

# Pietro Holl

Italian architect  
1780-1850

He was born in Rome on 2 May 1780 by Giuseppe, carpenter, and by Olimpia Crescenzi. His artistic training took place at the Accademia di S. Luca, where he attended the courses of architecture. Just fifteen, he won the first prize in the third class of the Clementine Prize of 1795 with three watercolors representing the altar of the Sacred Sacrament in the Vatican basilica; in 1801 he won the second prize of the Balestra Contest, with L. Baldi, on the design of a "Military School for the Education of the Company of the Genius", in which the "use of friezes, figurative coronations, bugnates" later used in the Argentine theater.

In 1804 Holl probably, following personal findings, a plan of the excavations of Ostia, "the oldest among those drawn up with modern criteria of representation", in which was reported the "situation after the eighteenth century sterren carried out by objects seekers from collection and excavation campaigns conducted by Giuseppe Petrini until 1804".

The formation of Holl continued in the studio of A. De Dominicis, where he was the first young architect. De Dominicis was the director of the Christian School of Design in the square of S. Salvatore in Lauro; the courses began in November 1796 and, with the exception of the suspension in the Roman Republic (1798-99), continued with sufficient regularity: Holl soon took part in assisting the students and replacing the teacher in the lessons so as to become, when he was hit by blindness, his natural successor, legitimized by Pope Pius VII with the obtaining of the coadjutor in August 1806.

Under the direction of Holl, the institute (known as the Roman Academy of Civil Architecture or the School of Drawing Principles and later the Pontifical Studio of Arts) was always in awe of the institution, thanks to the institution, same year, of the annual civil architecture contests reserved for the students and divided into three classes, attended by numerous academic professors of St. Luke as members of the Judicial Commissions.

In 1818, thanks to a pontificate rescripted "pro gratia ut possit proposes non obstantibus" Holl was admitted to the Academics of Merit in St. Luke. In September 1816 he became a member of the Virtuous Congregation at the Pantheon and in 1825 he became the regent. In the same year he wrote the "rehearsal for the works of rebuilding the allied roofs" in the apostolic palace in Lateran. He was an architect of "noble and noble families"; he designed with a "vague design" the music room in the palace of Giacomo Lepri in Rome and the new workshop of this in Genazzano; in 1832-33 he designed for the confraternity of the Gonfalone the chapel Santa S. Elena, in S. Maria in Aracoeli, demolished during the Roman Republic and rebuilt by Holl in the shape of a circular temple with a cupola, delimited by eight columns of broccatello. In 1835, for Marquis Domenico Pallavicini, he was expecting, near the Trajan Lake, to "have a triumphal arch [...] surmounted by a group of Christian Rome triumphing on

the errors of the profane", erected in honor of Pope Gregory XVI on his first trip to Fiumicino on May 14, 1835.

As an architect of the Tribunal, he was commissioned to carry out, from 1820 to 1821, numerous inspections in the main theaters of Rome, in order to verify their ease and security in the imminence of the Carnival or the season's performances spring. In November 1821, assisted by a commission composed of four academics of St. Luke (L. Belli, GB Martinetti, B. Piernicoli, G. Salvi), verified the regular execution of the works of the new theater factory in Valle, "so much work done so far [...] as much as those who remain to make up to their full accomplishment". Some years later (1826) he was entrusted with the project and the realization of the enlargement of the Argentine theater.

In 1824, Duke Salvatore Sforza Cesarini had given the theater to perpetual emphyseuses to the Impressionist Pietro Cartoni at the cost of 1000 scudi annual. Two years later, it was possible to complete the building thanks to the acquisition of an annual rent of 10 pounds of wax worked, of 154 square feet of public space that were to be added to those occupied by the provisional structure of the old ticket office. Among theater performances in the nineteenth century, the one performed by Holl it poses as the most significant in the functional profile. The expansion included a factory body attached to the previous one, in which the Holl he made the vestibule, coaxial to the theater, and two side rooms in which the ticket office and cafeteria would be located. Four gray-pink granite Doric columns, probably found there during the demolition work, were placed in support of the slab corresponding to the third order of the stages. Above the vestibule Holl placed a music room (in which, according to the chronicles of the time, N. Paganini would have held a concert during the Carnival of 1827); other service rooms were made at the loggia. This latter level was equipped with a stairway that directly connected it to the ground floor. This arrangement - perhaps suggested by the same Pontifical Authorities - might have originated from the fear that viewers of the less well-off classes would be disturbed by passing through intervals, along the main elliptical ramps. The prospect, essentially conforming to the present, is of a neoclassical matrix, denoted by a double order of round arches, the first of which is entirely included within a smooth, smooth strip of work. At the crowning of the facade Holl he placed a bas-relief and a false penthouse bearing the inscription "To the arts of Melpomene, Euterpe and Tersicore"; it would not seem to be attributable to Holl the nose currently visible on the top representing a trophy flanked by two Fama depictions.

The intervention set up by Holl aroused many criticisms among contemporaries. The Romanesque Memories of Antiquity and Fine Arts of 1826 noted the unavailability of sculptural decoration, representing "more warlike and theatrical emblems" as well as the heaviness of the pedestrians supported of arches, each of which "equals (if not exceed) the width of the space"; while in the concert hall above the vestibule it would be unnecessarily sought out "that elegance, which required the destination, and the capacity."

The activity of teacher and director of drawing schools was maintained by Holl till death. From the union with Anna Garinei, married in 1808, were born Filippo, Luigi, Francesco, Cesare, Savior and Angel. Francis died in 1842; Cesare, in 1848. Of Luigi,

born in 1821, he is an architect, there are many accomplishments that attest to his activity in Rome in the years 1848 to 1872.

The Holl he died in Rome on 29 July. 1850.

by Raffaella Catini - Biographical Dictionary of the Italians - Volume 61 (2004)

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