

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY OF WOOD-CARVING FROM THE GOTHIC PERIOD
UNTIL THE PRESENT DAY: THE DESIGN AND EXECUTION OF
THE WOOD-CARVING ON THE FURNITURE IN THE LITTLE-
CHAPEL-IN-THE-WOODS, TEXAS STATE COLLEGE
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I hereby recommend that the thesis prepared
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PREFACE

This thesis is composed of two parts: first, a brief historical survey of wood-carving; and second, the design and execution of the wood-carving on the pulpit, lectern, and pews in the Little-Chapel-in-the-Woods.

The production of wood-carving has been so extensive that the survey is limited, except for a brief introduction, to carving from the Gothic period to the present day. The evolution and the achievements in the field of wood-carving are traced in relation to varying cultures; and only the carving of the countries which lead in the development of the various styles of carving is included.

From the historical survey the writer was enabled to recognize the basic principles and practices which seem fundamental to the art of wood-carving. These are the fundamentals which have grown out of the limits and requirements inherent in the material and the tools as they affect the approach, the importance of function in determining the form of the carving, the effect of light and distance on the surface of the carving, and the basic universal principles of design as applied to this form of expression.

With this study as a background the writer was able to meet with greater understanding the problem of designing and executing the wood-carving on the furniture in the Chapel.

The writer wishes to express her gratitude for the aid that was received in carrying out this project: for the criticisms of Miss Marjorie Baltzel; and for the suggestions and advice of Mr. O'Neil Ford, the architect who designed the furniture, and Mr. Lynn Ford, who directed the construction of the furniture.

The greatest appreciation is felt for the guidance and inspiration of Miss Dorothy A. LaSelle, director of this thesis.

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PART ONE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Carving was perhaps one of the earliest activities of man. Before he knew agriculture, clothing, or orderly building he had found ways of shaping a variety of materials into desired forms by chipping, rubbing, or scraping. Of the various materials available to primitive man, wood must have been carved on the most extensive scale, for its shape could have been controlled long before he found tools strong enough to carve harder materials.¹ Carved wood, due to its perishable character, has not survived; thus, examples of carving dating back to fifty thousand B. C. exist today but are of the more durable materials of stone, ivory, and bone. These consist of tools and weapons carved with conventional patterns and animal forms in engraved lines or in shallow relief.²

It is apparent that as soon as man had solved the utilitarian needs for the various tools and weapons which he needed, he also recognised his desire for proportion and symmetry in the object itself and for the pleasure to be found in an enrichment of the surface of the object. From the early

¹Brenda Putnam, The Sculptor's Way (New York: Farrar and Reinhart, 1939), p. 321.

²Alan Durst, Wood-carving (London: The Studio Ltd., 1938), p. 7.

awareness of the quality of form and of enrichment which enhance the object to the eye as revealed in these primitive implements one might recognize a fundamental art impulse.¹

The earliest extant wood-carvings historically are the examples of Egyptian carving dating from about 2900 B. C. Panels, furniture, boxes, and toilet implements have been found carved with figures, hieroglyphs, animals, and plant forms in relief.² A wood panel, the Panel of Hesire, circa 2800 B. C. (Plate I) illustrates a highly developed decorative skill. The figure, which is in the conventional Egyptian manner in which the body is drawn from different points of view--head and feet in profile and shoulders in a frontal position--is carefully modeled and the carving is strong and firm.³ An example of Egyptian carving in the round is the statuette in sycamore, "Sheik el Beled." This figure in a typical rigid frontal pose is strong, well proportioned, and reveals a masterly handling of the human form.⁴

Chronologically the next culture is that of Babylonia and Assyria. The art of these peoples resembled to some extent that of Egypt in that forms are conventionalized for the

¹Helen Gardner, Art through the Ages (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1936), p. 3.

²Paul Hasluck, Cassel's Wood-carving (Philadelphia: David McKay, 1913), p. 131.

³Ibid.

⁴Helen Gardner, op. cit., p. 35.

purpose of space filling and are extremely decorative. The period affords little of interest in connection with wood-carving because of a lack of wood in this region. However, some of the patterns which they produced in stone appear in the wood-carving of later periods.¹

The next period which has a direct reference to the production of wood carving is the Greek period, 800 B. C. to 160 A. D. There are few extant examples, but there is specific evidence of wooden figures of gods having been preserved until historic times. Also furniture, as illustrated in bas-reliefs on stone, is shown with legs carved to represent the legs and feet of animals such as lions, leopards, and sphinxes, revealing a link between Egypt, Assyria, and Greece.²

Roman wood-carving dating from 100 B. C. to 337 A. D. took its motifs from the Etruscans and from the Greeks. As in Greece, furniture was carved with legs representing the limbs of animals, and also with the Greek scroll, rosettes, and acanthus. With the Romans, especially, one finds frequent use of birds, cupids, and griffins combined with elaborate designs of scroll foliage.³ Another use of carving among the Romans appeared in the enrichment of ships and galleys, the

¹Hasluck, op. cit., p. 134.

²Ibid., p. 136.

³Ibid., p. 139.

prows of which were carved into elaborate forms.¹

After the fall of Rome and during the growth of Christianity, Byzantine art flourished in the East from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries. This style was the most important element in the development of early Christian and Romanesque styles of carving. During the period when Byzantine art prevailed the chief interest seemed to have been in the carving of stone and of ivory. However, the style had a widespread influence in later styles of carving applied to wood (See Plate II). Byzantine carving was generally a flat pattern, cut in two planes. The whole ground was covered with pattern achieving a characteristic quality of richness of texture. The designs were a highly symbolic combination of Christian and Eastern motifs with a lavish use of floral and geometric forms.²

Byzantine style was felt as far north as the Scandinavian countries. Here wood-carving had held a prominent place in life since earliest Viking times. It was applied to both large and small objects: ships, houses, and articles of household use. Remarkable examples of ancient Scandinavian carving exist today revealing a characteristic interlacing of forms and typical motifs of serpents and dragons in low relief carving³ (See Plate III).

¹Ibid., p. 138.

²Helen Gardner, op. cit., pp. 230-231.

³Hasluck, op. cit., p. 144.

The carving of Oceania and the African Negro illustrate a primitive form of carving (Plate IV). The carvings of Oceania consist of simple incised carving, chip carving, and simple flat relief. The motifs of these people are of an infinite variety of geometric shapes adapted skillfully to the surfaces of canoes, weapons, and household articles.¹ The African Negro carving consists chiefly of the carving of fetishes and masks. These small pieces of sculpture represent a compromise between representation and design.² Typical pieces of this work are generally formally balanced cylindrical masses composed of parts of the object which have been distorted and simplified into ovoids, conoids, and cylinders. They are beautiful examples of craftsmanship with highly polished surfaces contrasting with rich geometric carving.³

Other examples of ancient wood-carving are the totem poles of the Northwestern Indians of America, the intricate carving of Japan and China, and the Mohammedan art of Egypt, Tripoli, Algeria, and Morocco, where wood-carving forms an important part in the enrichment of architectural forms (Plate V).

All of these examples bear tribute to an universal use

¹Helen Gardner, op. cit., p. 571.

²Paul Guillaume and Thomas Munro, Primitive Negro Sculpture (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1926), p. 133.

³Helen Gardner, op. cit., p. 566.

of wood-carving and illustrate many degrees of skill of craftsmanship. Craftsman had arrived at all the methods of carving--incised line, "chip" carving, relief, and carving in the round. The carver had found that wood as a material has definite limitations arising from its perishable character and from the various grains which control the execution of a design. He had found that wood cannot be used to convey the delicacy of form which can be obtained in the even texture of marble, and also that it lacked the plasticity of clay or of cast metal. On the other hand, man had learned that the texture and warmth of wood make it useful for many purposes. He had used it universally and on an extensive scale for architectural purposes, for furniture, and other objects of daily use, and also for sculpture. In relation to these uses of wood, he had employed carving often for symbolic purposes, for variation of texture, and otherwise to contribute to the beauty of various objects.¹

The use of carving and the degree of skill of execution reached a still higher development in the succeeding Gothic period, which is presented in the following chapter.

¹Hasluck, op. cit., p. 2.

CHAPTER II

WOOD-CARVING OF THE GOTHIC PERIOD

It has been said that the Gothic period was the greatest period of wood-carving the world has ever known because of the quality of the carving as well as the immense quantity which was produced.¹ This period which had its beginnings in France in the twelfth century and which lasted through the fifteenth century was one of the greatest creative epochs in the history of the world. The art of wood-carving takes its place along with the development of an architectural style, the craft of stained glass and the stone sculpture as one of the most outstanding achievements of this age.

The cathedral was the highest expression of the new architectural style² and it is chiefly in the cathedral that the work of the wood-carver is found. Richly carved chests were used for church documents and vestments. The stalls for the monks, canons, and choristers were elaborately carved on the ends and on the high backs and canopies.³ Some of the most interesting carving is found on the brackets under the

¹Malcolm Vaughn, "A Collection of Rare Gothic Wood-carving," International Studio, LXXXVIII (Oct., 1927), 25.

²Helen Gardner, op. cit., p. 303.

³Donald Smith, Woodwork (Peoria: The Manual Arts Press, 1937), p. 39.

hinged seats of the stalls.¹ It has been said that "from an archaeological standpoint these misericorde furnish the archaeologist with perhaps a more exact and living idea of the customs, habits and ways of the time than the pure and noble contours of a higher type of work."² Into the limited triangular space afforded by the misericorde the carvers ingeniously adapted compositions of figures at work, ploughing, sowing, reaping, shearing sheep; figures engaged in the sports and pastimes of the day; illustrations of nursery rhymes, old legends, fables and satire set forth with clownish humor; illustrations for stories of the Bible, the life of the Virgin and Saints; foliage and animals, both moral and fantastic.³

Examples of carving are seen also on the screens which the nobility built to separate themselves from the commoners⁴ and on pulpits, altars, font covers, lecterns, and on the ends of benches. The bench and stall ends were often crowned with elaborate finials. From the fact that these finials were often small figures they derived the name "poppy head" probably from the French word for doll, "poupee." These poppy heads included

¹Francis Bond, Wood-carving in English Churches London: Oxford University Press, 1910), p. 1.

²Edith Valerio, "Wood-carving in Belgian Churches," International Studio, XCII (April, 1929), 29.

³Loc. cit.

⁴Smith, op. cit., p. 41.

an infinite number of variations--circular knobs of flowers, kneeling figures of priests, bishops, a variety of grotesque monsters. The most common form was that of the fleur-de-lis.¹

To accomplish all this carving large colonies of craftsmen sprang up in connection with the construction of the cathedrals. The best men of the various crafts were banded together in guilds and were placed under competent masters who had earned an honoured position in the guild.² The highly organized activity of the guilds, functioning primarily for the benefit of its members, also set up standards of workmanship which resulted in a generally consistent high quality of work.³ This system of guild and apprenticeship was unfavorable to the "mere charlatan in art" and also prevented any individual artist from towering above the rest⁴ so that there are no names of individuals outstanding as wood-carvers until the last part of the fifteenth century, when the individualism of the Renaissance had begun to show itself.

Generally speaking, the Gothic period is one in which patient, sincere craftsmen worked together with a simplicity

¹Charles Cox, Bench-Ends in English Churches (London: Oxford University Press, 1916), p. 14.

²George Jack, Wood-Carving (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd., 1937), p. 245.

³M. D. Anderson, The Medieval Carver (Cambridge: The University Press, 1935), p. xviii.

⁴G. G. Coulton, Art and the Reformation (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1928), p. 218.

of aim. This aim was not for self-glory or financial gain,¹ but an aim based on the fact that to the medieval man the cathedral was a "symbol of love."²

These craftsmen were hardly distinguished from workmen and were directed and dominated by the spiritual and learned schemes of the church. The cathedral was also a school and the most learned men and teachers of the day met in its chapter house. There are records that these men superintended the decoration of the cathedral and in some cases furnished the carvers with sketches of the patterns to be cut.³

During the first part of the Gothic period, ideals for the decoration and the construction of the woodwork were drawn directly from the stonework.⁴ Furniture such as screens, tabernacles, stalls, and pulpits were composed of arches, pinnacles, buttresses, and traceries as these were seen in the architecture, except with greater richness and freedom and minuteness of detail. Architectural features, such as tracery, were also repeated in relief carving on bench-ends, pulpits, chests, and other surfaces.⁵

¹Anderson, op. cit., p. xviii.

