

# Raffaele Francisi

Italian architect  
1821-1901

He was born in Rome in October 1821 by Francesco, goldsmith and silversmith, and Elisabetta Coldieri. Initiated to his father's profession, at the same time he devoted himself to architectural studies, under the guidance of P. Camporese.

His first documented work was the raising of the house in via Bocca di Leone 1-4, which he owned with N. Carnevali, co-author of the project. In 1849 he planned the enlargement of the monastery of S. Maria in Campo Marzio, between via Metastasio 32-40, and vicolo Valdina, beginning a long and successful career that embraced the whole second half of the nineteenth century.

Employed since 1846 to the Pontifical Mint of Rome, from 1860 to 1870 he held the office of verifier of the Office stamps goldsmiths and silver. The director of the Mint, G. Mazio, in 1846 commissioned him to renovate the family building in via della Scrofa 39, and via della Stelletta 28, later sold to the Boncompagni Ludovisi. Later, Francisi intervened again on the building (1864-67), with an extension and reconstruction of the façade in the alley of the Spaniards 32-34. In 1870 he also designed the funeral monument for Mazio, leaning against the first pillar of the nave of the church of S. Agostino.

In his vast production there were numerous renovations of private houses. Of uncertain date, but certainly before 1880, are "two great dorms in the house of S. Pasquale in Trastevere ... a new building in Via della Luce ..., the restoration of two houses in Via Gregoriana of the Congregation of Divine Pietà, the Palazzo already Naro ... in Via della Stelletta ... in the Palazzo Pio, now owned by the Banca Romana, ... and at the Palazzo dell'Ecc. Cardinal Micara in Via di S. Basilio".

A good part of these interventions is characterized by the adoption of sangallesque compositional schemes, with the serial repetition of linguistic elements and decorative details, inserted in the facades with a careful study of the general proportions.

Gasparoni commenting on the important restoration of the casamento of the Opera Pia Michelini, located in Piazza Navona, Via Agonale and Piazza Tor Sanguigna (1857-58), defines Francisi "fearing follower of the grandiose manner ... of the Sangallo", and compares the work of the young architect to those of the major Roman professionals of the mid-nineteenth century, citing among others L. Poletti, A. Sarti, P. Camporese, A. Cipolla.

In the same area Francisi intervened in 1872 with the raising and reconstruction of the façades of the Canori Focardi building, in piazza Tor Sanguigna 3-7, via S. Apollinare 1-3, alley of the Tre Archi 1-3, later demolished to the construction of via Zanardelli. In the same year, the project to unify the properties of the Marquess Ferdinando di Lorenzana, located in via S. Caterina dei Funari 27-28.

The Gualdi palace in Largo Arenula, built in the three years from 1886-88, is particularly important, where sixteenth-century elements are dilated in the imposing façade.

In 1887-89, Francisi designed an office building owned by P. Cartoni, husband of his daughter Anna, with his wife Isabella Cumbo, located between via XX Settembre, via Goito and via Castelfidardo; aligned with the nearby headquarters of the Ministry of Finance, the building was demolished in 1910-11 to build the building of the Cassa depositi e prestiti. Also for Cartoni in 1886 Francisi had designed a farmhouse with stables and barns located in Via Appia Antica, near the church of Quo Vadis.

The theme of the funeral monument often recurs in the career of Francisi, who in 1866 redesigned the chapel of S. Sebastiano in S. Maria in Aquiro, to place the monument to F. Rota, with a bust of M. Capresi; of the F. are the altar with columns and triangular tympanum. In 1868 he created the monument to the memory of Msgr. F. Vici di Malignano, located in the church of Ss. Giovanni e Paolo, in the chapel of the Assunta, with sculptures by G. Palombini. In 1871 he designed the monument Tognoli - Canale in the church of S. Eustachio, located on the left side of the chapel of S. Michele. From 1857 to 1865 he designed and directed important restoration and consolidation works in the church of S. Eligio degli Orefici, which particularly involved the choir, the crypt, the dome and the paving, a post linked to the contacts of FRANCISI, through his father, with the Confraternity of silversmiths and goldsmiths in Rome. In 1858 he gave the drawings for the reconstruction of the altar of S. Andrea Avellino in the church of S. Andrea della Valle.

He was a member of the Accademia di S. Luca since 1867 and a councilor since 1875; since 1872 he joined the Society of amateurs and lovers of the fine arts of Rome. In 1881 he was elected a member of merit in the Congregation of Virtuosi al Pantheon, of which he was regent in 1893.

Francisi died in Rome on June 26, 1901 and was buried in the family tomb at the Verano, built on his project in 1877.

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