In Vincenzo Scamozzi’s earliest recorded project in Venice, the young architect undertook to introduce new sources of light into the gloomy interior of the Venetian church of San Salvatore, located a short distance due south of the Ponte di Rialto. Thereby the theme ‘architettura-luce’ makes its appearance at the beginning of Scamozzi’s architectural practice, around 1570, or slightly later, when the canons of San Salvatore called upon Scamozzi to remedy the darkness of their church (“chiesa [...] cieca ed oscura”), which he did, advising opening a lantern in each of the three domes of the nave. Temanza writes that “la Chiesa fu arricchita di quella luce che abbisognava”. As is often the case with Scamozzi’s lanterns the exterior architectural forms are exceedingly simple, with expansive window openings aimed at introducing a maximum of light into the architectural interior. In the immense architectural treatise of Scamozzi’s maturity, his Idea dell’architettura universale, first published in 1615, the architecture of light constitutes a new and not negligible component. Here Scamozzi’s detailed theoretical attention to light appears unique, almost unprecedented in Renaissance architectural treatises. He proposes a systematic typology of architectural illumination (“lumi diversi negli edifici”), differentiated into six and more kinds of light within a construction. “Il lume naturale è uno solo”, writes Scamozzi, “ma per vari accidenti egli può esser alterato non poco: e perciò noi lo divideremo in sei specie”.

In order to explicate the declination of architectural light, Scamozzi indicates on a full-page plate of the Idea the various kinds of light, tracing them on the plan and the elevation of a paradigmatic central-plan edifice, which appears to be further development of the Rocca Pisana. The plate on page 138 of the “Prima parte” of the Idea illustrates, in fact, the lost Villa Bardellini at Monfumo (Treviso), designed by Scamozzi in 1594. In this plate of the Villa Bardellini the six species of light are indicated on the elevation, and the passage of light through the rooms is shown on the plan. The building has at its centre, “una Sala rotonda [...], con quattro gran Nichi negli angoli, la quale si eleva in molta l'altezza; dove appare la sua cupola sopra al tetto” (I, 39). The first instance of Scamozzi’s light typology, “lume amplissimo, o celeste”, is the light of the open, sun-lit sky, indicated in Scamozzi’s elevation diagram by the arc “u-x” over the cupola. Second in Scamozzi’s classification is “lume vivo e perpendicolare”, open skylight received from the “aperture delle Cupole, come della Rotonda di Roma”, and, with regard to the elevation, Scamozzi writes, the diagonal, crossed lines, “o-p” and “r-s”, indicate the “lume vivo, perpendicolare, che dal cielo aperto viene dal-...
l’apertura del sommo della Cupola, e si diffonde nel piano della Sala”. In a similar manner Scamozzi describes and categorizes the diffusion of light throughout the edifice, distinguishing the several cases and trajectories of light, and differentiating among levels of illumination (“forte”, “mediocre”, “debole”), among the directions of light (vertical, horizontal, diagonal), and between the diffusion of direct lighting (“diretto”, “aperto”, “vivo”) and that of indirect lighting (“lume secondario, terziario, riflesso o rifratto”).

In his Discorsi sopra l’antichità di Roma, a commentary, prepared by Scamozzi following his return from Rome around 1580, to a series of vedute of the antichità di Roma engraved by
which the columns are all seen in controbue.

Nearby, at the right, is another columnaded exedra, where the columns are illuminated by the light of the interior space. Also indicative is a near reversal of usual graphic conventions: more notable than the windows closer to the viewer, blacked-out following an established graphic convention of architectural drawing, are the open, white windows, in the background behind, more distant from the viewer. In Scamozzi's ideal restitution of the term e, light, that is illumination depicted by graphic means, enters from the left and from a source not identifiable with the position of the spectator, a source that is located distant from the observer, deep in profundity, so that it can filter from afar through the architectural spaces toward the vantage point of the spectator. Thus it is possible to discern a clear connection between Scamozzi's interest in architectural light, evident in his mature treatise, the Idea dell'architettura universale, and his interest in the diversity of light as reflected in his youthful studies of perspective and of the "scienze antiquarie", of which a first result was seen in his "Tavola delle Terme di Dioclezione". Nor would it perhaps be mistaken to seek the origins of this interest in a scientific matrix, on the one hand, an optic-perspectival matrix, and, on the other, an antiquarian-architectural one.

In Scamozzi's treatise the treatment of the topic 'light' is not restricted to the brief chapter on architectural lighting. Scamozzi's comments to the plates illustrating his own architectural works are often careful to specify the diffusion of light within Scamozzi's buildings. Observations concerning architectural light also
recur in Scamozzi’s treatment of the architectural typologies, “casa antica”, “scale”, “porte”, “finestre”, “sale”, “salotti” and others7. Thus, just as in the Discorsi, in the Architettura universale, the phenomenon ‘light’ emerges as a recurrent motive in the thought of the architect and author. The extraordinary effects of illumination experienced in the Rocca Pisana are amply illustrated in Franco Barbieri’s La Rocca Pisana of 1985.

Nor did the classic passage on the illumination of the Roman Pantheon, that of Sebastiano Serlio in his third book dedicated to “Antichità”, escape the notice of Scamozzi8. To this passage Serlio appended, in his 1584 edition of Serlio, the following annotation, the cross indicating it as among the topics “più gravi, et importanti”: “+ Lume nella parte superiore della Ritonda si dilata con molta gratia, per tutte le parti, come non impedita di cosa alcuna”9. In his treatise Serlio also notes in the Pantheon the presence of a “lume secondo”, which filters into the perimetral chapels through the interior windows in the attic wall. More fundamental to Serlio’s consideration of the Pantheon is a further observation he makes concerning the rôle of light within the architectural space of the ancient Rotunda. Serlio writes that he who finds himself within the Pantheon, even if of “medioce aspetto e presenza”, “se gli accresce un non so che di grandezza, e di venustà” (an analysis to which a Longinian aesthetic is not extraneous, here in a precocious architectural application), and Serlio continues, affirming that “il tutto nasce dal lume celeste, che da cosa alcuna non è impedito”. From these considerations Serlio draws a further and more practical lesson with regard to the presentation of sculptural works of art. Lighting from above (“il lume di sopra”), he writes, is best suited for the spaces where statues are housed, as testify the “diversi tabernacoli, nicchi, et finestrelle” of the Rotunda in Rome.

