

Filippo Gagliardi

Italian Baroque architect, painter
(c.1607-1659)

Filippo Gagliardi, (Filippo Bizzarro, Filippo delle Prospettive). - Son of Andrea, he was born in Rome between 1606 and 1608, as can be deduced from the *states of the souls* of the parish of S. Maria del Popolo (in 1635 he was twenty-seven years old, in 1659 fifty-three years). Known primarily as a painter of perspective backgrounds of other people's works, he learned the art of perspective from the quadraturist M. Zaccolini, as he himself states in the *Treatise on Perspective*; to that activity he joined that of architect.

The manuscript of the *Treatise*, preserved at the Academy of St. Luke of Rome, was written by Gagliardi probably no later than the third decade of the century. XVII. This is a disquisition on the need for knowledge of the "sub-art of perspectiva" in support of pictorial practice.

Between 1632 and 1636 Gagliardi lived in Via del Babuino, together with his elder sister Caterina (born in 1597) and her husband, the painter Cesare Possenti. In these years the execution by Gagliardi of the perspective works dates back to two paintings commissioned by Cardinal Antonio Barberini the Younger to Andrea Sacchi: the *Feast of the Saracen in Piazza Navona* (Rome, Museum of Rome) and the *Vision of s. Bonaventura* (Rome, S. Maria della Concezione) for whom the attribution to the painter results from the inventory of the properties of Cardinal Barberini (1671). In the *Vision of s. Bonaventura* the representation of the interior of the Capuchin church is assigned to Gagliardi also by Bellori (1672-76).

The inventory of the paintings left by Cardinal Barberini to his brother Francesco (1672) indicates in Gagliardi the author of the perspective of another work by Sacchi, the *Visit of Urban VIII to the Church of the Gesù* (Rome, National Gallery of ancient art), performed in memory of the celebration of the first centenary of the Society of Jesus (27 September 1639). From the inventory of the art collection of Maffeo Barberini we learn that Gagliardi was also the author of the perspective installation of the painting, with figures of Filippo Lauri, depicting the *Carosello in honor of Christina of Sweden* (Rome, Museum of Rome) held in the courtyard of Palazzo Barberini on February 4th. 1656.

The only painting signed and dated by Gagliardi, dating back to 1640, is a large canvas with a view of the *Interior of St. Peter's in the Vatican* (Madrid, Museo del Prado) in which the representation of the site, with the imposing Berniniano canopy at the end of the central nave, it appears analytical, faithful to the visual data.

Gagliardi was also the author of some drawings from which engravings were drawn to illustrate printed volumes. For the work of Gagliardi Teti *Aedes Barberinae ad Quirinalem* (published in Rome in 1642), he created the framing of portraits of cardinals published in appendix to the 1647 edition; for the volume dedicated to the cultivation of citrus by Giovanni Battista Ferrari, *Hesperides sive De malorum aureorum cultura...* (published in Rome in 1646 by Hermann Scheus) provided four drawings translated into print by Camillo Cungi.

This is the representation of the gardens of Cardinal Carlo Pio, Cardinal Marcello Lante and the Aldobrandini garden near Tuscolo; the fourth engraving depicts some pruning tools under a porch.

Also known are some printed portraits taken from Gagliardi's inventions, among which those of the cardinals *Antonio* and *Francesco Barberini*.

On February 12th 1651 Gagliardi married Caterina Giannotti, widow, seventeen years older than him, with whom he lived in the parish of S. Andrea delle Fratte, where the artist resided from 1643.

Between the fifth and sixth decade of the seventeenth century, commissioned by the general father of the Carmelites GA Filippini, Gagliardi was entrusted with the project of decorative and architectural renewal of the basilica of S. Martino ai Monti in Rome; for this company, in fact, payments to the artist are

documented from December 1648 to April 1654. To testify the esteem of the Filippini towards the work of Gagliardi is the prayer, contained in his will, to continue the work in the church, even after his death, to the same artist.

The interventions in the basilica consisted in the tamponatura of the medieval windows replaced by six new windows, in the construction of six cantories, in the decoration of the upper area of the central nave with statues (by Paolo Naldini) and architectural elements in stucco, in the restructuring of the crypt equipped with a new decoration and a large entrance staircase. In particular, between 1649 and 1652, Gagliardi frescoed the fake perspectives next to the windows in the central nave and the two views of the *Interior of S. Pietro in the Vatican* and of *S. Giovanni in Laterano* in the left aisle, reconstruction arbitrary interior of the two basilicas in the Constantinian age.

Gagliardi's relations with the Carmelites of S. Martino ai Monti continued even after 1654, as shown by some estimates of works for the basilica carried out by Gagliardi between 1655 and 1656.

At the same time as an architect, Gagliardi continued as a painter: in 1654 a series of payments made by the Apostolic Custody dates back to some paintings for the papal residence at the Quirinale "in the open loggia of Montecavallo, and near the stairs".

In 1648 he became a member of the Congregation of Virtuosi al Pantheon, of which he was regent since 1655; in 1651 it appears to be an academic of S. Luca and from 1655 took over from Sacchi in the position of prince who held until 1658.

Gagliardi died in 1659. The date of death must be between October and December, since from the registers of the Academy of St. Luke the 6th of October Gagliardi still in the list of academics who paid the price for the feast of the patron saint. In the latter period, Gagliardi appears to live again in the parish of S. Maria del Popolo.

by Grazia Gerone - Biographical Dictionary of Italians - Volume 51 (1998)

Translated from:

[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/filippo-gagliardi_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/filippo-gagliardi_(Dizionario-Biografico))