

Observations regarding the *San Zeno Altarpiece* by Andrea Mantegna

KOMATSUBARA Aya

Doshisha University, Kyoto

Andrea Mantegna (1431–1506), one of the most famous Renaissance painters from northern Italy, was known for his knowledge of antiquity and as a result, numerous scholars have searched for the sources of his paintings and frescoes. However, limited studies have focused on another important characteristic of Mantegna: his realistic expression and spatial representation, which not only influenced artists in northern Italy but also Albrecht Dürer in Germany. However, this aspect has not been adequately discussed. Therefore, this study examines the *San Zeno Altarpiece* (1456–1459) (Fig. 1), a magnificent triptych commissioned by Gregorio Correr, the Abbot of the Benedictine monastery of San Zeno, and links the source of its framework and spatial representation to the Flemish art that Andrea Mantegna would have seen in Ferrara.

Although the most diffused form of altarpieces in northern Italy during the mid-15th century were in the gilded, ornate Gothic style, the *San Zeno Altarpiece* included details referring to classical antiquity. Mantegna related its framework to the *sacra conversazione* (sacred conversation), seen in the center of the work (Fig. 2), and its naturalistic technique subsequently became a model for various northern



Fig.1 Andrea Mantegna, the *San Zeno Altarpiece* (the end of 1456–1459), Basilica di San Zeno, Verona.



Fig.2 The main scene of Fig. 1

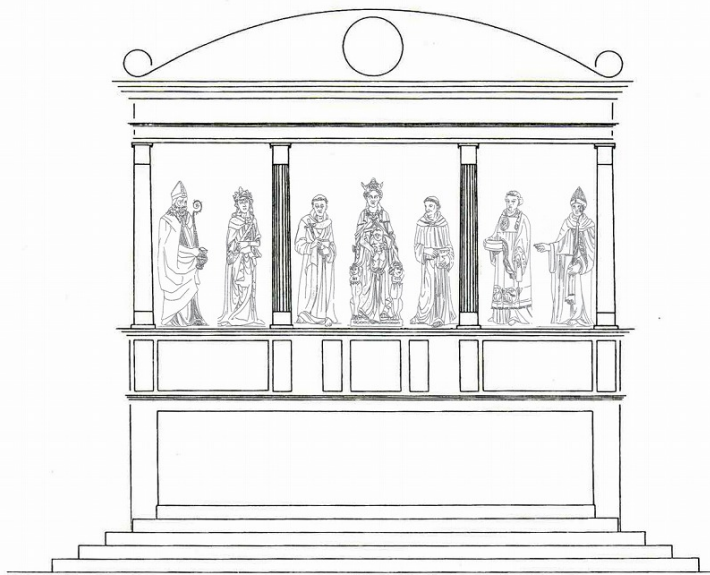


Fig.3 Reconstruction of Donatello's high altar (according to research by White (1969) and Yoshino (1990)).

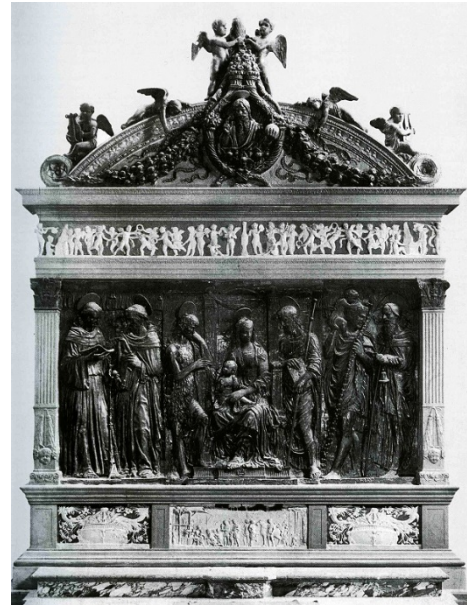


Fig.4 Nicolò Pizzolo, the Ovetari Pala (1450–c. 1453), the pre-World War II photograph, Musei Civici, Gabinetto fotografico, Padua.

Italian painters.