Serlio’s statuary light, which explicitly serves to amplify and render more beautiful the illuminated sculptures, is a theme which reappears in Scamozzi’s Architettura universale. Here Scamozzi distinguishes very explicitly between what he calls the “container” (“il continente”) and the “contained”, that is the object exhibited (the “cosa contenuta”), emphasizing the nobility and beauty of the exhibited work of art in terms essentially little different from those employed by present-day architects and exhibition designers10.

Both the Rotunda and the interior illumination of chambers intended for statuary display are themes that can be discovered in Scamozzi’s architectural works. As evident both in Giovanni Battista Gleria’s reconstruction of the lost church of Santa Maria della Celestia and in the Chatsworth drawing which has been associated with this project, Scamozzi proposes a sort of new Pantheon for Venice, a circular, centralized plan with a dome11. The theme of illumination alla romana reappears both in Scamozzi’s project for the Venetian church of San Nicolò da Tolentino and in that for the church of San Gaetano in Padua, and again in the Chiesetta di San Giorgio at the villa Duodo in Monselice12. In his restitution of the ancient Roman house, Scamozzi proposes – situated on the median axis of the vast complex – a large salone under a domed vault, placing at the two sides of this large room, niches of colossal dimensions furnished with statues13, in a exhibition model clearly derived from the giant niches of the Pantheon portico, a design pattern which Scamozzi adapts to other contexts, for instance, in his the-
Moreover, distributed through Scamozzi’s treatise are numerous other indications regarding the disposition of niches, foreseen as containers for statues, groups and statuary complexes.

In the Chiesetta of the Palazzo Ducale in Venice the task with which Scamozzi was confronted, possibly around 1593, was the following: the exhibition of a large marble statuary group of the Madonna and Child with four Angels. This work was begun by Jacopo Sansovino in 1536, to be completed only very many years later, after the death of the sculptor-architect in 1570. At the point in time when Scamozzi entered onto the scene, the group was destined to become the altar statue (simulacro di culto) of the high altar of the Chapel of the Venetian Doge, then Pasquale Cicogna, whose reign extended over the entire decade from 1585 to 1595. While the statuary group was clearly intended, in its new systematisation, as an object of Christian veneration and devotion, the unusual magnificence of Scamozzi’s framing architectural altar creates a dramatic, almost museum-like, even exhibition-like impression. The liturgical function of the altar is greatly understated: the mensa itself does not project forward, but it is withdrawn into the altar aedicule as a kind of table spread before the Virgin, a plane contained within the concavity of the altar and not a stereometrically projecting cubic mensa.

In the Palazzo Ducale the Chiesetta is located on the terzo piano, at the northern extremity of the wing on the Rio di Palazzo, far above the Scala dei Giganti in the northwest corner of the Cortile di Palazzo. Opposite Scamozzi’s altar, the Chiesetta opens onto the Antichiesetta, and, to the right, onto the Senate. As can be observed from the Cortile, the small chapel of the Chiesetta projects outward considerably from the body of the Doge’s Palace, without, however, being a ‘hanging’ or cantilevered structure, since it rests on the stairwell that leads to the Ducal Apartments at the level immediately below the Chiesetta.

In the earlier history of Italian architecture there are few if any precedents for similar architectonic statuary displays which, in their richness, complexity and artifice, approach the level of the solutions realized by Scamozzi in the Chiesetta. Instead of a simple niche in the form of a classical aedicule, Scamozzi composes a much more elaborate spatial structure, accomodating three rows of columns and pilasters and excavating in the centre a niche proper, a niche which begins as a rounded concavity, and then is given a flattened curved profile in its deepest part.

Within the columned portico of his altar the architect has also incorporated a scheme to enhance the illumination of Sansovino’s statuary group: two narrow windows, set high between paired lateral pilasters, are inserted in the two side walls of the shallow altar-chapel. While these two small windows do not escape the notice of the assiduous observer, their presence and their function has gone unremarked in the slight art historical literature treating Scamozzi’s
altar. Nevertheless, there enters through these two lateral windows into the cappelletta a secondary light, a “lume secondario”, “laterale” and “orizzontale”, which diffuses through the forest of columns to illuminate the marble altar group, a light which supplements and completes the illumination afforded by the two windows placed high above in the west wall of the Chiesetta at the sides of the altar tabernacle, a “luce viva e perpendicolare”.

On the plan of the Chiesetta are indicated the several sources of light that illuminate the space of the Chiesetta following its transformation by Scamozzi. The lateral windows along the north wall, presumably predating Scamozzi, constitute the principal sources of light. But additional openings also afford illumination: the two large high square windows at the sides of Scamozzi’s altar tabernacle, just beneath the level of the pediment, opened, it seems, as an integral part of Scamozzi’s project, to judge by the profiles of the window frames. The openings of the two internal doors leading respectively to the Antichiesetta and to the Senate as well as those of the two low windows opened in the interior dividing wall between the Chiesetta and the Antichiesetta all afford lesser intensities of illumination. Taken together, all these light sources create a variable and complex illumination, emanating from several openings, not all created by Scamozzi himself. One may note that the level of illumination that they together create does not perhaps completely satisfy the expectations of the modern eye, blind to the stars and conditioned by a lifetime experience of artificial light, ranging from incandescent, to neon, to halogen, and embracing the further determinative light experiences of cathode monitors, LCD’s, flash and strobe.

