

# Paolo Campi

In a document from 1712, kept in the archives of Montecassino, it is said "son of the quondam Domenico di Carrara Scultore in Rome". They do not know the biographical details: the first news that came to him dates back to 1703, when he received a prize at the Accademia di S. Luca of Rome.

On the date unknown, however, after arriving in Rome, married Rosalba Maria Salvioni, painter, daughter of a Vatican printer originally from the Val Brembana (Tiraboschi), which had been a kind of prodigal child, whose only known a Baptism of Christ in the Church of St. John at Taleggio (see U. Thieme-F. Becker, *Künstlerlexikon*, XXIX, 368).

CAMPI was the help of Pierre Le Gros II until the death of this (1719), but he had already begun to carve on his behalf. His first independent commission was perhaps the one related to Angela's glory, in stucco, on the altar of S. Salvatore in Lauro (Titi, 1763, p. 408). Another work of his first period of activity known to us is one of the great travertine statues crowning the balustrades of St. John's Square columns in the Vatican, St. Bonaventure, for which 60 shields were paid on April 21st. 1703 (Arch of St. Peter's Factory, ser. Arm., Vol. 397, 227). But more important is the statue of S. Sebastiano in marble and stucco, which he performed for one of the altars in the left arm of the transept of the church of S. Agnese in Piazza Navona: this sculpture of antique style takes probably moved by S. Sebastiano of Domenico Guidi in the façade of S. Andrea della Valle.

The great opportunity came to CAMPI in 1712, when Pierre Le Gros made him participate in the realization of the vast sculptural decoration program that was then developed for the cloister of the monastery of Montecassino: a work he had to occupy for almost a fourth century. In conclusion, it was CAMPI who received the largest number of commissions and performed the least number of statues: destroyed or damaged by the bombings of 1944, have in some cases been restored, in other cases replaced.

The 12th Jan. 1712, the abbot of Montecassino, commissioned by Pierre Le Gros, commissioned CAMPI to execute two marble statues (Pope Gregory II and Gisulfo Duke of Benevento), with the obligation to terminate them in eighteen months (Caravita, pp. 510 -13); but we do not know when they actually were accomplished. Even these are only fragments. At the beginning of 1718, CAMPI signed a final payment receipt for the statues of "Zacaria Pontefice and Alessandro Parimente Pontefice and Conrado Primo Emperatore", all of which were finished and put into operation in the niches of the cloister. The remains of one, the Pope Zaccaria (the head and the tunic), allow to recognize in CAMPI's ways an elegant and lively baroque derived more from Rusconi than by Le Gros. For Charlemagne things went wrong: assigned to Le Gros in 1714, he was just sketched when he died five years later; The commission was then transferred to CAMPI who completed the statue in December 1720 (date of final payment: Caravita, p. 513). Remaining intact, it reveals the impetuous rhythm of the drapery, and a number of decorative details that are not reflected in other CAMPI's works, which in this case must have followed as closely as possible the Le Gros model.

After a presumably inactive period, in 1726 CAMPI received the commission for the statue of Benedict XIII, which was placed in the cloister, was completely destroyed by the bombings of 1944. CAMPI's work for the cloister was undoubtedly a great favor: in fact, after he had executed no less than eight full-size statues, the monks of Montecassino asked him to carve the colossal statues of the two patrons of the Order (S. Benedetto and S. Scolastica) destined to flank the staircase. The S.Benedetto, despite the damage suffered in the bombing, is almost intact, while nothing remains of S.Scolastica. Only of these two statues there are photographs taken before World War II, which show how much the modern sculptor who rediscovered S.Scolastica, despite having faithfully followed the compositional lines of the original, has misrepresented the spirit. Both of the CAMPI's statues are conceived in elegant "contrasts", with delicately flamboyant movements; the figures are wrapped in heavy and voluminous robes that animate, amplify and enhance the moods suggested by attitudes and expression of faces. In 1735, accusing the receipt of the final payment, CAMPI claimed that two years had elapsed to complete the statues (Caravita, pp. 519-21).

CAMPI's masterpiece is the colossal marble statue of S. Giuliana Falconieri in S. Pietro in the Vatican. From an engraving by Pietro Bombelli dating from 1785 we know that he completed the work in 1732. The composition is grandiose, monumental, everywhere animated by a wide wave of motion; except for the upper part, which is treated with more delicate touch (reminiscent of Le Gros), marks the passage to the area of deep shadows surrounding the head and face of intense spirituality. Another work by CAMPI for S. Peter is S. Pietro Nolasco with a free slave kneeling in front of him: here the sculptor, in an effort to accentuate the expressive force, is likely to fall in histrionic way. Once again, the engraving deals with Bombelli's date to give us the date (1742) of the statue, and this is the last news that, in the current state of the studies, there is the Campi.

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