²Emile Male, Religious Art in France (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1913), p. 398.

³Ibid., p. 393.

⁴"Wood-Carving," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th ed., XXIII, 717.

⁵A. D. F. Hamlin, A History of Ornament (New York: The Century Co., 1916), p. 311.

In methods of construction, until the second half of the thirteenth century, the accepted method of making a chest was to hollow out a solid trunk in the manner that a stone coffin was cut from a solid block. Similarly, the framework of screens was constructed with openings filled in with arcades whose various members were dowelled together as in stonework, instead of being framed together in a manner more suitable for wood construction.¹

The wood-worker gradually learned that wood should be treated in a different manner. He found that wood is of a fibrous character and subject to warping and cracking when used in thick blocks such as were used in stonework. He found that it could be employed more successfully in long thin strips and planks. Thus one finds that the construction developed from the single solid block to lighter construction of framed panels. An example may be seen in the bench ends which were at first solid thick planks with deep relief carving which evolved into light framed panels with tracery and decoration cut out and applied. Another example is seen in the construction of fifteenth century canopies of framed panels with details of delicate ornamental pinnacles, archlets and buttresses applied to a sturdy main structure.²

¹F. E. Howard and F. H. Crossley, English Church Wood-Work (London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1927), p. 3.

²Ibid., p. 19.

The development of knowledge of framed construction had an important function in the evolution of the style of wood-carving as well as the evolution of the architectural style, for after the fourteenth century the mason no longer was prominent and it was the wood-worker who invented new methods for construction and embellishment.¹

The style of the Gothic period may be broadly classified as Early (twelfth and thirteenth centuries), Developed (fourteenth century), and Florid (fifteenth century). In France it is more specifically designated as Early French, Rayonnant, and Flamboyant, while in England the corresponding developments are called Lancet, Decorated, and Perpendicular.²

At the beginning of the Early Gothic period the style of carving was Romanesque in character. In France the style was a blend of many influences including decorative motifs which were oriental and classic: Byzantine, Spanish, Roman, and Lombard. These artistic influences had been carried to France by trade routes, pilgrimage ways, adventurers, gifts, foreign conquest, papal emissaries, the crusades, refugees from Moslem persecution in Spain, and also by the borrowing of master builders from other countries.³

¹"Wood-Carving," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XXIII, 717.

²Hamlin, op. cit., p. 283.

³Helen Huss Parkhurst, The Cathedral (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1936), p. 8.

The style was severely simple, largely geometric, and the figures and foliage were highly conventionalized¹ (Plate VI). The carving was chiefly symbolic for under the influence of the learned theologians who directed the work, the medieval iconography was a "sacred script, a calculus and a symbolic code."² To these churchmen everything was symbolic; thus the carver had to observe a multitude of precise details, such as certain objects or perhaps a style of hair treatment which would characterize a certain saint. Grouping, symmetry, and numbers were endowed with symbolism, and forms were used merely as an expression of spiritual meaning.³

Books such as the Speculum Ecclesie by Honorius of Autum and the Speculum Majus by Vincent of Beauvais were widely used as textbooks of ordered arrangement and symbolism.⁴ Probably no book was more popular in the Middle Ages than The Physiologus or Bestiary. This book had been compiled as early as the fifth century and was comprised of a collection of some fifty animals as "moral animals."⁵

The apparent desire of the craftsmen to make use of

¹George Kowalczyk, Decorative Sculpture (New York: E. Weyhe, 1927), p. 30.

²Male, op. cit., p. 22.

³Ibid.

⁴Anderson, op. cit., p. xiv.

⁵Bond, Wood-carvings in English Churches, p. viii.

every form of life reveals an aspect of the thought of the period which parallels the encyclopedia character of the Speculum Majus.¹ The church at this time left little more than pieces of pure decoration to the individual fancy of the carvers. When he did have freedom of creation he carved plants and animals to show some aspect of nature which appealed to him.² There was an idea that "the Cathedral was an epitome of the world and a place in which all God's creatures may find a home."³

During this early Gothic period the carving showed gradual modification of established religious iconography by an increasing development of naturalism. This new spirit started by the Franciscan movement in the first part of the twelfth century, was altering religious ideals by inspiring in people a new love of life and nature. There was a gradual changing of focus from emphasis on the life to come to the pleasure and beauties of this life. This resulted in a closer observation of nature.⁴

Naturalism appeared in the carving as the decoration was gradually put more into the hands of laymen. The laymen wanted the appearance of things to be real and not abstract.

¹Male, op. cit., p. 390.

²Ibid., p. 58.

³Ibid., p. 63.

⁴Helen Gardner, op. cit., p. 305.

Gothic iconography, therefore, began to include illustrations of scenes of the life of Christ, saints, and moral lessons which could be understood by everyone rather than the geometric and abstract symbolism that could be understood only by the learned.¹

The use of tracery in relief as a motif for carving replaced the Romanesque motifs of canopies and arcades. Like that seen in the architecture during the early period it was very simple arrangement of foiled arches, simple foliated finials, mouldings of resettes in quatrefoil, cusps, and crockets.²

The carving of foliage was at first a modification of the classic acanthus leaf and rinceau by naturalism but not a direct copying of nature.³ This close set Romanesque foliage by the end of the thirteenth century had been abandoned for forms which, it has been said, were "conventionalized forms of the earliest sprouting Spring herbage and forms which are suggestive of the new life and energy in nature."⁴ The foliage was still very simple, the leaves springing out from a fairly thick stem in one simple curve.

¹Joan Evans, Patterns in Western Europe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), p. 5.

²Ibid., p. 10.

³Hamlin, op. cit., p. 252.

⁴Ibid., p. 303.

The carvers who preceded the fourteenth century understood the value of pattern, the economical use of detail, and the stylization of natural forms into orderly masses. Their carving is in low relief largely in two planes with very meagre modeling. The forms of the background spaces were used as complementary parts of the design and are just as important as the raised portions. The pattern which results from this approach is most characteristic in definiteness and richness in dark and light.¹ The cutting shows as being a definite outcome of some particular tool² and reflects the energetic methods employed by the carvers. They obviously worked for a general effect, for the carving displays the fact that the desire of minute accuracy, exact symmetry, or smoothness and regularity of surface were not considered as ends in themselves. In most cases much of the charm of the carving is attributed to this unlabored appearance.³

The fourteenth century was marked by a change in temper in life as well as in art. Emphasis began to be laid on human values rather than on the divine. Men strove less for intellectual comprehension and more for romantic expression; also there developed a desire for richness and ornament.⁴

¹Vaughn, International Studio, LXXXVIII, 22.

²Jack, op. cit., p. 101.

³Howard and Crossley, op. cit., p. 5.

⁴Evans, op. cit., p. 294.

The simple tracery of the Early Gothic period had developed into the Curvilinear style by the second decade of the fourteenth century. This system was one in which reverse curves were added so that the lines merged into ogival forms.¹

The carving of figures developed from the stiff, stylized yet noble and serene figures of the early Gothic period into a more skillful and graceful type (Plate VII). The sense of design was not entirely lost for the figures are kept in relation to structure.² The carving of drapery was marked by long sweeping naturalistic lines. The plane of inspiration seemed to be lower and the aim of refinement, elegance, and prettiness became evident.³

In the carving of foliage there was greater grace and delicacy of detail and a still greater variety of plant life was copied, including specimens of oak, ivy, maple, sycamore, vine, fig, hawthorn, and columbine.⁴ A photographic treatment of foliage was succeeded at the end of the fourteenth century by a bulbous form of foliage and an exaggerated treatment of the surface of the leaves made into round bumps. To achieve this effect every serration was elaborately carved with a

¹Ibid., p. 294.

²"Wood-carving," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XXIII, 718.

³Arthur Gardner, Medieval Sculpture in France (Cambridge: University Press, 1931), p. 358.

⁴Evans, op. cit., p. 47.

swelling in the middle and a hollow around it. A characteristic of this foliage also was that it was built on the ogee curve which had developed in the tracery.¹

In the fifteenth century in France, architecture and carving forms became more intricate and ornate, deriving the name Flamboyant from their flame-like quality.² At the same time in England there was a reaction against the Curvilinear ornament resulting in a more stern and sober style, the Perpendicular.³ This style was based on a system of tracery of vertical bars crossed by horizontal bars on small flattened arches. Both these styles developed because of changes in social conditions brought on by the plague of Black Death.⁴

The fifteenth century carvers were greatly influenced by Flemish carvers who, because of their great skill, were being imported by architects of other countries. Under their influence carving developed into a sophisticated form of expression of religious subjects (Plate VIII). These carvings were extremely skillful.⁵ They were energetically modeled and deeply undercut; examples can be seen of figures which are almost detachable. These carvers transgressed into the

¹"Wood-carving," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XXIII, 718.

²Bond, Wood-carving in English Churches, p. 204.

³Evans, op. cit., p. 27.

⁴Hamlin, op. cit., p. 294.

⁵Valerio, International Studio, XCII, 29.

realm of painting by the use of perspective and foreshortening in the relief carving. An attempt to portray space is seen in the carving of some figures in high relief and others in low relief. The earlier simplicity of draperies was replaced by complicated folds curiously notched producing a flickering light. The constant change of plane demanded by an imitation of nature created a restless confusion of light and an indefinite pattern.¹ In mood these carvings tend to dwell more on the morbid or sentimental aspects of religion, for example, on the sufferings of Christ. The groupings are more agitated, there is vigorous action, and the faces are less tender and serene than those seen in the preceding periods.²

The tendencies seen in the carving of foliage in the preceding period was carried to extremes in this period. Naturalism was unnaturally intensified in a dramatic over-emphasis of twisted forms. Leaves of irregular shape were used: fern, oak, and maple. These were deeply cut and arranged in lacy patterns suggesting sea-weed.³ Tracery as a motif in the wood-carving became more delicate with a greater elaboration of floral spandrels and crockets. In many cases the branching bars of tracery became stalks breaking out into

¹Jack, op. cit., p. 100.

²Arthur Gardner, op. cit., p. 389.

³Evans, op. cit., p. 45.

foliage.¹

At the end of the fifteenth century, Renaissance influence began to make its appearance in the carving, although the structural parts remained Gothic. This influence is seen in the introduction of Classic motif and in a prominence given to human interest; in costume, and differentiated characterization in the carving of figures.²

¹Howard and Crossley, op. cit., p. 21.

²Vaughn, International Studio, LXXXVIII, 75.

CHAPTER III

RENAISSANCE AND BAROQUE WOOD-CARVING

The wood-carving of the Renaissance includes that done during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This style developed into a highly skillful and elaborate style of carving called Baroque or Rococco during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Renaissance carving was influenced chiefly by the revival of classic art, a movement that had begun in Italy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and which reached a climax there in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The new interpretation of classic art resulting from the interest of the Italians in recalling the history of their own people was one of many changes which took place during this period. There were many advances in civilization; discovery, scientific development, freedom of thought, and the rise of the individual.¹

Architects began to study classical remains and to transmit a classic spirit into their own works. They intermingled the old and new with a daring which was indicative of the free attitude of the early Renaissance.² Under the influence of these builders, Renaissance carving functioned to

¹Alexander Speltz, Styles of Ornament (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1910), p. 329.

²Helen Gardner, op. cit., p. 344.

give expression to proportion and structural design. The design of the woodwork was reminiscent of structural features such as pilasters, capitals, and pediments with a revival of classic motif: the anthemion, the scroll, the rosette, and the ancanthus. Other subjects consisted of fruits and flowers, amorini, centaurs, satyrs, dolphins, and ribbons.¹ These motifs were combined with arabesques, woven into designs by means of sinuous and scroll movements and modeled to produce the utmost play of light and shade (Plate IX). They were treated naturalistically to an extent unknown in their classic models,² although, Joan Evans says, "It was not until naturalistic decoration had been stylized into classically regular sheaves of leaves and flowers and bound with fluttering ribbons that it was acclimatized in Italy."³

In this carving Gothic symbolism gave place to a decoration devoid of ideas. It has been said that this was largely due to the Reformation, which "by compelling the Church to watch every aspect of her own thought and to concentrate violently, put an end to the long tradition of legends and poetry and dreams."⁴

During the sixteenth century the carver added to the

¹Hasluck, op. cit., p. 170.