Scamozzi’s world of light was, of course, very different, as were his ambitions. He could, however, situate his ideal of optimal statuary illumination somewhere along a scale ranging between gentle candle light and the blazing light of the summer sun, which bleaches the plasticity-defining shadows from sculptural forms. In the Chiesetta, Scamozzi’s intention appears to be that of introducing additional light from above, to create a statuary light, at once diffuse and temperate, but adequate to illuminate and reveal the plastic form of Sansovino’s statuary group. Possibly Scamozzi’s ideal of sculptural light was the equivalent of the diffuse, post-winter daylight, cast by an empty clear blue sky. With his two small lateral windows, placed high between the columns of his tabernacle, Scamozzi follows the same aim, illuminating the group from the sides with light that comes from above, and, simultaneously, brightening the shadowed cavity of the niche.

At the same time the ‘architect-designer’ Scamozzi achieves a further luminous effect, just possibly one that did not lie within the realm of his immediate intentions: as sunlight enters from the two small lateral windows, its rays reverberate, constituting an almost tangible stratum of light, and creating a diffuse splendour before and around the Virgin in a
penumbra of light. In the frontal view of the altar the lateral windows tend to disappear, hidden behind the columns, thus eliciting the impression of a Vergine lucifera, housed in a sacellum resplendent with light – light, which is ultimately the most immediate expression of the numinous. This mysterious, fleeting quasi-corona of light may simply be a contingent phenomenon. And, while this luminous phenomenon is inconstant in time and determined by momentary conditions of external light, it is nevertheless an observable and recurrent attribute of Scamozzi’s altar today.

If we look now to the more tangible architectural forms of Scamozzi’s statuary altar, a comparison with the plate illustrating the “Porta Romana” (i.e., the Italic or Composite door) in Scamozzi’s treatise shows that the external frame of the altar corresponds completely to a very high doorway in which the frieze of the entablature has been omitted but which is crowned by a tympanum, broken to receive the arms of the Cugno Doge. This tall giant doorway gives the impression of opening like a window onto a vision of a chapel composed by a succession of columns and arches, with the white simulacrum set before a nocturnal background, and, above, crossing through a diaphragm of white cornices, half a blue hemisphere blanketed with a hundred and more stars of gold. The eight points of the stars repeat exactly the octacuspitate stars of the crown of Sansovino’s Madonna Reginae, as an explicit indication that the altar is conceived as a celestial house, the stellate half-hemisphere as a Dome of Heaven, divine as the volteceleste of the nearby cupolas of the Basilica of San M arco with
The richness of the architectural forms is brought to completion by the conspicuous colouristic richness of the precious materials employed in the altar. White marble in the place of pietra d'Istria constitutes in Venice a note of increased magnificence, and, in addition, there are green serpentine, marbles red and grey, and mishi, black pietra di paragone, and, for the capitals and bases of the columns, bronze, following an usage of classical antiquity known to Scamozzi from ancient literary sources and, just possibly, also suggested by the precious fantasy architecture of the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, where we read of the Temple of Venus Physizoa, its columns with capitals of bronze. In Scamozzi’s Architettura universale he specifically cites the “Portico di Gneo Ottavio”, which had “le Colonne con i Capitelli di Rame; cioè di Bronzo”. In the altar of the Chiesetta the elements of polychromy and of black-white chiaroscuro are intrinsically colouristic, and hence further components of the design determined by light, as, for instance, is also the soffit or intrados of the larger interior arch, apparently painted in imitation of inlay pietra dura intarsia.

If, as in the analysis of Serlio, statuary lighting aims to enhance and amplify the subjective impression created by sculptures within their architectural enclosures, this same aim appears manifested in the rich architectural articulation of Scamozzi’s altar. Within the context of the immense portal that surrounds the columned arch of the altar, the columns appear to be calculated on a smaller scale, in a relation 1 : 3 (i.e., “column : portone”). But the scale and, indeed, the objective dimensions of the coloured marble columns, which flank the white marble Madonna, accord more essentially with the dimensions of the statuary group and its socle, which they nearly match. While the dimensions of the seated, enthroned Madonna are objectively large, they appear subjectively small, when measured against the vertical expanse of the giant doorway, which extends around the Madonna as a vertical frame, the height of which is nearly four times greater than that of the seated Madonna. “Perche rare volte i Scultori fanno le loro statue proportionate a’ Nicchi”, writes Scamozzi, it is the task of the architect to see that “le statue vi comparono molto meglio”, better, that is, in the niches that the architect constructs: proportionate and commensurate in size.

The resolution of such discrepancies of scale lies in establishing a dimensional bridge or link between a large-scale architectural design and the statue-simulacrum, whose dimensions are calculated on a smaller scale. In the Cicognia Altar, Scamozzi accomplishes this transition primarily through two design expedients. The second, more distant arch, that surmounting the niche proper, is effectively much smaller than the forward arch that springs from the foremost columns of the altar, thus accomplishing a reduction in scale as the circle around the statue draws smaller and closer. In turn, the small-scale...
columns that surround the Madonna create the impression that she – if standing, nearly as tall as the length of a column shaft – is larger than she actually is, the eye deceived by a cognitive standard of comparison: the knowledge of the normal dimensional relationship between the (smaller) human body and the (larger) architectural orders. Similarly, an example selected from the stucco decoration of the Villa Madama in Rome, the statue of Venus, in reality small like a bronzetto, is, with artifice, and in a reversal of architectural scale, made to appear as large as a colossus, compared to the diminutive order and statue niches at her two sides. A further example of a similar design strategy is observable in Jacopo Sansovino’s Monument to the Doge Francesco Venier in the Venetian church of San Salvatore, where in the two lateral tabernacles the very slender flanking columns, topped by elongated mensoles sustaining pediments, rise only to the shoulder level of the standing statues that they frame, and thus adding magnitude to these figural elements within the complex machina of the tomb.

