

# Tiberio Calcagni

Italian Architect and Sculptor  
(1532-1565)

Son of Lucrezia Bonaccorsi (the name of the father is unknown), he was born in Florence in February 1532. He was a disciple and help of Michelangelo Buonarroti and, according to Vasari's testimony, he had the good fortune to complete two works by the master: the *Brutus* and the *Pietà* (now in the cathedral of Florence). On reaching Michelangelo in Rome, he helped him in the drafting of the architectural drawings concerning S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini, which he himself, commissioned by the deputies of the Florentine factory, brought to the vision, in 1560, to Duke Cosimo; and of the same St. John he also built the model on clay. He remained close to Michelangelo until his death (1564), keeping Leonardo Buonarroti informed, with numerous letters, on the health of his uncle and on the conflicts and disagreements about the works of the workshop of S. Peter's. By Michelangelo's intercession, he was entrusted with the direction of the work on the Sforza chapel in S. Maria Maggiore, which was soon interrupted by the death of the client and Buonarroti. In 1565 he oversaw the restoration of the church of S. Angelo in Borgo, but of his intervention, testified by a plaque, no traces remain for the total renovation of the church which took place in the 18th century. In the same year, 1565, on December 7, at thirty-three years and ten months, he died and was buried in Rome, in the church of S. Giovanni Decollato, by his mother and brothers Raffaele, Nicola and Orazio, as evidenced by a plaque still *in situ*.

Due to the scarce information about his life and the lack of original works, the figure of Calcagni, always in the shadow of Michelangelo, remains indefinite. His intervention in the *Brutus*, when it was not even denied, was limited by Michelangelo's scholars to drapery only. In the *Pietà* the intervention is greater: in addition to various repairs of original pieces, the left side of the group was largely modified and the whole figure of the *Magdalene* seems to be by the hand of Calcagni; but he is always an executor of Michelangelo themes and motifs. So as regards the architectural drawings: the criticism is in agreement in considering the design of the Uffizi, *Arch . 3185*, the "in clean" translation made by Calcagni of the Michelangelo plant for S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini. One cannot certainly distinguish a personal intervention also in the other drawings concerning the same factory, but some scholars wanted to see above all in the elevation something extraneous to the Michelangelo idea, gravitating rather in the artistic orbit of the factory Vatican.

by Giovanna Casadei Mugnai - Biographical Dictionary of Italians - Volume 16 (1973)

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