of Mantegna’s Battle of Sea Monsters,” note 13. Jacobsen notes that prior to 1475 Mantegna was aware of Strabo’s account through the translations of Guarriento of Verona and from Francesco Filefo. A translation of Strabo’s text was also in Venice (now in the Laurenziana, see his note 17). In 1490 Rizzo and Codussi judged the Lombardo workshop’s progress on the façade of the Scuola Grande di San Marco. Luchs stated that although the conclusions of Rizzo and Codussi are not recorded, the result was that Pietro Lombardo was replaced with Giovanni Buora as proto. In \textit{Tullio Lombardo and Ideal Portrait Sculpture}, 39.
\end{itemize}
figure has the ability to see, like an artist, and the winged figure perched on the hybrid’s tail has uncarved irises, perhaps a demonstration that the figure is a representation of a sculpture.\textsuperscript{80} The tail of this hybrid is also an interesting case; it is carved not as a reptilian scale from nature, but as an abstracted stylized type of scale found in moldings such as those that can be seen all along the lower order entablature of the exterior, above the exterior doorways, and along the upper story arcade as well as the interior cornice at the first level (Figure 40).

In Venice, images of marine hybrids, while not frequently depicted in churches, were nevertheless considered appropriate sacred adornment.\textsuperscript{81} It is a well-known convention that the defeated lay at the foot of the victor and at the Miracoli, the baser creatures in the reliefs are at the foot of the divine image of the Madonna, paying deference to the Virgin’s miraculous interventions. The reliefs show the victory of Christianity over non-belief, in this instance antique pagan subjects. Furthermore, they work to promote the cult of Mary in Venice and her association with the mythic foundation of Venice. Although the Virgin was appropriated as protectress of many Italian cities, Venetians believed they had a special connection to Mary.

\textsuperscript{80} There is documentary evidence this idea was present in Venice by 1475 in the form of a translation by Francesco Filelfo of the \textit{Dionysiaca} by Nonnos. The translation could have been known in academic circles as early as 1427, according to Jacobsen, “The Meaning of Mantegna’s Battle of Sea Monsters,” 625-626. I question whether the Lombardi equated themselves with the irascible Telchines as a dramatic foil for the workshop as a whole.

\textsuperscript{81} In Florence, about 1495, Filippino Lippi used this trope in his depiction of hybrids meant to look like stone at the base of the throne of the Madonna in the Nerli Chapel, Santo Spirito. This same type of subordination is used at the Miracoli.
Perhaps the most important prototypes for these reliefs came from Greco-Roman sources. The clearest antecedents are reliefs from sarcophagi featuring watery themes, such as a Sea Thiasos, a marine procession.\textsuperscript{82} Because of their formal correlation, three particular sarcophagi are of a type that may have inspired the Lombardo workshop. Among these is a fragment once visible on the Quirinal in Rome in the vicinity of Santi Apostoli on the property of the Colonna family during the second half of the Quattrocento (Figure 41). It shows a naked amor perched on the coiled tail of a triton with a Nereid between them.\textsuperscript{83} Another sarcophagus (Louvre, Paris) features a thiasos. Nereids, sea centaurs, a sea bull, and winged putti or amoretti are engaged in a raucous procession with musical instruments (Figure 42). Their heads alternately are inward and outward-facing, which heightens the sense of movement and procession.\textsuperscript{84} A third Roman sarcophagus features putti playing among the limbs of nereids and tritons who support a scalloped shell that holds a portrait of the deceased (Figure 43). To the far right, one triton firmly pulls at the arm of a putto leading him away from the action in the center of the relief.\textsuperscript{85} There are other sarcophagi that influenced Venetian artists, but the reliefs of these three sarcophagi represent the same sense of movement and activity evident in the Miracoli marine hybrid reliefs.

\textsuperscript{82} Reproduced in Bober, \textit{Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture}, 133-134, are selected sarcophagi known to Renaissance artists.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., (cat. 102). A drawing (Christ Church, Oxford), which is likely of this relief, has been attributed to a Venetian artist.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., (cat. 103), Until the seventeenth century, the relief was at San Francesco a Ripa in Trastevere Rome.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., (cat. 104), This sarcophagus front, which was unearthed in Siena was created at the end of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century or the beginning of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century C.E.
and figures displaying emotional character and lively movement were vital resources for the pedestal reliefs.

Antique Roman sarcophagi could have been easily studied in Venice in the collections of antiquarians, in nearby Padua and in Ravenna, which was an important source for the Lombardo workshop in terms of the final designs for the Miracoli. Pietro was in Ravenna in 1483 to work on the sepulchral tomb of Dante, while at the same time work was underway at the Miracoli (Figures 44 and 45). The antiquarian elements of the tomb (bucrania linked by festoons of fabric, the triangular pediment with the underside of the cornice mutules interspersed with rosettes, or paterae in coffers as a reference to libations and altars, the rustication of the exterior stones and the stepped dome) and the patronage of Bernardo Bembo call attention to Ravenna’s history as a Roman outpost as well as to the Lombardo shop’s link to the circle of literati patronage in Venice. ⁸⁶ Bernardo Bembo was an important humanist and politician active in the Veneto, with an equally important library.

