

Guidetto Guidetti

Italian architect
(† 1564)

The date of birth of this Florentine architect, son of "maestro" Raffaele, active in Rome, mainly between the fifth and seventh decades of the sixteenth century, is unknown; That date is placed in the last years of the fifteenth century.

The time of the arrival of Guidetti in Rome is unknown, but it must have taken place before 1520, when his name appears together with that of Antonio da Sangallo in the book of benefactors and contributors to the Fabbrica di S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini.

Around 1538 is the date of the beginning of reconstruction work of what could be considered its first architectural design: the facade of the church of S. Spirito in Sassia.

Various hypotheses have been made on the identity of the author of the work; and, just when his definitive assignment to Antonio da Sangallo now seemed to be desirable, now attributed to Guidetti. Recognition was supported on the basis of a careful stylistic comparison with a later work that can be linked to Guidetti with greater certainty as is the prospect of the church of S. Caterina dei Funari. The analysis showed the existence of remarkable and concrete analogies in the general disposition, in the proportions and in the individual decorative elements of the two architectures, legitimizing the attribution to Guidetti of the work which became the matrix of most of the facades of the churches of the second half of the sixteenth century.

Between 1545 and 1550, the works of another of the works traditionally attributed to Guidetti: the Cesi Gardens, wanted by Cardinal Federico in his palace near the Vatican, were probably completed, in order to arrange his important collection of antiquities.

Of the garden, demolished in the 1940s, there are still some descriptions and some drawings illustrating the main architectural elements in it. Particularly interesting was the antique shop, a small central building designed to accommodate the most valuable pieces of the collection. To suggest the name of Guidetti as the possible art of the work was the identification of recurring elements in his other works, such as a certain predilection for the reason of the niche, the taste for chiaroscuro, the care of the particular, beyond probably to the good relations between Cardinal Cesi and the architect.

On the basis of a series of documents found in the archives of S. Maria dell'Orto, Guidetti's assertive involvement in the church's works from 1555 to 1559 can be demonstrated.

The construction of the building, which began at the end of the 15th century, was proceeding very slowly and the arrival of the Florentine architect in the yard coincided with the beginning of a new phase of intense building activity which, under his direction, presumably expected completion of the apsidal area and of the major altars and the insertion and continuation of the body with three aisles with side chapels. From the examination of archival papers it can be assumed that Guidetti's role has been decisive in the idea of the entire iconographic structure of the building in its present forms.

On May 14, 1556, Guidetti married in Rome Maddalena, daughter of master Giovanni da Giovanni da Sant'Agata Florentine stonecutter and probable collaborator.

In the same year traces of his work are found in the payment orders made by the Apostolic Chamber for works of military architecture he performed in Borgo, Trastevere and Castel Sant'Angelo; while a document kept in the State Archives of Rieti refers to a mission he has carried out in the city, at the invitation of C. Orsini, to oversee the construction of some fortification works.

The following year the name of Guidetti, accompanied by the qualification of "architectum", appears in two different acts of the Archconfraternity of the Florentines, confirming his membership of the congregation.

Guidetti was also assigned the works of re-adaptation of the convent of S. Maria sopra Minerva.

Father V. Giustiniani, master general of the Order of the Dominicans, decided in 1558 to expand the fifteenth-century convent to demolish the old cloister, which stood beside the outer wall of the left navatella of the church, and to build a new one to leave the space needed to build the chapels on the left side of the building. A testimony to Guidetti's presence in the yard remains numerous notes of payments made between September 1559 and January 1564, to "Guido Guidetti, architect of the factory". The regularity of payments, a monthly fee of four shields subsequently elevated to 6, and the occurrence of his name from the front page in the expenditure log show the constant presence of the architect in the factory since the beginning of the work; little is deduced from the reading of the cards on the succession of interventions. At the end of 1559, the resettlement work concerning the building of the old convent seems to have already taken place. In the following year, the new hospice factory on the square was surely completed, as the recess recalled on the front door. At the same time they had to carry out the work for reconstruction of the cloister, the first part of which was completed in 1563: the remainder to the refectory was completed two years later. In January 1564, Guidetti, perhaps too busy in other sites, was replaced by a collaborator, Cipriano da Prata. Of his direct works survives only the cloister with two orders of arches supported by pillars, whose unplanned planimetric irregularity is clearly underlined by the apparent diversity of the intercolumns: it is a synthesis of a very simple creation and not of great stylistic value.

In 1560 the construction of the new church of S. Caterina dei Funari was probably initiated and sponsored by Cardinal Cesi, benefactor of the Confraternity of St. Catherine, who was responsible for the entire cost of the business carried out in the arc four years.