In the Doge’s Palace, within the tabernacle the profiles of the two white repeating cornices that ring the niche above the Virgin amplify the architectural framework, much as the two white concentric arches above concord in conferring a dynamic upward expansion to the altar. To fill his expansive structure, Scamozzi disposes a double file of columns, with their flanking coupled pilasters behind or at the side, and he raises Sansovino’s statuary group, already replete with a basis, upon a further high red-stone socle, in which the bevelled, sunken-panelled faces reflect Jacopo Sansovino’s design preferences.

Despite the extraordinary richness of the ensemble, the architectural tenor of the whole, as well as that of the single forms, is of an unusual, almost classical restraint and purity. This restraint is all the more striking against the backdrop of the heavy, inflated Vittorian ornamentality still prevailing in Venice at the end of the century. In Scamozzi’s design the limpid whiteness of the exterior marble framework also contains, isolates and intensifies the zone of polychromy at the centre.

In the entablature of the niche the contrasting deep green of the broken pulvinate frieze lends emphasis to the succession of planes and to the dynamic linear and spatial rhythm of the architrave and cornice, a movement rendered more intense, more charged with tension and more instable by the flattening of the concave profile of the niche itself. Other manifestations of a similar taste can be discovered in other works by Scamozzi, for instance, in the curving contours of the five steps of the cavea in his well-known project drawing for the Teatro Ducale at Sabbioneta, preserved in an autographed copy at the Uffizi (191 A). It is not far afield to discern in the multiple curved contours of Scamozzi’s Palazzo Ducale Altar — rounded, but with a reined in trajectory charged with dynamic tension — an anticipation of the elegant architectural dynamism of the great mas-

17. Plan of the light paths in the Chiesetta, Palazzo Ducale, Venice.
tribute to the serliana contratta of the large Ionic windows of the upper storey of Sansovino’s Library, a design also characterised by paired lateral columns, again disposed not side by side, but in depth, one behind the other. In both cases the Serlian window is inserted into a dimensional context conceived on a larger scale, framed, that is, by a major order. In both designs, the contraction of the triadic Serlian motive acquires a Sansovinesque character, with the smaller columns only slightly detached from the sides, in a sort of double pseudo-serliana, with, as mentioned, paired columns at the sides, arranged in depth.

The Sansovinesque invention of the serliana contratta, with the lateral apertures much reduced in width, is found in the very well-known drawing “D.18” of the Museo Civico in Vicenza, recording a project for the façade of the Scuola della Misericordia in Venice, with the serliana contratta occurring in both storeys. But it is the large windows of the upper storey, with their spirally scannellated columns, which allowed Manfredo Tafuri to demonstrate unequivocally the descent of this Sansovino window invention from a single Florentine model: the tabernacle of the Mercanzia by

...
Donatello at Orsanmichele, with the same small spirally-fluted columns\textsuperscript{29}. In Scamozzi’s project for the altar of the Ducal Chapel the paired columns of the Libreria’s Ionic windows are separated and distanced from one another in depth, to create an interval to contain the mensa and in which to insert the light-bringing lateral windows, which are half-concealed within the lateral intercolumniations. Where Sansovino transformed Donatello’s statue niche into a window, Scamozzi, in a typological reversal, refashions Sansovino’s window into a statuary container: no longer a window, but now a niche enframement. Following this interpretation, the niche proper, with its arc and its two flanking columns, constitutes a second, more distant arch, a minor one inserted into the primary arched organism.

In the landings of the staircase that leads to the upper level of Sansovino’s Libreria, there recur doorways and blind arches that take the form of the serliana contratta. All these designs echo the forms of the large Ionic windows of the Library’s exterior. A walled in serliana contratta occupies the rear wall of the vestibule just behind the entrance to the Libreria between the two colossal caryatids\textsuperscript{30}. Here, too, the order is Ionic, formulated in a summary form, and the columns are coupled with contropilastri, now replete with capitals and bases, in the place of the pseudo-pilasters of the exterior Ionic windows. Even the diagonally circling veins of the marble appear to mime the pattern of spiral fluting. And higher along the stairway, in the atrium leading to the Sala of the Libreria, the so-called serliana reappears in the form of two large open and paired window-portals, Ionic, and functioning as a diaphragm of light\textsuperscript{31}. Again the columns are distanced only slightly from the contropilastri, and the archivolts are divided into squares and rectangles, filled with grotesque intaglios.

If not previously, certainly soon after 1582, all of these architectural designs of Jacopo Sansovino moved rapidly into Scamozzi’s purview, gaining enormously in relevance when he prevailed in the competition for the commission to complete and to continue Sansovino’s Library, a commission which would require him to build numerous exact replicas of Sansovino’s Ionic Serlian windows, which were also repeated in Scamozzi’s continuation of the Libreria’s architecture in the Procuratie Nuove\textsuperscript{32}. In this context Scamozzi had occasion to document these windows in two drawings, now belonging to the collection of the Uffizi (192 A and 193 A)\textsuperscript{33}. It is, in addition, interesting that on these...
two drawings Scamozzi inscribes no less than seven annotations relating to architectural lighting, for instance, "Calle dove ricevano lumi queste due Fabriche...", "Calle per lumi...", "Requia per dare lume à diverse cose", etc. Despite Scamozzi’s well-known criticisms of the errors of the “fabbriche di Piazza”34, his project to complete and amplify Sansovino’s architecture on the Piazza San Marco implies a long and deep acquaintance with Sansovino’s Library, and thus an intimate knowledge of the Florentine’s Venetian architecture.