Tullio is considered the first significant Venetian sculptor to adopt and transform classical imagery and style. Among the sources that may have inspired him are stone reliefs that were formerly placed on the interior of the Miracoli below the organ on the left wall of the nave (Figures 46 and 47). These reliefs were fragments from the series of Ravenna Thrones of the gods. ⁸⁷ In Tullio’s time they were thought to be the work of Praxiteles or Polyclitus, and were first recorded in Venice in 1355. The figural types of

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⁸⁷ Bober, Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture, 90.
the amoretti in these reliefs must have been influential for the Lombardo shop, but especially for Tullio and Antonio, because similar figures can be seen at the pedestal bases that flank the main portal at the Scuola Grande di San Marco, a commission the Lombardo shop completed almost simultaneously with the Miracoli project (Figure 48).

Another important stylistic choice the Lombardi made in the orientation of the church is that the apparent ‘Greekness’ of the Church makes it splendid and worthy of adulation. Pyrgoteles *Madonna and Child* above the main entrance (Figure 49), the two reliefs from Ravenna thought to be the work of Praxiteles, which were installed under the organ and the pastophory plan are most striking examples of the Miracoli’s Greekness. The Lombardi made every effort, as well, to decorate the space in a manner befitting their interpretation of Greek ornamentation. The similarities to the Ducal Chapel, San Marco, are striking in this regard.

San Marco, a focal point of the city, served as the Lombardo shop’s most potent source of inspiration for the Miracoli. Both San Marco and the Miracoli encase precious images of the Madonna and Child inside marble frameworks, and the profusion of carved sculptural detail in both churches makes them remarkably similar. San Marco is the most Byzantine-like structure in Venice; it was designed to be reminiscent of the Church of the Twelve Apostles in Constantinople. It is a shrine to Saint Mark and is thought to contain the image of the Virgin Mary by Saint Luke, the *Madonna of Nicopeia*. The exterior of San Marco is entirely clad in richly veined marbles and features intricate carving and reliefs. The floor patterns of the elevated chancel at the Miracoli are reminiscent of the opus sectile found in San Marco, but perhaps most significant in its resemblance to San
Marco is the arrangement of the chancel, raised above the crypt. San Marco must have been the source the Lombardo shop drew from when they solved the problem of where to place a sacristy in the Miracoli.

There are four sculptures that are absorbed into the balustrade that frames the stairway and leads to the Madonna and Child painting (Figure 50). This balustrade turns in a ninety-degree angle and terminates in a pulpit at both ends resulting in a double pulpit arrangement. At the intersections of these sections of balustrade are two figures, Saint Francis and Saint Clare. At the other terminating points, closest to the miraculous image, are the angel Gabriel and the Annunciate Virgin (Figures 51, 52 and 53). Authorship of these figures is difficult to determine, but it is likely that Tullio and Antonio were responsible for the designs. The iconography of these four sculptures would have served as potent reminders of the Franciscan doctrine of the Immaculata, because they represent the Annunciation, Saint Francis and Saint Clare, the founders of the male and female mendicant Franciscan orders. The sculptures are beautifully rendered with a very high sheen, polished not only by the artists but by the many hands of penitent worshippers at the foot of the miraculous Madonna.

While San Marco provided the stimuli for the Miraco, the Church of the Miracoli may have also been inspired by monuments outside Venice that were associated with the Virgin’s miracles. In Florence, for instance, Andrea di Cione’s tabernacle in Orsanmichele might have been influential for the Lombardi because it, too, enshrines a miracle-working painting of the Madonna in a chapel that celebrates the Virgin Mary
(Figures 54 and 55). Whether or not the Lombardi knew the Orsanmichele tabernacle, the purpose for each was similar. There are similarities in terms of the sumptuousness of materials, the use of prophets and virtues, the motifs of tendrils sprouting babies heads and the presence of both carved and uncarved irises. A marble balustrade serves to separate each painting from the public and the frame functions as a hortus conclusus, or enclosed garden. All’antica costumes are seen in the figural sculptures and the mood of the carvings within the ensemble pay respect to the Virgin. Orcagna’s tabernacle at Orsanmichele of intricately carved marble portrays scenes from the life of the Virgin, various types of angels, theological and cardinal Virtues, including Justice, Virginity, Obedience, Patience, Fortitude, Faith, Hope, Charity and Humility. The aggregate symbolic meaning serves to glorify those qualities of the Madonna that were valued and striven for by the communal society at large, and by women in particular. This is the didactic purpose of the Orsanmichele iconography, to instruct the devout and to glorify the purity of the Virgin, while honoring the presence of the Virgin at this shrine.

The tabernacle that enshrines the miracle working painting by Bernardo Daddi was built after the plague of 1348 with private donations. There is a hierarchy of representation that places allegorical Virtues around the base of the tabernacle and images of prophets and angels in the horizontal upper register above the painting. Closest to the Madonna and Child in the vertical sections are angels with musical instruments and liturgical objects. Some angels wear armor and others hold attributes of the Virgin. These

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angels function symbolically as attendants of the Virgin; they serve to protect and honor her mystical presence in the physical painting. An element of the iconographic program that is shared with the Miracoli is the reference to Mary as the *Stella Maris*. Originally the image of Christ appeared in an overhead arch, but this image was changed to a star comprised of two overlapping triangles. The image of Mary as the *Stella Maris* seems to have significance for shrines housing a miracle-working painting of the Madonna and Child.89