Many scholars[1] have revealed that this altarpiece was derived from the high altar of the Basilica di Sant'Antonio in Padua (1447–c. 1450) (Fig. 3) by Donatello (c. 1387–1466) and the Pala of the Ovetari Chapel (1449–c. 1453)[2] (Fig. 4) by Nicolò Pizzolò (c. 1421–1453). However, even though both these works address the same subject, *sacra conversazione*, as Mantegna's, the *San Zeno Altarpiece* includes a different pictorial representation. Therefore, this study investigates another source of the altarpiece's pictorial representation and framework, and suggests that Mantegna created a unique pictorial space by studying Flemish and Tuscan artwork.

1. The circumstances of the altarpiece's commission and a general overview regarding its motifs

It has been accepted that the *San Zeno Altarpiece* was commissioned in 1456 as one of the works to be included in the expanded apse and crypt of the Basilica di San Zeno[3]. The work measures 480 × 450 cm and the saints depicted in it are approximately 140 cm in length, which is practically life-sized. According to Lightbown, the reconstruction of the basilica was initiated around 1446 and completed on September 26, 1451 with the new altar consecrated in the same year[4]. Therefore, Mantegna's altarpiece was probably commissioned for this new altar and was completed by the end of 1459 since he practically relocated to Mantua by the latter half of 1460. Although it can be confusing, the small inscription of "1443" on the lower edge of the carpet on which Madonna's throne is situated indicates the year when Gregorio Correr received the commandery from his uncle Antonio.

Another reason regarding the commission of this magnificent altarpiece was not only to honor Correr but also to fulfill the need to create a suitable environment for the increasing

number of pilgrims. Two examples include: Padua, where Donatello executed the enormous Sant'Antonio for Basilica di Sant'Antonio to house the relics of the saint; and Mantua, where Marchese Gian Francesco Gonzaga (1395–1444) ordered the medals to accommodate the relics of Mantua (the Blood of Christ) and his son Ludovico (1412–1478) rebuilt the church of Sant'Andrea to house them[5]. Thus, it was plausible that the commission of the *San Zeno Altarpiece* was during this active period of church expansion.

Gregorio Correr was a Venetian noble who was a relative of Popes Gregorius XII and Eugenius IV[6]. He studied classical literature at Vittorio Feltre's school in Mantua where he had a close relationship with Ludovico Gonzaga, who later became a patron of Mantegna. For this reason, we cannot neglect the possibility of Correr's classical influence in Mantegna's altarpiece.

The *San Zeno Altarpiece* comprises the main scene in which the Madonna and Child are surrounded by the saints (the *sacra conversazione*), and three scenes of the predella (from left to right: the *Agony in the Garden*, the *Crucifixion*, and the *Resurrection of Christ*). The entire structure represents the façade of a Greek temple. The three scenes are in fact copies created by Paolo Caliari (1753–1835) and the originals are currently in the Louvre and the Museum of Tours. The red and white rose bower that surrounds the Madonna and the saints alludes to the *hortus conclusus* (the *enclosed garden*) as a symbol of the Madonna. The blue sky in the main scene appears to be linked to that in the predella, which creates the illusion that the main scene is floating in the air.

The program of the altarpiece is understood as follows[7]: the main scene commemorates the Incarnation; the three scenes of the predella allude to the prediction of the Death and Resurrection of Christ; and the entire altarpiece represents the Salvation. The sleeping Apostles in the *Agony in the Garden* connote the Death of Christ, while the *Crucifixion* and the *Resurrection of Christ* represents His Death and Resurrection. The miracle of the Resurrection is also emphasized by the contrast between the sleeping Apostles in the *Agony in the Garden* and the awakened soldiers in the *Resurrection of Christ*.

Regarding the loggia as an ancient temple, Cieri Via and Osano emphasized the analogy between the temple and the *Tabernaculum*, and suggested that Mantegna's altarpiece alludes to the location where the Incarnation was achieved[8]. Additionally, the saints and the throne of the Madonna indicate that the temple should be Paradise or Heavenly Jerusalem, in accordance with the description of God seated on the throne in the *Apocalypse*[9]. Therefore, in this scene, the Incarnation and the glory after the Death of Christ are simultaneously represented.

2. Genealogy of the form of the *San Zeno Altarpiece* and its differences to earlier altarpieces

Regarding the source of inspiration for the San Zeno Altarpiece, numerous scholars have enumerated Donatello's high altar in the Basilica di Sant'Antonio and Pizzolo's Pala of the Ovetari. However, Donatello's was dismantled in 1579 and even though various reconstructions[10] were initiated, there is no documentation that describes its architectural form and basis. It is hypothesized that Pizzolo's Pala of the Ovetari Chapel was similar to Donatello's temple-like architectural form because Pizzolo was one of the assistants who worked on the high altar of Sant'Antonio and there was no similar type of altarpiece in Veneto before that time.

