certain climates an integral element of architecture, almost of decoration. Art history has been rather neglectful of the inevitable ageing of all buildings. A rare exception is Mostafavi & Leatherbarrow's *On Weathering: the Life of Buildings in Time*. Ruins are, apart from earthquake, fire and war, the ultimate result of the action of weather; of the reduction of the building to its barest skeleton.

The choice of materials may often be determined by their resistance to change or by their known characteristics over time. Copper acquires a green patina on being exposed to the weather, the duration before an even coating is achieved depending on climate and pollution. To short-circuit this uncertainty, it is now possible to specify pre-patinated copper as, for instance, James Stirling did for the roof of his ship-like bookshop for Electa at the 1991 Venice Biennale. It has since become widely used although it differs somewhat from copper that patinated slowly and gradually. On the other hand using Cor-Ten steel, an alloy of steel properly known as high-strength weathering steel, is a matter of being aware that the unpainted steel first colours a bright orange which after a year turns a darker red and eventually a deep brown with slight purple flecks. Eero Saarinen pioneered its architectural use at the John Deere building in Moline, Illinois with considerable success. It is a material which I have used and which I find appealing precisely because of its 'natural' weathering; it is a metal which has the characteristics of unpainted wood.

The fact that architectural thought needs to include the selection of materials does not deny that the choice may at certain times and in certain places be extremely limited. Senmut designing the mortuary temple of Queen Hatshepsut (1520 B.C.) opposite Karnak on the Nile had very little choice except to use stone: it was available and satisfied the requirements of permanence and significance. The labourers on the site would have had a similar but different restriction of choice for their dwellings. When Carlo Scarpa, on the other hand, was design-

Above
Carlo Scarpa, Brion Tomb, San Vito d'Altivole (Treviso) Italy 1969 onwards; low level opening in chapel wall and serrated concrete wall in water

ing the Brion tomb at San Vito d'Altivole in 1969 he decided on mainly board-marked concrete and gold and enamel mosaic tiles combined with occasional stuccoed panels. The L-shaped site partially surrounds the existing cemetery crowded with marble tombstones and monuments. Scarpa moved away from the prevailing choice of material for funerary structures and made out of small-scale faceted concrete almost a new material. In places he submerged it in water, an evocation of the foundations of Venice that also plays on the symbolism of water in both life and death.

The choice of material is, like other forms of visual selection, made on the basis of both inclusion and exclusion. In the 19th century the use of glass and iron was considered appropriate in railway stations, urban shopping arcades and exhibition buildings but not in churches. There was a proposal for a church in 1856 constructed in iron in the Gothic style published in the