

Lodovico del Luca

Italian sculptor
c.1520-1604

The son of Giovan Pietro and brother of the architect and sculptor Giacomo, was born in Sicily, perhaps in Cefalù. Sometimes he was mistakenly called Scalza, surely confusing with the sculptor Lodovico Scalza d'Orvieto.

Del Luca is mentioned for the first time in a June 1551 document: a letter from Vasari to Lorenzo Ridolfi concerning a request of 10 ducats for a Lodovico who had cast "bronze" bronze heads to decorate the Ridolfi palace in Florence.

In the early 1570s, Del Luca collaborated with his brother Giacomo at the funeral monument, made by the latter, by Elena Savelli in S. Giovanni in Laterano. There are many bronze reliefs on the marble: an angel, the effigy of the deceased, the weapons and the three rounds. These three medallions, cast by Del Luca, illustrate the *Universal Judgment and the Resurrection of the Dead*.

The upper left corner represents Christ the Judge. In the center an angel is about to play the trumpet of Judgment and call the dead, partly in the form of skeletons, depicted in the last medallion at the bottom.

In 1575 Del Luca, again in collaboration with his brother, fused the rays or flames surrounding the emblem of the monogram of Christ, destined to the main façade of the church of the Gesù, executed on designs by Bartolomeo Ammannati. In the factory's record, five times the name of the Duke is quoted, Giacomo appears only the first, while in the later, only the name of Del Luca appears. It is also reported that his remuneration gave rise to a dispute over which he was called an expert Guglielmo Della Porta. In the year 1583, after the rejection of his brother Giacomo, Del Luca was called for the fusion of the statue of *Maximilian I* kneeling for his monumental burial in the Hofkirche of Innsbruck. It had been Massimiliano himself to undertake, since 1502, a work that lasted for more than eighty years and was part of some of the greatest artists of the time.

With a contract of 15 January. 1583, ratified by Archduke Ferdinand II on March 13 of that same year, Del Luca committed to merging the statue in the Mühlau foundry by paying 450 crowns and, in which his work did not satisfy the experts and archduke, to merge again the effigy of the emperor at his own expense. This clause was not purely formal since, after the failed attempt by H. Ch. Loeffler in 1553, none of the founders subsequently interrogated had accepted the offer. In 1584 Del Luca was paid for the statue, which was in fact the first large work he had performed so far. He must have had some success in Innsbruck since, according to the archives, at the expense of Archduke Ferdinand II he began an apprentice in the art of casting bronze. The 12th of Oct. 1584 sent a letter to the archduke from Rome and in 1585 was still in contact with him.

During the pontificate of Sixus V the Del Luca doubled his activity in the same Rome. Between 1586 and 1590 he was associated with Bastiano Torrigiani, who led the papal

foundry, a gilded bronze tabernacle for the chapel of the crib in S. Maria Maggiore (which the pope had done restoring), probably on models, according to tradition , Riccio and Andrea Soncino.

On the altar there is elevated the ciborium supported by four angels holding hands with candle cornucopias with hands free. The Del Luca is attributable to the fusion of ciborium in the shape of a temple and ornamented with figurines, while Torrigiani would be the author of the four angels. Under the base is dated 1590. The payment of this work, which reveals the influence of Michelangelo and recalls the tabernacle of Farnese by Giacomo Del Duca, currently kept at the National Museum of Capodimonte, was carried out at rates from 1587 to 1590.

In 1586 the works commissioned by Sixtus V began to move and erect the obelisk today in St. Peter's Square. Under the direction of Domenico Fontana, they took part in the accomplishment of this demanding work, many founders, including Del Luca and Bastiano Torrigiani. Del Luca made the four lions supporting the obelisk in 1588, merging them according to the models of Prospero Bresciano and Cecchino da Pietrasanta. The latter are the same artists who, together with Gregorio de Rossi, worked on the obelisk of S. Giovanni in Laterano, for whom Del Luca provided four more lions. Further information on these works has come to a large extent from the documents relating to a process begun by Prospero Bresciano against Orlando Landi in 1592.

In 1592 Del Luca executed a Golden Bronze Crucifix for the altar on behalf of Cardinal Savelli's grandson, then devoted to S. Ignatius, to Gesù. In 1598 he was paid for works in the Lateran basilica: no doubt it was his participation in the decoration of the Sacrament chapel.

His name, together with that of Antonio Gentili, appears both as admirable experts, in a document of February 1600, presented by Orazio Censore for works performed in S. Giovanni ("Giacomo") in Laterano. On 14 Dec. 1600 is documented in Loreto to make the estimate of the chapel of Pietà realized by A. Calcagni. Lastly, Del Luca was last mentioned on June 13, 1601, when the Congregation of St. Mary of Loreto reinstated some plaster forms belonging to the legacy of his brother Giacomo, author of the dome of this church.

Following the fashion of time, Del Luca cast, in addition to the above-mentioned works, small bronzes from ancient models: no doubt the copy of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius preserved at the National Museum of the Bargello of Florence, 38 cm high, which the name of the foundry was engraved at the base (the statue then enjoyed a lot of popularity, given the number of copies that came to it). A small bronze plaque with a Pietà (today at the Messina Regional Museum) has recently been attributed to Del Luca also showing a great deal of affinity with the Piety performed by his brother Giacomo, which was donated in will by the marcher Edith Dusmet but Semours at Gall. nat. of antique art in Rome. It seems that Del Luca during his stay in Innsbruck also worked for the ducal court of Bavaria.

Perhaps it was thanks to his relationship with Antonio Del Duca, his uncle, true promoter of S. Maria degli Angeli and "chaplain at S. Maria di Loreto, if the Del Luca,

just like his brother Giacomo, was part and also was, in some ways adviser to the Brotherhood of the Furnaces, as it appears from the minutes of the meetings of 1577 for example in S. Maria di Loreto. His name is also found among the artists who, following Federico Zuccari, undertook to observe the statute of the "Drawing Academy".

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