Therefore, this article supports the findings by Yoshino[11] who corrected the disposition of the saints by consulting the article written by White[12] (Fig. 3).

There would be no objection against the explanation that Mantegna's altarpiece was derived from that of Donatello and Pizzolo since these have commonalities in which the saints are symmetrically lined up on both sides of the Madonna and the scenes are unified by a framework that represents an ancient temple. In addition, it has been indicated that the technique of perspective, low viewpoint, was indebted to the reliefs in Donatello's high altar[13]. It is plausible that the technique of creating a one-point perspective and a pictorial space with profound depth was due to Donatello's influence. However, according to Yoshino[14], there are certain differences between pictorial work of Mantegna and plastic work of Donatello. Furthermore, the uniqueness of Mantegna's work can be explained by focusing on these differences in addition to earlier works.

The *San Zeno Altarpiece* differs from previous works based on the following two points: 1) the altarpiece is represented as if it is a temple floating in the sky by unifying the framework and spatial representation with the naturalistic blue sky; and 2) the base of the throne of the Madonna is higher than its surroundings. Conversely, we cannot view such spatial depth in neither Pizzolo's Pala of the Ovetari Chapel nor Donatello's high altar. More specifically, in northern Italy, the most diffused style of altarpiece was that of the late-Gothic polyptych. For instance, the *hortus conclusus* completely encloses the Madonna by a high wall[15]. Thus, we can conclude that the spatial representation of Mantegna's altarpiece was unique among Venetian art of the same period and that he created a work with spatial depth that differed from earlier works by utilizing illusionistic representation to the best of his ability.

The insertion of a naturalistic blue sky into the image had been adopted before Mantegna's time, as seen in the *Miracle of the Repentant Son*, one of the reliefs in the high altar of Sant'Antonio; and the *Lazara Altarpiece* (1449–1452) by Francesco Squarcione (c. 1395–c. 1468), the master of Mantegna. In these works, they created realistic images by rejecting the traditional gold background. In particular, Donatello used the sky to add depth and he utilized the low viewpoint for increasing its monumentality. This aspect is similar to Mantegna, but Donatello's relief appears as if our view is obstructed since four-fifths of the upper and lower edges are occupied by edifices. Conversely, in the *San Zeno Altarpiece*, the sky in the background can be seen through the architecture, which enhances the feeling of depth and creates the illusion that one could enter the pictorial space. Furthermore, his painted sky is not only in one part of the work but also throughout the entire altarpiece.

3. Flemish art as a source of inspiration

The composition of the *Crucifixion* was, as Meiss indicated, the panoramic *plateau composition* frequently used by the school of van Eyck[16]. In fact, there is one *Crucifixion* (at the end of the 15th century) by a Paduan painter housed at the Musei Civici in Padua, and as Meiss suggested, the Flemish works of the same type had already existed or had been imitated by Paduan painters during Mantegna's lifetime. Furthermore, it has been documented by Ciriaco d'Ancona (1391–1453) and Bartolomeo Fazio (c. 1400–1457) that there was one Flemish triptych

by van der Weyden in which he painted the *Deposition* or *Entombment* and *Expulsion from the Garden of Eden*[17]. Although the work does not currently exist, Ciriaco praised its naturalistic representation as a “rather divine technique than that of human hands (*potius divina quam humana arte*).” In this triptych, a king is shown kneeling in front of a naturalistic landscape, which includes a decorated porch and narthex. Other important works by van der Weyden include: *Annunciation Triptych* (c. 1440, the Louvre, Paris, and the Galleria Sabauda, Turin) in which it depicts narrative scenes; *Abegg Triptych* (c. 1445, Abegg-Stiftung, Riggisberg); the *Miraflores Altarpiece* (c. 1440, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin) (Fig. 5); the *Deposition* (c. 1435, Museo del Prado, Madrid); and the *Lamentation* (c. 1450, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence).