²"Wood-carving," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XXIII, 718.

³Evans, op. cit., p. 72.

⁴Coulton, Art and the Reformation, p. 389.

motifs of earlier Renaissance strapwork, cartouches, urns decorated with masks flanked by drapery, and pediment-shaped ornament. This century was transitional between the early purer style of Renaissance and a florid exaggerated baroque style which developed in the seventeenth century.

Since much of this carving was influenced by examples in marble, it frequently lacks a distinctive wood-like effect.¹

The works of nearly all the countries of Europe were gradually influenced by Italy. These countries did not merely copy Italian Renaissance style but each developed its own distinctive style.

In France the first influence of the Renaissance was felt in the second decade of the fifteenth century and one finds examples of Gothic structure with Renaissance decorative details. This modification of details forming a transitional style lasted until the first part of the sixteenth century. It was not until Francis I ascended to the throne that Renaissance art was really established. Carving was used in the decoration of the magnificent palaces and chateaux which were beginning to be built at this time.² This carving was very similar to Italian in lightness and grace and in motif. The French carvers of this time showed an understanding of the

¹"Wood-carving," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XXIII, 718.

²Speltz, op. cit., p. 362.

treatment of wood. In their carving the grain and beauty of the wood is displayed in broad surfaces; although as the style progressed the tendency for a lavish use of detail became more apparent.¹

The most radical change in style after the purer Renaissance (Plate X) was the Rococo as seen in the styles of carved ornament commonly called Louis XIV and XV.² Louis XIV ascended to the throne in 1643 and until his death in 1715 gave every possible encouragement to building in the particular grand style he affected.³ The carving in these buildings reflects the artificiality and extravagance of its time. Characteristic of the designs for structure as well as for decoration are scrolls and attenuated foliage. The technique and draughtmanship became more and more highly developed. The effects of French Rococo were disastrous everywhere especially in Italy and in Germany where it became almost burlesque in manner.⁴

In England the Gothic style was retained longer than in any other country. The last phase is known as the Tudor style which was a peculiar mixture of the Gothic and the Renaissance. Much of the carving is found in the paneling of

¹Hasluck, op. cit., p. 170.

²"Wood-carving," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XXIII, 718.

³Hasluck, op. cit., p. 173.

⁴"Wood-carving," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XXIII, 718.

the walls which had become a general system of lining walls, a system of necessity as well as fashion, which is found in the halls, churches, and ordinary homes.¹

This period known as the Commonwealth was a period of guerrilla warfare in which architectural progress gave way to an age of destruction. It was the age of the Puritans and the fighting between the Roundheads and Cromwellians for constitutional rights. All these things led to a simplification of things of daily use. The chief decorative motif of the wood-carving consisted of a "linen fold" pattern and the Tudor rose, a very conventional flower motif. In the following period during the reign of the Stuart kings carving became more elaborate and a more important element of decoration.²

The real characteristics of English Renaissance carving did not begin to develop until the reign of Elizabeth, 1558-1603. The Elizabethan style, although influenced by Italian Renaissance through the importation of Flemish and German carvers, had a strong national character. A most characteristic feature of Elizabethan carving is the strap-work pattern; also there was a great use of crests and coats of arms, caryatide, shields and cartouches, and figures of

¹H. Avray Tipping, Grinling Gibbons and the Woodwork of His Age (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), p. 3.

²Albert E. Bullock, "English Architectural Decoration," Architectural Record, XLIII (July, 1918), 335.

animals and grotesques.¹

The Elizabethan developed into a style known as Jacobean. During this period the carving consists of shallow relief and incised carving of geometric patterns or conventionalized natural forms. It seems to have been the result of an attempt to produce as much effect as possible with the least effort. In both these periods the carving is found as decoration of great houses such as Kirby Hall, Haddan Hall, Knoke, and others.²

The English Renaissance became completely free of all Gothic elements under the influence of two famous architects, Inigo Jones (1573-1652), and Christopher Wren (1633-1723).³ Inigo Jones, influenced by having studied in Italy under the architect Palladio, after some time succeeded in introducing a complete change in building--founding a pure classical school after Palladio. The scroll work in friezes, on pilasters, and in panels of his buildings is not that of early Renaissance but that of the Baroque style in Italy.⁴

Sir Christopher Wren, who was influenced by the French architect Vignola,⁵ employed a wood-carver whose school or

¹Speltz, op. cit., p. 428.

²Hasluck, op. cit., p. 164.

³Speltz, op. cit., p. 430.

⁴Tipping, op. cit., p. 18.

⁵Speltz, op. cit., p. 430.

style of wood-carving set the style for the whole of the eighteenth century. This wood-carver, Grinling Gibbons, who was born in 1648, became so famous that the period, so far as carving is concerned, is often named after him.

During his time the rise in the skill of the joiner had great influence upon wood-work. For example, in the design and treatment of panelling, a complete revolution took place. During the seventeenth century this panelling followed natural rules--oak boards of such width as could be obtained from ordinary trees was used of sufficient thickness and width to give solidity and to prevent warping in both frame and in panel. Also the mouldings were simple and the decorative carving in low relief.¹

Before the close of the century, the panels became enormous in size, probably because of the size of the panels in marble, stone, and plaster seen in the classic models and their interpretation by Renaissance builders. This size became possible because of the skill of the joiner. By a new system of elaborate construction they aimed at giving an effect of solid walls out of thin boards and mouldings built up of many bits cleverly pieced and glued and reinforced in order that they might become substantial enough to sustain their own weight.

From these panels may be taken the ethics of the art of the time. As H. Avray Tipping says,

¹Tipping, op. cit., p. 3.

Honesty in art was at a discount. What was really admirable was to make a thing appear what it is not--to treat as material not so much according to its own nature but as if it were something else. A race of artificers, whose business it was to perfect their technique but to subject their thought and invention to strict rules and guidance of professional designers.¹

It was after the joiner had prepared and partly set up his wainscoting and other woodwork that the carver was called in. The carvers had become a large and important body and much was demanded of them.²

The motifs of these carvers consisted of birds living and dead, fruits, flowers, ribbons, shells, dolphins, and cupids, musical instruments and weapons, arranged in festoons or swags. They rejected nothing--nothing was too small, too thin, or too difficult to carve--and their chief aim besides technical skill was elaboration of detail.³ Their carving is so deeply undercut that the forms were almost detached from the background like pieces of separate sculpture and as in many of Grinling Gibbon's most elaborate carvings, were built up of different pieces of wood, each carved separately and afterwards glued or pinned together to form the composition.⁴ This technical resource conquered the bounds which the grain

¹Ibid., p. 4.

²Ibid., p. 5.

³Hasluck, op. cit., p. 172.

⁴Jack, op. cit., pp. 214-215.

of wood set for the carver. When a piece of carving is done in a solid piece, projections running counter to the grain will break off easily; for this reason the carver must arrange the design to fit the grain of the wood. By piecing the wood together the grain of the wood may be made to run as required for the design. It was this treatment which made possible the almost unbelievable results which were achieved (Plate XII).

After Grinling Gibbons, during the eighteenth century, the style of carving returned to more severe classical ideals as seen in the ornament of various styles of furniture: Louis XVI in France, Biedmeyer in Germany, and in England the Adams brothers, under whose influence Thomas Chippendale, George Hepplewhite and Thomas Sheraton designed their furniture. These styles depended on enrichment by small patterns of motifs that had been used throughout the past.¹

¹"Wood-carving," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XXIII, 719.

CHAPTER IV
WOOD-CARVING OF THE NINETEENTH AND
TWENTIETH CENTURIES

The wood-carving of the nineteenth century consisted almost entirely of the reproduction of past styles.¹ An example of this tendency may be illustrated by the career of I. Kirchmayer, who worked during the last few years of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Mr. Kirchmayer was born in Oberammergau where he mastered the medium of wood-carving in his early teens. While a young man he came to America and learned to execute the ornamental carving of all periods. Later he worked almost entirely in a Gothic manner and won the name of "the dean of American wood-carving" (See Plate XIII).

There was a marked effort to adopt Gothic architecture to American needs, as seen in the buildings of Yale and of Princeton, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and many others. Mr. Kirchmayer gave credit for his success to the interest of various architects and to Ralph Adams Cram, the foremost exponent of the Gothic style in the country, who gave him opportunities to develop the style of carving which he considered most congenial to him.

¹Hasluck, op. cit., p. 174.

He called his style "American" Gothic because of his own innovations to the style. These consisted of such things as an ingenuity in the treatment of drapery in which architectural features such as niches were repeated in the folds of robes, and of Gothic designs carved on robes as embroidery.¹

In France there was one new development at the last of the nineteenth century--a style known as the "Art Nouveau." Although it had some influence, this "painful decorative" style was very brief for it was chiefly untrue to material. Its wood-carving conveyed the impression of metal or modelled clay.² This movement was derived indirectly from the manner seen in the work of the sculptor Rodin.³ His style, Impressionism, was chiefly concerned with the surface play of light and is generally realistic especially in its literary and psychological content, qualities which are pictorial rather than sculptural.⁴ The nineteenth century production chiefly reflects sentimentality and a complete estrangement between art and life.⁵

¹Anne Webb Karnagham, "Ecclesiastical Carvings in America," International Studio, LXXXV (1926), 50.

²"Wood-carving," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XXIII, 719.

³Stanley Casson, Some Modern Sculptors (London: Humphrey Milford, 1924), p.

⁴Sheldon Cheney, A Primer of Modern Art (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924), p. 253.

⁵C. Giedion-Welcher, Modern Plastic Art (Zurich: H. Girsberger, 1937), p. 7.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the art of wood-carving had ceased to be a profitable profession. The wood-carver naturally works with the architect and the furniture designer, but the production of furniture was chiefly the reproduction of historic styles with much of the carving done by machinery. The furniture and buildings which were being designed as expressive of this age were tending toward extreme simplification of structure as well as enrichment.¹

Many of the writers consulted have stated that recently there have been signs of a growing demand and an impending activity and development in the field of sculpture and carving.² Although modern architecture and furniture is based on functionalism and does not give scope for a great deal of decoration, its rather severe setting affords an opportunity of effectively showing a certain amount of carving.³ The trend is for decorative carving to be used not as decoration but to serve a definite function: to retain the identity of a building, to break up monotonous surfaces, and to make transitions from one part of a design to another.⁴

¹"Wood-carving," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XXIII, 719.

²Durst, op. cit., p. 32; Stanley Casson, Sculpture of Today (London: The Studio Ltd., 1939), p. 31; and Hasluck, op. cit., p. 174.

³Durst, op. cit., p. 38.

⁴Helen Gardner, op. cit., p. 107.

There has been a recognition of the subtle way that sculpture can be designed and placed in or near a building in a way that it will bear a relation to the building and also a relation in space. This recognition has been true chiefly of Sweden.¹

One of the possibilities of the use of sculpture in modern architecture may be illustrated by the introduction of sculpture into the exterior of the building itself. Epstein's "Night and Day" in the Transport Headquarters in Westminster, Eric Gill's reliefs in the British Broadcasting Company, and "America," the work of Paul Manship and Lee Lawrie in the Rockefeller Center, illustrate this practice, as well as several styles of expression.²

On the interior of buildings there has been an increasing use of relief and of small sculpture. Casson says in his book, Sculpture of Today,

. . . . Modern methods of lighting make the use of sculpture a very great advantage. Indirect lighting gives an added value to works of art in three dimensions and minimises the beauty of pictures. In many modern houses, therefore, small sculptures are a very great amenity.³

A use of relief carving as part of the arrangement of an interior is the wood-carving of the English sculptor Bainbridge Copnall which decorates the walls of the British steamship,

¹Casson, Sculpture of Today, p. 13.

²Ibid., p. 14.

