

Giovanni Capranesi

Italian painter
(1852-1921)

He was the son of Caesar and Mary Tarabini, was born in Rome in 1852. The family, related to Giacomo Della Chiesa - the future Pope Benedict XV - and Cardinal Iacobini had a remarkable humanistic tradition and archaeological culture. Started at classical studios, he was directed towards the pictorial activity of the Ferrarese A. Mantovani, traditional decorator painter. Having become a pupil of the Mantovani, according to Callari, he was next to him as a helper in the works at the Vatican Logges ending in 1887, but his name is not found in the archive documentation. Approaching the Roman Academic Group, he underwent the influence of C. Fracassini and above all of F. Podesti, and since then he painted his painting to a wide decorative eclecticism. Around 1890 he worked in collaboration with V. Monti in the interior of the Ferrara cathedral; with painter Domenico De Angelis performed his first major work, the decoration of the Sacrament chapel in the church of Sant'Ignazio, Rome (completed for the beginning of 1894). Depending on the consents received for that work, C. and De Angelis left in the same year for South America, where they did a great deal of activity with public and private commissions.

In Brazil, Capranesi performed the decoration of the theaters of Manaus and Belém (Pará); in this city he left paintings in the cathedral as well as in other public and private buildings, always supported by De Angelis. Among the other works performed in South America are the paintings in the cathedral of Buenos Aires.

Returning to Italy, he settled permanently in Rome. Here, from the beginning of the century, he performed friezes and decorations for many palaces and villas, alternating with this production of paintings of mythological or grandly "romancing", in the wake of the painter L. Alma Tadema (remember the Dionysics Festivals, exhibited in 1911). Among the decorations performed in Rome are the friezes of the palace palace Piombino (then Palazzo Margherita); the ceiling (now disappeared) of the Banca d'Italia Palace's Council Hall; the decoration of the primitive seat of the Barracco Museum (built by G. Koch, 1905, today destroyed); the decorations inside Palazzo Pignatelli in Magnanapoli (1906); candelabra panels, symbolizing the twelve months of the year, in the palace Giraud-Torlonia (1907); decorations inside the Quirinale; decorations in the church of the Immaculate Conception in via Orazio; as well as works in numerous villas (Campanari [Wolkonsky], Maraini, De Asarta, Torlonia, and others that today are left untouched). Among the most important works dedicated to Italy and abroad, the great celebratory painting painted on his return to Italy from South America on behalf of the Brazilian government, depicting The Death of Gomez (with the portraits of President MF de Campos Salles and other Brazilian statesmen), and the cycle of five large canvases for the decoration of the Bank of Italy's headquarters in Genoa. Academician of St. Luke from 1911, was a member of various cultural organizations. In the last few years of his life he worked regularly with the Bank of Italy, providing designs for new banknotes: he designed the 50 lire (first issue, 1915), 500 (first issue, 1919), 1000 (used

after death of Capranesi, first issue, 1930), 100 lire (used after the death of C, first issue, 1931). He died on the 17th of September. 1921 in Rome. In the same year he was elected President of the Accademia di S. Luca.

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