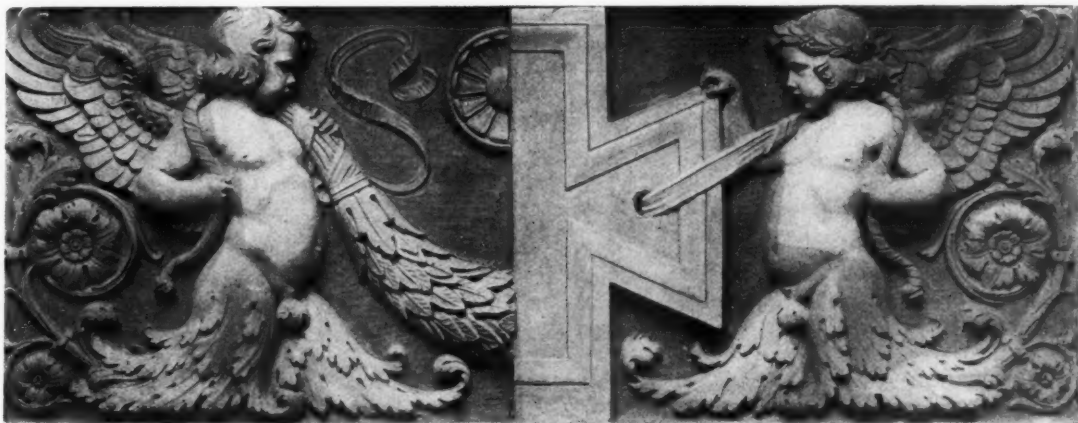


THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

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FIGURES IN ARCHITRAVE OF THE COLONNADE

THE NEW MUNICIPAL BUILDING, NEW YORK AND ITS SCULPTURE

By WILLIAM WALTON



THOSE destinies which pre-
side over towns and cities,
as others do over men,
usually provide that for
the older municipalities
the great monumental de-
velopments shall be at-
tained only after infinite
debate. This seems to be
peculiarly true of the
Borough of Manhattan; sometimes the
long-delayed boon is not completely satis-
factory even when received, as the Subway,
and sometimes it is, as the new Municipal
Building promises to be. The number of
years, and of futile attempts, that have
been required to solve for this metropolis
the comparatively simple problem of a
comprehensive municipal building erected
on a convenient and appropriate site, can
not be considered as complimentary to the
municipal enterprise and intelligence—un-
less they be set down to the waywardness

of our particular Destiny. The average
citizen will, however, probably console him-
self with the reflection that if this building
had been designed and erected twenty-five
years ago it would not have been as com-
plete a solution of the problem as the one
now attained. In the mere matter of
size and capacity it would certainly have
been inferior, and although allowance has
been made by the architects for further
growth in the city's size, wealth, popula-
tion and number of office holders, it is even
possible that the present colossal structure
may be found inadequate in course of time.
Forty stories—including the tower; net
office area, 648,000 square feet; total cubical
contents of building, 19,490,000 cubic feet;
total height of building from the curb to
the top of the terminal statue, 583 feet;
estimated weight of structure, 377,320,000
pounds. The architects state that they
have found that the average floor space oc-
cupied by a city employee in the various

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localities now occupied by the municipal offices is 109 square feet, and this has been increased in the new building to 152 square feet. "This arrangement is not arbitrary, but the result of an actual plan of each individual room in the building and the laying out upon that plan of every desk, every filing case, and every necessary piece of equipment."

The well-known reputation of Messrs. McKim, Mead and White, to whom this contract was awarded in the competition established by the municipality — was warrant for the confidence that, whatever advantage might be taken of the very newest, and latest scientific developments in the planning and construction of the building, in the design of the exterior of the same, the long established standards only would be generally considered. A municipal character was carefully sought, in the

design of the tower—which is in consonance with that of the City Hall—and in the general design, but it is that of a general, well-ordered, stately municipality, with a respect for the traditions; there is nothing, for instance, to indicate the Subway, burrowing in the foundations, nor the wireless telegraph, humming around the eaves. The more frivolous arts—painting, and perhaps even sculpture—may seek to express, in their façades, as it were, the present day and hour, or perhaps even to-morrow or next week, but architecture never!

As the facts in the case required Chambers street to be kept open through the middle of the site, and indicated the western side of the building as the front, the general plan provided for building on both sides of this street and bridging it on the east, with a more stately opening on the western front. The plan of the building was dictated practically by the irregular shape of the plot on which it was decided to place it—bounded by Park Row, Duane and Centre streets. The shape of this plan is, roughly speaking,

that of a shallow V, with angles instead of curves, or nearly, that of a bracket used in type, the open legs of the V being connected by a colonnade forming an architectural screen, three stories high or sixty-six feet, averaging seventy including the pedestals of the columns. The open court thus formed, on the western side of the structure, takes the place of the inner, well-like court



PROGRESS
Medallion Above Small Arch in Colonnade

twenty stories high on all four sides which otherwise would have had to be provided. All the ground floor of the building is given over to the approaches of the Subway. With the exception of the fourth, all the remaining stories are devoted to the offices for the city departments; the fourth, much lower than any of the others, and appearing on the exterior in the frieze of the entablature of the Corinthian order of the base, fulfills the functions generally allotted to the basement, as it contains the distributing system of the heating plant and all the other mechanical

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contrivances usually connected with a large office building—the Subway beneath this one rendering it impossible to place all this machinery below ground, as is generally done. The V shape of the building is maintained for twenty-four stories, or a height of 337 feet. Above this, in the center, and directly over the archway which permits the passage of Chambers street, rises the tower.

