

Zanobi Filippo del Rosso

Italian architect
(1724-1798)

He was born in Florence, in the "people" of S. Maria Novella, on December 16th. 1724 by Giuseppe Ignazio, architect, and Diomira di Francesco Gilardoni. He completed his first literary studies under the guidance of the learned priest of the Red house father G. Tanini and, just fifteen years old, wrote the biography of his father that precedes the edition of the reliefs of *La Libreria Mediceo Laurenziana ...* of his father. After having learned the first notions of architecture from the architect GF Ciochi, in 1749 he was admitted to the novitiate of the Florentine design academy and therefore he moved to study in Rome, where he remained for a period of about twelve years.

In Rome, in addition to perfecting his knowledge of architecture with masters such as L. Vanvitelli and F. Fuga, he performed some works, probably not of great commitment, for the Santacroce, Salviati, Barberini families and for the cardinals Borromeo and Piccolomini.

Only the testimony of the decoration of the third chapel on the left in S. Marcello al Corso remains of this activity, as well as numerous drawings unfortunately stolen by one of his pupils.

During his long stay in Rome, Del Rosso became known and appreciated, more than as an architect, as a writer and poet: in the sixth decade, in fact, during the custody of MG Morei, became part of Arcadia with the name Ofilio Marathon; in 1754 he read the sonnet *Michel Angelo Buonarroti an excellent example to be followed in all three fine arts* during the solemn award ceremony of the winners of the clementine competition of the Accademia di S. Luca; he composed some epitheses and the Bernese opera in two volumes *Dell'arte d'amare* and *Del rimedio dell'amore* (Italy 1817) that was much appreciated by the Roman society of Galant in the second half of the eighteenth century. During the Roman stay, Del Rosso met and married the Prato painter Francesca Stradetti, also an arcade poet with the name of Laurinda Corintia; in 1760 his son Giuseppe was born. He returned to Florence in 1765 at the invitation of the Prime Minister, A. Botta Adorno, on the eve of the arrival in the capital of the new Grand Duke Peter Leopold of Lorraine.

Dedicated entirely to the profession of architect, partly because of the deteriorated family economic conditions, he soon obtained aggregation from the grand duke among the architects of the royal factories and at the end of the seventh decade and in the early years of the following one he realized his first challenging works; in 1769 he furnished an elegant design of the new library of the Holy Cross commissioned by the Grand Duke in the former room of the manuscripts of the convent transferred just before the Laurenziana; the same year he directed the renovation of the interior of the church of the Madonna dei Ricci, in via dei Corso (reconstruction of the tribune and side chapels, new stucco decorations of the pillars); in 1770 he drafted the project of the Nuovo

theater (today Rossi) commissioned by the grand-ducal government in Pisa in via Collegio Ricci.

The project of Del Rosso, realized by the master builder O. Cecconi, inaugurated in 1771 and then subsequently transformed in 1828 and in 1912, is particularly important because with the choice of the horseshoe type and a rational definition of four orders of overlapping boxes document how much its author was up-to-date and in the vanguard in the transition phase from the old typology of the private theater codified by the Galli-Bibiena to that of the modern public theater.

In 1771 Del Rosso realized in San Domenico, between Florence and Fiesole, a holiday resort for the Accademia dei Generosi, with an adjoining theater for the leisure of the vacationers, then completely transformed; between 1770 and 1771 he was finally commissioned to renovate the Carmine church in Florence, where he was soon replaced by G. Ruggieri following the church fire which occurred at the beginning of 1771.

In spite of this incident, in 1772 he designed the new oratory and the main façade with a new grand staircase for the Filipino convent in Florence, which constitutes some of the most appreciated and interesting examples of late Florentine architecture in Florence, and decreed DeLiridiffamente as an architect Throughout the eighth decade, the design activity of Del Rosso continued intensively and in many directions: after having made in 1773 the epitaph for the tomb of the imperial antiques, A. Cocchi, in the north aisle of S. Croce, between 1775 and 1776 built for the Boboli Gardens the new entrance to the Cavaliere casino and the unusual and refined caffèhaus at the end of the garden near the Fort St. George as an original lookout over the city; also in 1776 as architect of S. Maria del Fiore he repaired the lantern and the dome of the Florence cathedral damaged by a lightning.

He also performed numerous works on behalf of private individuals, including the renovation of the Ferroni Magnani building, at the beginning of Via dei Serragli (1770-78), and of the Compagni building, in via Bufalini, now INAIL, the villa Giugni al Galluzzo and the stables of the Duke Salviati, still in Galluzzo. In addition to compiling the *Memory on how to build, compensate and maintain the roads of Tuscany with the least possible expenditure*, in the same year he designed the apparatus for the funeral of Empress Maria Theresa of Austria celebrated in the basilica of S Lorenzo and was engaged in the rearrangement work of the Uffizi Gallery, where he made the entrance by continuing the main staircase of Vasari, the vestibule, the cabinet of the hard stones, the decoration of the Niobe room and the "Etruscan Museum" porch that was on the terrace overlooking the Orcagna lodge.

During the '80s the activity of Del Rosso slowed considerably due to the progressive loss of sight: in 1784 he designed the new decoration of the church of S. Maria Maggiore, whose construction was suspended after the collapse of a pillar and the collapse of a part of the church; in the same year he created the high altar of the collegiate church of Empoli and in 1785 transformed the former menagerie of the Boboli garden into an elegant room of citrus fruit, much admired and appreciated by his contemporaries; in the last period of his life he also designed the synagogue of Siena.

To complete the panorama of the intense design activity of what may be considered one of the most significant architects of the period of Pietro Leopoldo's government in Tuscany, some unrealized projects must be remembered, of which only the historical evidence remains: that of the new chapel of S. Iacopo for the cathedral of Pistoia; a royal hunting lodge, a Greek cross church and a caffeaus for Grand Duke Paul, future emperor of Russia; the reduction of the suppressed monastery of the Theatines with annexed Italian theater in Warsaw, and finally the facade of a church, the arcades and a triumphal arch for the main square of Lisbon.

Del Rosso died in Florence on January 28th. 1798 at the age of seventy-four and was buried in the church of Santa Maria Novella next to his father where still today remember a bust and a plaque made to be affixed by his son Joseph.

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