

Luzio LUZI

called "Luzio Romano"

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The date of birth of this painter is not known, to be considered around 1510 because of a well-established historiographical tradition that places the first activity at the end of the third decade of the sixteenth century.

The oldest documents referable to Luzi (preserved in the Historical Archives of the National Academy of St. Luke in Rome) indicate it as originating in Todi; but the attribute "Romano", from the place that almost exclusively linked his work, appears precociously in the sixteenth-century sources (Vasari). However, it does not seem to be identified with Luzi il Luzio "de Lutiis" resident near S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini, registered as a "Roman citizen" in a deed of property of 21 July 1519 (Gnoli, Trezzani).

It is still necessary to specify the process, including training, that allowed him to take part in the decoration of the Genoese residence of Andrea Doria in Fassolo (now Palazzo Doria Pamphili) starting from 1528.

The presence of Luzi alongside the numerous collaborators of Perin del Vaga (Pietro Buonaccorsi) is not documented but is remembered by Vasari (1550, 1568) and reiterated by later authors (Soprani, Angelini, Alizeri), disagreements on the actual areas of competence of the "young". This debut solicits the hypothesis of a previous Roman stay in which Luzi, in direct contact with the classic vestiges, could mature the taste for the grotesque which informs a large part of the vast graphic production progressively ascribed to it and still a privileged instrument for the reconstruction of his problematic catalog. In particular, the study of Chantilly's drawings (Musée Condé, inv. 94) and of Palermo (Biblioteca comunale, vol. XXIII.H.38, c.32) makes it possible to recognize the distinctive character of Luzi in the mechanical juxtaposition of the faithful citations from the old and therefore identify his responsibilities at Palazzo Doria extending beyond the traditional boundaries: from executor of the Periniani projects to the stuccos of the representative rooms to the execution, and perhaps the ideation, of the decorations, also painted, of the ceilings of the rooms private of Cadmus (lost), of the Zodiac and of the Sacrifices.

By the end of 1533 Luzi had to move to Rome: at 1 (Jan. 1534, in fact, given the registration of his debt to the university of painters of S. Luca, quantified in 2 scudi according to the provisions to which they were subject, for the exercise of art, those who had not held a shop in the city or "taken important works" before 1527 (Rome, Arch. stor. of the National Academy of St. Luke, Volume 2, paragraph 3v : Missirini.) The payments received by him later within the same institution, from November 1534 to June 1536, suggest the appointment of the painters to the consul (Tomassetti), confirming an achieved operational autonomy which echoed the participation in prestigious decorative companies.

The first of these should be identified with the works in the Palazzo Massimo di Pirro, around 1537. The presence of Luzi in this place, already advanced by the critics (Dumont, *The frescoes of Paul III* (, I, p.34, II, No. 26), has been more recently limited to stucco friezes and paintings of the halls of Aeneas, of the receptions and of the gods and to the lacunose grotesque ornamentation of the loggia (Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, pp. 45-49).

The more demanding role played by Luzi in Castel Sant'Angelo is, instead, punctually perimettable on a documentary basis published by Gaudioso (1976 and *Frescoes of Paul III*(to which reference is made where not otherwise indicated).

The payments scaled between June 1544 and December 1545 certify the tasks of Luzi in the decoration of the north wing of the Farnesian apartment, in the planning and executive phase and in full autonomy towards the older Perin, acquired at the construction site in a phase more advanced work. Probably since the end of 1543 Luzi intervened in the library, successful attempt to restore an "old-fashioned" environment,

concluded with the aid support only in mid-June 1545. A group of sheets distributed among various European collections allows reconstruction the path followed by Luzi in the progressive focusing on the articulated ornamental apparatus distributed on the vault and on the walls, celebrating the origins of Rome and the emperor Hadrian, "figure" of Paul III.

By July 1545, still employing considerable numbers of collaborators, Luzi concluded the vestibule of the library, the rooms of the Treasury, the Adriano and the Festoons. From May to December 1545 he worked in the central hall and in the two side rooms of the "Cagliostra", flanked by Perin involved in the decoration of the access corridor. The work of Luzi is still and problematically accompanied by that of the Florentine master in the so-called Pompeian corridor; for the latter it is known only one payment referable to the Law of 6 June 1545, inclusive of other works, which authorizes to reduce the scope of his intervention in favor of Perin. However, the portion certainly attributable to Luzi, the vault near the entrance to the Paolina hall where the stucco is abandoned in favor of the pictorial decoration, remains as an indication of an interesting stylistic evolution underway, prompted by a renewed study of classical sources, in particular, of the private rooms of the Domus Aurea.

Other works by Luzi in Castel Sant'Angelo have been lost and for some of them it is difficult to identify the original location: this is the case of "stuccos and paintings" in a "chapel" and "Madonna" in the "courtyard de la porta di mezzo", executed respectively between May and October and August and October of 1545, to which projects related to Luzi or its *entourage* have been brought back (Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, pp. 53 s.).

Luzi catalog for the years around the middle of the century is still settling because, due to the scarcity of documents, his hand can be recognized in different locations by stylistic bias to the works of Castel Sant'Angelo.