At its base the building has a Corinthian order which extends entirely around the building, including the colonnade which connects the legs of the V. The columns rise to the height of three stories, or fifty-two feet. Above this order is to be placed a row of about twenty-seven statues of heroic size, one over each column, on the three principal façades, on the north, south, and west. From this point the building rises as a plain shaft relieved by projecting piers and pierced by innumerable rectangular windows to the twentieth story, to the crowning feature, the colonnade, three stories high, surmounted by a wide frieze decorated with shields, and the cornice of the main part of the building; and from this rises the colonnaded tower in successive and diminishing stages, flanked at the corners by four octagonal tourelles. The last stage of the tower, which is circular, is surmounted by a triumphant statue of civic fame, about eighteen feet in height.

Chambers street passes under the three arches of the free standing colonnade, richly decorated with sculpture, joining the two legs of the V, and continues through the court and beneath a highly ornamented vault to its eastern exit. The motif of the entrance through the colonnade is based upon that of a Roman triumphal arch—a large central arch and two smaller ones at the sides; the same motif is repeated on the eastern and western ends of the vaulted passage of corresponding dimensions through the main building. The flanking arches, of smaller dimensions, receive the sidewalks for pedestrians. The central arch is thirty-five feet wide and fifty feet high, the smaller arches about half this height. Above each of these smaller arches of the free colonnade is a rectangular panel with figures in high relief; the lower moulding of this panel is a continuation of that from which the central arch springs. Immediately above these panels, between the

Corinthian capitals of the columns, and immediately below the architrave, are circular medallions, nine feet in diameter, each bearing a kneeling figure, male and female; in the spandrels of the great central arch, seventeen and a half by eighteen feet in extreme dimensions, are seated great winged figures, also male and female; the



BUILDING INSPECTION

long tablet, bearing an inscription, "Manhattan," in the frieze of the colonnade above this arch, is supported at either end by naked little architectural boys, Roman in character, and in the smaller spaces at the ends are heavy decorative garlands upheld by similar infants. In the frieze on either side of this central entrance to the

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building are inscribed "New Amsterdam" and "New York." All these sculptures are in high relief; the keystone of the central arch bears an eagle carved still more boldly. Finally, the short pilasters of the frieze, which continue the columns below, are ornamented with oval shields showing the coats-of-arms of the city of New Amsterdam, the province of New York, the city of New York, the state of New York and New Netherland. This frieze is, on the average, sixty-four feet above the street level. The same shields appear around the interior of the court and on the north and south façades and in the uppermost frieze of the main portion of the building over the crowning colonnade, with the exception of that bearing the arms of the province of New York which are too small in detail to be seen at such a height. The sculptor selected by competition for this work, so far as at present awarded, is Adolph A. Weinman.

His ingenuity in design was probably most heavily taxed in providing for the six pairs of standing figures in relief, which are spaced all around the building, on the second story; for the twenty-four upright panels, each eight feet three inches by three feet one inch, the series being duplicated. Each pair of figures, usually male and female, face each other, separated by two windows and enclosed by a column on the outside of each. In these he was required to personify, in an intelligent manner and with appropriate accessories, a number of the most important of the various departments into which the municipal administration is divided, and which are to be

housed in this building—sufficiently novel and difficult themes for any form of art. The developments of modern civilization contrived to assert themselves even on this classic architectural structure. All the sculpture on this building was worked out, in design and execution, by the sculptor in close collaboration with the architects, and was formally approved by the Art Commission of the city, as the law requires.

In these idealizations and personifications of modern themes—developments, institutions, manifestations—the architectural decorative artist works with certain rather curiously defined privileges and limitations which have been established for him partly by custom and partly by his own sense of the fitness of things. With but few exceptions no new symbols are allowed him—only the slightest and freest suggestions of modern costumes are to be tolerated on an architectural façade, the conventional scroll represents the newspaper or the "blue print"; the scythe or the sickle, the reaping machine; the spade, the steam excavator; the decorative ballot-box—the globe between four columns—the present day upright rectangular box; to signify guidance or restraint he has to fall back on the Renaissance symbol of a bridle; the rudder, the sword, the

ploughshare, the sceptre, the trumpet, the urn, the winged figure, have none of them been superseded. For this, of course, there is good reason—there are certain things in art which may be said to have been settled, once for all; it is but fit that there should be something permanent, well



CIVIL SERVICE

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

established by good tradition, not liable to temporary and arbitrary aberrations, in the ever present artistic problem of personifying impersonal things. To represent the Department of Building Inspection, for instance, by a decorative architectural figure intelligibly there must be some general rules accepted. Under these conditions Mr. Weinman has evolved his twelve personifications—more concerned (as is right) with his architectural and sculptural problem than with his legibility.

For the Commissioner of Records he presents a male figure (not in any way suggesting a clerk) leaning upon a book and examining records; for the Commissioner of Accounts, a female figure (certainly not a typewriter) poring over a ledger. For the Department of Building Inspection, a stately matronly figure in a modified costume of the ancient Greeks with one foot on the base of a column and the column and wall of a building seen behind her, holding in both hands the displayed plan of the structure, the erection of which she is supervising. The sterner Department of Correction is represented by a stalwart male figure with bare arms and legs leaning upon a huge executioner's sword, holding the heavy prison keys, and with the ball and chain at his feet. The Bureau of Licenses is presented by a female awarding these documents with a certain air of discrimination; that of Elections, by another lady, handsomely draped, guarding the ballot-box with both hands. For the very modern Civil Service Commission we have another female figure, standing very straight, with a severe countenance, holding before her the long string of questions for applicants, which is adorned at the top with the arms of Manhattan. The Sheriff is a male, somewhat more modern in aspect, with staff and summons; the Water Supply, a graceful female figure pouring water from an urn into a basin; the Comptroller, a male with a ledger, in a thoughtful attitude. For the Commissioner of Public Service, a female figure with the caduceus of Hermes, emblem of commerce, and the winged wheel, symbol of transportation; for the very important Board of Estimate and Apportionment, a dignified, burgher-like figure holding the memoranda of accounts and the bridle of

restraint. These panels are all in low relief.