³Ibid., p. 18.

the S. S. Queen Mary. These carvings depicting the history of shipping are applied to the panelling in highly polished units¹ (Plate XVIII).

In modern decoration one finds wood being used consciously for itself, for the purpose of variation in materials and for its qualities of warmth and texture which produce a certain enjoyment, as the knowledge that it is not friable and is not chilling to the touch make wood a material that is particularly pleasing, "a comfortable material."² This re-discovery of the character of material which is so in keeping with the modern spirit may be seen also in the use of woods rarely used before because of grains and markings, and in the carving of such woods with a partial object of bringing out these features.³

It cannot be said that any specific style is the style of the twentieth century, for the production of wood-carving has been too individualistic; however, in spite of the great diversity in approach, there are certain tendencies which reveal a common aim.⁴ Even the radical changes created by the influence of the various "isms" which have developed during

¹"Wooden Walls of England," House and Garden, LXIX (May, 1936), 58-59.

²Hasluck, op. cit., p. 2.

³"Wood-carving," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XXIII, 719.

⁴Giedion-Welcker, op. cit., p. 8.

this century--Cubism, Futurism, Constructionism, and many others--are based on a common desire to create a new plastic form expressive of this age.¹ It has been said that the common denominator of these movements is "the attempt of the artist who, reflecting all the movements and aspirations of his time, attempts to express himself with the means of his own day."²

Thus the approach to plastic expression is based fundamentally on modern life. Contemporary culture is one whose chief qualities are speed, complexity, and intensity³--qualities resulting from the great advances in scientific learning and the effect of the machine in all phases of life. Advances in communication and travel have enriched sensations and everywhere there are new forms both natural and technical which are capable of influencing plastic expression. Various instruments such as the microscope have revealed new and varied forms; machine forms, and an invironment of steel bridges, concrete roads, derricks, and factories with rows of machine made objects in repeating patterns with their clear contours, rigid volumes, and textures of hard surfaces, have

¹Ibid., p. 7.

²Moholy Nagy, The New Vision (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1938), p. 68.

³Cheney, op. cit., p. 20.

produced a new sort of perception and pleasure.¹

This environment has produced an "objective" personality whose first reaction was against the literary and psychological content in plastic art which had been produced by the "romantic" personality of the preceding decade.² Also, since scientific learning has destroyed a general vital contact with religion, the tendency of the twentieth century carver is toward a plastic art based on realities of modern life and approached directly and honestly.³

The twentieth century production of carving has a direct link with the past in that it uses the same material and techniques. The artist of today has profited by a study of the past, for, since his purpose has not been eclectic, he has been able to achieve a truer perspective and a greater understanding of past achievements in that he can see certain permanent fundamental qualities which are common to all great artists and periods.⁴ A definite kinship may be seen in some of the examples of modern carving with certain past styles: less elegant examples of Egyptian sculpture, archaic Greek sculpture, Byzantine carving and primitive negro wood-carvings.⁵

¹Lewis Mumford, Technics and Civilization (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1934), p. 334.

²Ibid.

³Giedion-Welcker, op. cit., p. 7.

⁴Casson, Some Modern Sculptors, p. 17.

⁵Cheney, op. cit., p. 280.

In most cases the similarity has resulted not because the sculptor has copied these styles, but because the sculptor has approached his problem in the same way. The work approached directly and with an understanding of material has had as its aim the achievement of the most expressive form with the simplest means; thus in all these styles there is a lack of an imitation of nature, an absence of lofty subject matter and virtuosity.¹ The difference lies in the lack of self consciousness in primitive examples of carving as compared with modern examples which are usually intellectual, self critical, and individualistic.²

Tendencies which may be seen in all the various contemporary approaches are: an objective approach with emphasis on form and organization; simplification of natural forms to the expression of the most essential qualities, leading in some cases to abstraction and pure geometric forms; also, a recognition of the capacity and limitation of each of the sculptor's media. This last implies an understanding of the difference between modeling and carving and makes the practice of translation from one medium to the other impossible. Thus it is a common principle that the material is a part of the work of art. The original concept is a stone, a metal, or a wood concept; and the modern sculptor working in several

¹Ibid.

²Clive Bell, Since Cezanne (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1923), p. 116.

mediums reveals subtle differentiation in his results.¹

Several modern sculptors who have used wood extensively and who are representative of the "honest period"² which followed Impressionism are Mestrovic, Eric Gill, Thomas Rosandic, and Ernst Barlach.³ The Servian, Mestrovic, whose work was first recognized in the art world in 1911 expressed in contrast to the egotistic aspect of the Impressionist the spirit of his own race and age.⁴ The qualities of his work suggest the innate Byzantinism of his Slavonic background in its great vigor and severity. His style is one of simple and controlled lines, a certain rigidity of pose, conventionalization of figures and a treatment of drapery formalized into patterns of folds which suggest the massive volumes of the forms they cover.⁵ His wood-carvings are treated in a direct and masterly manner, the tool marks creating a rich surface.

In his relief carvings, Mestrovic has followed strict rules of relief similar to those seen in early Greek sculpture. These are: clear and definite outline; superimposed figures receding in definite and coherent planes; and the movement always lateral, that is, with no figures advancing from or

¹Helen Gardner, op. cit., p. 705.

²Cheney, op. cit., p. 264.

³Casson, Some Modern Sculptors, p. 12.

⁴Ibid., p. 6.

⁵Ibid., p. 60.

receding into the background¹ (Plate XIV).

These rules of relief are followed in the work of Eric Gill, an Englishman. His work, extremely intellectual, is formalized, very unified in design, and Anglo-Saxon in feeling. This last quality is suggested by the faces and forms which are English as well as by a similarity to ninth and tenth century Anglo-Saxon carvings which reveal a profound feeling for the decorative value of the human figure and its use interwoven with formal elements, as well as direct unlabored manner. Gill is different from most modern carvers in that he sincerely attempts to base the inspiration for his art on religious instinct.²

The wood-carvings of Ernst Barlach, a German, are distinctive because of their strong masses of almost geometric form, entirely without ornament. His work reveals an intensity of feeling. They are vigorous in movement and in the tooling of the surface³ (Plate XV).

Another trend in style of wood-carving in this century may be seen in the highly decorative stylized type of work illustrated by certain French sculptors: Jan and Joel Martel, G. Artemoff, Ecole Bouille, Albert Guenot, Celine Lepage, and others. Examples of their work, illustrated in a series of

¹Ibid., p. 19.

²Ibid., pp. 88-93.

³Cheney, op. cit., pp. 63, 294.

portfolios, La Decorative Sculpture Moderne, published by Henri Rapin in 1925, range from highly formalized treatment of natural forms to more abstract geometric forms. (Plate XIX).

Several younger sculptors who have used wood extensively are three Englishmen: John Skeaping, Alan Durst, and Richard Bedford; Carl Milles of Sweden; and in America, Robert Laurent, Chaim Gross, and Heinz Warneke. Richard Bedford and Robert Laurent have experimented with plant forms as subject matter for sculpture in the round.¹ Heinz Warneke and Alan Durst have worked with animal forms,² Gross with acrobatic figures,³ and Carl Milles is versatile in subject matter as well as material.⁴

A group of sculptors of various nationalities have shown in their work the influence of Cubism and its many phases, as well as a fad for primitive negro wood sculpture. This group includes such sculptors as Constantin Brancusi, Alexander Archipenko, and Ossip Zadkine (Plate XVIII).

Brancusi's work may be used as an example of the tendencies of this group.⁵ First of all, one notes the abstract form and the importance of material. When he works in

¹Casson, Sculpture of Today, p. 26.

²Ibid.

³"Chain Gross," American Magazine of Art, December, 1938, p. 697.

⁴Casson, Sculpture of Today, p. 28.

⁵Nagy, op. cit., p. 147.

wood he keeps the organic shape of the tree and emphasizes the grain and other qualities particular to wood (Plate XVII). In contrast, when he carves in marble, he emphasizes the smooth satiny texture in smooth egg-like forms.¹

Characteristics of the work of Alexander Archipenko are his use of the optical illusion produced by concave surfaces and the substitution of voids for solids.²

Another contemporary influence is the teaching of the Bauhaus. This German school was eliminated from Germany by the Nazis. Its teachers and students have scattered over the world and are now holding many important positions in education and production. The spirit of this group has become very influential in art education throughout the world.³

One of the chief aims of this school has been an attempt to establish a better contact between art and life. It is their desire to produce designers and craftsmen who will serve a definite and profitable function by furnishing the community with new ideas and useful products.⁴

The training of the Bauhaus is based on a background of experience with materials; tactile exercises and sensory training, scientific physical analysis of materials, and

¹Mumford, op. cit., p. 336.

²Nagy, op. cit., p. 20.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

exercises in surface treatment of a single material with different tools. Their theory of training also includes the use of the machine as a tool; thus, training in the various handicrafts is combined with the use of basic machines of the various industries.¹

In contrast to the personal touch in wood-carving produced by hand, the result of wood decorated by machinery implies such terms as precision, calculation, and flawlessness. These qualities and standards of perfection will possibly have much influence on contemporary designers, but the work that is produced by machinery still lacks the quality and appeal of something done by hand. As Mr. Mumford says:

Very frequently, in machine work, the best structure is forfeited to the mere conveniences of production: given equally high standards of performance, the machine can often no more than hold its own in competition with the hand product. . . .

.....
Ultimately it is to the human organism that we must return to achieve the final touch of perfection.²

¹Ibid.

²Mumford, op. cit., p. 359.

PART TWO

CHAPTER V

THE DESIGN AND EXECUTION OF THE WOOD CARVING ON THE FURNITURE IN THE-LITTLE-CHAPEL-IN-THE-WOODS

The problem of designing and executing the wood-carving on the furniture for the Little-Chapel-in-the-Woods consisted of creating suitable enrichment for the pulpit, lectern, and pews. These pieces of furniture were designed by the architect. It was necessary to make the carving suitable to these various pieces and to the building of which these furnishings are an intrinsic part.

The following considerations were made in order that the carving might be related to its environment. First, the scale and the amount of carving were planned in relation to the style and the scale of the building. Second, the scale of the carving was planned also in proportion to the size and the differing shapes of the pieces to be carved. Third, the position which the carving would finally occupy in relation to the placing of the furniture in the building was considered in view of the effect which distance and the conditions of light have upon the appearance of wood-carving. Fourth, in the creation of the patterns the other decorative features already established were also considered: the staggered geometric designs of the windows, the texture of the saw-pierced

metal light fixtures, and the altar with its panels of concentric squares which had been carried out by mill-work.

The method of designing was that of cutting patterns directly in wood; it was felt that this approach would result in patterns consistent with the character of the medium. Also, by cutting patterns in scraps of wood and placing these in approximately the position in which they would finally be cut, it was possible to see the general effect of light and shade sought after and to estimate the depth of carving that would be most effective in the light in the Chapel. It was found that carving is essentially a matter of working with light, for it is light falling on one plane and casting shadows on another which reveals the pattern.

This approach of designing directly in wood served the purpose of acquainting the carver with the handling of the tools to be used and their effect in relation to the character of the wood of which the furniture was constructed. Beechwood, the wood chosen, was found to be a hard wood with a comparatively fine and even grain. Its quality was felt to be best displayed by a clean clear-cut stroke of the tool. Accordingly, the carving has been finished with the tools rather than with an abrasive such as sandpaper, and the tool marks show to some extent. This finish was maintained not only as being in keeping with the character of the wood but also as being consistent with the method by which the carving was produced.

The type of design decided upon is geometric. The style of carving is similar to the type known as chip carving, which consists of a pattern preserved by ridges. These ridges are left by cutting wood away on either side of a shape which is generally geometric in form. This style of carving is particularly adaptable to the creation of rich textures.

The pulpit was the first piece of furniture to be carved. The carving consists of two horizontal bands one near the top and one near the bottom of the octagonal pulpit (See Plate XX). Each band is composed of a six inch strip of geometric pattern and a strip one inch wide. The wider strip is made of intersecting straight lines. The narrow strip is formed of two triangular grooves one-half inch from the wider strip. It was cut to stabilize the zig-zag edge of this wider pattern and to repeat the dark line produced by the inset of the base and the narrow inset between the side panels and the top of the pulpit (See Plate XX, "a" and "b"). The panels which form the seven sides vary in width and are clearly divided at the corners by heavy verticle mouldings as illustrated. The effect that would be produced by breaking the pattern at uneven intervals at these corners was considered in planning the design.

