

sacristy, vestry and treasure chamber referred to as the treasury. This was true at Lincoln too, in the later thirteenth century, where it seems that the sacristan answered to the treasurer. These are indeed treasure houses. But even at Lincoln, it is the sacristy within the treasure house that is signalled as sacred space by its fine vault.

By the later thirteenth century, treasure-storing chambers, whether within a treasure house complex or elsewhere, were increasingly used to store institutional muniments, the documents that recorded rights to the institution's property, and as storage and counting houses for its monies. The only institutional monies discussed here are those for building funds – although at Westminster money from the king was delivered from the royal exchequer in sacks to the clerk of the works. Large ecclesiastical institutions, particularly those that involved communal living (monastics and regular canons), must have had several pots of money divided among the various departments, notably that of the cellarer. This aspect of ecclesiastical treasure storage could usefully be expanded, but almost requires another book.

In short, the decision to privilege the treasury over the sacristy leads to some lack of coherence in argument and obscures some important changes in attitude and approach to church treasures. Nevertheless, this is overall a useful, widely researched, thoughtful and often thought-provoking book.

### **Donatello a Padova: l'attività nella basilica di Sant'Antonio. Le registrazioni contabili dell'Archivio dell'Arca**

By Giovanna Baldissin Molli and Elda Martellozzo Forin. 141 pp. incl. 17 col. ills. (*Centro Studi Antoniani, Padua, 2023*), €35. ISBN 978-88-95908-26-7.

by JEREMY WARREN

No account of the life and work of Donatello (Donato di Niccolò di Betto Bardi, c.1386–1466) would be complete without discussion of the crucial decade the sculptor spent in Padua (1443–53). During his years in the city, he not only created, in the bronze statue on horseback of the *condottiere* Erasmo da Narni (1370–1443), known as *Gattamelata*, the first large-scale equestrian monument since ancient times, but also what must have been a quite extraordinary, and in its way no less revolutionary, high altar for the basilica of

St Anthony of Padua (the Santo). We do not know what Donatello's altar looked like since it was dismantled in the sixteenth century, its sculptures distributed around the basilica and almost all the architectonic elements destroyed or otherwise lost. The surviving elements, mostly in bronze, which include the great crucifix, a hieratic seated Virgin and Child, standing figures of saints and four panels with the miracles of St Anthony, were brought together again in the late nineteenth century in a new high altar designed by Camillo Boito (1836–1914).

The rich trove of documents in the Archivio della Veneranda Arca di S. Antonio relating to Donatello's work at the Santo has long been known. The key documents were first published as early as the 1850s by Bernardo Gonzati,<sup>1</sup> and more recently Antonio Sartori included many of them in his compendium of documents for the history of art in Padua.<sup>2</sup> However, the volume under review contains the first complete transcription of all the documents, many previously unpublished, that survive in the Santo's archive relating to Donatello's activity on behalf of the church.

The book is in two parts: an introductory essay by Giovanna Baldissin Molli, followed by the transcriptions, expertly and punctiliously undertaken by Elda Martellozzo Forin. Baldissin's excellent and wide-ranging introduction helps to set the context. She agrees with Vasari's statement that the sculptor came to Padua in the first place to make the *Gattamelata*, but the *massari*, the authorities at the Santo, would no doubt have moved quickly to engage this famous sculptor. Baldissin shows how the internal arrangements and furnishings of the basilica had since the fourteenth century been through a process of constant evolution, which seems to have reached a height around the time that Donatello arrived in the city – it was in 1442 that the *massari* agreed to build a chapel to house the tomb of St Anthony in the left aisle of the basilica's nave.

The documents relating to Donatello run only from 1444 to 1449 since, unfortunately, the account books for 1450–54 are lost. They therefore cover only the first part of the decade he spent living and working in Padua. The transcription follows the order in which they appear in the account registers and, as a result, not always strictly chronologically, since the books are ordered by the specific *massaro* who was serving as treasurer in any given period. They contain a wealth of information relating to Donatello's work on the high altar,

firstly expenditure on materials, the highest expenses relating to purchases of metal for the figures and reliefs, but also of white wax, essential in the making of bronzes, which was bought from apothecaries. Then there is the rich cast of individuals receiving payments for their services, including the numerous assistants, here described as *garçoni*, that Donatello brought from Florence and who began to receive payments from 1447. Although some of his helpers are relatively well-known, such as Urbano da Cortona or Nicolò Pizzo, others are simply bare names, for example the stonemasons Meo and Pipo, or even anonymous, among these the unnamed woman who in 1449 was paid for gilding the Cross onto which Donatello's figure of Christ was hung.

Although the documents in the Archivio dell'Arca do not help with the vexed questions about the original appearance of Donatello's high altar and the disposition of the various elements of this complex structure, they help to map in often extraordinary detail the business of the making of several of its most important elements, including the great crucifix, the series of six standing saints and the seated figure of the Virgin and Child. They provide a window into the very human daily life of an artist's workshop, down to the supply of wine to Donatello or canvas for the windows of his house. Baldissin's essay functions as a commentary on the work that was carried out during these years, providing important contextual material on the ways in which trades and shops involved with the project functioned in Padua. Not least, she also tells us about the *massari* who encouraged, oversaw and arranged the financing of Donatello's great Paduan enterprise. The book makes a very welcome addition to the corpus of literature on this great artist.

<sup>1</sup> B. Gonzati: *La basilica di S. Antonio di Padova descritta e illustrata*, Padua 1852–53.

<sup>2</sup> A. Sartori: *Documenti per la storia dell'arte a Padova*, Vicenza 1976.

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