

# Giuseppe Lironi

Italian sculptor  
(c.1690-1746)

The place is not known and the date of birth of Lironi is not certain, perhaps the son of Giovan Pietro Comasco, coming from a family of artists originally from Vacallo in the Canton of Ticino and mainly active in Rome between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Recently, the birth of Lironi were moved to 1691 on the basis of the registered age, albeit with a certain approximation, in the act of death.

Very young, between 1705 and 1707 Lironi attended the sculpture classes of the Accademia di S. Luca. From the third decade the presence of the sculptor is attested in the circle of Camillo Rusconi, within which in all likelihood his training took place; it is not to be excluded that he also looked at the models of Lorenzo Ottoni, with whom he would later collaborate and with whom, on 25 August. 1720, he signed as "Giuseppe Lironi sculptor" a testimony in favor of the artist Giuseppe Ferretti, accused of having damaged a statue in the Campidoglio.

In the summer of 1725 there was a payment to Lironi for "one of the Putti delle Pile di marmo [...] of the Aqua Santa of the Vatican Basilica". The intervention of Lironi in the creation of the holy water stoves of the first span of St. Peter is based on archival documentation, in contrast with a critical tradition that attributed to him the paternity of the sun conches. Together with other artists belonging to Ottoni, between the turn of the twenties and the following decade Lironi was on several occasions engaged in the Vatican: for the Fabbrica di S. Pietro he sculpted the allegory of *Hope*, arranged on 27 June 1739 in one of the niches of the northern vestibule and for which payments have been recorded since 1728.

Of uncertain dating is the execution of *Prudence* for the south portico, unanimously ascribed to Lironi and brought back by C. Savettieri to a period between 1725 and 1728 on the basis of a presumed precedence of the work for the southern area of the vestibule. The work is preserved in the terracotta sketch at the Liebieghaus in Frankfurt am Main.

Still in S. Pietro Lironi carried out no better defined stucco works for the choir chapel, as can be seen from payments on 22 November, 1735 and 6 April 1736. He also worked as a restorer, receiving a reward of 9 scudi to relocate the fragments of the fingers of the left hand of the Virgin of *Pietà* Michelangelo, damaged most likely during the movements that the group suffered before being placed in the current location.

In the 1730s Lironi already enjoyed a certain notoriety. Around 1732 he realized the colossal statue of *S. Giuseppe* that the cardinal Annibale Albani donated in that year to the oratory urbinata named to the same saint. In 1733, a few weeks after being awarded the title of academic merit by the Academy of St. Luca (January 4), he worked with some artists of the circle of Rusconi in the construction of the Corsini chapel in S. Giovanni in Laterano. This is attested by the payments for the allegory of *Justice*, registered between March of the same year and June 1735. The contacts with the Corsini are documented in this period also by the sale

and purchase deed (27 July 1733) of Palazzo Riario at Lungara, where the artist is mentioned as a tenant of the "sculteria" acquired by the family with adjacent buildings.

In 1739 he was active as a stuccatore for the church of S. Carlo ai Catinari, where he executed the angels that frame the paintings on the side walls of the Cavallerini chapel.

The fourth decade of the eighteenth century also includes the hypothetical participation of Lironi in the works for the Portuguese basilica of Mafra, where many of the artists who supported the classicist line of the late Roman Baroque promoted by Clement XII Corsini were active.

Lironi was also involved in the reconstruction of the façade of S. Maria Maggiore (1741-43), for which he carried out the relief with the *Esarca Olimpio and Pope Martin I* and the *Madonna with the Child* placed on the tympanum of the façade.

In October 1745 the work was completed, on a project by Giuseppe Pannini, of the new chapel of S. Teresa in S. Maria della Scala, for which Lironi realized the two bas-reliefs on the sides of the window with the *Vision of Joseph and of the Virgin by S. Teresa* and the *Vision of Christ*.

Finally, it is necessary to examine, without however being able to point out the dating, four marble putti, referred to in the inventory of Bartolomeo Cavaceppi of 1799, representing the *Seasons* and now kept at the casino of the princes of Villa Torlonia, which were realized models of Lironi. The iconographic affinities between *Winter* and the same terracotta subject of the National Museum of the Palazzo di Venezia have led to the hypothesis that the latter is the original of Lironi.

Lironi died in Rome, in the parish of S. Spirito in Sassia, on 11 September, 1746.

by Francesca Sinagra - Biographical Dictionary of Italians - Volume 65 (2005)

Translated from:

[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-lironi\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-lironi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)