

Quintilian RAIMONDI

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He was born in Nerola, near Rome, December 23, 1794 by Giovan Sante, wealthy landowner, and by Anna Attilia Castigliani. His presence in Rome is documented from the years of training at the Academy of St. Luke. Between 1818 and 1819 the young man, who from then on would have resided in the Barigioni palace at no.81 of Via della Pedacchia, he attended the course of geometry, perspective and optics held by Pietro Delicati and that of architectural and ornate elements by Basilio Mazzoli: with the latter he copied the works of Ticinese Giocondo Albertolli «reasoning on good forms, exact waves are their execution "(Corbo, 1970, p.108).

In 1822 he won the second prize of theoretical architecture with a project for a city gate (State Archives of Rome, *Camerlengato* , part I, title IV, b.36, fascist 100, Accademia di S. Luca, Archivio storico, *Miscellanea schools I* , nos. 12-13).

In 1824 he took part in the first class Clementino competition held by the same academy. The proposed design theme was the rebuilding of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, destroyed by a fire in June 1823.

The Raimondi project, distinguished by the motto "Dicea" of your favor rendimi degna "» (Accademia di S. Luca, Historical Archives, *Miscellaneous competitions I* , No. 18) and exhibited on the occasion of the award ceremony, like the others in competition , in the hall of the Palazzo Senatorio in Campidoglio, was praised "for the elegant party of the plant, not for the style of the decorations, which is convenient to the greatness and dignity of the edifice" (Loverly, 1825, p.36) ; less appreciation they received the vestibule, "too vast and majestic" compared to the small size of the apses placed around the tribune, and the choice to build the terminal part of the side aisles sacrificing "the ancient beauty of the colonnades" (*ibid.*) .

On 21 December 1826 Raimondi applied for an architect's license pursuant to the regulations issued on 25 June 1823 signed by Cardinal Ercole Consalvi "to regulate the qualification for the profession of experts, architects and civil engineers" (Cipriani, 2008, page 403), enclosing the required qualifications and a positive attestation by Giulio Camporese. However, the concession was initially refused by the president of the Academy, Girolamo Scaccia, on the basis of articles 22 to 28 of the regulation and in particular article 23, specifying that it was not possible "to give an architect's license to all. schoolchildren who will leave the academic schools with some profit, which is not enough, and there must be studies of science, practice, examination, bail "(*ibid.*). Two years later the question seemed to be still unresolved. In a letter addressed on 10 September 1828 to the Secretary of State, cardinal Tommaso Bernetti, to whom he attached attestations signed by the professors Gaspare Salvi, Giuseppe Valadier and Camporese, Raimondi pleaded with the benefit of the exemption of the deposit, stating that count "eight years of satisfactory service to clients, including de 'Places Pii, who have it for Architetto" (State Archives of Rome, Congregation of Studies 1816-1870, Personnel-Instances, b.169, ms., p.1r): the restoration work and the report prepared for the archpriest church of Montorio Romano (1828-1831) and the decoration of the main nave of the cathedral church of the Assumption in Nepi, object of a long series of restoration interventions following the damage suffered during the French occupation (1823-38, State Archives of Rome, Presidency of Rome and Comarca, Title VII, Cult, 1827-1870, envelopes 1305-1306; *The Presidency of Rome and Comarca* , 2008).

«Primiera opera» by Raimondi was, according to Francesco Gasparoni, who in 1830 said it was recently completed (Gasparoni, 1830, Gasparoni, 1841), the renovation of the building located on Via del Babuino at the numbers 19-24 in the corner with via Margutta.

The façade of the building is treated completely flat and smooth, with elements of square and rectangular shape on the high base that incorporates the ground floor and mezzanine, only rectangular on the following floors: "example among the modern very rare, but not among the ancient "(*ibid.* , p.135). Of the building that was so renewed, the «simplicity and width of manner in general was praised, and that made you see a

spacious building even though mediocre in size» (page 136); not relevant, but punctually found, some flaws, such as the proportions of the only balcony that surmounts the entrance, judged small in relation to the facade, and the cantons that Raimondi chose to highlight only above the base, where "the strength of the corners of a factory it is right to show itself rather to the planted plant, than to the planted plant itself "(page 136).