There is a close resemblance between the representation of the materials and the plastic drapery of Mantegna’s altarpiece and those of Flemish works. Two examples include: the expressive representation and the gestures in Mantegna’s *Crucifixion* to those in the *Deposition* by van der Weyden; and the *Agony in the Garden* by Mantegna with *Lamentation* by van der Weyden. In addition, the following three characteristics in the *San Zeno Altarpiece* are indebted to Flemish art: 1) composition that uses the framework as a part of pictorial space; 2) illusionistic representation; and 3) the insertion of a naturalistic blue sky in the background of the entire altarpiece.

With regard to spatial composition, the technique of creating a pictorial space as if it was real is similar to Flemish art. Examples include the *Ghent Altarpiece* by van Eyck, where there are shadows in the framework, and works by van der Weyden in which the border between the depicted framework and the real one made of wood appears to be blurred.

In Ciriaco d’Ancona’s admiration of the altarpiece by van der Weyden, he referred to “deep green grass, flowers, trees, and the leafy and shadowy hills, in addition to the porch and narthex[18].” This further indicates that these works depicted not only the architecture but also the surrounding landscape. Therefore, this author proposes that the *Ferrara Altarpiece* by van der Weyden was similar to the *Miraflores Altarpiece* (Fig. 5) in which the depicted architecture and the landscape were combined. It is plausible that the lost *Ferrara Altarpiece* (created before 1449) adapted this compositional technique since this characteristic of van der Weyden appeared



Fig.5 Rogier van der Weyden, *Miraflores Altarpiece* (c. 1440), Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

in his works before the mid-15th century[19]. Therefore, it can be suggested that Mantegna utilized this technique of spatial representation for the *San Zeno Altarpiece*.

Osano revealed that the lost *Ferrara Altarpiece* had a certain influence on the works of Jacopo Bellini[20]. He indicated that the composition of the *St. John Altarpiece* by van der Weyden was similar to that of Bellini's drawing, the *Preaching of the Christ* in which the architraves and arches were used as a window through which the observers could view the narrative scene. It is important to note that Jacopo was the father-in-law of Mantegna and this window type aspect was also used in the *San Zeno Altarpiece*. This indicates that the northern Italian painters positively adopted the spatial representation of Flemish art[21]. In addition, Mantegna created space between the columns of the framework and depicted architecture by painting pilasters in the foreground and inserting the garland and putti before the pilasters. This approach was also used by van der Weyden in which he created a pictorial space by painting figures in the foreground.

On the basis of these similarities, we cannot ignore the influence of the works of van der Weyden on Mantegna's spatial representation. According to Gombosi, Siense painter Angelo Parrasio (?–c. 1456) and Michele Pannonio (c. 1415–c. 1475) studied the oil paintings of van der Weyden and executed several works as court painters in Ferrara[22]. Of their works, there was the *Thaleia* (Fig. 6)[23] created around 1450 in which there is a goddess seated on a throne in front of a blue sky. This minute representation of the sky in the background is probably derived from that of van der Weyden, which is also similar to that of Mantegna. Considering that the naturalistic landscape and realistic representation of the materials of Flemish art were highly praised at the time, it is plausible that northern Italian painters such as Mantegna learned these techniques by studying the works of van der Weyden.

4. Originality of Mantegna

Another important aspect of Mantegna's *San Zeno Altarpiece* is its consistent design throughout the altarpiece. The main scene of the altarpiece is connected to that of the predella by the insertion of a blue sky into the background of all of the scenes. Although he modified the level of detail according to the size of the scene, yet there is consistency in all the scenes. This particular technique cannot be found in other northern Italian works before the *San Zeno Altarpiece*.

This approach of connecting the background of the scenes with the predella can also be found in Tuscan art. However, in northern Italy, this unification of pictorial space was not widespread. Therefore, with regard to Mantegna, it is possible that he was inspired by Giotto's



Fig.6 Michele Pannonio, *Thaleia* (c. 1450), Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.

work in the Scrovegni Chapel (1304–1306) nonetheless it is very unique that he used it to connect the main scene and the predella of the altarpiece. Additionally, we can emphasize another unique characteristic of Mantegna's altarpiece. If we extend a line from the unnatural posture of the sleeping St. John in *the Agony in the Garden* to that of the axis of the cross in the *Crucifixion*, and that of the soldier before the tomb in the *Resurrection*, they arrive at a vanishing point in the main scene. Based on this aspect, it is apparent that Mantegna closely related the main scene with the predella. Furthermore, the base of the Madonna's throne is extremely high and the ancient bas-relief was inspired by the real rose window at the Basilica di San Zeno. This unique characteristic, in which the center of the bas-relief is the vanishing point of the main scene, cannot be found in the works by Donatello or Pizzolo[24].