Immediately close to the end of the fifth decade should the decoration of the ceiling of a room on the ground floor of the Mattei palace of Paganica, in collaboration with Domenico Zaga, be attributed: the stories of the lunettes, only partly preserved, are attributable to Luzi grotesque ornamentation of the vault. The meaning of a possible intervention by Luzi in the rooms added by Paul III in the Palazzo dei Conservatori around 1544 (Pietrangeli, 1973, Gaudioso, 1976, p.27), reposed in more recent times on the basis of a large graphic production for the friezes from the halls of the Geese and the Eagles (Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, pp. 56, 74), opens up to more stimulating reflections. In fact, the weight that Luzi, in continuous relationship with the Farnese client, would have had on the contextual evolution of the decorative genre in Rome, with the function of privileged disseminator of the ancient frieze subdivided into panels in which the dialogue between figurative scenes and ornate grotesque resolves to the full advantage of the latter.

The versatility of Luzi in the decoration of sacred environments is difficult to trace, due to the small traces that have survived: the deposit of 5 scudi received on 19 November. 1548 to paint the tribune of the church of S. Maria in Via, without further evidence (Bertolotti, 1884, p.21), and a study, kept in Windsor, for the funeral monument of Cardinal Cristoforo Jacovacci (died in 1541), whose realization is not known (Clayton).

The physiognomy of Luzi "painter of history", even if less investigated, is also partly reconstructable with the support of the drawings.

In particular, it is the sheet with the *Battle of Lake Regillo* (Florence, Cabinet of drawings and prints of the Uffizi, *Inv.*, No. 1091 S) to allow the attribution to Luzi of the frieze with episodes of Roman history in a room of the noble floor of Palazzo Stati Cenci Maccarani. In the same place, in a period probably between 1546 and 1551, Luzi would have intervened also in the frieze of another room on the piano nobile, bearing quotes from the Perinian cycle of Love and Psyche in Castel Sant'Angelo, and in the grotesques of the library on the ground floor.

The presence of Luzi in Palazzo Spada recalled by the seventeenth-century sources (Baglione, Martinelli) should be placed in the first decorative phase of the building, before 1550, and recognize the ground floor

in the interventions in a small dressing room and in a grotesque vault in the environment to the right of the entrance and, in the main floor, in the frieze of the hall of Aeneas.

More likely in the second half of the fifth decade and before the death of Paul III, in direct contiguity with the works of Castel Sant'Angelo, which was castellano since April 1545 Mario Ruffini, Luzi intervened in Frascati in the villa of his brother the latter, Alessandro: the friezes of three rooms on the east side and two on the northwest side of the factory, characterized by the common dominant grotesque motif alternating with figurative or landscape panels, denounce, despite the poor state of preservation, close affinity with the solutions experimented by the painter in the Farnesian building site.

Officially accredited as a specialist in the decorative genre, Luzi seems to continue to operate on the Roman scene without interruption for at least two decades.

19 Jan. 1553 was commissioned to estimate, together with Marcello Venusti, the frescoes completed up to now under the direction of Daniele Ricciarelli da Volterra in the Della Rovere chapel at Trinità dei Monti (Bertolotti, 1881, II, pp. 293).

Still to be circumstantiated is his probable participation in the building sites of Villa Giulia and Palazzo Firenze promoted by Giulio III. It is only partly easier for stylistic-iconographic reasons, however, is the recognition of an intervention, perhaps only in a directive, for the ceiling decorations in the hall of Alexander the Great and the vault and walls of the Roman room in the cardinal's palace Tiberio Crispi, today Del Drago, in Bolsena, between 1559 and 1562.

Between 1563 and 1565 he took part in the works of the lodges on the third floor of the Vatican palace, coordinated by Daniele da Volterra (Bertolotti, 1882), probably creating the framing portion of the biblical stories in the first arm; by 1565 the decoration of the small vault in front of the Constantine Hall concluded (*ibid.*). In the same two-year period, and again in collaboration with Daniele da Volterra, he took part in the initial phase of the work for the gilded stucco lacunars of the ceiling of S. Giovanni in Laterano, lost (Bertolotti, 1881, I, pp. 61, 136).

Finally, in 1569, on behalf of Tommaso de 'Cavalieri and Prospero Boccapaduli, deputies to the Capitol Works, he decorated the vault of the entrance vestibule of the Palazzo dei Conservatori.

The work, lost, had to satisfy the expectations of the client who in 1575 commissioned it to decorate the vaults of the stairs, two in the first shelf and three in the second (Pecchiai). The latter convey a complex iconographic program, the glorification of classical and Christian Rome, illustrated in a group of preparatory studies divided between Windsor (Blunt), Haarlem (Tuyll van Serooskerken) and Palermo (Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, pp. 63-66). Using the only white stucco in this last enterprise, Luzi seemed to affirm the opportunity of a return to the archaeological taste of the early sixteenth century of Raphaellesque origin, in provocative detachment from the contemporary orientations.

The place and date of death of Luzi are not known.

Nor is the identification of Luzi with the "Lutios de Lutis" mentioned in deeds of property of 1582 (Davidson, 1966). The coherent integration of the profile of his personality remain, however, the numerous sheets related to projects, of unknown realization, in the field of goldsmith and applied art: a graphic production that attests the multiple possibilities of reflection given by the same classical sources which inspired his artistic activity.

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