The carving on the lectern is on the two sides of the roughly triangular wedge-shaped shaft. This shaft which tapers from the top to the bottom supports a slanting desk-like top. The sides of the shaft are formed by two thick

tapering boards which are joined at about a forty-five degree angle. These sides meet in such a way that a deep triangular groove is produced down the front of the shaft (See Plate XXI). The carving covers the whole side of the shaft except for one inch margins at the front and back. The pattern was designed to harmonize with that on the pulpit and yet to achieve a variety of pattern. The design is made of straight vertical grooves to repeat the groove in the construction of the shaft and of circular shapes. The areas of the pattern increase in proportion to the taper of the base. The depth of the carving also increases as it nears the top where the areas become broader. This was done in order that the same degree of dark and light would be maintained throughout.

The carving on the pews is confined to horizontal bands two and one-half inches in width. These bands are one inch from the tops of the rectangular ends of the pews. The pew ends are thirty-three inches tall and sixteen inches in width. The band of carving is on a three and one-half inch horizontal board which finishes the top of the pew end (See Plate XXII). The geometric designs are similar to those on the pulpit and lectern. Each of the designs is different, although, the patterns are of two general types--those made of shapes with curved edges and those made of shapes with straight edges. The texture and space division in all the designs are similar. This limitation allows a variety of movements in the borders and yet maintains a feeling of unity down the whole line of pews.

The variety of patterns used in the enrichment of the pulpit, lectern, and pews was kept consistent with the material from which they were made by working them out from the very beginning in wood. The style and scale of the patterns were determined by what was felt to be most appropriate to the style and scale of the building, to the other decorative features which had been established, already, and to each of the pieces carved. The depth of the carving is about three-eighths of an inch on the pulpit and lectern, and one-fourth of an inch on the pews. These depths were determined by the necessity of controlling the slant of the planes in order to produce a rich dark and light pattern. This problem was considered by observing the carving in relation to its scale, the distance from which it is seen, and the effect of the specific light in the Chapel on the carving. The surface of the carving which is left with the tool marks showing has a slight polish resulting from the cuts of the sharp tools. The polish is heightened by the use of a wood filler and wax on the furniture to preserve the wood, as well as to add to its beauty. A surface of tool marks, a dull polish, and a natural finish seemed most consistent with the other features of the Chapel.

Thus, in executing this project, the wood-carving on the pulpit, lectern, and pews of the Little-Chapel-in-the-Woods, the primary aim was considered at all times--that of creating an enrichment that is suitable to its function and in harmony with its environment.

PLATE I

PANEL OF HESIRE, AN EGYPTIAN TOMB RELIEF,

2800 B. C.

(Schafer, Heinrich and Andrae, Walter.
Die Kunst des Alten Orients.
Propylaen: Verlag der Berlin,
1925.)



PLATE II

ROMANESQUE WOODEN CAPITAL

(Alan Durst, Wood-carving.
London: The Studio
Ltd., 1938.)

PLATE II

ROMANESQUE WOODEN CAPITAL

(Alan Durst, Wood-carving.
London: The Studio
Ltd., 1938.)



PLATE III

DOOR OF CHURCH AT VALTHIOFSTAD, ICELAND

An example of Scandinavian wood-carving dating from the middle ages.

(Hasluck, Paul N. Cassel's Wood-carving.
Philadelphia: David McKay, 1913.)



PLATE IV

EXAMPLES OF CARVING BY PRIMITIVE PEOPLE

Figure 1. An African Negro fetish.

Figure 2. An example of Polynesian
carving from Moari.

(Sydow. Die Kunst der Naturriolker und
der Vorzeit. Berlin: Propylaeen
Kunstgeschichte, 1926.)



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

PLATE V

DETAIL OF EGYPTIAN MOHAMMADAN WOOD-CARVING

This panel, carved in the thirteenth century, illustrates a typical use of geometric panels, moldings, and carving in arabesque patterns in the construction of doors, screens, and ceilings in Mohammadan mosques and palaces.

(Kowalczyk, George. Decorative Sculpture.
New York: E. Weyhe, 1927.)



PLATE VI
GOTHIC MADONNA AND CHILD OF TWELFTH
CENTURY WORKMANSHIP
(International Studio, LXXXVIII (Oct.
1927), 22.)



PLATE VII

FOURTEENTH CENTURY GOTHIC WOODCARVING

Figure 1. Pew ends from Evreux and S.
Benoit-sur-Loire.

Figure 2. Misercordes from the stalls
of Amiens.

(Arthur Gardner, Medieval Sculpture in
France. Cambridge: The Univer-
sity Press, 1931.)



Fig. 1.

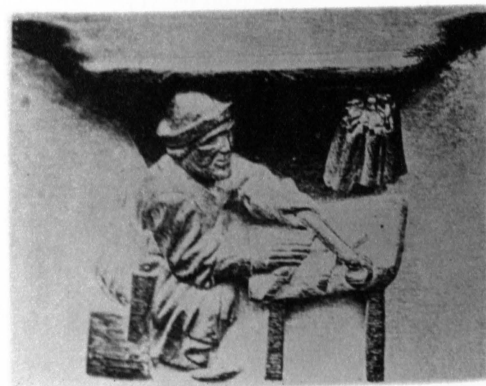


Fig. 2.

PLATE IX

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE WOOD-CARVING

Figure 1. Stalls of San Pietro of
Perugia

Figure 2. A sixteenth century chest

(Schubring, Paul. Die Kunst der
Hochrenaissance in Italien.
Berlin: Propylaen Kunst-
geschichte, 1926.)

PLATE IX.



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

PLATE X

PANEL OF THE DOORS OF ST. MACLOU, ROUEN

This panel, carved in 1557, is an example of French Renaissance wood-carving. It illustrates the use of the strap-work and other Renaissance motif.

(Evans, Joan. Pattern in Western Europe.
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931.)

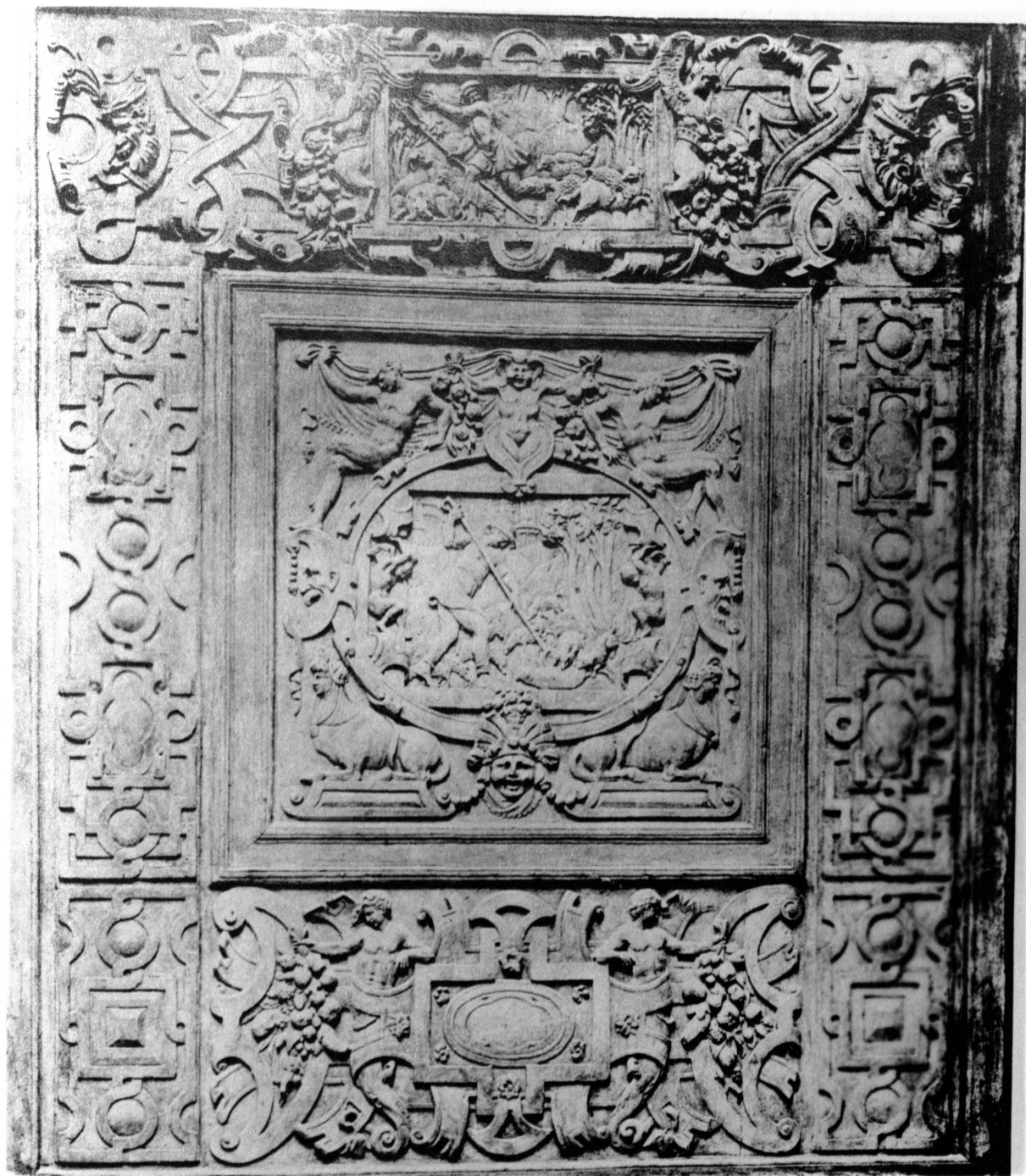


PLATE XI

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH CHEST

(Cescinsky, H. and Gribble, E. R. Early English
Furniture and Woodwork. Vol. I. London:
George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1922.)

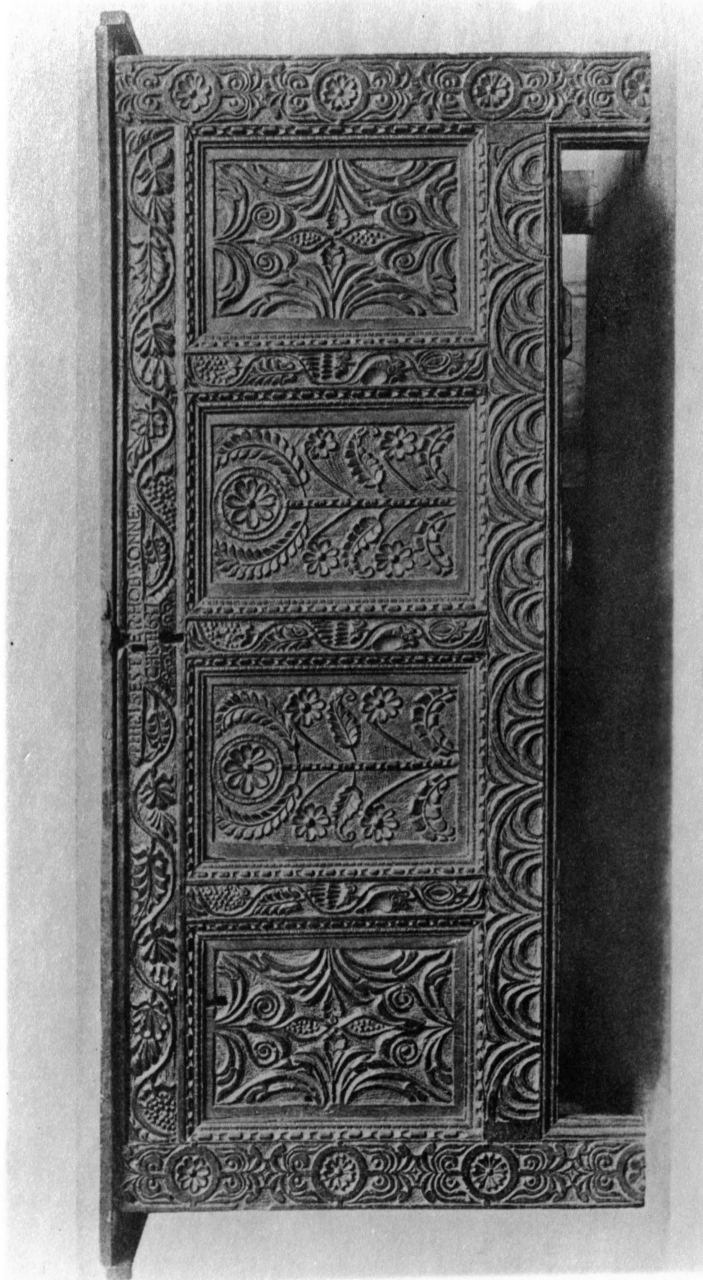


PLATE XII

A MIRROR FRAME IN LIME WOOD BY GRINLING

GIBBONS, CIRCA 1690

(Evans, Joan. Patterns in Western Europe.
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931.)