For the sculptured high reliefs on the screen of columns of the Chambers street entrance, not unlike the façade of a triumphal arch, the themes presented take a wider range and the artist, consequently worked with a certain greater freedom. He set himself to symbolize the virtues of public officials and of good citizens. The great winged figures in the spandrels over the central arch signify Guidance and Executive Power, the first, that to the north, a severe female genius holding the rudder of the ship of state and the tablets of the Law; the southern one, a male, with the helmet and fasces, symbols of authority. The kneeling figures in the circular medallions on a level with these spandrels, male and female and more nearly nude, facing inwards, represent Enlightened Progress, a youth with a winged globe and a lighted torch, and Prudence, the mother of Wisdom, holding out the mirror and the serpent. In the horizontal panels immediately below these the groups personify Civic Duty and Civic Pride; the architectural balance of the two is preserved by the presiding female figure standing in each case nearest the central columns and facing outward toward the group of representative citizens coming toward her. In the first of these this figure, personifying the City, accompanied by a youthful genius supporting a shield with the city's arms, rests her left arm on the tables of the laws of municipal government and with the other presents the people with the charter of the city; in the second, they press forward to pay homage to this personification of the city, which, crowned with a diadem and the Liberty cap, wearing a breast-plate and with her hand on the cornucopia, which a nice little naked boy supports, stands before her chair of state. A very well ordered variety is presented in these two little processions of typified citizens, old and young, male and female, not too greatly diversified, all with a certain gravity and dignity as befits the stately architectural function they are fulfilling. In fact, it may be observed as one of the chief characteristics of this figure work that the sculptor never forgets his architectural duty; his design, gravely considered, carefully balanced and spaced, is carried out with the

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greatest firmness and decision, there are no mere suggestions, no delicate modelling, nor lost outlines, even the edges of the feathers of the wings are most positively defined. Delight in form and line is one æsthetic pleasure and delight in color and tone quite another, and it is the first only which it is sought to give in these reliefs.

To top all, the colossal statue of Civic Fame, crowned with laurel, surmounting the tower, nearly 600 feet in the air, stands firmly with both bare feet on the terminal



KEYSTONE IN GREAT ARCH OF COLONNADE

globe, her draperies fluttering lightly about her limbs, as it may well do at that altitude, and holds aloft in one hand her mural crown, the five parapets of which symbolize the five boroughs of Greater New York, and in the other—on the arm of which hangs a circular shield with the city's coat-of-arms—a sprig of the conqueror's laurel. The base is surrounded by dolphins, signifying the seaport town. Long may she stand there, and have no cause to be ashamed! This statue is hammered out in heavy sheet copper; all the other sculpture on the building is cut in Mount Airy, N. C., light granite, as are the capitals of the lower colonnade. The stone used in the construction

of the building is from granite quarries in Maine, North Jay and Mount Waldo.

Work on the foundations was commenced in July, 1909, and from the first it was recognized that the problem before the engineers was one of the largest and most difficult ever undertaken on the island of Manhattan. That rock, Manhattan schist and Fordham gneiss, on which the island is so largely based, dips down below tide level at about Tenth street and thereafter, as we go south, seeks depth of, in some localities, over 200 feet below the surface. As the law at present requires all very high buildings to be founded on rock bottom, and as the greatest depth to which the caissons for the foundation can be sunk is about 100 feet, the difficulties in the way of securing a solid base for these towering and enormously heavy structures require the services of a special engineering profession, and great skill and the shouldering of great responsibility. In this case it was found by the supplementary borings of the foundation company that the bed rock, at the northern end of the lot on which it was proposed to erect the building, sank to an extreme depth of 209 feet below the street, and, just outside, to the depth of 288.9 feet. Instead of confining the caissons for the supporting piers to the line of the walls, as is frequently done, it was therefore decided to scatter them over the lot, for clusters of piers. These piers, it was originally proposed, to sink to a depth of sixty feet below the surface of Chambers street, but this was increased to sixty-eight caisson piers carried down to rock bottom on the southern end of the lot, and thirty-eight such piers, on the northern end, to the depth of seventy-three feet below Chambers street level. The piers supporting the tower rest on rock; the depth secured on the sand is considered to be sufficient to secure the sand against settlement as the pressure per square foot is the "moderate" measure of six tons, instead of the fifteen tons to the square foot which the rock bottom will bear. The total weight of the building, including its contents, estimated to about 165,000 tons, is carried by 167 columns supported on 106 caissons or concrete piers. The depth to which the deepest of these caissons have been sunk, 112 feet below water level,

(Continued on page 140)

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FRONTISPICE:—

BRONZE FOUNTAIN PALAZZO DEL MUNICIPIO, PRATO, ITALY.

ARCHITECT AND MANUFACTURER

THAT manufacturers of equipment and materials entering into the construction of buildings have contributed much to the development of architecture in America is generally acknowledged. Without their aid and collaboration architects would have had greatest difficulty in producing, and in fact would have been entirely unable in some cases to produce the results that to-day mark a distinct advance over the accomplishments of fifty years ago. The present situation has been brought about largely by reason of an understanding and appreciation both by the architect and the manufacturer of each other's function and field. That it be not destroyed seems of highest importance in the interest of both.