Another Florentine church with a miraculous image also employs an elaborate tabernacle to protect and enclose the image. At Santissima Annunziata, in Florence, Michelozzo designed a tabernacle to enclose a miraculous image of the Annunciation, which was painted in the thirteenth century by a monk. While he was painting, the Servite friar became frustrated with his inability to create a truly beautiful Madonna and he fell asleep in a state of despair. The miracle occurred when an angel completed the Virgin's face as he slept. In the fifteenth century, a marble tabernacle in the form of a small temple was commissioned from Michelozzo by Piero de'Medici to house the miraculous painting. The structure of the tabernacle is laden with row upon row of moldings and the overall effect is one of lavish decoration (Figures 56 and 57). In the church of the Miracoli, the tabernacle of Orsanmichele and the tabernacle of Santissima Annunziata, the areas around the paintings are partitioned off from the general public and

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89 Kreytenberg observed that elements of the iconography of the Tabernacle inside Orsanmichele “...may represent the *Stella Maris* from the Litany of the Virgin, the star of the sea, which guides mankind, like mariners to a safe harbor, to paradise,” (*Orcagna's Tabernacle*, 41). At the Miracoli, the marine hybrids are like lost mariners who find their way through Mary.
the rest of the church by a balustrade. They all seem to serve the function of sequestering the Virgin to maintain her purity.

Michelozzo’s tabernacle displays a luxurious treatment through heavily fluted columns supporting an even heavier entablature with carved ovolos, egg and dart, dentils and fictive swags. Two Corinthian and two Composite capitals form the support for the massive entablature. The frieze features putti or angels heads inside discs against a blue background connected with profuse ribbons and swags in an all’antica style.90

These two Florentine examples, Orcagna’s tabernacle at Orsanmichele and Michelozzo’s design for Santissima Annunziata, are examples of smaller chapels within larger structures. If the domed area of the Miracoli were separated from the nave of the church, the elevated chancel would be similar to the Florentine tabernacles built for miraculous paintings. However, the miracles performed by the Virgin for those who prayed before the Master Niccoló painting were considered so numerous and significant in Venice that a whole church was erected quickly and dedicated to the Immaculate Virgin to honor her purity and in thanks for her divine intervention.

The exterior sculptural program at the Miracoli reflects the varying styles of Pietro and his two sons, and it relates to the interior as an appropriate decorative scheme to honor the miraculous painting and the Virgin. Just as with the imagery on Orcagna’s tabernacle in Orsanmichele, figures of prophets appear on the upper level of the exterior.

90 Florentine newly-weds still make their way to the Annunciation shrine at Santissima Annunziata in order for the bride to leave her bouquet with the Madonna. The Miracoli is popular in contemporary Venetian culture as a wedding chapel so that the bride may arrive and depart in style via boat.
Their presence is moralizing and coincides with the lineage of purity of the Virgin. Along the flanks of the church the prophets are inset within the spandrels of the arcade on the second story (Figures 58 and 59). These prophets represent Old Testament figures who had visions that predicted the coming of Christ and that relate Mary’s role as the bearer of the Son of God. The scrolls that swirl around these figures are a reference to their writings. Linked to these Old Testament prophets is the idea of Mary as the Second Eve, the only human born without sin and the only one therefore capable of bringing about the redemption of humanity. These prophets display a range of techniques, quality and styles, some outstanding and others less imaginative and formulaic.

Evidence was found in the cleaning of the Miracoli that the metal tracery of the rose window in the tympanum above the entrance was once gilded.\textsuperscript{91} There is proof that elements of the façade of the Scuola Grande di San Marco were also gilded in the past.\textsuperscript{92} There is also visual evidence that several sculptural elements at the courtyard of the Miracoli were once richly gilded.\textsuperscript{91} With the recent cleaning of the Miracoli, these prophets held up well since they were carved from durable Istrian limestone. For information on the 1988-1998 restoration see Save Venice http://www.savevenice.org/site/pp.asp?c=9eIHKWMHF&b=68200. They helped orchestrate the total restoration of many Venetian buildings and works of art. The project at the Miracoli was lead by Ottorino Nonfarmale under the direction of Venetian architect Mario Piana, and it was sponsored in part by The Getty Grant Program, Paul F. Wallace Foundation.\textsuperscript{92} “From 2002 to 2004, the Arte & Restauro restoration firm restored and conserved the façade, starting with the upper tier and working in stages down to ground level. The most interesting discovery that emerged during the restoration is that parts of the façade were once richly gilded. The visible traces of red pigment, once thought to be decorative paint on the façade, were instead identified as the tinted base preparation for the application of gold leaf,” http://www.savevenice.org/site/pp.asp?c=9eIHKWMHF&b=67644. The red pigment they refer to must be bole, the sticky red substance applied to things that were to be gilded to give them a more saturated golden color.
Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista were gilded, if there is any truth in Lazzaro Bastiani’s painting of the Scuola receiving the relic of the True Cross (Figures 60 and 61), for in the background if one looks through the columns to the left, under the elevated walkway, the eagle in the pediment above the ceremonial processional portal is rendered in gold and stands out in contrast to the background. Today, the eagle is as white as the slab of marble behind it in the tympanum (Figure 62). In Bastiani’s image the cornice around the segmental arch surrounding the eagle, the cornice below the eagle and the capitals also appear to be gilded.

The tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin by Tullio, with the assistance of Antonio, also features gilding of foliate ornamentation, wings of angels and capitals. The entire effect, with the use of black marble niche backgrounds in contrast with the white marble figures, produces vibrancy and liveliness between the architectural elements of the tomb and the figural sculpture (Figure 63). The most salient example for this is San Marco and its rich encrustation with gold mosaics. Gold is not only a costly material but refers to the heavenly realm. I propose that based on these examples from the Lombardi’s oeuvre, it is plausible that the Miracoli also once featured gilding. It is tempting to suggest the marine hybrids once could have stood out from their unarticulated white backgrounds. The foliate elements of the pilasters of the triumphal arch at the Miracoli as well as the sensitively carved plinths might have originally appeared much like the same elements in the Vendramin Tomb.

The effect of gold would have again, called to mind the sea of gold tesserae in the Basilica of San Marco and the dazzling effect of those mosaics. On a more intimate scale,
the Miracoli reliefs, or perhaps the triumphal arch pilasters, might have caused the same mesmerizing effect. In San Marco, the foliate designs are described on the floor, in the mosaic pavement, in the overhead vaulting and in the plutei that serve as a balustrade for the former so-called women’s galleries. The foliate carvings, which sometimes include hybrid creatures, animals and sarcophagi-like isocephalic compositions, are from different periods with different styles, but they served to contain and separate the women in an elevated sphere, up and away from the men and the city, much like the Virgin in her hortus conclusus behind the balustrade at the Miracoli. The Basilica is divided into earthly and heavenly realms, where the shimmering gold mosaic represents the divine. Similarly, at the Miracoli the common area of the nave is divided from the sacred area of the raised chancel.

The Vendramin Tomb is significant as a turning point within the oeuvre of the Lombardo family because of the connection to Ermolao Barbaro, Andrea Vendramin’s grandson. It was his duty to execute his grandfather’s will and Barbaro, as a meticulous translator of ancient authors, was responsible for the importation of humanist ideals to the Veneto. He is best known for his translation of the Roman author Pliny. As an important writer, philologist and teacher, and as a grandson of the Doge, he could have urged a program that was appropriately antiquarian for such a wealthy individual.93 His relationship with Tullio and the broader Venetian artistic community serves as an important link for the dissemination of information about antiquity to Renaissance

Venice. This intellectual relationship resulted in a monument that was non-imitative in style and that transformed antique forms into contemporary sculpture.

The Lombardo family was connected to many of the influential artists and humanists in Venice and the impression they made on the Lombardo is seen throughout their works. In fact, they knew Cristoforo Moro, an intellectual, senator and ambassador to Rome. Moro hired Pietro to design and build the chancel of San Giobbe (under construction by 1471, but perhaps not completed until 1493) before Moro was elected Doge (r. 1462-1471). For this commission, Moro employed Pietro to build a new portal, choir, presbytery and a pendentive dome with reliefs of the Evangelists. The pendentive dome solution for spanning a recessed choir area was repeated in the Miracoli project. The work they did in San Giobbe seems very important for the Miracoli.

Moro was an ambassador to Rome and would have had the opportunity to observe the art of that city. When he worked with Pietro at San Giobbe, this scholar and statesman might have passed on information about Roman art to the artists, or given specific directions that followed Roman precedents for the commission. If Tullio, Antonio or Pietro travelled to Rome or Florence, there is no documentation for the travel. Authors sometimes conclude they must have travelled south because of the perceptive use of Roman and Tuscan elements, but these could have been easily disseminated via prints. Sheard believed that Tullio’s complete comprehension of the techniques and the

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95 Richard Goy, *Building Renaissance Venice*, 163, observed that Moro left 10,000 ducats to the architectural projects at San Giobbe because of his personal friendship with Bernardino of Siena, who came to preach there in 1443. In addition, while he was Doge he directed funds to San Giobbe, suggesting that the church clearly meant a great deal to Moro and he selected an artist prudently.
stereometric quality of Roman second-century reliefs is proof of travel to Rome. Sheard wrote that Tullio must have studied some works in person due to such “detailed and subtle comprehension of the formal and technical properties of Roman grand style imperial reliefs, and particular reminiscences and readaptations of composition, motifs, and techniques typical of the Aurelian reliefs on the Arch of Constantine and in S. Marina."\textsuperscript{96} However, her strongest argument concerning what Tullio might have learned through studying the sculpture in person concerns an interest in large high-relief sculptures, those that are nearly completely realized figures and are barely attached to the relief, which can be found in ancient Roman reliefs and can be seen in Tullio’s work. These feature the main character of the relief. The effect these characters have on viewers walking past the reliefs is one of hovering or perceived movement.

Moreover, Hadrianic and Aurelian sculptors developed the device of detaching the principal foreground figures, creating a ‘stereoscopic effect,’ in that the nearly three-dimensional figures, normally the emperor and his close associates, appear to move in relation to the background as the viewer crosses in front of the relief. The resultant illusion of movement is an optical metaphor for the awe-inspiring potency of the emperor.\textsuperscript{97}

In this instance Tullio transferred the potency of the emperor for a Christian purpose, as is shown in the reliefs of Saint Mark on the façade of the Scuola, the three reliefs he and his brother did for the Santo in Padua as well as the marine hybrids in the Miracoli.