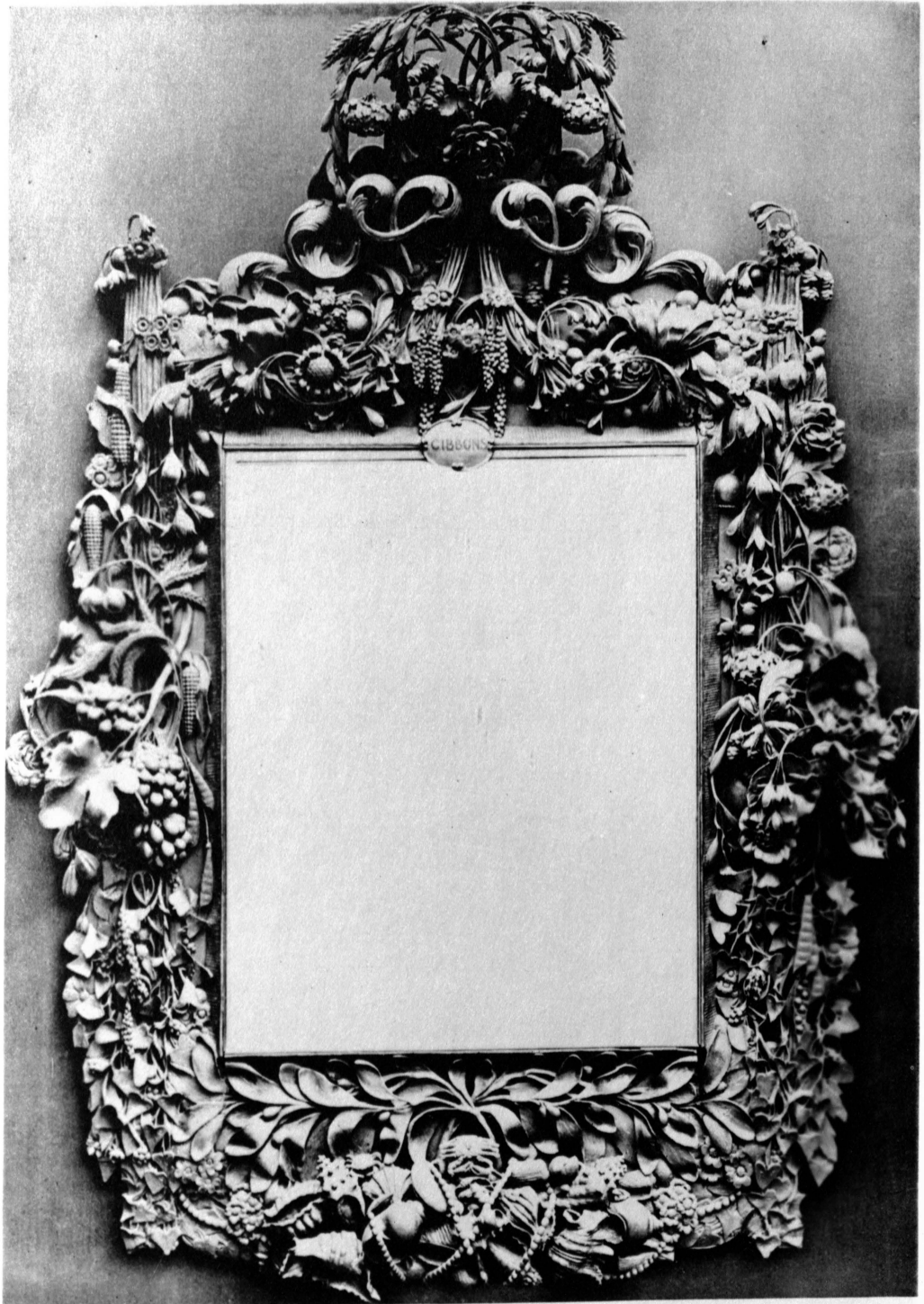


PLATE XIII

ALTARPIECE IN ST. PAULS CHURCH, CHICAGO,

BY I. KIRCHMAYER

(International Studio, LXXXV (1926), 54.)

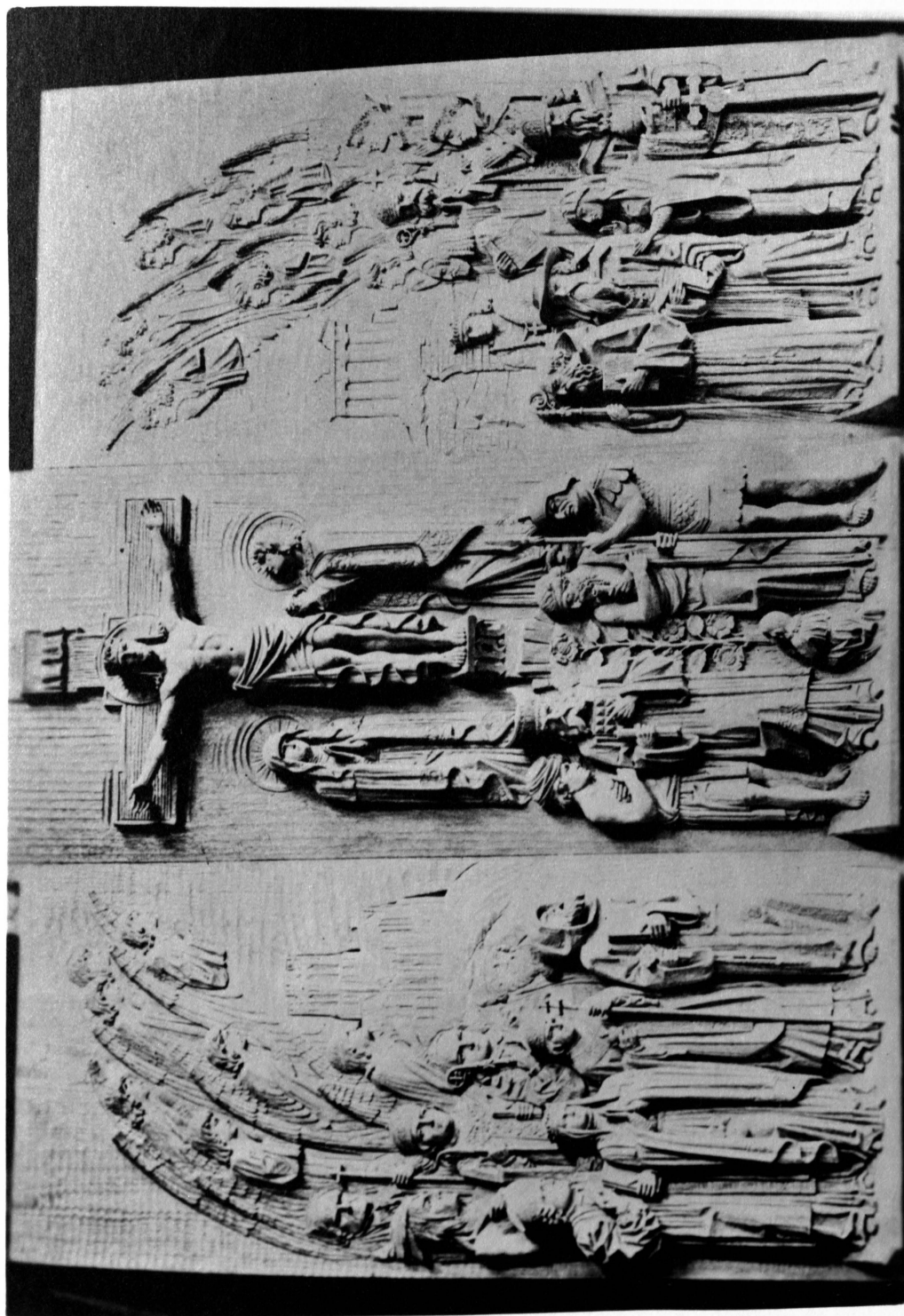


PLATE XIV

RELIEF BY IVAN MESTROVIC

(Europa, Nova. Ivan Mestrovic. Zagreb, 1933.)



PLATE XV

FIGURE BY ERNST BARLACH



PLATE XVI

FIGURE IN WOOD BY OSSIP ZADKINE

(Durst, Alan. Wood-carving.
London: The Studio, Ltd.,
1938.)



PLATE XVII

ABSTRACT SCULPTURE IN WOOD BY CONSTANTIN BRANCUSI

(Nagy, Moholy. The New Vision. New York: W. W.
Norton and Co., Inc., 1938.)

PLATE XVII.

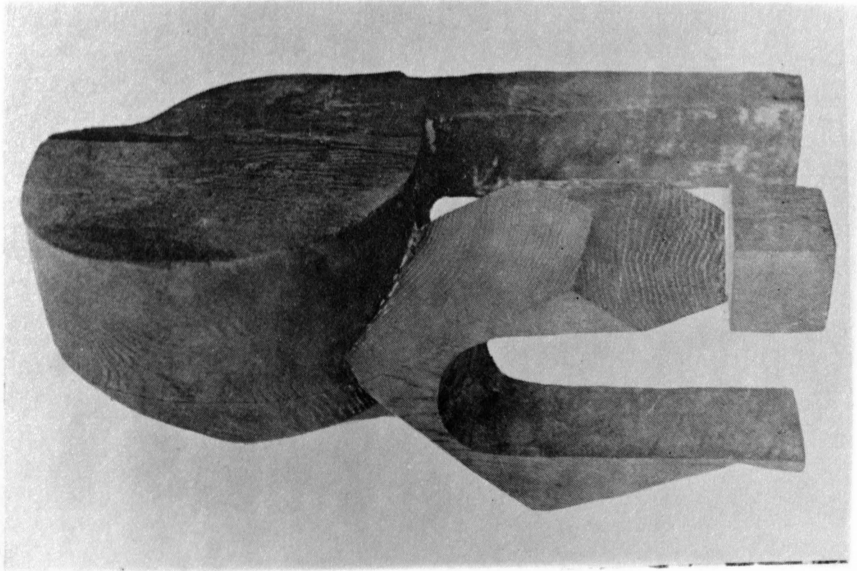
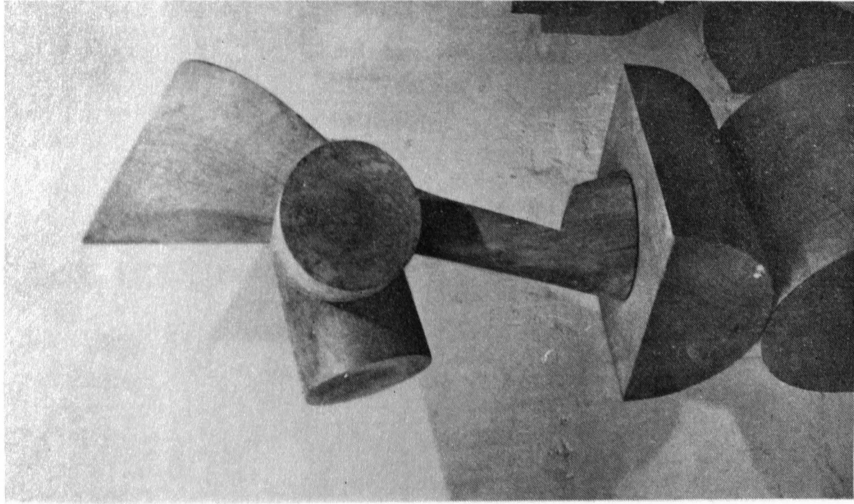


PLATE XVIII

APPLIQUE RELIEFS BY BAINBRIDGE COPNALL

These reliefs illustrate a contemporary use of wood-carving as a part of interior decoration.

