

Cesare Caroselli

Italian painter
1847-1927

He was born in Genazzano (Rome) on December 14th. 1847 by Nicola and Cesarina Senni. He began his artistic studies in Rome at the art school in the hospice of S. Michele, where he remained for a year, and had as a master of drawing Francesco Giangiacomo; subsequently he was a pupil of the Academy of S. Luca. He left voluntarily, in 1866, to reach Garibaldi, and took part in the Bezzecca fight. Back in Rome, he was imprisoned for a month by the papal government.

In 1869 he won the Pio Clementino competition of the Accademia di S. Luca with the picture *Reconciliation of Jacob with Esau* and won, three years later, the Crossbow competition banned by the same Accademia, with the painting *Agrippina that lands at the port of Brindisi with the ashes of Germanico*. These two early works show in the composition and style both the formation of the painter, which took place in the closed Roman artistic environment, and his lack of personal contributions in the development of the themes. It is also a rhetorical and weak painting of 1881, with a historical character, *La disfida di Barletta* which contains, however, some interesting ideas, probably determined by the drawings and watercolors made by him in the center of Puglia, where he had been before leaving for Trentino.

Also in 1881, he took part in the Milan National Exposition with a genre painting: *Country Festival*. Together with Scipione Vannutelli, his countryman, in Prospero Piatti and Virginio Monti, he decorated the church of Madonna del Buon Consiglio in Genazzano between 1881 and 1882. His are the frescoes of *Jesus among the doctors*, in the lunette of the altar of the Holy Spirit, and *S. Nicola da Tolentino who prays the Virgin for the souls of Purgatory*, in that of the altar dedicated to the saint. In Rome, as part of the Exposition of Fine Arts of 1883, he again presented the *Challenge of Barletta* and two *Landscapes*.

Interested in landscape painting, during the course of his artistic career he performed numerous views of Genazzano, Rome and the Roman countryside. Apart from some sporadic appearances at exhibitions, even at an international level, the painter's activity is to be found above all in the decoration of Roman churches, where, while demonstrating that he possesses a good technique, he expires artistically due to lack of inventiveness and I keep going back to old patterns.

Under the direction of Francesco Vespignani, in 1885 he frescoed the figure of *St. Athanasius* in the new apse of S. Giovanni in Laterano. He worked with the same architect, during 1887, in the church of the Sacred Heart at the Castro Pretorio, painting the *major Prophets* in the four pendentives of the tiburium and the figures of the *Sibyls* and the *minor Prophets* in the band above the main nave.

Of 1895 is the fresco of the ceiling of the church of S. Maria in Traspontina, depicting the *Virgin who delivers the scapular as Simone Stock*. For commission of Propaganda Fide

and the Emperor of Austria he frescoed, in 1897, the iconostasis of the SS. Sergio and Bacco, which later became the church of the Ruthenian nation.

Listed among the first members of the Association among architecture lovers, he participated in various initiatives of restoration of Roman churches: he was part of the commission for the restoration of S. Maria in Cosmedin and in 1899 he decorated both the apse, with frescoes of Romanesque style, both, together with Alessandro Palombi, the chapel of the Madonna of Loreto and that of S. Giovanni Battista. He was among the promoters of the restoration of the church of S. Saba, taking an active part of it, and commissioned by the Fund of the cult to restore the ceiling of the Ara Coeli. Still in the ambit of the activities of the Association among architecture lovers, he compiled, together with others, the *Inventory of the monuments of Rome* (Rome 1908-1912).

In 1905 he frescoed the ceiling of the nave and the cruise of S. Andrea della Valle with a *Holy Family* and an *Annunciation*, while in 1914 he executed the painting *S. Francis who supports the Lateran* for the chapel of the penitentiaries in St. John. In recent years he also dedicated himself to portraiture: an example is that of *Cardinal Francesco di Paola Cassetta* (Bibl. Apost. Vaticana).

He died in Rome on June 16, 1927.

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