The Lombardo shop was adaptable and attentive to the cultural undercurrents of their adoptive city, Venice. They learned quickly and forged an imagery that was based


\textsuperscript{97}Ibid.
on a wide variety of sources. The iconography of the Immaculata is present in their work at the Miracoli and this important association between the Miracoli project and Pope Sixtus IV helped demonstrate to a wider audience the vast skill of subtle representation the workshop was capable of producing. They were sensitively aware of the climate of religious fervor and in their relationships with literati, such as Barbaro, they explored new methods of representation derived from ancient classicizing models.
CONCLUSION

While work was underway at the Miracoli, the workshop undertook several other important commissions. In addition to the commission for the Tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin, the workshop completed the lower portions of the façade of the Scuola Grande di San Marco by 1490. Between 1481 and 1485 they completed another major tomb for a Doge, Niccolò Marcello (Figure 64), as well as the tomb of Bishop Zanetti in the capella maggiore of Treviso. Tullio also repaired a major collapse of the cupola in the capella maggiore in the Cathedral at Treviso in 1488. Together, these commissions represent important public works for the Veneto and in them we can see an emergent emotive classicism that was sensitively aware of their cultural context.

In 1506, Antonio was called to Ferrara to decorate the Camerino d’Alabastro of Duke Alfonso d’Este, a patron eager to demonstrate his humanist knowledge. Alfonso’s goal was to commission paintings and sculptures that directly reflected the ancient

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98 In the process of executing this repair, Tullio bailed out his father’s poorly designed cupola. In September 1486 Pietro promised to have it repaired at his own expense and by 1488 Tullio had agreed to oversee the reconstruction. Therefore, Tullio must have already been a skilled foreman by this time and he must have learned those techniques from working at the Miracoli. Luchs, *Tullio Lombardo and Ideal Portrait Sculpture*, 37.

writings of Greek and Roman authors. In what remains of Antonio’s work from Ferrara, the mood and motifs are very similar to the Miracoli (Figure 65). The small-scale mythic dramas are so highly decorative, but more than that they demonstrate erudition and an active response to antiquity as well as poetic ideals like the dreamy, otherworldly representations of fantastical mythological beings.

The hallmarks of Tullio’s and Antonio’s styles were developed at the Miracoli and I believe that it was the formative experience with the project’s emphasis on both antiquarianism and Christianity that allowed Tullio and Antonio to go on to their later successes. Luchs states that the brothers worked together to develop a new expressionistic interpretative visual vocabulary in the four main reliefs in the Miracoli, which were derived from an antique heritage but were executed in a distinctly contemporary Venetian visual language. With their specific contributions at the Miracoli, the Lombardo workshop was able to formulate their individual personal styles at this time and the elements of their expressive visual vocabulary flourished as a result of thoughtful experimentation.

At the Miracoli, they found a solution to reconcile the humanist demand for *all’antica* decoration while still fulfilling a devotional program suitable to honor and glorify the Madonna and Child, and specifically to reinforce the Virgin’s role as Immaculata. Their work here represents the first instance in Venice of a dedication to the

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101 During Tullio and Antonio’s careers, they completed such illustrious commissions as tombs of several Doges, architectural and sculptural commissions for no less than three Scuole Grandi, the Church of San Salvatore and the Zen Chapel in San Marco. (See Appendix C of this text for a complete list.)
Virgin of the Immaculate Conception; therefore, the iconographic program of the Miracoli was not pre-determined by tradition but was implemented in a creative way.

The study of the art of the Lombardo and its impact on the Italian peninsula is important to further studies of late Quattrocento and early Cinquecento sculpture in Venice and throughout the Italian city-states. They established a system of signification through their novel iconography and the prestige they gained from the exquisite execution of the Miracoli project thrust them into success. However, the specific cultural moment out of which they emerged was teeming with vivacious artistic life and their role as the emergent workshop in the decades directly before and after 1500 reflects their environment.
FIGURES