(Casson, Stanley. Sculpture of Today.
London: The Studio Ltd., 1939.)

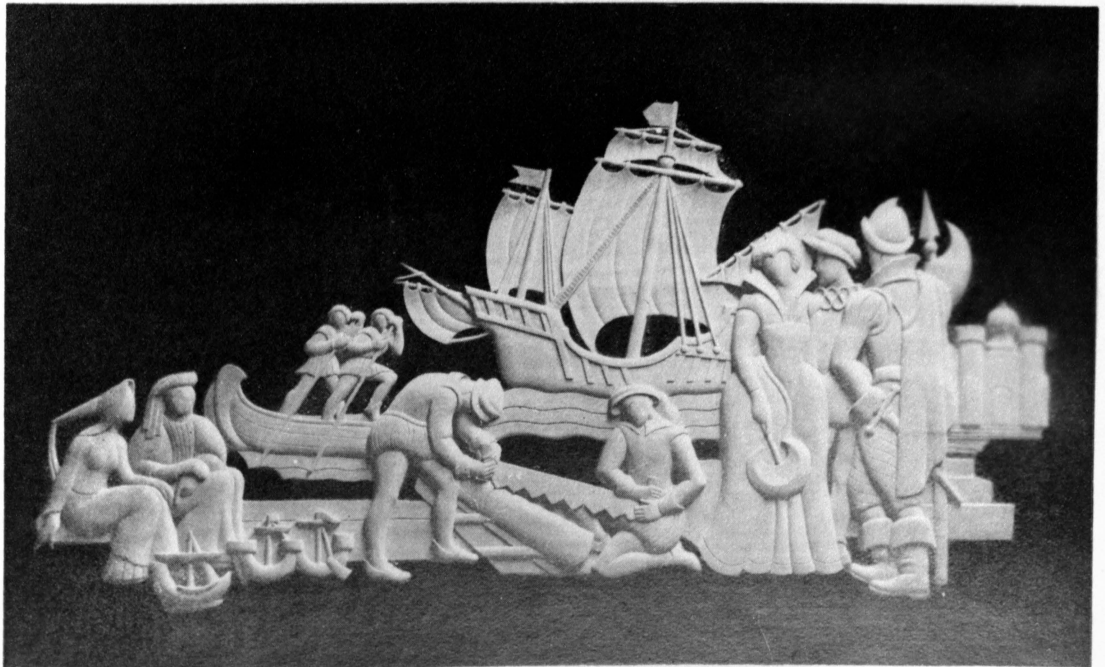
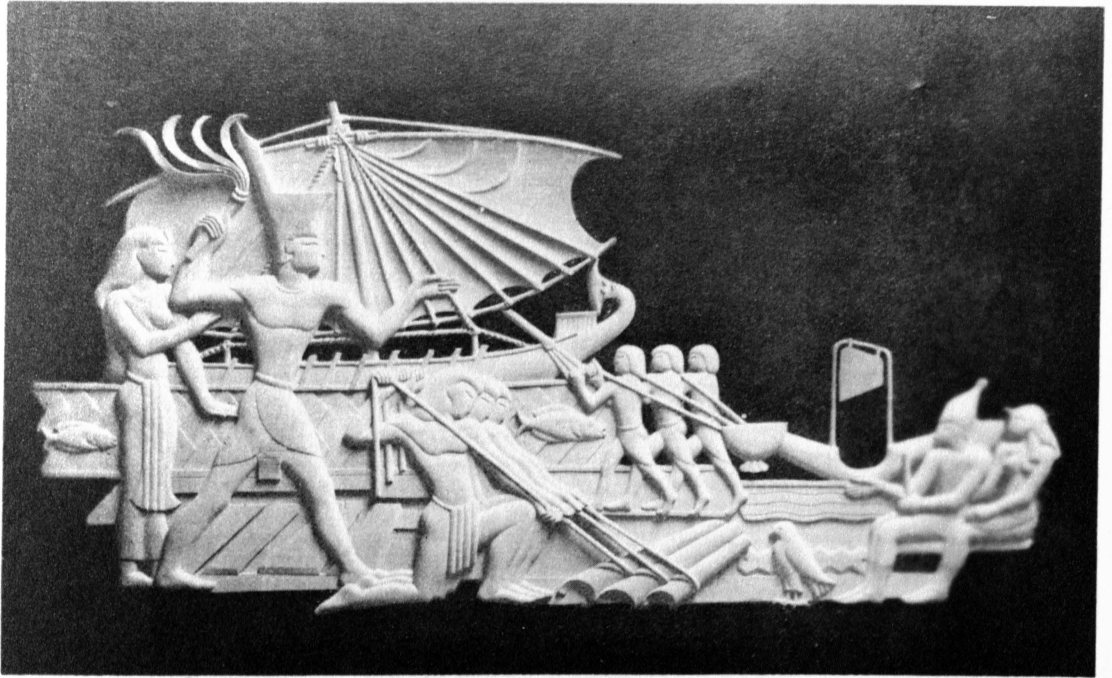


PLATE XIX

SECTION OF CARVING IN A MODERN FRENCH CHAPEL

BY POLOGNE

(Rapin, Henri. La Sculpture Decorative Moderne.
Paris: Ch. Moreau, 1925.)

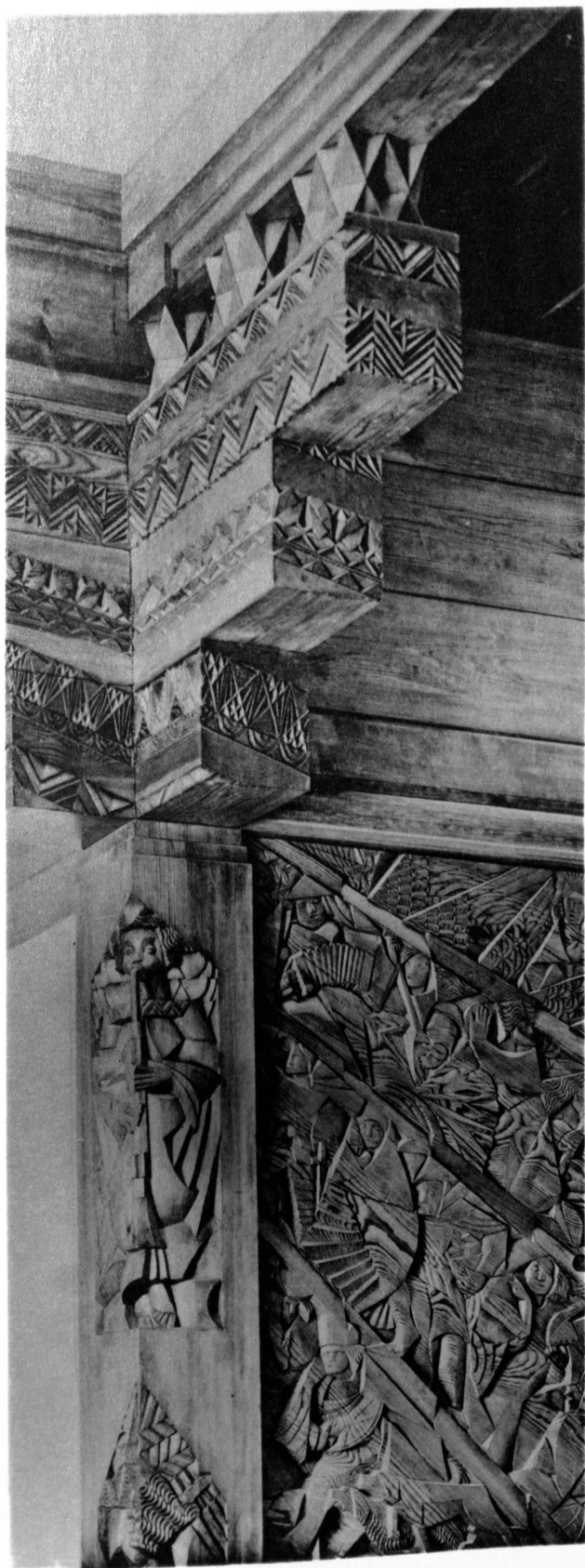


PLATE XX

WORKING DRAWING OF THE PULPIT

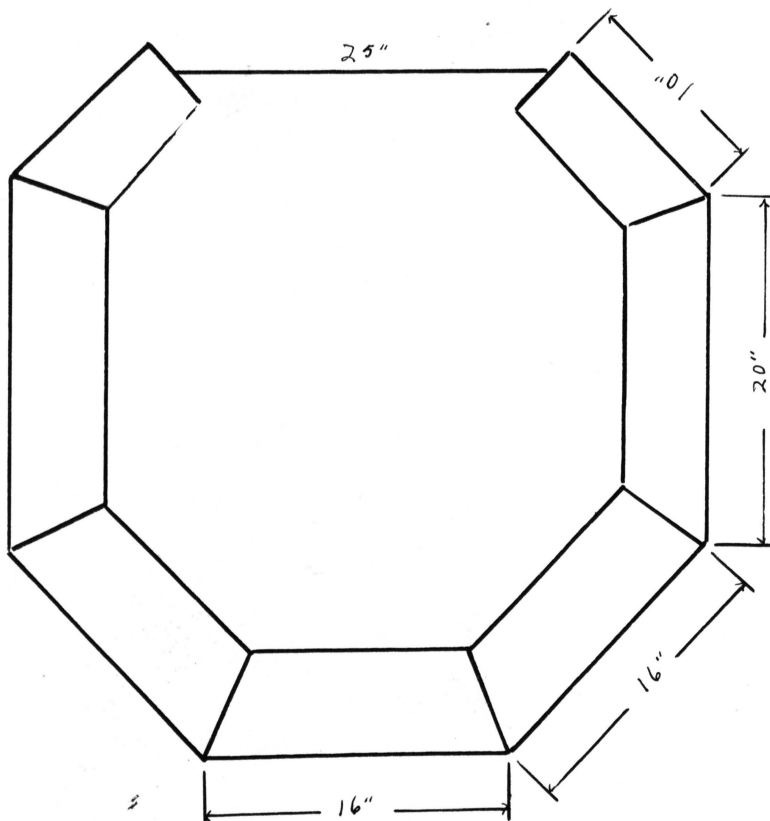
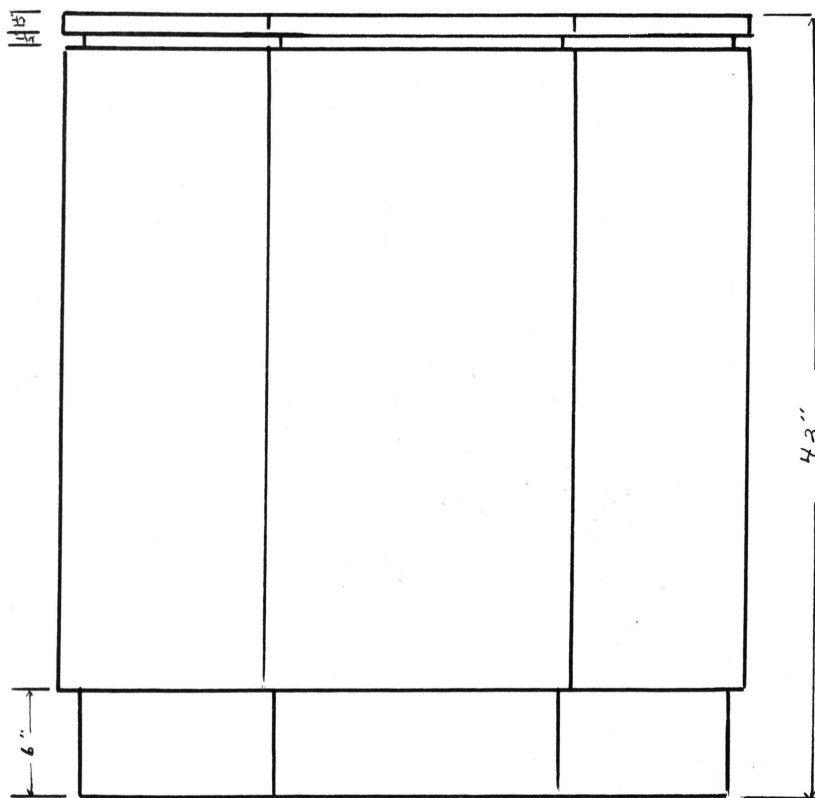