In any event, Scamozzi’s re-use of the Sansovino giant Ionic windows as a statuary niche in the Doge’s Palace was determined, in part, by the function of the altar, which was destined to receive Sansovino’s statuary group as the “cosa contenuta”. Following a completely natural sense of decorum Scamozzi designs a fitting “container” for the marble group in a Sansovinesque manner. The motive of the serliana contratta was, on the other hand, one that experienced a not negligible fortuna in Scamozzi’s own architecture. It reappears, in 1611, in his project for the Palazzo Comunale di Bergamo, now as a window35, and it can also be traced in the illustrations of Scamozzi’s Architettura universale, as, for instance, in the plate showing the Palazzo Cornaro, projected for the Canal Grande at San Maurizio36. The most instructive instance of Scamozzi’s re-use of this motive is, however, found in the palace of the “Magnifici Signori Strozzi” in Florence. This is the enormous Florentine palace, better known as the Palazzo Nonfinito, which Roberto Strozzi, then residing in Venice, “si risolse di edificare”, writes Scamozzi, “secondo i nostri Disegni e Modello”, a construction erected largely in the absence of the architect37. At the south side of the Borgo degli Albizi, above the lateral entranceway and high above street level, we discover an unexpected reappearance of the so-called serliana of the Palazzo Ducale Chiesetta Altar, now transformed to fulfil its original function as a window, and, once again, it is furnished with a balustraded balcony, as it appeared originally in Sansovino’s Library. Comparing Scamozzi’s Palazzo Strozzi window with his altar in Venice, we may discern a number of correspondences and variances: (1) the smaller-scale columns (and pilasters) of the minor order, all furnished with all the attributes of an architectural order, (2) the pulvinate frieze, (3) the Venetian contropilastrino transformed into angle pilasters at the two sides, their function remaining unchanged, (4) the Palazzo Strozzi arch, now somewhat retracted in its vertical extension to make way for the insertion of a large architectural inscription which takes the form of a cartoccio, such large building inscriptions being much to Scamozzi’s taste. In the ground plans of the two Scamozzi designs we can, moreover, observe an identical separation of the binate orders: the columns and pilasters are distanced from one another in depth. In both cases the partition of the archivolt follows Sansovinesque formulas, derived from antique ceiling coffering. In a comparison of the elevations of the Ionic windows of Sansovino’s Libreria and the Ionic window of Scamozzi’s Palazzo Strozzi, Scamozzi’s debts become even more apparent, especially as regards the general architectural arrangement. Variations in the inflection of
27. Venice, Libreria Marciana, blind 'serliana contratta' on the landing of staircase (photo M. Morresi).


architectural vocabulary aside, it is evident that Scamozzi has derived the idea for the larger binate Ionic order, which frames the serliana contratta, from the corner resolution (cantonale) of Sansovino’s Library, which is likewise distinguished by a binate order on both levels. In addition are noteworthy the smaller columns of the arch, barely detached from the flanking pilasters, the keystone, which takes the form of a draped female head, the pulvinate frieze, the window balcony with balusters, and the Ionic order, present in two distinct dimensional scales. A few critical modifications, introduced by Scamozzi, can be detected, such as the high bases of the orders (which, however, are, in part, heightened to compensate for the extraordinarily oblique and deforming viewpoint imposed by the very narrow street below, bordering on the south side of the palace). Finally the archivolts of the Strozzi arch reflect closely the archivolts of the ground-level arcade of the Marciana. The rhythmic partition is not identical, but it follows the same logic of squares and rectangles in a rhythmic sequence.
Returning to the linked themes of statuary exposition and the architecture of light, it can scarcely come as a surprise that these two topics play a significant rôle in the thought of the 'complex' architect, Vincenzo Scamozzi, whose pensiero appears based on an intellectual compilation reflecting a vast, classically inspired culture, nor can it surprise that these two topics found expression in Scamozzi's architectural practice. In this context, it is sufficient to recall, among Scamozzi's 'allestimenti statuari', his well-known sistematisation of the Museo Grimani collection of ancient sculptures in the Antisala of the Libreria Sansoviniana in order to constitute the new Statuario Pubblico, immediately prior to Scamozzi's transformation of the Chiesetta in the Doge's Palace (where in fact Grimani statues had been previously housed)\(^3\). In addition, mention must be made of two 'teatri' of statues: the Palladian Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza, where Scamozzi constructed the splendid proscenium, with its square-headed statuary niches patterned on the statuary tabernacles of the Roman Pantheon\(^4\), and, further, the Teatro D'Ucule at Sabbioneta, built to Scamozzi's order for Vespasiano Gonzaga, where, inter alia, is noteworthy the dramatic motive of the colossal busts all'antica placed on high pedestals and collocated in giant niches set in the intercolumniations of the peristyle, a design motive, as has been mentioned, deriving from the Pantheon portico.

The typology of statuary spaces – Scamozzi's ' contenitori di statue' – includes a variety of types: the chapel-altar (as in the Doge's Palace), the mausoleum, the galeria\(^5\), the tribune\(^6\), the antiquarium (to display a collection of ancient sculpture)\(^7\), and also the abstract typology proposed in Scamozzi's 'sala rotonda', an ideal model elaborated on the pattern of statuary displays in classical antiquity\(^8\). The theme of statuary display fascinated many Renaissance architects, as, for example, Antonio Labacco and Andrea Palladio, both of whose visions of ancient architecture imagined a universe of statue-inhabited edifices\(^9\).

