

Marco de'Dolci

Italian architect and cabinetmaker
(15th cent)

Son of Pietro di Domenico, known as Rasci, was Giovanni's brother named Giovannino. Florentine by birth, is documented in Rome as early as 1462, under the pontificate of Pius II, engaged in carpentry work at the Apostolic Palace. Documents concerning his activity in Rome during the pontificate of Paul II were also found for which he worked at the palace of S. Marco. And during that of Sixtus IV for which he carried out carpentry work. In particular, he was commissioned, with his brother, to furnish the Vatican Library.

This work was carried out between 1477 and 1482, when Brother Giovannino was also engaged outside Rome; it can therefore be considered that the task fell mainly on Marco. Sixtus IV had nurtured the ambition to create a well-organized library from the very beginning of his pontificate: in 1475 the first two rooms, called "Bibliotheca Publica" or "comunis", had already been completed and decorated conservation of Greek and Latin manuscripts. The Dolcis were therefore exclusively in charge of furnishing the "secret" room - where the heretics' writings were to be kept - and for the "secretior" - which had to contain the archives -, which together constituted the "Bibliotheca nova pontifical". It is known that Sixtus IV provided for the creation of cabinets and shelves, so that the rooms were well kept. However, these rooms were dismantled in 1585, when Sixtus V had the current library built by Domenico Fontana. So the furniture was lost too: only part of the wooden lining of the "Bibliotheca nova" was transported in the vestibule of the Sistine hall, where it was relocated in 1968.

The documents relating to the construction of this library indicate that the Dolcis were also responsible for carrying out the fixtures and other works more properly of carpentry.

It is possible that Marco directed the workshop of which he was the brother, carrying out the traditional role of the teacher. Within the well-established company established by Dolci, he would have performed more practical tasks, while Giovannino would have been responsible for organizing and planning.

Marco perhaps never resided permanently in Rome, or at least returned to Florence after the death of his brother. In fact his family was in Florence, and in this city was contracted for the marriage of his daughter Tommasia in 1490. The document recalls Marco as "architectori florentino"; it also informs that he endowed his daughter with the considerable sum of 400 florins. This indicates the economic prosperity that Marco had reached, although, being his son-in-law a shoemaker, we can not find a social ascent. Marco died in Florence after 1506. He passed on his trade to his son Domenico, in addition to his grandfather's name: Domenico erected the Chapel of the Soccorso, still existing in the church of the SS. Annunziata of Florence.

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