Finally, in the *San Zeno Altarpiece*, the blue sky creates the impression that there is continuous space throughout the scene and each motif leads our eyes to the base of the throne in the main scene. By placing the Madonna and Child on the throne, they are situated on the vanishing point and thus they obtain more dignity. This extremely unique throne was a new design that Mantegna created by studying the works of Tuscan and Flemish artists. The unique design of the basement such as an ancient relief, throne, and circle motif was not adapted to succeeding North Italian altarpieces. However, after the *San Zeno Altarpiece*, the solemn throne of the Madonna with its high base and rich ornamentation appeared in many altarpieces including those by Giovanni Bellini. Although the individual details differed per artist, this throne was transformed from a rather simple and low one to its highly decorated version that dignified the Madonna and Child. In this sense, the *San Zeno Altarpiece* served as a magnificent model for the *sacra conversazione* in Veneto.

Conclusion

Based on these aforementioned observations, it can be concluded that the *San Zeno Altarpiece* by Mantegna created new, realistic *sacra conversazione* by absorbing the realistic representation of space and expanding the Tuscan classical form derived from Donatello. Additionally, he applied the ancient motif learned from Donatello and Leon Battista Alberti to the throne of the Madonna and produced a new visual effect that enhanced the monumentality of the altarpiece. Furthermore, he inserted the naturalistic and illusionistic panoramic landscape into the scenes of the predella, thus enhancing the visual effect of the work in its entirety. By challenging the Flemish representations of landscapes, he merged the spatial representation of the North with the classical taste of the South and created a Renaissance masterpiece that inspired many subsequent altarpieces including: the *St. Martin Altarpiece* (1485, Basilica di San Martino, Treviglio) by Bernaldino Butinone and Bernardo Zenale, the *Sacra Conversazione* (Philadelphia Museum of Art) by a certain Veronese painter, and those by Giovanni Bellini. Furthermore, due to the combination of Gregorio Correr's extensive knowledge, the humanistic environment in northern Italy, and the excellent skills of Andrea Mantegna, an enthusiastic connoisseur of antiquity, the *San Zeno Altarpiece* became the artistic standard for all northern Italian *sacra conversazione* that characterized the complex pictorial space and solemn throne of the Madonna.

