

This altar was made to temporarily frame the fresco representing the Virgin Mary of whom the miracle was the starting point for the construction of the Sanctuary. The work is closely linked to seventeenth-century sculpture techniques and it has two twisted columns on either side culminating with a double broken pediment. The altar, entirely covered by a rich carving of racemes and small angel figures, shows the mature artistic level of the master carver, made more evident by the chromatic choice based on the effective contrast between blue and gold.

The sculpture represents the crowned Virgin, seated on a throne, breastfeeding the child with his hand reaching out to her breast. The nickname "dell'uccellino" (which means "of a little bird") refers to a little bird made of terracotta, which used to stand in place of the missing left hand of the Madonna. Probably the sculpture was one of the statues that composed a bigger carved altar, as suggested by the throne that seems unfinished. Due to the shape of her face with a high forehead, to the sloping eyes, to the flared crown and the mantle that opens showing her hair the sculpture resembles many replicas spread over Switzerland, France and Germany during early 15th century. The work, which is incomplete due to the lack of part of the right arm of the Child and of the left hand of the Virgin, was restored in 2006 thanks to the contribution of the Piedmont Region.

The statue was originally polychrome, as can be noticed by some traces of color in the lateral folds of the dress and on the right side of his neck. The sculpture was made from one large tree trunk and is hollow in the back. It is a life-size representation of Saint Anthony the Abbott, first patron of the Walser community of Ornavasso, in the act of blessing and covered by a tunic full of drapery with parallel grooves. The face of the saint is very refined and filled with majesty. The date 1220 engraved on the statue was used for its dating until 1954; subsequent researches made comparing the style of the work and the age of the materials, put the sculpture into 15th century. This is the eldest artifact among all those present in our Museum.

The two sculptures were part of the altar of the parish church built in 1787 using part of the previous seventeenth-century decorations. The Parish Archive inventory of 1618 reports that at the corners of the altar there were four little angels with two bigger ones placed at the bottom of the altar steps. Stolen in 1987, the statues were found a few years later and brought back to the museum.

The angels are depicted while they fly, covered by a fluttering drape, in the act of supporting the Crucifix (which is missing). One angel turns his face upwards to contemplate the cross, while the other turns his gaze to the viewers and points at the crucifix.

The cartagloria are three boards that stood on the altar, one in the middle and two on the sides. They contained some orations of the Missal that the Priest had to recite while he was turned towards the altar, without having to move the Missal. At first there was only one board which contained the prayer of Gloria in Excelsis Deo (hence the name). They became useless after changes made to the celebration of the Mass after the Second Vatican Council.

Carlo Bascapè was Bishop of Novara from 1593 until his death in 1615. His episcopate brought an intense religious renewal inspired by the spirituality of the last Council of Trent and the figure of Saint Charles Borromeo. He made many pastoral visits throughout his bishopric; from these journeys, he gained a profound knowledge of our territory and described it in detail in this book. The book exposed is open on the page regarding Ornavasso.

Martino Bonacina, theologian, was born in Milan around 1585. In 1608 he became an oblate and started teaching canonical and civil law in Milan seminary which was still under the renewal influence of Saint Charles Borromeo. In his writings, he addressed matters of doctrinal and institutional importance resulting from the Reformation. This book is part of his body of work that includes the essays "De Sacramentis in general" ("About sacraments") and "De Matrimonii Sacramento" ("About holy matrimony).

The wooden furniture is very simple but of exquisite workmanship. It was made by local artists and placed in the sacristy of the sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin Mary "Della Guardia". The upper part has two sloping roofs and contains eleven compartments of various sizes, shaped ad hoc containing the furnishings used by the Priest. The lower part of the closet, a drawer, was used to hold the sacred vestments.

The four reliquary busts are two female and two male. Each bust lays on four curled up feet; in the center of the bust, there is a heart-shaped groove surrounded by an elaborate frame, where they used to keep the relics. The female busts end at shoulder level, while the male busts include their forearms. Even if the subjects are not real, the expressions of their faces denote an accurate artistic research conducted observing real people and their tempers.

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