The paternity of this work was for centuries considered to be uncertain and subject to various assumptions by scholars divided between those who recognized the artist in Giacomo Della Porta and who considered it executed at different stages, within which the distinction could be distinguished, imprint of Iacopo Barozzi called Vignola. Guidetti had the total responsibility of the project, after discovering, by analyzing the wall facade of the façade, two inscriptions still unknown: the former reminded the name of the chief captain Bartolomeo da Casale Monferrato. The second, concealed by the great dedicatory inscription, revealed the name of the architect: "Guideto de Guideti". The façade consists of two overlapping corinthian orders, separated by a high trabeation; on the median axis there is a portal enclosed by imposing grooved columns supporting a trabeation of a tympanum, corresponding to a large circular window in the top, which is enclosed in a square plate and surmounted by a coat of arms; two large bends with simple curvature, side by side, and a triangular tympanum with a cross and four candlesticks complete the prospectus. Particularly rich is the architectural decoration, which sees repositioning in all intercolumns an alternation of niches and plates, and the ornamental one, located mainly in the bands corresponding to the capitals of the two orders, with motives of festoons reproducing flowers and fruit in the lower one and ribbons, wreaths and beads framed by volutes in the upper one. The prospectus clearly shows its derivation from the model of S. Spirito in Sassia. If there seems to be no doubt that Guidetti may have been the designer of the façade design, there are still some perplexities about his total responsibility in the construction phase. The analysis of the wall edges has highlighted the differences between the lower and the upper order in the processing of decorations and chromaticism; such indications would lead

to a further hypothesis that he sees in Guidetti the author of the project, but responsible for the realization of the only lower part of the facade, that is testified by his signature.

In the autumn of 1561, Guidetti was awaited by the Priori di Rieti, who had applied for a valid architect to the attorney of the Municipality of Rome, F. Sonanti.

The reasons for such a request are unknown; while from Sonanti's response it is concluded that, having to bring the architect to Acquasparta "to draw fabrica" on the appointment of Cardinal Cesi, he would have stopped at Rieti; but at the moment there are no confirmations of its passage. The document has led him to assume that he may have been the aristocrat of the family building at Acquasparta; the construction dates of the building (1565-79) would seem to exclude this possibility, although the reading of the architectural system demonstrates the existence of a general design conceived by a person who is certainly close to the Sangallo circle. The most probable hypothesis is that Guidetti could be considered the designer of the palace's design, whose realization, after his death, would be entrusted to others, probably to that G.D. Bianchi that the documents indicate as the architect of the factory in the following years.

On the 15th of April. 1562, at the request of the Ordinary Ordinary Council, Guidetti was invited, together with Vignola and Nanni di Baccio Bigio, to submit plans for the Sapienza works which began after a long stalemate of works. The outcome of this competition is not known; but his presence in the building yard and his responsibilities in the construction of part of the porch appear to have been established.

In 1563 he was commissioned by Pope Pius IV to oversee the building of the Conservatory's Palace, with a salary of 50 scudi and with the exact constraint of faithfully respecting the original directives set by Michelangelo; Jobs began in June and, after his death, were completed by Giacomo Della Porta, who replaced him in the factory.

On 27 September In 1564, in his home in the S. Angelo district, opposite the church of S. Caterina dei Funari, he wrote his will. From the list of credits quoted in the document, the names of two major buyers of Guidetti: Baldovino Del Monte and the Company of Ss. Annunziata are derived. As for the first, brother of Julius III, Guidetti had a considerable credit for 250 scudi against him; and it would be important to understand if and by what means its name could be linked to one of the two most famous companies operated by Baldovino, namely Villa Giulia and the Palazzo di Firenze. As for the second, the document specifies that the object of these works was the palace of the Penitentiaries in Borgo Vecchio; but it is practically impossible to determine the magnitude of Guidetti's work due to the subsequent transformation of the building; it is probable, however, that it was simple adaptations.

Among the works traditionally attributed to Guidetti, it is necessary to recall the Uffizi design depicting, according to the caption, the "relief of an ancient dome domed with cross-shaped crossings in the vault". It is actually one of the eight octagonal rooms in the central symmetry body of the Basilica of St. Peter and describes the original dome brick apparatus. This illustrated is a particular turnaround structure, inspired undoubtedly by examples of the Roman world, which is supposed to be realized without the aid of the Hundred and which can be related to another Uffizi architecture design by Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane, also illustrating the same type of structure, whose use in the Renaissance era is closely linked to some of the achievements of the Sangallo family. It has been shown that the octagon rooms were made during the pontificate of Paul III by Antonio da Sangallo; and this, in addition to confirming the existence of a link between the affirmed architect and Guidetti, could support the hypothesis of its presence in the basilica yard during the years of Sangallo's direction. It seems to have lost all the attribution to Guidetti, always advanced by Giovannoni, of the Cesi chapel in S. Maria Maggiore.

Guidetti died in Rome, probably in the fall of 1564, when it was documented that he was replaced in the yards he directed.

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