Note

- [1] C. Cieri Via, “Note sul simbolismo archeologico di Andrea Mantegna,” in *Studi in onore di Giulio Carlo Argan*, Roma, 1984, I, pp. 103–126, C. Cieri Via, *Andrea Mantegna pala di San Zeno*, Venezia, 1985, K. Clark, *The art of Humanism*, New York, 1981, p. 120ff., A. De Nicolò Salmazo, “Alla fine della formazione padovana di Andrea Mantegna, La pala di Gregorio Correr per l’altare maggiore di San Zeno a Verona”, in S. Marinelli, P. Marini, a cura di, *Mantegna e arti a Verona 1450–1500*, Verona, 2006, pp. 37–51, L. Puppi, *Il trittico di Andrea Mantegna per la Basilica di S. Zeno Maggiore in Verona*, Verona, 1972.
- [2] The terracotta work for the Ovetari Chapel in the Church of the Eremitani in Padua. Regarding the details, I consulted the pre-World War II photograph (Musei Civici, Gabinetto fotografico, Padua) since it was badly damaged by bombardment.
- [3] It is considered that the execution of the altarpiece was between the end of 1456 and 1457 since Gregorio Correr and Marchese Ludovico Gonzaga refer to this altar in their letters written at the end of 1456. C. Cieri Via, *op.cit.*, 1985, p. 7ff., L.Puppi, *op.cit.*, p. 21ff., V. Herzner, “Il Trittico di Andrea Mantegna per la Basilica di San Zeno Maggiore in Verona”, in *The Art Bulletin*, 1972, LVI, p. 441.
- [4] R. Lightbown, *Mantegna –with a complete catalogue of the paintings, drawings, and prints–*, California, 1986, p. 68.
- [5] For more details regarding the relationship between the Gonzaga family and the relics of Mantua, see J. Woods-Marsden, *The Gonzaga of Mantua and Pisanello’s Arthrian Frescos*, New Jersey, 1988.
- [6] See G. degli Agosti, *Notizie storico-critiche intorno la vita, e le opere degli scrittori viniziani*, Venezia, 1752, pp. 109–134, V. da Bisticci, (a cura di P. d’Ancona ed E. Aeschilimann), *Vite di uomini illustri del secolo XV*, Milano, 1951, M. E. Cosenza, *Biographical and Bibliographical Dictionary of the Italian Humanists and of the World of Classical Scholarship in Italy, 1300–1800*, II, Boston, Mass., 1962, pp. 1110–1112, C. de Rosmini, *Idea dell’ottimo precettore nella vita e disciplina di Vittorino da Feltre*, Bassano, 1801, R.Lightbown, *op.cit.*, pp. 65–66, 72,
- [7] R. Lightbown, *op.cit.*, p. 70ff., C. Cieri.Via, *L’antico fra storia e allegoria*, Roma, 1985, pp. 92–93.
- [8] S. Osano, *Kioku no naka no Kodai (“Antiquity in the Memory” (in Japanese))*, Chuokouronbijyutsusyuppan, 1992, p. 227, C. Cieri Via, *ibid.*, pp. 92–93, C. Cieri Via, *op.cit.*, Venezia, 1985, p. 13ff.
- [9] C. Cieri Via, *op.cit.*, 1984, p. 17.
- [10] See G. Fiocco, *Donatello al santo*, Padova, 1965, V. Herzner, “Donatellos “pala over ancona” für den Hochaltar des Santo in Padua: Ein Rekonstructionversuch,” in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 33, 1970 pp. 89ff., H.W. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, Princeton, 1963, p. 162ff, J. Pope-Hennessy, *Donatello: Sculptor*, New York, 1993, p. 280ff., J.White, “Donatello’s High Altar in the Santo at Padua Part One: The Documents and Their Implications,” in *The Art Bulletin*, 1969, LI, no. 1, pp. 1–14, J.White, “Donatello’s High Altar in the Santo at Padua Part Two: The Reconstruction”, in *The Art Bulletin*, 1969, LI, no. 2, pp. 119–141, A. Yoshino “Donatello no Sei Antonio Seidou Syusaidan Ritsuzouhaiti Saikou (Reconsideration on the desposition of the saints of the High Altar of the Basilica di Sant’Antonio in Padua (in Japanese))” in *Bijyutsushi (Art History)*, 1990, no. 127, pp. 1–13, A. Yoshino “Donatello no Sei Antonio Seidou Syusaidan Ritsuzouhaiti no Fukugen (Reconstruction of the Disposition of the Saints of the High Altar of the Basilica di Sant’Antonio in Padua (in Japanese))” in *Bijyutsushigaku (Art History)*, 1990, no. 11, pp. 91–114.
- [11] A. Yoshino *op. cit.*
- [12] J. White, *op. cit.*
- [13] K. Clark, *op.cit.*, p.116, M. L. Dunkelman “Donatello’s Influence on Mantegna’s Early Narrative Scenes” in *The Art Bulletin*, 1980, LXII, pp. 226–235.
- [14] A. Yoshino, *op. cit.*
- [15] See E. Borsook, edited by, *Italian Altarpieces 1250–1550 Function and Design*, Oxford, 1994, J.