PLATE XXI
WORKING DRAWING OF THE LECTERN

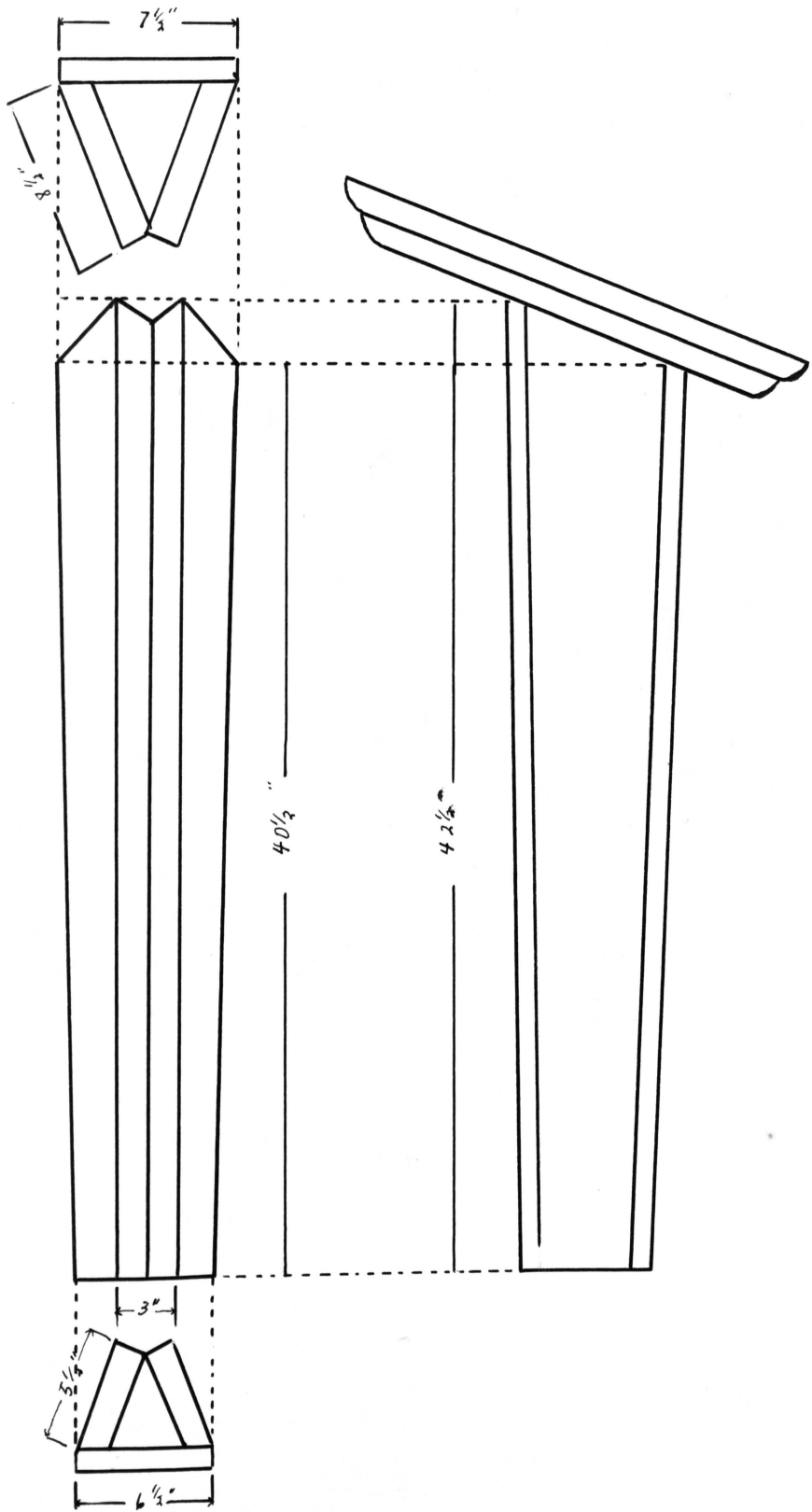


PLATE XXII
WORKING DRAWING OF A PEW

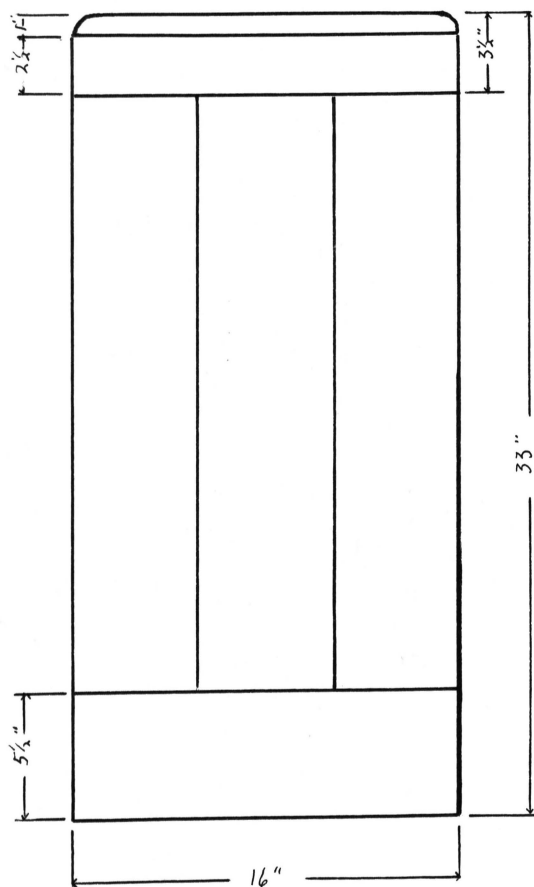


PLATE XXIII
PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PULPIT



PLATE XXIV

DETAIL OF CARVING ON THE PULPIT

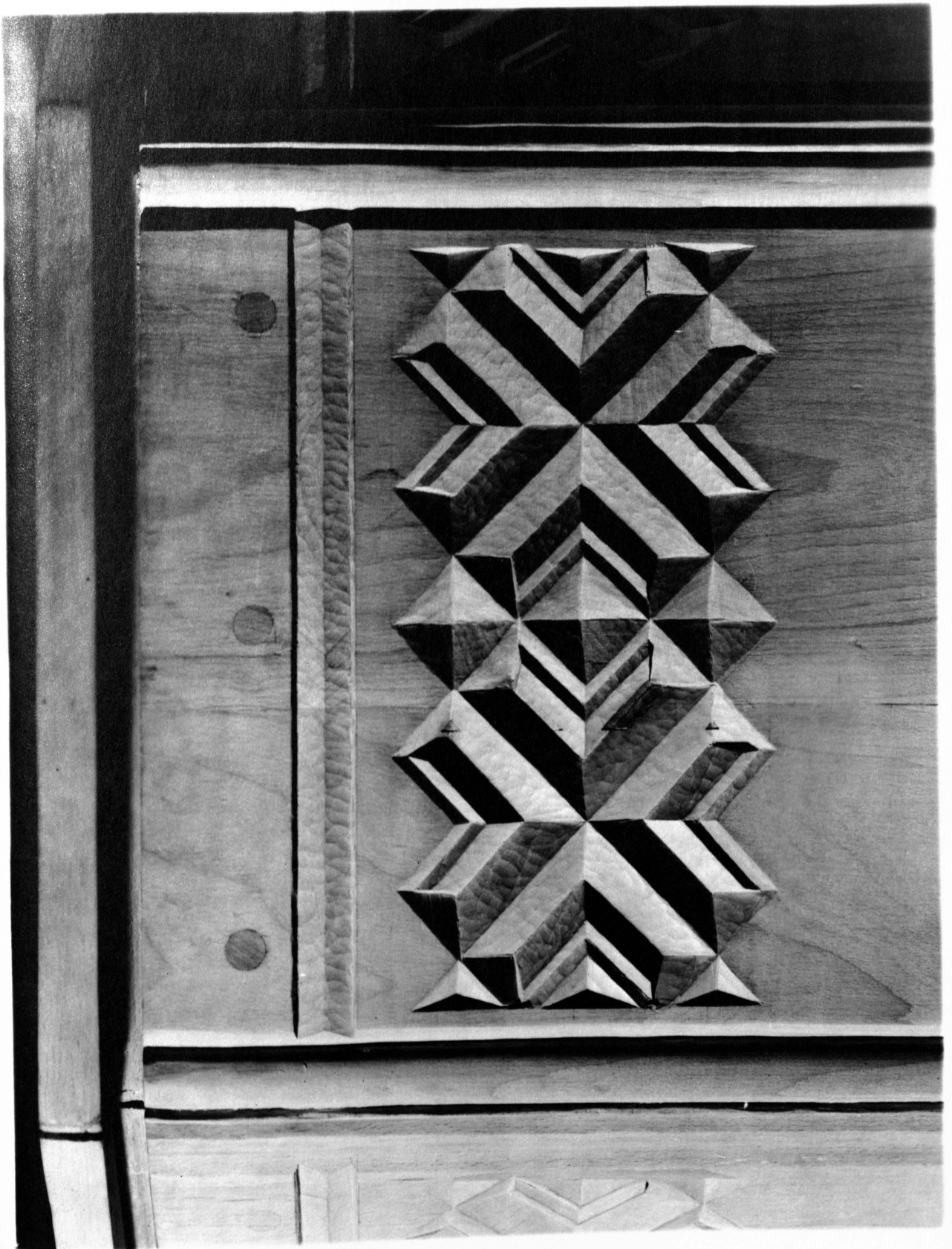


PLATE XXV
PHOTOGRAPH OF THE LECTERN



PLATE XXVI

DETAIL OF CARVING ON THE LECTERN



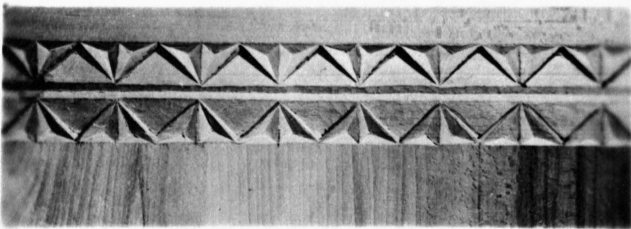
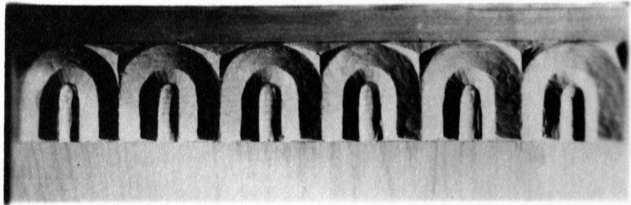
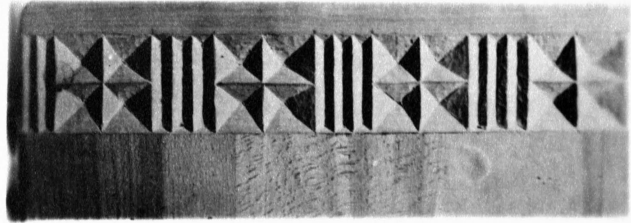
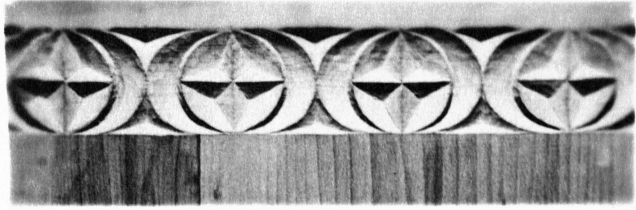
PLATE XXVII
PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PEWS

PLATE XXVII.



PLATE XXVIII

THE CARVING ON FIVE OF THE PEWS



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