Viewed in broad terms, it is clear that architectural spaces specifically destined to house statuary displays, as well as the exposition of paintings, represent a more than marginal aspect of Renaissance architecture; witness, to
mention only the most important category, the architecture of churches, with their endless array of chapels and altars. And, despite this fact, within the context of statuary spaces, those illuminated by a true architecture of light are not highly numerous, even though, it must be admitted, the most signal examples comprise within their time a group of exceptionally significant architectural achievements.

Among them, the Medici Chapel at San Lorenzo in Florence takes the first place: the space is white, the architecture, ‘bi-colore’, black-white, and light enters from above, from the high windows and the lantern of the dome, creating the clear diffuse illumination most suitable to rendering the chapel’s statues legible. In turn, the Del Monte Chapel in San Pietro in Montorio in Rome, built under the watchful eye of Michelangelo, is distinguished by its measured, coolly-lit marble whiteness, devoid of intricate decorative marble carvings, which, in the opinion of Buonarroti, would have only obfuscated our view of the marble statues, and thus the planned relief intaglios were omitted, following the precise instructions of the master.

The Antiquarium of the Venetian Palazzo Grimani near Santa Maria Formosa is a highly individual re-edition of the scheme of the ‘Statuario mediceo’ in the Sagrestia Nuova of San Lorenzo. The Tribune of Palazzo Grimani, if not white, is in essence ‘bi-colore’ and of a uniform lightness and clarity, illuminated by the “lume vivo” which comes from above. Similar, too, is the Pellegrini Chapel at San Bernardino in Verona: here the architecture of Sanmicheli is equally white and equally heir to the Cappella Medicea. In Verona the missing statuary apparatus is implicit in the Leerstellen of the vacant niches, as, for example, also in the Ricetto of the Libreria Laurenziana. In the Libreria Sansoviniana, the Statuario Pubblico, destined to house a part of Giovanni Grimani’s collection of ancient statuary, represents the apex of Scamozzi’s ambitions realized in this genre.

If we turn now to reconsider more closely the innovative system of illumination devised by Scamozzi for the Altar of the Chiesetta in the Palazzo Ducale, it will be possible to indicate a likely Roman origin for this luministic innovation. Scamozzi’s intimate knowledge of the city of Rome cannot be in doubt, even if it has not been completely studied. In addition to his very long youthful sojourn there, undertaken explicitly to study the remains of antiquity, Scamozzi visited the city numerous times during the course of his later life. An extensive network of personal contacts and patrons also linked him to the eternal city. The fruit of Scamozzi’s study of Rome extended beyond his antiquarian learning to include a considerable knowledge of modern Roman architecture. To his interest in modern architecture testify the many references to modern building contained in the Architettura universale.

In Rome, in the church of Sant’Andrea in Via Flaminia, in a diminutive Pantheon destined to
contain paintings, Giacomo Barozzi il Vignola created an independent source of light specifically to illuminate the main altar: in the shallow apse, Vignola opens two small rectangular windows at the sides of the arch high above the altar with the intention of increasing the illumination of the pala51. He thereby anticipates not only Scamozzi’s altar in the Palazzo Ducale, but also Roman baroque experiments with lighting52.

Scamozzi’s interest in Vignola’s architectural works has been noted more than once, and Scamozzi’s familiarity with Vignola’s writings is documented in his own53. The two architects both pursued a conservative architectural direction, and both were employed by patrons of a Counter-Reform tendency54. Indeed, in the oval cupolas of the perimetral chapels of Scamozzi’s church of San Getano in Padua one can recognize a specific debt on the part of Scamozzi to Vignola’s small temple of Sant’Andrea, with its innovative oval cupola55.

Natural light is a crucial component of architecture, and before the widespread introduction of artificial illumination it was indeed a sine qua non of the architecture of interior spaces. While light has not escaped the attention of scholars, and while the centrality of light in modern and contemporary architecture can scarcely be over-estimated, the topic of light in architecture, in many ways as fugitive and fleeting as light itself, has seldom been treated comprehensively and systematically as an historical phenomenon56.

Nevertheless, considering only the Veneto prior to Scamozzi, attention has often been drawn to the luminist sensibility of Mauro Codussi, of Jacopo Sansovino and of Andrea Palladio57. In attempting to follow the principal line of development that leads to the Roman baroque,
it is not imperative to review every step that ultimately leads to Gian Lorenzo Bernini’s Ecstasy of St. Teresa in the Cappella Cornaro of Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome. Instead it is more informative to concentrate on three examples, all Roman and all later than Scamozzi’s Palazzo Ducale Altar. Each embodies an innovative and experimental resolution of the need for illumination, with solutions very analogous to Scamozzi’s precocious altar design. These three projects are: (1) Bernini’s altar to Santa Bibiana in the church of the same name, (2) a project by Pietro da Cortona for the main altar of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, and (3) the Cappella Raimondi in the church of San Pietro in Montorio, again by Bernini.

In the instance of the Altar of Santa Bibiana, ca. 1625, in addition to the large lunette-shaped window in the vault, one of the compartments of the decoration of the arch above the altar is opened for light to enter, creating a secondary light source to supplement the primary one. This second lateral light source shines upon the upraised face of the saint, adding emphasis and concentration, in an effect not dissimilar to the action of light in Scamozzi’s earlier Venetian altar. In both, light has an integrative, focusing function.

In Pietro da Cortona’s project drawing of 1534 for the high altar of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini (Royal Library, Windsor Castle), here following the instructive analysis of Karl Noehles, we may see that the architect devises an ingenious method to introduce light onto the pala of the altar, a large marble bas-relief of the Baptism of Christ, by creating openings in the zone behind and at the sides of the altar. In the plan of the altar, at the bottom of the Windsor drawing, one observes that light shafts are opened in the walls behind the two columns flanking the pala, and that light enters from the back of the apse through two angled passages. Thus the wall behind the pala is recessed, creating a space resembling a shallow stage, on which appear the figures carved in relief, and it is illuminated by light sources hidden in the wings. In Cortona’s plan, daylight, attenuated and diffused, filters through the concealed windows to illuminate the altarpiece, its source masked by the columns placed in the outlets of the light shafts. Not only the system of illumination but also the planimetric richness of Cortona’s project present parallels to Scamozzi’s altar in the Doge’s Palace.

