

Raffaele Ingami

Italian Architect (1838-1908)

He was born on 13 July 1838 in Marino, near Rome, to Carlo and Carolina Vitali. He attended the theoretical course in mathematics and philosophical sciences at the Roman Archiginnasio; he was then admitted to the School of Engineers and, in 1860, obtained the civil architect's matriculation.

In 1861 his collaboration with the Roman studio of V. Vespignani began, of which he was first assistant architect for about twenty years.,

The first documented independent professional assignments date back to the mid-1860s, when, in Marino, he was responsible for the renovation of the Fuori le Mura road, the public fountain on the same street and the water conduction system, as well as carrying out restoration work on private buildings.

In 1868 he married Luisa Torriani, from whom his daughter Angelina was born.

Between 1870 and 1877 he built the new Nobili building in Tivoli and the renovation of the Pierret house in Albano Laziale. In this same period he worked in Rome, completing a new building between Piazza della Minerva and Via Pie 'di Marmo and taking care of the renovation of the Folchi building in Via del Pozzetto, adjacent to the tenement of A. Busiri Vici.

In 1877, the "new altar in soft and hard colored stones" was created based on his design for the chapel of S. Paolo della Croce at the basilica of Ss. Giovanni e Paolo al Celio.

In this first phase of his activity, he also dedicated himself to writing writings on themes of architecture, painting and sculpture, with which he won three consecutive editions of the Poletti competition.

In 1872 he presented a dissertation on the topic whether the unity of pictorial teaching benefits the true growth of art; in 1874 he took part in the competition with a paper on the comparison of Greek sculpture of the time of Pericles, and of its imitators, with the sculpture of the present era; and in 1876 he attempted the architectural writing Reasoning on the necessity of using iron in modern architectural works. The awarding of the prize to Ingami it then gave rise to a controversy conducted in particularly lively tones by G. Calderini, also in the competition, who questioned whether he was Ingami truly a practicing architect. The controversy soon subsided, however it led to Ingami himself to present a detailed curriculum vitae to the academic commission, at the bottom of which he declared that he had always believed "to practice and practice architecture".

Very close to the Catholic, and especially clerical, environment, Ingami held numerous

public positions of some importance. Starting from 1887 he was a member of the Congregation of the Virtuosi of the Pantheon and, from 1892, of the Accademia dell'Arcadia with the name of Crisono Poriniano. In 1895 he was elected for the first time as a Capitoline municipal councilor on the list of the Roman Union; remaining in office until 1902.

In 1884 he was appointed second honorary assistant architect of the Reverend Fabbrica di S. Pietro, on whose behalf he carried out the restoration and elevation of a building located in Via del S. Uffizio; in 1901 he succeeded the deceased F. Azzurri in the commission established by Cardinal G. Giustiniani (1839) within the same Reverenda Fabbrica. Since 1887 he was among the members of the Society of Italian Engineers and Architects.

The most important achievements of Ingami concern religious architecture. In November 1892 he began the consolidation work on the church and the adjoining convent of S. Brigida in Piazza Farnese.

Having completed the work on the structure, in February of the following year he began the restoration and renovation of the complex. The chapel of the Addolorata, now of S. Riccardo, was designed by him and decorated by the art leaders V. Monti and E. Cisterna, also active in S. Gioacchino; contemporary with the aforementioned interventions and attributable to Ingami it is the neo-Romanesque bell tower with three-light windows and spire on the top.

The most notable work of Ingami is the church of S. Gioacchino in via Pompeo Magno in Prati, built between 1890 and 1898 thanks to the proceeds of an international subscription and offered as a gift to Pope Leo XIII on the occasion of the episcopal jubilee of 1893.

The construction of the church, characterized by the significant changes that he had to make changes to its original project during construction, such as the additions of the dome and the transept, it had a singular epilogue, in 1897, with a judicial dispute regarding the possession of the building. The issue pitted the Lyonese abbot A. Brugidou, promoter of the subscription and commissioner of the work, and Monsignor I. Onesti, called by the Vatican to replace him in the management of the church following the problems encountered during the apostolic visit of 1894; the controversy ended, after various events, with Brugidou's renunciation of all his rights over the building.

Shaped like a Latin cross, the church has an octagonal dome with a metal structure, externally covered with perforated aluminum sheets with star motifs. The portico in front of the entrance is delimited by monolithic columns with Corinthian capitals that support an entablature and an attic with a mosaic depicting the Reparatory Adoration of the Catholic Nations. The overabundance and at the same time the extreme refinement of the decoration, the innovative structural choices, although strictly hidden, and the particularity of the cast iron friezes placed to decorate the roofs, certainly more frequently used in contemporary architecture beyond the Alps, were harshly criticized by contemporaries as manifestations of the most frenetic eclecticism.

In 1896 Ingami carried out an intervention to expand and raise the French seminary of S. Chiara in via di Torre Argentina; between 1900 and 1901 he carried out the restoration of the church of S. Giacomo alla Lungara, which became necessary following the almost total demolition of the entire complex, including the Augustinian convent, due to the construction, in 1887, of the corresponding section of the Lungotevere. In the Verano cemetery he created the Dettina-Di Marco tomb.

In 1904 he drew up the project for the construction of the oratory annexed to the church of S. Maria dell'Orazione e Morte in via Giulia, subsequently built based on a design by F. Sneider.

The died in Rome on 11 June 1908.

by Raffaella Catini

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