Obviously, however, where relations are as close as are those of architect and the manufacturer of materials and utilities employed by him in the execution of his work, nothing short of the strictest regard not only for each other's unquestioned rights, but also for the unwritten and to some extent undefined rules which govern architectural practice, and business activity generally, will serve to preserve those relations undisturbed. For example: it is quite evident that the architect could not undertake to manufacture building materials or equipment and retain unaffected either his professional standing or his previous professional relations with other manufacturers. Similarly the manufacturer who suddenly displays a willingness to usurp even to a rather limited extent, the functions of an architect by furnishing for little or no direct money return, copies of indifferent plans for houses, bungalows or other types of structures, can scarcely expect with reason to continue on his former footing with architects, after it becomes apparent that his course is not due to misapprehension or hasty and unconsidered action, but is the result of a deliberately formulated plan of procedure. In any event, if there is available that which may fairly be considered a substitute for the product of the free-plan distributor, it would be imputing to the architect more than human qualities of mind to assume that his subsequent selections of materials or equipment, as between the two products would be unaffected.

It is frankly conceded that there are certain building products which can be furnished with advantage to what might be termed two markets. First—direct to the consumer, generally a somewhat limited field, and second, through the medium of the architect's plans and specifications to another variety of consumer. This latter probably constitutes the world's greatest market for most materials of construction and building equipment. Where these two markets conflict it is for the manufacturer to choose between them, or possibly both might be served by adopting totally different selling plans. But any scheme which involves an attempt to stimulate the first market by exploiting the man who practically controls the second seems to disregard one of the first laws of human nature.

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THE NEW MUNICIPAL BUILDING AND ITS SCULPTURE

(Continued from page 138)

is the greatest ever attained by this process.

The total cost of the foundations is given as \$1,443,147; and the time required to complete them was over a year and a half, as this was the largest piece of foundation work ever undertaken in this city. The caissons vary in size from six feet, six inches, in diameter, to twenty-six feet by thirty-one feet. The difficulties of excavating were greatly increased by the number of occupants found already in possession, water, sewer and gas mains, electric light, telephone and telegraph wire conduits, and a temporary foot bridge carrying Chambers street, none of which could be disturbed. The subway is along the west side and the elevated railroad piers on the east; the surrounding high buildings, the World, the St.

Paul and the Barclay Buildings, and the new Hall of Records, none of which have deep foundations, had also to be seriously considered because of the possible danger to disturbing them by the leaking of sand into the caissons. None of these buildings settled appreciably, and the traffic on Chambers street was not seriously interrupted. Everything was done on a large scale; the "hospital lock" for the "sand hogs," emerging from their labors in the compressed air in the caissons, was seven feet in diameter and twenty-one feet long, with two beds, and thoroughly heated to counteract the chill from the reduced pressure. There are 59,089 pieces of granite, averaging 6.7 cubic feet each, in the exterior facing of the building; the largest pieces weighed forty tons apiece. The steel girders are among the heaviest ever used, some weighing fifty tons each; the total weight of the steel was 25,338 tons.

RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS

NECESSITY FOR ARCHITECT'S CERTIFICATE

The specifications for the cement work on a building provided that the construction company should perform the work in the best, most substantial and thoroughly workmanlike manner, and that when the contract was completed the architect should issue a certificate to that effect which should release the contractor from further responsibility. The architect had not given this certificate, therefore the construction company could not claim exemption from liability for the defective work on account of anything that the architect did or said. What he said as to the work being properly done might be used to contradict him as a witness, proper foundation being laid, but it was not competent for any other purpose.

Culbertson v. Ashland Cement & Construction Co., Kentucky Court of Appeals, 139 S. W. 792 (J. S.)

Actions by contractor for balance due on a building contract and against the contractor because of the collapse of the structures. Counsel asked judge to instruct jury that if they find that the contractor

was to construct the structures under certain plans, and upon completion they gave way, then the contractor would be liable, etc. Was held properly refused, as incomplete, for failure to state that the giving way of the structure was due to failure to comply with the plans and to state that the owners were free from fault.

Bishop Co. v. Curran and ano. 76 Atlantic (R. I.) 275. H.C.L.