Figure 1. Lombardo workshop, Three Marine Hybrids and Putti (facing outward) and Two Marine Hybrids with Amoretti (facing inward), 1485-9, base of triumphal arch, chancel, Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice.
Figure 2. Lombardo workshop, Two Marine Hybrids with Two Putti and Seraphim (facing outward) and Two Marine Hybrids and Two Clothed Babies (facing inward), 1485-89, base of triumphal arch, chancel, Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice.
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Figure 23. Giovanni Bellini, *Saint Peter*, c.1500, oil on canvas, formerly interior of organ shutters at Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice, now Gallerie dell’Accademia, Venice.
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Figure 30. Pedestal base detail of west pilaster of triumphal arch (detail of Figure 1), Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice.
Figure 31. Pedestal base detail of west pilaster of triumphal arch (detail of Figure 1), Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice.
Figure 32. Pedestal base detail of east pilaster of triumphal arch (detail of Figure 2), Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice.
Figure 33. Pedestal base detail of east pilaster of triumphal arch (detail of Figure 2), Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice.
Figure 34. Outermost figure on west pilaster pedestal base (detail of Figure 30), facing nave, Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice.
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Figure 48. Lombardo workshop, 1488-1495, pedestal base flanking main portal, Scuola Grande di San Marco, Venice.
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Figure 54. Andrea di Cione, Tabernacle, 1359, Orsanmichele, Florence.
Figure 55. Andrea di Cione, *Burial and Assumption of the Virgin*, east side of tabernacle, 1359, Orsanmichele, Florence.
Figure 56. Michelozzo di Bartolomeo, Tabernacle (east side), 1447-61, marble and bronze, Santissima Annunziata, Florence.
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Figure 58. Lombardo workshop, *Prophet*, Istrian stone, east side exterior, Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice.
Figure 59. Lombardo workshop, *Prophet*, Istrian stone, east side exterior, Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice.
Figure 60. Lazzaro Bastiani, *The Relic of the Holy Cross is offered to the Scuola di S. Giovanni Evangelista*, c. 1494, tempera on canvas, 319 x 438 cm, Gallerie dell’Accademia, Venice.
Figure 61. Lazzaro Bastiani, *The Relic of the Holy Cross is offered to the Scuola di S. Giovanni Evangelista* (detail of Figure 60), c. 1494, tempera on canvas, 319 x 438 cm, Gallerie dell’Accademia, Venice.
Figure 62. Pietro Lombardo and workshop, Lunette with Eagle, atrium of the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista, Venice.
Figure 63. Tullio Lombardo, *Tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin*, polychromed marble, c.1490-94, Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice.
Figure 64. Pietro Lombardo and workshop, *Tomb of Doge Niccolo Marcello*, 1481-1485, marble, Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice.
Figure 65. Antonio Lombardo, marble relief, 1506-1516, formerly Camerino d’Alabastro, Ferrara, now Hermitage, St. Petersburg.
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APPENDIX A: LOMBARDI CONTRACT

The following document is excerpted from D.S.R., *Chronichetta dell’Origine, Principio, e Fondatione della Chiesa, & Monasterio della Madonna de Miracoli di Venetia*, (Venice), 1664, (in Ralph Lieberman, *The Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli*, 97). On 4 March, 1481, Pietro Lombardo is explicitly mentioned, not as architect but as executor. The ceremonious language of the original is carried over to the translation.

“Premovono tanto alli Signori Procuratori gl’interessi di questa Gloriosa Immagine, che per maggior grandezza, & splendidezza della Chiesa da farsi consultorono con migliori periti di farne fare un Modello per ciascuno, & quello, che fosse stimato il migliore, & il più bello, quello si eleggesse, & conforme a quello si facesse la Chiesa. Onde havendone hauti diversi, piacque a tutti piu quello nella forma, del quale hoggi si vede fatta la Chiesa, & così per lo stabilimento di esso adi quattro Marzo 1481. Radunatisi al luogo solito convennero con scrittura publica, & determination ferma con Mastro Pietro Lombardo, era all’hora il primo della professione, & in gran stima, havendo fatto poco prima il Sepolcro del Serenissimo Pietro Mocenigo Dose di Venetia in S. Giovanni Paolo, acciò dovesse far questa Chiesa nel modo, e forma descritta nel disegno, che era in man di sier Francesco Zen uno de Procuratori della Chiesa tutta a sue spese di robba, fattura, & ferri alli balcony dale fondamenta fino alla prima cornice, con tre porte come si vedono per prezzo, & pagamento de ducatti mille correnti da contarsegli secondo il suo bisogno: Et firmata in questa forma la scrittura si mise subito il Lombardo à ordinar, e far provisione della robba necessaria, secondo lo stabilimento fatto, come poco dopo poi si
mise all’opera con molti operari per compir la fabbica più presto, che hauesse potuto; come essequi.”

Author’s Translation:

All of the Gentleman Procurators moved, in the interests of this Glorious Image, that to make the greater grandeur and splendor of the Church, they consulted with the best experts to make a Model for everybody and that what they esteemed as the Best and the most beautiful, that they must elect it and the Church must be made to conform to it. Having had various models, everybody liked one with the form that the Church looks like today and so voted for the establishment of it on 4 March 1481. Gathered together at the usual place they met with a public document, and with firm determination with Master Pietro Lombardo, who at that time was the best of the profession and was very highly esteemed, having done little before the Tomb of the Serenissima Doge Pietro Mocenigo of Venice in Santi Giovanni e Paolo, for this reason he must make the Church in the style, and form described by the design that was in the hand of sir Francesco Zen one of the Procurators of the Church all of his own expense for things [materials], such as the irons to make the balconies from the foundations up to the first cornice, with three doors as one sees for price and payment of one thousand ducats to account for according to its need: And signed in that form the writing [contract] ordered from the Lombardo, and to make provisions of the things [materials] necessary, second the building having been made, as soon after then it was put to work with many workers to complete the building as soon as he was able to; as homage.
Below the Angelo Amadi account of the contract between the Procurators and Pietro Lombardo follows the facts as recounted by D.S.R., in *Memorie Lasciate da Francesco Amadi della sua famiglia*, Museo Civico Correr, Venice, Raccolta Gradenigo, ms 56.