In the Cicogna Altar in Venice, the screen of columns lit from behind is also comparable, planimetrically and in its effect, to the design of the main altar of Bernini’s church of Sant’Andrea al Quirinale, where the screen of columns, disposed ‘a transenna’ (i.e., the double flanking columns of the aedicule that frames the opening onto the semicircular main altar chapel), stands before an illuminated space, lit by natural light streaming down from the windows of the lantern above, conferring a strong luminosity to the main altar in contrast to the dimmer interior of the church and the darker chapels adjoining the altar chapel.

In the Cappella Raimondi of San Pietro in Montorio (1640-47), Bernini realizes a solution similar to that embodied in Cortona’s project drawing. The pala, a relief carved in marble, is in

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fact detached from its columnar architectural frame, and it is recessed some distance behind this cornice. In the ensuing interval, between the columns and the bas-relief altarpiece depicting the Ecstasy of St. Francis, Bernini opens in the lateral exterior wall, at the left, a single high narrow window. Thus from a nearly concealed lateral source abundant light unfolds over the marble altarpiece, a light which imparts a more ample illumination and a more focussed, accentuated lighting to the dramatic image of St. Francis in ecstasy. With this provision of a source of “luce vivo e naturale”, introduced from the exterior, Bernini creates a system of illumination very similar to that of Scamozzi’s Venetian altar, where, however, light is brought in from both sides of the altar in order to establish an equilibrium of light sources.

Scamozzi’s Altar in the Ducal Chapel in the Doge’s Palace, in fact, anticipates these solutions of the Roman baroque by more than three decades, but it would perhaps be mistaken to attribute too great a significance to this temporal discrepancy, and to conclude that the Venetian altar is simply a tentative provincial experiment, peripheral, isolated from the main line of development and without subsequent echo. In contrast to such an assessment stands not merely the extraordinary urbanity of the architectural language which Scamozzi speaks in the Chiesetta, but also his apparent reference to Vignola’s Sant’Andrea in Via Flaminia, and possibly even the close parallels with later Roman experiments in altar lighting.

While Scamozzi appears almost completely extraneous to the decorative tendency of late-Cinquecento Venetian architecture, often of a Vittorian stamp, this does not imply that his architecture is provincial, or confined in its implications to the Venetian Lagoon. Indeed, it seems more correct to describe him as cosmopolitan, a formulation which finds justification in Scamozzi’s privileged formation, in his personal contacts that extended far beyond Venice and his native Vicenza, in his many and far-flung journeys in Italy and beyond the Alps, all of which render him far more cosmopolitan than many of his contemporaries in the Veneto.

The example of the Altar of the Doge’s Chapel, beautiful, and rich in its invention, lends itself to underline the urbanity of the universal architecture of Vincenzo Scamozzi.

At the same time the historical relationship that Scamozzi’s own concern with light had with the luminist achievements of the Roman baroque remains, in part, to be clarified. One may suspect the existence of missing links. A future investigation including a more ample, more nearly exhaustive survey of the monuments of Italy outside the Urrbs might reveal...
further significant anticipations of baroque light, ones equally important for the history of architectural and sculptural illumination as Scamozzi's Altar in the Doge's Palace.

While considerations concerning light appear in Renaissance architectural treatises as early as Alberti's, and while a similar interest can sometimes be traced in Renaissance architectural drawings, and although every window testifies to the role of light in architecture, nevertheless both the text and the figures of Serlio's Quinto librito are remarkable for their explication of phenomena of architectural light. In Book V this is particularly evident in the first group of temples, which represent central-plan Christian temples. Serlio's first concern is to assure a sufficient illumination of the interior, but it is clear that he admires fully-lit, bright interiors even more (“ben chiaro”). Serlio is also concerned with the shapes, forms and positioning of apertures and windows to admit light; with their names, their number and their dimensions, particularly in relation to the interior dimensions; with light-admitting lanterns, with their glazing and with their height and diameter in proportion to those of the interior space; with the illumination of secondary spaces. For his second octagonal temple, Serlio proposes, in order to increase the level of illumination, opening an aperture at the top of the vault and covering it with a glass pyramid (“Quanto alla luce di questo Tempio, le finestre potrebbon servire: nondemeno chi vorrà maggior luce potrà fare un’apertura nella sommità della volta, coperta così piramidamente di vetri, accioche le nevi, et li ghiacci non vi si ritenghino”, p. 208r, fig. at p. 209r). Within some of Serlio's central-plan temples may be found altars with windows directly above them (figs. at pp. 204r, 204t, 205r, 205t, 208r, 209r, 211r, etc.). The theme of altar illumination is explicitly raised in the instance of a longitudinal church (p. 219r), where the “quadro”, that is, the pala, of the altar will be a painting, and it will receive completely adequate light (“Il quadro sopra l’altare, sarà per una pittura, et haverà la luce molto accomodata...”, p. 219; figs. at pp. 219r, 219t left): this full illumination is accomplished through double light shafts which are opened in the apse of the “cappella maggiore”, on both sides of the altar. The opening of lateral apertures and windows to introduce lighting from the sides is a characteristic of a number of Serlio's temple designs (see the figures on pp. 203r, 203t, 204r, 205r, 205t, etc.), and such lateral windows, at least on occasion, even require, for the sake of symmetry, the introduction of a blind window (“finestra morta”, p. 209r: fig. p. 210r). More observations about architectural illumination can be traced in Serlio's Book VII. Here Serlio returns to the theme of laterally lighted chapels, and, in Chapter XLVIII, he expounds a longitudinal temple plan with four large niches excavated in the lateral walls. The large concave perimetral niches permit opening light shafts through the exterior walls reaching into the six lateral chapels (fig. at p. 113). “Dalli lati di fuori di esso tempio saranno quattro nicchi per banda: per li quali le capelle prenderranno la luce”. This system of lateral lighting represents in nuce the same system of illumination that Scamozzi instituted in his windows, half-concealed in a labyrinth of columns, at the two sides of the Cigocna Altar of the Madonna di San Marco in the Doge's Palace.