CONTRACTOR NOT CHARGEABLE WITH INSPECTOR'S COMPENSATION

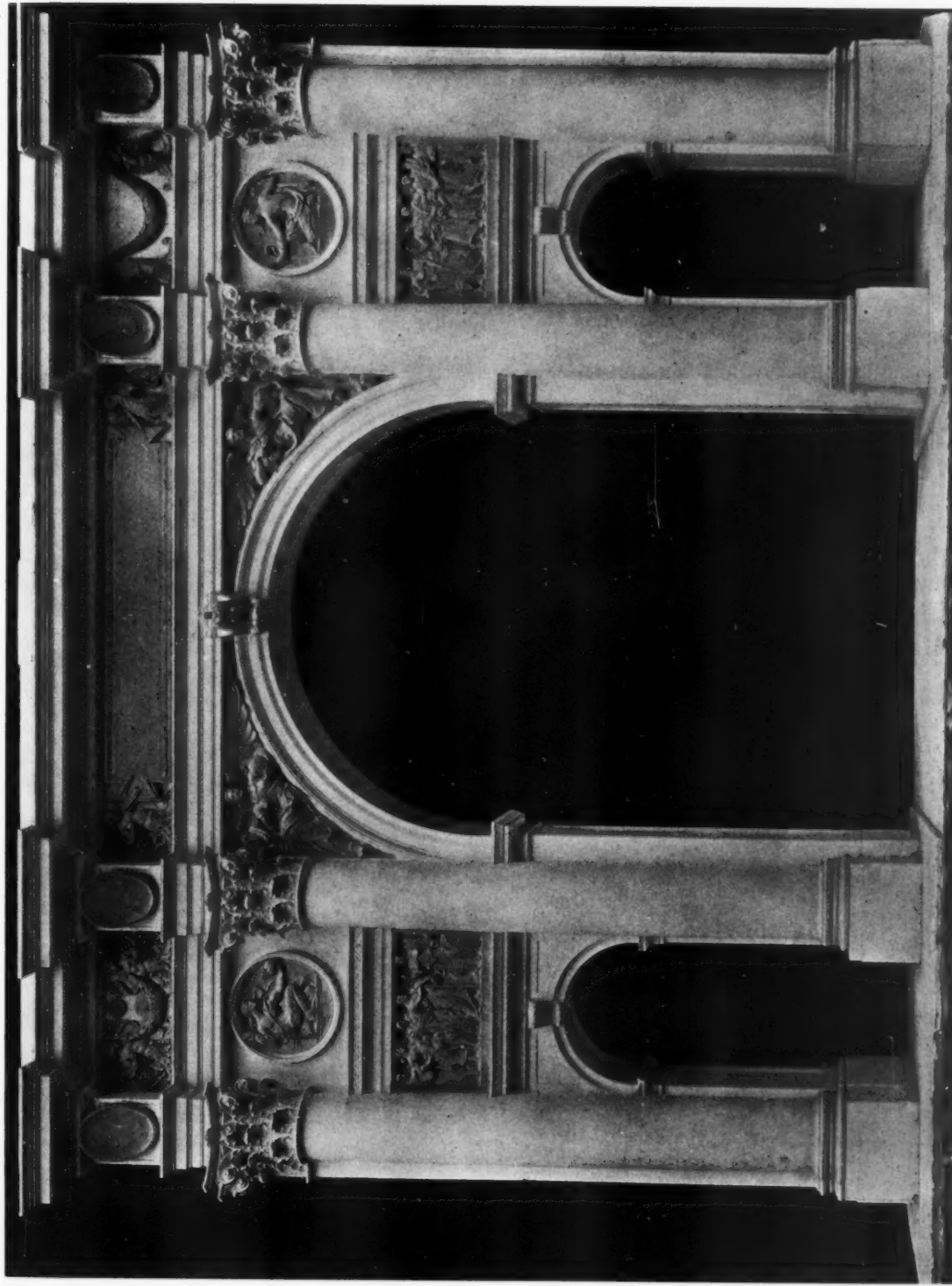
A building contract provided that the work was to be done under the direction of the architect, who was to be paid by the owner. He had authority to condemn materials and the contractor was required to remove and make good condemned materials. It was held that there was no ground for charging the contractor for an inspector to follow the work merely to see if the contractor was fulfilling his contract.

Simpson Bros. Corp'n. v. John B. White & Sons, Rhode Island Circuit Court, 187 Fed. 418 (J. S.)



THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, NEW YORK

MESSRS. MCKIM, MEAD & WHITE, ARCHITECTS



SCALE MODEL OF ARCH IN COLONNADE

THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, NEW YORK

MESSRS. MCKIM, MEAD & WHITE, ARCHITECTS, MR. A. A. WEINMAN, SCULPTOR



ESTIMATE AND APPORTIONMENT

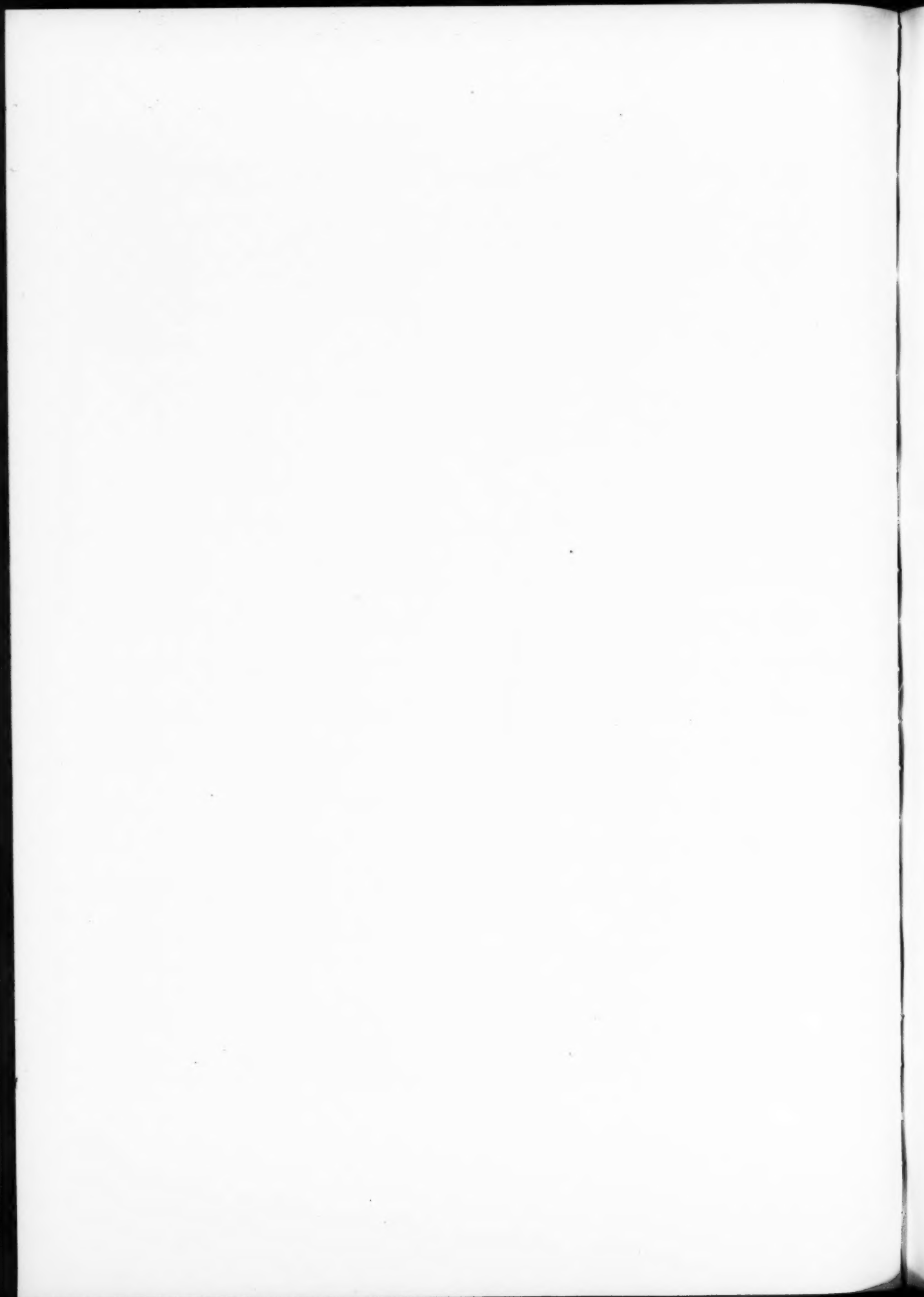


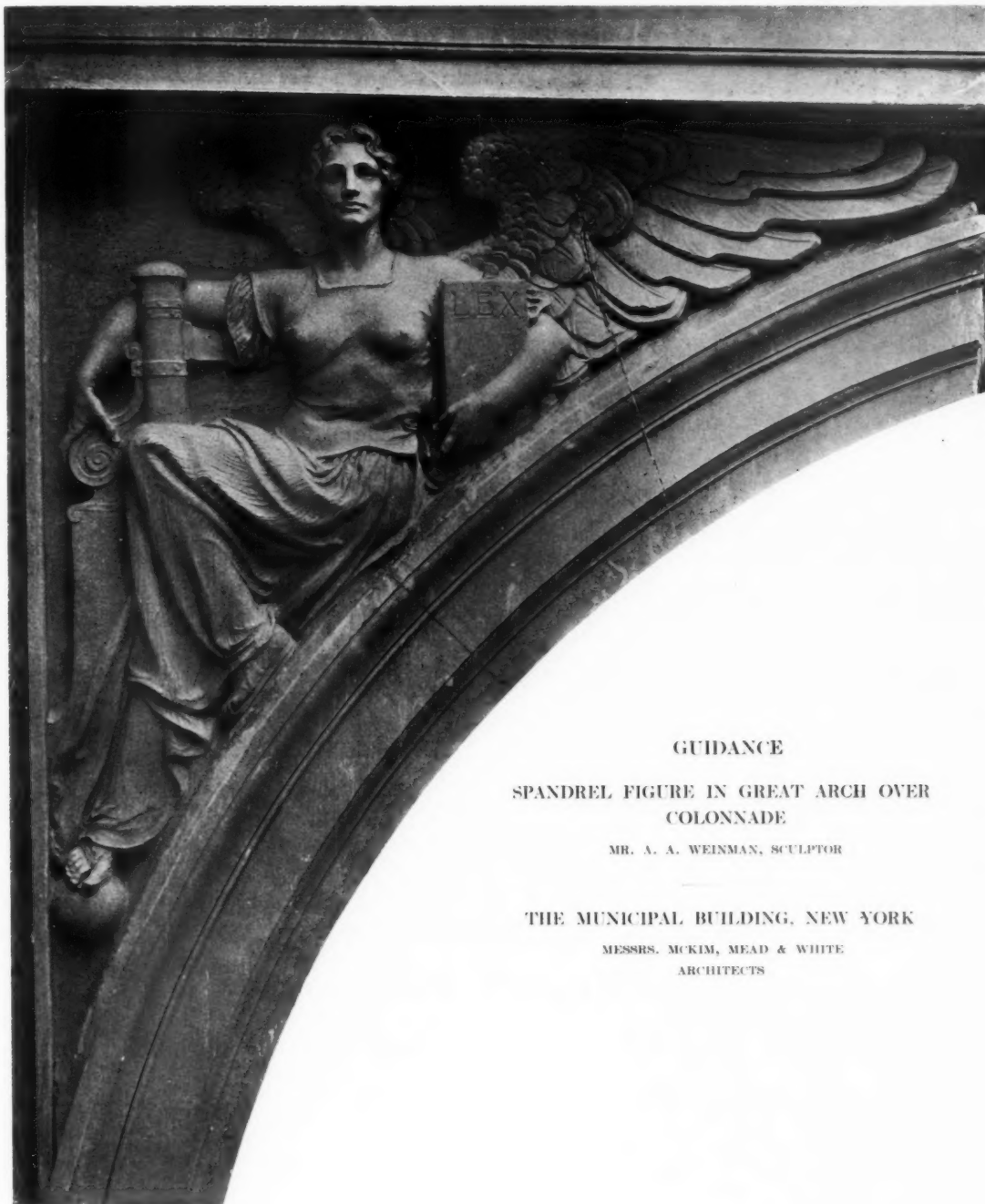
ELECTIONS

PANELS IN SECOND STORY

THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, NEW YORK

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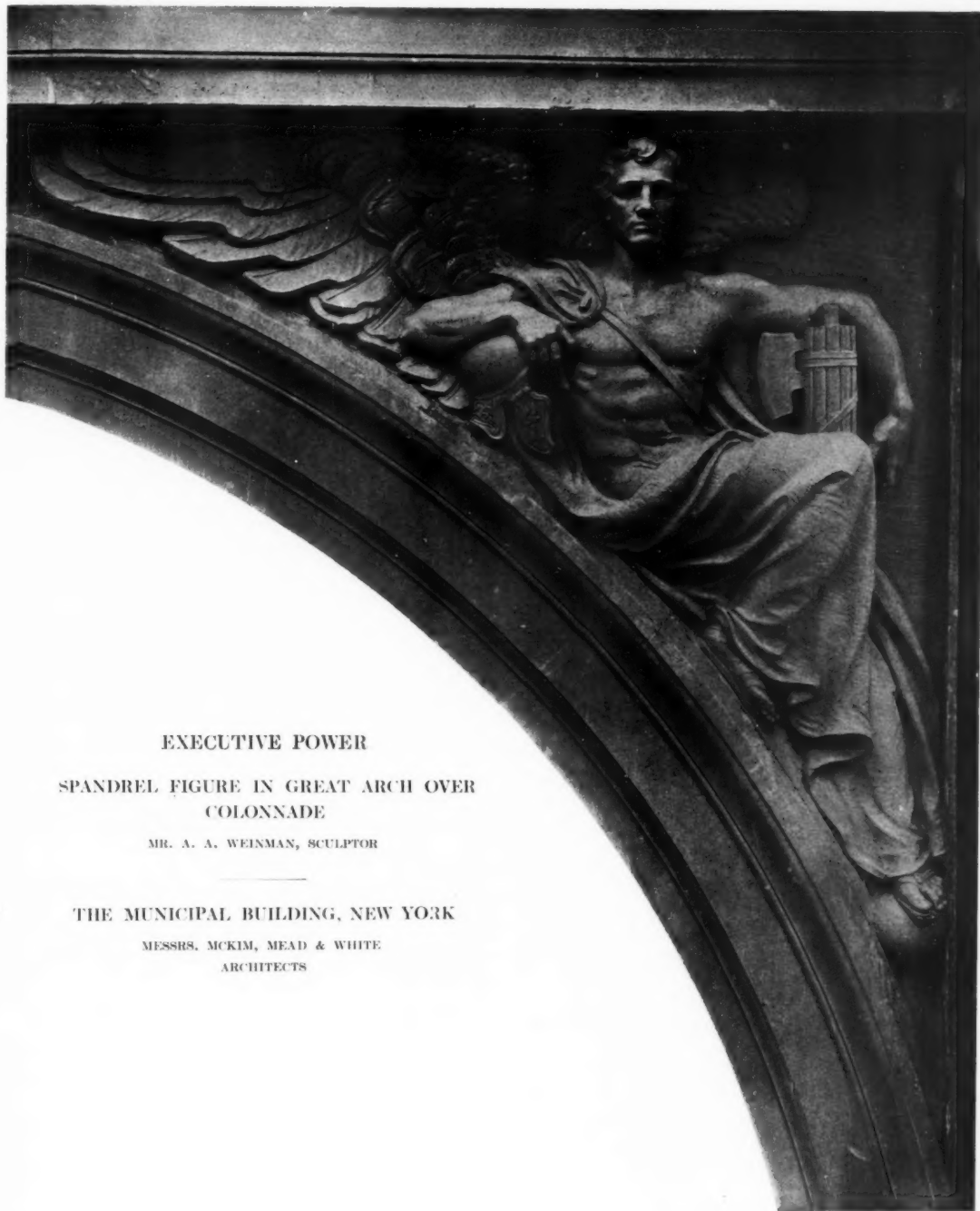
GUIDANCE