“In questo giorno 1581: (sic) à di 4 Marzo; Mag:ci m. Francesco Diedo, el Dottor, m. Francesco Zen, et m. Marco Soranzo, et noi m. Alvise et Angelo Amadi, co’l nome di dio, e della Gloriosa Vergine Maria, concludessimo marcado con Maistro Pietro Lombardo, qual fece il Sepolcro di m. Pietro Mocenigo, Prencipe di Venetia, in S. Giovanni, e Paulo; di far à tutta sua spesa, si di Quadri di terra Cotta, come di Pietra Viva, con sua Calcina, et ferri delle Finestre. Et Porte 3: con tre Figure di Marmo, sù; una sopra là Porta Grande, di nostra Donna, con due Angeli dai Canti, et due Profetti sopra le alter due. Fodrata tutta di fuora di Marmi circumcirca; cioè taole di quelle dà Pisa, dil luoco chimato dá Carrara, dove sono i più belli, i quail deno esser vergadi, et belli; over dei greci belli, et vergadil ligadi di Pietre dà Verona negre, et rosse, della Miglior sorte, che se possa trovar; dal basamento fin là prima cornise, per precio di ducati mille; cioè ducati 1000: Et tutto à sua spesa, et questo appar per i patti, et dissegno del Modello, qual stà appresso di m. Francesco Zen Procurator di detta Chiesa.”

Translation:

In this day 1581: the 4th of March; The magnificent sir Francesco Diedo, the doctor, m. Francesco Zen, and m. Marco Soranzo, and us Alvise and Angelo Amadi, in the name of
God, and of the Glorious Virgin Mary, concluded to do business with Master Pietro Lombardo, who made the Tomb of m. Pietro Mocenigo, Prince of Venice, in Santi Giovanni e Paolo; to make all of his own expense, of the pictures in terra cotta, as those of Living stone with its mortar, and irons of the windows. And 3 doors: with 3 figures in marble; one over the Main Door, of our Lady, with two Angels Singing, and two Prophets over the other two. Fully lined the exterior with Marbles, that is just like those the blocks of the type from Pisa, and of Carrara, where they are the most beautiful, which they have to be vergadi [green marble] and beautiful; use beautiful Greek, and vergadi ligadi [perhaps here he means Verde Larissa from Greece] of black stone from Verona, and red, of the best quality, that it is possible to find; from the base end to the first cornice, for the price of one thousand ducats; that is 1000 ducats: and all at his own expense, and this appears for the pacts, and designs of the Model, which stays near m. Francesco Zen Procurator of the said Church.
APPENDIX B: PROCESSIONAL ROUTE