- Burckhardt, “*Das Altarbild*” *Das Altarbild; Das Porträt in der Malerei; Die Sammler: Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte von Italien*, (Jacob Burckhardt Werke Bd. 6), Basel Schwabe, 2000, (also its English edition by P. Humfrey in 1988 is useful), P. Humfrey, edited by. *The Altarpiece in the Renaissance*, Cambridge, 1990.
- [16] Some examples include: the Crucifixion after van Eyck (Ca’ d’oro, Venice); the Crucifixion of folio 48v from the Heures de Milan (Museo Civico, Turin). The setting of the Crucifixion is on a hill with a panoramic landscape depicted in the distance. M. Meiss, “Jan van Eyck and the Italian Renaissance” in M. Meiss, *The painter’s choice*, New York, 1976, pp. 19–35.
- [17] “Cuiusce nobilissimi artificis manu apud Ferrariam VIII Iduum quintilium N.V.P.A. III Lionellus hestensis princeps illustris eximii operis tabellam nobis ostendit primorum quoque parentum ac e supplicio humanati Jovis depositi pientissimo agalmate circum et plerumque virum imaginibus mulierumque moestissime deploratum imaginibus mirabili quidem et potius divina quam humana arte depictam. Nam vivos aspirare vultus videres, quos viventes voluit ostentare, mortique simile defunctum, et utique velamina tanta, plurigenumque colorum paludamenta, elaboratas eximie ostro atque auro vestes, virentiaque prata, flores, arbores et frondigeros atque umbrosos colles, necnon exornatas porticus et propylea, auro auri simile, margaritas gemmas, et coetera omnia non artificio manu hominis quin ab ipsa omniparente natura inibi genita diceres.” (F., Winkler, *Der Meister von Flémalle und Rogier van der Weyden*, Strasbourg, 1913, p.181ff.); “Ejus est tabula altera in penetralibus Principis Ferrariae, in cuius alteris valvis Adam et Eva nudis corporibus e Terrestri Paradiso per Angelum ejecti, quibus nihil desit ad summam pulchritudinem: in alteris Regulus quidam supplex: in media tabula Christus e cruce demissus, Maria Mater, Maria Magdalena, Josephus ita expresso dolore ac lacrymis, ut a veris discrepare non existimes.” (*Bartholomaei faciei de viris illustribus*, L. Mehus, edited by, 1745, Firenze, p. 48.).
- [18] See note [17]
- [19] See K. M. Birkmeyer, “The Arch Motif in Netherlandish Painting of the Fifteenth Century,” in *The Art Bulletin*, XLIII, 1961, pp. 1–20, pp. 99–112, K. Motoki “Rogier van der Weyden saku St. John Saidanga to Rogier youshiki no tenkai (St. John Altarpiece by Rogier van der Weyden and the Development of the Style of Rogier)”, in *Bijyutsushigaku (Art History)*, 1980, pp. 81–109.
- [20] S. Osano, “Rogier van der Weyden e l’Italia: probremi, riflessioni e ipotesi,” (II) in *Antichità viva*, XX, no. 5, 1981, pp. 5–14.
- [21] A composition similar to this can found in folio 9 of the Louvre Sketchbooks by Jacopo Bellini. However, it requires further consideration to clarify the influence of this drawing on Mantegna’s altarpiece since its chronology is still being discussed. However, regarding the total composition of the framework and pictorial space, the San Zeno Altarpiece is similar to those of the works by van der Weyden than those of the drawings by Bellini.
- [22] G. Gombosi, “A Ferrarese Pupil of Piero della Francesca,” in *Burlington Magazine*, LXIII, 1933, pp. 66–77.
- [23] For the identification of this goddess, see S. Campbell, *Cosmè Tura of Ferrara*, New Haven, 1997.
- [24] C. Cieri Via considered that the putti of the bas-relief was derived from an ancient sculpture and the chair-back was inspired by the actual rose window at the Basilica di San Zeno. She also stated that there were two angels supporting the tondo ornamento and interpreted this design as the fortune of the mortal human, according to the interpretation of the program of the rose window (C. Cieri Via, *op.cit.*, Venezia, 1985, p.17ff.) However, I would like to add that the bas-relief of Donatello and the tombs of the Early Christian period were his source since it is the circular ornament and not the laurel crown in the San Zeno Altarpiece that was supported by the putti in this type of bas-relief.
- Regarding the San Zeno Altarpiece, I also want to emphasize that there are many circle motifs including those behind the throne and at the side of the Madonna. These are common motifs in the works of Brunelleschi, Alberti, and Donatello. In particular, in the works of Alberti, this motif can be seen in the façade of the Church of Santa Maria Novella in Firenze, and the façade and decoration

of the door of the Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini. There is no evidence if Mantegna already met Alberti before his sojourn to Mantua. However, the commissioner Gregorio Correr had many opportunities to work closely with Alberti. They worked as abbreviators of Pope Eugenius IV in 1432 and later traveled with the Pope. Correr also participated at the Council of Firenze in 1439 and witnessed numerous Renaissance buildings being created, especially those by Brunelleschi. Therefore, we cannot ignore Correr as a possible source for Alberti's motifs and the composition of the San Zeno Altarpiece. I propose that additional research can be conducted to reveal Alberti's influence on this particular altarpiece.

* This paper is based on the Japanese version published in *Bigaku (Aesthetics)*, No.237 (Vol.61, No.2), 2010, pp. 61–72.