Serlio's particular interest in architectural light may have been inspired by Baldassarre Peruzzi, and it is foreshadowed in certain drawings of Francesco di Giorgio, for instance, Uffizi 331 A, inscribed “luce” in the oculus of the cupola, and by other drawings, copies after original drawings by Francesco di Giorgio’s, found in the Codex Ashburnham 1828 App. of the Biblioteca Laurenziana: architectural plans, mostly centralized, with the indication “lume superficiale”signifying light from above, toplighting, in the manner of the Pantheon. Serlio's central plan churches in Book V recall drawings by Peruzzi, whose church elevation drawings often reflect a specific interest in the sources of illumination, for instance, Peruzzi's elevation view of the interior of San Domenico in Siena (Ashmolean, Talman 40, 31 [468]), with its brilliantly lit “teoria di finestre”, including in the centre, lunettes filled by giant, open serliane.

1. The present text was presented at the XXV Congresso nazionale di storia dell’architettura “Vincenzo Scamozzi (1548-1618). Alla ricerca di un prototipo per una teoria e nella pratica”, 15-20 June 1998, organized by the Centro Internazionale per l’Architettura e nella pratica”, 15-20 June 1998, the Centro Internazionale dell’architettura “Vincenzo Scamozzi in Palazzo Ducale. An initial study of the Scamozzi altar began in 1981, during the preparations for a le- cture, Scultura e luce, at the conference, Scamozzi in Palazzo Ducale. An initial


8. Sebastiano Serlio, Tutte l’opere d’Archi-

dier: Ar chitectural Demonstrations This text is discussed in a recent disser-


123.9, 168.27, 50.41, 168.3, 88.11, 123.9, 168.27, 50.41, 168.3, 88.11, 123.9, 168.27, 50.41, 168.3, 88.11, 123.9, 168.27, 50.41, 168.3, 88.11, 123.9, 168.27, 50.41, 168.3, 88.11, 123.9, 168.27, 50.41, 168.3, 88.11, 123.9, 168.27, 50.41, 168.3, 88.11, 123.9, 168.27, 50.41, 168.3, 88.11, 123.9, 168.27, 50.41, 168.3, 88.11, 123.9.
Altar-tabernacle: cf. Idea, II, p. 168 (31-192). Diocletiane dove furono molte statue: Rotonda; nelle Therme Antoniane, e forme ne habbiamo degni essempi nella ti sopra, i quali escano alquanto in fuori sono, ò cavi in cerchio, overo quadran-

Tabernacoli, e trà gl'uni, e gl'altri, vi è


Scamozzi e antiquity: D. Gioseffi, Munich 2000, p. 141, fig. 132.


bili, e fanno diverse apparenze, & effetti trà gl'esi, e gl'altri, vi è

18. L. Cicognara, A. Diedo and G. Selva, Le fabbriche e i monumenti cospicui di Vene-

zia, Padova 1980, p. 192 (= fol. m 7r).


56. Light in architecture: I do not know a
following works: Lichtarchitektur/The Archi-
tations of further literature, see the fol-
litigation and its history, with many cita-
tions from Francesco Sansovino’s
bible, pp. 269-280). For architectural
comparable to Wolfgang Schöne’s
general work treating light in architectu-
27, 15 Mars 1988, 136 pp.; L. Cremoni-
also: L. Cremoni, Il Vignola, cit. [cf. note 51], fig. 105.
54. Cf. also Vignola’s Cappella della
ad Indi-
Enciclopedia dello Spettacolo, 6, cols. 493-
Dictionary of Art, ad vocem, ‘Lighting’
510. The history of light in architecture
50. See Idea, i, pp. 47, 67 (‘le migliori e
più lodate de’ moderni’), 321, 322, 326,
and in the two keywords,
window” and ‘lantern’, which can be
search terms. J. S. Ackerman’s The
lorentino, and the Cappella Raimondi: the
three projects are each treated in Lavin,
Bernini…, cit. [cf. note 51], p. 256-268; 1987,
three openings and ‘windows’ ad Indicem).
59. In Codussi: see L. Puppi and L. Oli-
4-5, edition). J. S. Ackerman’s The
many arti.
53. Franz, Vincenzo Scamozzi…, cit. [cf. note 51].
52. Cf. also Vignola’s Cappella della

51. Sant’Andrea in via Flaminia: M. Wal-
cher Casotti, Il Vignola, I, Trieste 1960,

Puppi, Sulle relazioni culturali di Vincenzo
Assimilazione e interpretazione barocca del
346, 347, 357, 367, 363, 381 (‘apertu-
303, 405, etc. For the indeb-
tedness of the Quinto libro temple to
Peruzzi; see: A. Bruschi, L’architettura del
secolo, in Sebastianio Serlio, 6o International
Symposium on History of Architecture (Venice, 31 August-4 September 1987), Mil-
p. 169-186 (see to have
“…non casuali precedenti già in parte nel
Trattato di Francesco di Giorgio” and even more in the “trattati abbozzi” on
Temples of Leonardo and Peruzzi).

56. Light in architecture I do not know a
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50. See Idea, i, pp. 47, 67 (‘le migliori e
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