A. Ca’ Amadi
B. Santa Marina (procession sang lauds here)
C. Calle del Paradiso (Niccolo di Pietro’s workshop was near the Ponte del Paradiso, hence the diversion to this street)
D. Santa Maria Formosa
E. Santi Giovanni e Paolo
F. Parish Church of San Canciano
G. Santa Maria dei Miracoli
## APPENDIX C: CHART OF LOMBARDI COMMISSIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pietro (sculptor/architect)</th>
<th>Tullio (sculptor/architect)</th>
<th>Antonio (sculptor)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1435</td>
<td>Born near Carona, Lombardy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1455</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tullio born (circa)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1460-63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Antonio born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1462-63</td>
<td>In Bologna, S Petronio July 1462-May 1463</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1464</td>
<td>By this time, with family in Padua</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1464</td>
<td>Began Tomb of Doge Antonio Roselli, Santo, Padua</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1467</td>
<td>8 April, Finished Roselli Tomb, likely moved to Venice this year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1460s</td>
<td>Tomb of Doge Pasquale Malipiero, SS Giovanni e Paolo, Venice, First Venetian tomb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1470s</td>
<td>Building of the church of S Giobbe taken over after Gambello, commissioned by Doge Cristoforo Moro</td>
<td>Assistant at S Giobbe, Venice</td>
<td>Assistant at S Giobbe, Venice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1470s</td>
<td>Early 70s, Frari choir screen, prophets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1474</td>
<td>Pietro and family first documented in Venice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1475</td>
<td>Adult colleague of his father by this date, Tullio about 20</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adult colleague of his father by this date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1476-81</td>
<td>Tomb of Doge Pietro Mocenigo (d. 1476), SS Giovanni e Paolo, Venice</td>
<td>Tomb of Doge Pietro Mocenigo (d. 1476), SS Giovanni e Paolo, Venice</td>
<td>Tomb of Doge Pietro Mocenigo (d. 1476), SS Giovanni e Paolo, Venice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Pietro</td>
<td>Tullio</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1480s</td>
<td>Tomb of Lodovico Foscarini (d. 1480) S Maria dei Frari, destr</td>
<td>Tomb of Lodovico Foscarini (d. 1480) S Maria dei Frari, destr</td>
<td>Tomb of Lodovico Foscarini (d. 1480) S Maria dei Frari, destr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1480s</td>
<td>Tomb of Jacopo Marcello (d. 1484) S Maria dei Frari</td>
<td>Tomb of Jacopo Marcello (d. 1484) S Maria dei Frari</td>
<td>Tomb of Jacopo Marcello (d. 1484) S Maria dei Frari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1481-85</td>
<td>Tomb of Doge Niccolo Marcello, formerly S Marina, moved to SS Giovanni e Paolo</td>
<td>Tomb of Doge Niccolo Marcello, formerly S Marina, moved to SS Giovanni e Paolo</td>
<td>Tomb of Doge Niccolo Marcello, formerly S Marina, moved to SS Giovanni e Paolo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1481-1489</td>
<td>Architecture and sculpture, Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice</td>
<td>Architecture and sculpture, Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice</td>
<td>Sculpture, Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1482-1483</td>
<td>Dante Tomb, Ravenna</td>
<td>First signed work, a Holy Sepulchre for S Sepulcro, Venice, four angels now in S Martino</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1484</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1485-1488</td>
<td>Tomb of Bishop Giovanni Zanetti (d. 1484), Treviso Cathedral</td>
<td>Tomb of Bishop Giovanni Zanetti (d. 1484), Treviso Cathedral, shared relief ornament for sarcophagus</td>
<td>Tomb of Bishop Giovanni Zanetti (d. 1484), Treviso Cathedral, Portrait of the bishop, shared relief ornament for sarcophagus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1485</td>
<td>San Giobbe chancel completed</td>
<td>San Giobbe chancel completed</td>
<td>San Giobbe chancel completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1485-86</td>
<td>Supervised work at Cappella Maggiore and cupola for Treviso Cathedral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1486</td>
<td>Dome for Treviso Cathedral collapsed, 15 September</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1488</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contract stated Tullio agreed to carry out all restorations of collapsed dome, Treviso Cathedral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Pietro</td>
<td>Tullio</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1489-1490</td>
<td>Construction supervisor, Scuola Grande di San Marco, Venice, lower section of façade designed with Buora</td>
<td>Helped carve four pictorial reliefs flanking the two main portals at Scuola San Marco, two lions, <em>Baptism of Anianus</em> and <em>Healing of Anianus</em></td>
<td>Helped carve four pictorial reliefs flanking the two main portals at Scuola San Marco, two lions, <em>Baptism of Anianus</em> and <em>Healing of Anianus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1489-1495</td>
<td></td>
<td>Continued work on reliefs at Scuola Grande di San Marco</td>
<td>Continued work on reliefs at Scuola Grande di San Marco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1490</td>
<td>Pietro replaced by Buora at Scuola Grande di San Marco</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1490-1494</td>
<td></td>
<td>Designed and largely executed Tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin (d. 1478) SS Giovanni e Paolo, Venice</td>
<td>Helped execute Tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin (d. 1478) SS Giovanni e Paolo, Venice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1490-1510</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ca d’Oro bust length double relief of <em>A Couple</em> with signature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1495</td>
<td>Altarpiece for the chapel of the Madonna, Mantua commissioned, never completed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1498</td>
<td><em>Protomagister</em> of the Doge’s Palace, two fireplaces completed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1499</td>
<td></td>
<td>Takes over workshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Commissioned to complete relief for the Cappella del Santo, Padua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Pietro</td>
<td>Tullio</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1500-1504</td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed relief <em>Miracle of the Reattached Leg</em> for Cappella del Santo, Padua</td>
<td>Completed relief <em>Miracle of the Infant</em> for Cappella del Santo, Padua, first signed and documented work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1501</td>
<td>Work done on Dome at Cividale Cathedral</td>
<td>Completed monumental altarpiece relief, <em>Coronation of the Virgin</em>, Bernabo Chapel, San Giovanni Crisostomo, Venice (c.1500-1502)</td>
<td>Commissioned to complete relief <em>Miracle of the Miser’s Heart</em>, never completed, perhaps designed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1502</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Antonio and Alessandro Leopardi receive commission for the Tomb of Cardinal Zen (d. 1501), S Marco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1504</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leopardi left Zen commission, leaving it to Antonio, with Tullio’s assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1505</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Bacchus and Ariadne</em> double bust length relief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1505</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Tomb of Doge Giovanni Mocenigo</em>, Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Pietro</td>
<td>Tullio</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
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<tr>
<td>1505</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May or June, Antonio left Venice for Ferrara prior to work undertaken at Zen Chapel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1506</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed over thirty marble reliefs for Duke Alfonso d’Este’s camerini d’alabastro, Ferrara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1506-1516</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sent to Venice by Duke Alfonso to find assistants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1507</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Submitted lost model for new Scula Grande della Misericordia, Venice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1509</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed Tomb of Doge Giovanni Mocenigo (by 1510)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed Tomb of Doge Giovanni Mocenigo (by 1510)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1510</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed Tomb of Doge Giovanni Mocenigo (by 1510)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1511</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Withdraw from duties as protomagister at Doge’s Palace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1511</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Helped supervise construction of the chapel of the Holy Sacrament, designed by Antonio, Treviso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prepared a model for Isabella d’Este for the Palazzo Ducale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1517</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assisted Tullio at S Salvatore, Venice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tullio completed Zen chapel project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1512-1521</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Played limited role in Antonio’s work at Zen Chapel in S Marco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1505-1521</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Head of stonemason’s guild in Venice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Pietro</td>
<td>Tullio</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
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<tr>
<td>1514</td>
<td>Died in Venice, June</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1515</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Antonio died in Ferrara, March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1516</td>
<td></td>
<td>Funerary chapel for Guidarello Guidarelli, Ravenna, San Francesco</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1520-1525</td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed commission for <em>Miracle of the Miser’s Heart</em>, Santo, Padua (1520-1525)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1525</td>
<td></td>
<td>Again employed by Isabella d’Este</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1527</td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed Matteo Bellati Monument, Duomo, Feltre, Last known work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1532</td>
<td></td>
<td>Died in Venice, 17 November</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>