SPANDREL FIGURE IN GREAT ARCH OVER
COLONNADE

MR. A. A. WEINMAN, SCULPTOR

THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, NEW YORK

MESSRS. MCKIM, MEAD & WHITE
ARCHITECTS



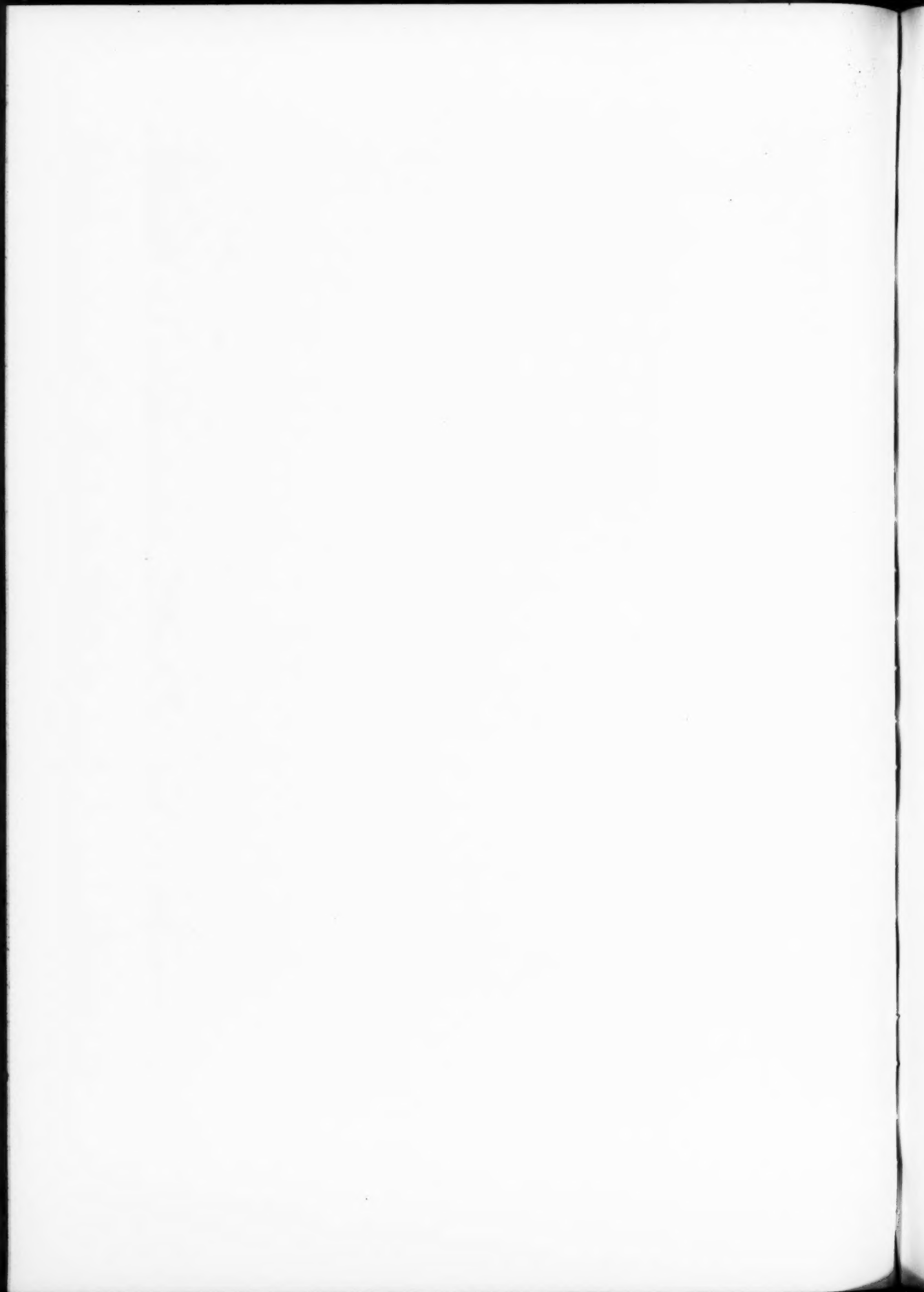
EXECUTIVE POWER

SPANDREL FIGURE IN GREAT ARCH OVER
COLONNADE

MR. A. A. WEINMAN, SCULPTOR

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CIVIC DUTY PANEL ABOVE SMALL NORTH ARCH IN COLONNADE

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CIVIC PRIDE, PANEL ABOVE THE SMALL SOUTH ARCH IN COLONNADE

THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, NEW YORK

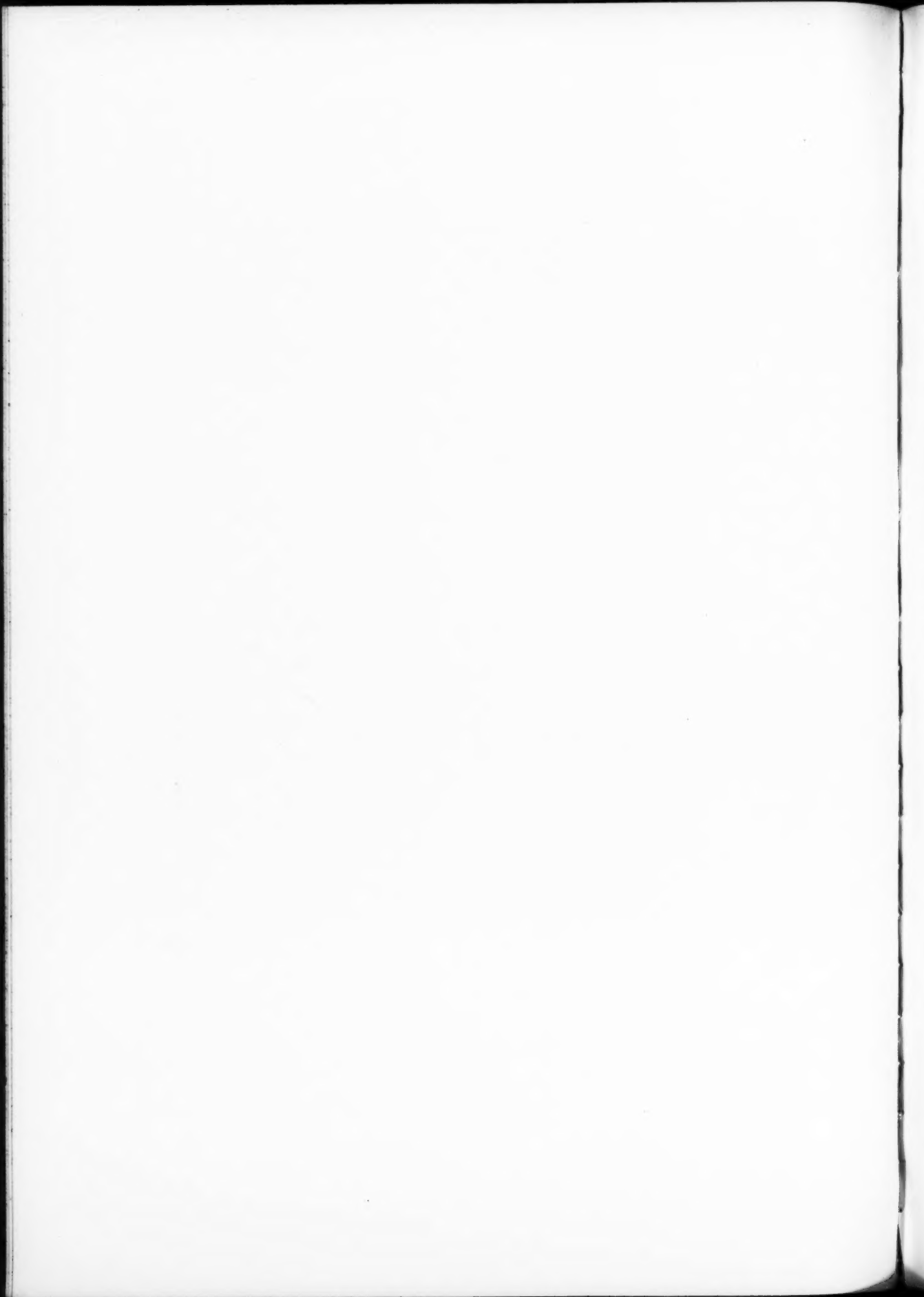
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CIVIC FAME—FIGURE SURMOUNTING TOWER

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DETAIL OF CASA PIGAFETTA (XV CENTURY), VINCENZA, ITALY