In 1835 Raimondi took part in the excavation campaign, commissioned by Alessandro Torlonia and directed by Pietro Ercole Visconti in the estate of Ceri, near Mount Abatone, following which two important sepulchral monuments and related funeral objects were brought to light. Raimondi carried out the relief of what was discovered, graphically returned in thirteen plates engraved by Gaetano Cottafavi and reproduced in a volume published by Visconti (1836).

The excavations of Ceri probably constituted one of the first occasions of contact with the Torlonia family, with whom Raimondi had established a lasting professional relationship which, considering the absence of information relating to subsequent works carried out for a different client, can be presumed to have from then on he absorbed his entire activity.

Towards the end of the decade, he commissioned, on behalf of Carlo Torlonia, the arrangement of the noble casino of Villa Carolina in Castel Gandolfo.

Already the subject of interventions by Giuseppe Valadier, the villa was re-renovated by Raimondi, to whom Oreste Raggi, who wrote it to Luigi Poletti in October 1842, attributed "the façade and the vestibule of the same casino, as is his frame that turns around and all the stucco decorations so externally that in the interior "(1844, p.254).

Connected by "classic and rigorous lines" (Campitelli, 1991, p.72) and surrounded by a park set up in English, the building aroused the admiration of its contemporaries also for the beauty of the ornaments, with bas-reliefs by Bertel Thorvaldsen (performed by Pietro Galli) and Domenico Cardelli.

At the end of the 1930s, Alessandro Torlonia commissioned Raimondi to create a theater and an orangery to be placed at the villa on Via Nomentana, begun in 1841.

The theatrical building, which follows the natural slope of the land, has the main front facing south from which you have access to the stage: above a sort of podium, the portico, with columns of tuscanico order, has a sinuous movement due to the concavity conferred to the central part. Large windows close the intercolumns; inside, the ambulatory is illuminated by a series of cast-iron and glass skylights on the roof. The external volume is surrounded by greenhouses, similarly in cast iron and glass, which follow the trend of the portico. The northern front, where the entrance to the theater is located, has an ionic convex portico; on the flanks Raimondi placed, like the southern front, arches supported by Tuscan pillars and full-height windows. On the sides of the theater and directly connected to the main gallery are two mirrored apartments, used as entertainment and richly decorated rooms.

Still for the family, from 1839 to 1841, he was engaged in the reorganization of the theater of Tordinona (later Apollo), in which he re-decorated the coffee, the ambulatories and the apartment next to the fourth order with new decorative devices (*Filippo Bigioli* , 1998; *Museum of Rome* , 2002). On 25 January 1839 he was elected among the academics of St. Luke.

From the same year he took over from the late Valadier in the construction of the Torlonia chapel (formerly of S. Giovanni Nepomuceno) in S. Giovanni in Laterano, inaugurated in February 1850, in which the funeral monuments of Giovanni and his consort Anna Maria were placed. The organism, a Greek cross with Corinthian pillars, has a dome covering the central compartment. The typology of the plant and the rich decoration, in which polychrome marble was widely used, echo the tradition of the great Roman funerary chapels (Steindl, 1991). In the forties, he was superintended, succeeding Giovan Battista Caretti, in the work under way in the Torlonia Palace in Piazza Venezia.

He died in Rome on 12 (or 14) January 1848 after a long illness. Initially placed in S. Mark, the body was moved and placed, by the will of Alessandro Torlonia, in the crypt of the family chapel in S. Giovanni in Laterano.

Officially commemorated in St. Luke in the congregation on January 28th, on that occasion his works were somewhat ungenerously defined as "not to vulgar elegance". In reality, the architecture of Raimondi, and especially the intervention in the villa Torlonia, are among the most interesting of the period for having been able to combine, with elegant and non-trivial solutions, the language of tradition and the most innovative technologies of the time.

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