

Simone Giorgini

Italian sculptor
(active 1677-1712)

The date of birth and death of this sculptor whose activity in Rome is documented between 1677 and 1712 is unknown.

On 25 September 1677 goes in fact the payment made to a "Simone Giorgi", identified by the critic with Giorgini, for the two deer heads, attributes of s. Felice di Valois, side by side to the portal, on the facade of the church of S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane.

There is no further news concerning Giorgini until the eighties of the 17th century when Titi in 1686 mentions the stucco statue of *Faith* as "work of Simone Giorgio", made for the setting on the left of the choir of the church of S. Ignazio.

The work is part of a group of four sculptures that also included *Hope* and *Charity*, performed respectively by G.A. Lavaggi and F. Nuvolone, and *Religion*, by Francesco Rainaldi. In the corresponding right environment, the Chapel Ludovisi, there are the Cardinal Virtues of C. Rusconi. It is possible that the eight statues were originally entrusted, around 1683, to Antonio Raggi, who for health reasons could never begin and three years later died. However, the reference in the eight sculptures to Raggi's works is so visible that they have been made based on his drawings. Of the five sculptors assigned to the best known was Rusconi, who received 20 scudi for each statue; while the rest were intended for only 15. This sparked discontent among the sculptors and caused a dispute between the Jesuit Fathers on one side and G. Lavaggi on the other, who supported, at work, that they had not been paid at all; the dispute begun in 1686 resolved only in 1699 to the disadvantage of the last two.

Meanwhile, by Andrea Pozzo's intervention, perhaps in order to seduce the bad feelings, Giorgini and Lavaggi were called to collaborate at the altar of S. Ignazio al Gesù, where they made two angels; it is not, however, a stucco model for those carved by P.E. Monnot, as has been said in the past, but as a description of the chapel of S. Ignazio al Gesù of 1705, of two sculptures that were to be placed above the altar front end and were not evident included in the final solution.

Between October 20 and November 20 In 1694, Giorgini worked in S. Carlo ai Catinari to make four stucco angels performing under the cupola above the balustrade in the chapel of S. Cecilia owned by the Congregation of Musicians. For this work, 40 scudi were paid, or, as evidenced by the document, 10 scudi per statue, according to the agreements with Antonio Gherardi, author of the Chapel; the rather low cost was probably tied to the summary bill of the statues, which were to be ready for November 22. 1694, on the occasion of the feast of the saint. In August 1695 Giorgini was recalled to modify two of the angels: in fact they were all remodeled, except for that with the violin that was completely redone. Visible from below to pairs, with the face and dental prostheses and open wings, Giorgini's angels, despite the changes, maintain a homogeneous background, a sign that those who helped him in the rework had no

predominant part or in any case he followed rigidly the directions of Giorgini. All in all, the sculptural decoration of the chapel with this upward vision, probably due to the second intervention, looks very impressive and impressive.

Evidently Giorgini's fame had to be in full swing if on November 10th, 1697 was unanimously permitted to be part of the Congregazione dei Virtuosi at the Pantheon. Although admission to the Virtuosi Company was less prestigious than that at the St. Luke Academy, which does not appear to have been part of Giorgini, however, unanimous consensus was not such a common event. Giorgini attended the Congregation meetings on 15 December., 1697, of 16 Feb. 1698 and 12 March 1698, when, as usual for novices, he was charged with Filippo Barigioni to prepare the usual feast of S. Giuseppe, protector of the Congregazione. From the documents Giorgini is still present on June 8, 1698, October 17 and November 14. 1700; then he no longer had to attend the life of the Congregation with certainty, especially since he did not even appear in the Deceased Book of Books until 1761.

Between 1699 and 1703 Giorgini worked with Leonardo Retti to execute the angels in stucco (lost) of the main altar of the church of S. Maria dell'Orto. It must be glories of cherubim and clouds around an oval with the image of Our Lady; but the present altar is no longer the one in the church at the beginning of the eighteenth century, probably disappeared during the mid-18th century remodeling. Giorgini Always in collaboration with Retti Giorgini worked between 1699 and 1706 to the decoration of the apse and transept of the same church, on behalf of the università dei fruttaroli, reaching a remarkable decorative wealth, which was perhaps requested by the same buyers, which in this way could demonstrate the opulence of the category. In particular, the two sculptors made stucco figures; while the most well-crafted parts were entrusted to N. Aldini and G. Bilancioni.

In 1702 Giorgini was commissioned to make the travertine statue of S. Protasio for the colonnade of St. Peter, which he delivered on April 19th. 1703 and for which 80 scudi were paid. The rich drama of the saint was approached to that of the Faith in St. Ignatius (Santa Maria Mannino). He was still active for St. Peter in July 1704 when he collaborated with Angelo De Rossi in the construction of the stucco model for the statue of Pope Alexander VIII (dead in 1691) destined for his tomb.

On September 23, that same year, Giorgini signed the contract for the two stucco statues depicting S. Isidoro and S. Patrizio on the facade of the Franciscan church of S. Isidoro Agricola.

The designer of the entire facade project was C.F. Bizzaccheri to whom, according to the agreements stipulated, Giorgini had to refer. The statues were made by Giorgini following the models already submitted to the fathers and accepted by them. The previous attribution to the sculptor Andrea Bertoni was refuted on the basis of the finding of the contract between Giorgini and the Franciscan fathers, on the basis of which it is known that he received the remuneration of 50 scudi. The size of the statues and the use of the stucco once again point to the figure of the Faith of St. Ignatius although, compared to that, the statues of St. Isidore have lost the Berninian roundness and appear to be at least partly affected by Marathon gravity, the indications followed

at that time by other sculptors including Camillo Rusconi. The facade of S.Isidoro was then approached to the statue of S.Protasio of the little previous colonnade (Santa Maria Mannino).

Nearby chronologically and linked to the dominant taste of the century, still entangled with Baroque creations, but already open to new suggestions, are then the two large marble statues depicting S.Giuseppe and S. Teresa, realized for the choir of the church of S Maria della Scala, commissioned by Princess Violante Facchinetti Pamphili on 12 Oct. 1706. For each of these statues, Giorgini was paid 190 scudi, a sign that, beyond the type of material used, his remuneration continued to grow.

As the contract says, Giorgini had to first make the models for the princess, to pass, after his approval, to the realization of the two definitive statues that still fit the ciborium of Carlo Rainaldi. The intense drapery that results in deep cherry blur shows a clear Berninian ascendancy, probably mediated by L. Ottoni and G. Mazzuoli, which is, however, accompanied by a fairness that is now fully eighteenth century. So S. Teresa, similar to the attitude to the statue of the Faith of St. Ignatius no longer has anything to do with the "heroic emphasis of the saints of the seventeenth century."

Around 1712 it is also possible to always refer to Giorgini the document stating that the sculptor "Simone Giorgi" received 70 scudi for work in the Chapel Albani of the church of S. Sebastiano fuori le Mura with Lorenzo Lironi. There is no news about Giorgini after this date.

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