

NAVONE, Francesco Antonio

by Simonetta Ceccarelli - Biographical Dictionary of Italians - Volume 78 (2013)

Francesco Antonio, the last born of Giovanni Domenico and Teresa Donadei, was born in Rome on May 27, 1731; he married around 1767 with Maria Natalini, Roman, and 15 children were born from their union (two of whom died shortly after birth).

The first news dates back to 1757 when he appears to collaborate with his father in the construction of the church of S. Maria Addolorata in Tarquinia. On March 19, 1759 he became part of the Congregation of the Virtuosi al Pantheon and, from 1769 until his death, he was an academic of S. Luca. The first documented works of Francesco Antonio are those carried out in 1758, as coadjutor of his father, for the bell tower of S. Maria dei Miracoli. In 1763 he completed, together with the designer Alessandro Dori, the machine for the exposition of the Quarantore in the basilica of S. Lorenzo in Damaso.

Between 1769 and 1774 he was present in Civitavecchia where he executed works for the expansion of the church of S. Francesco and built the 'building' of the Command, the factory for the military garrison called the Quartierone, a new building in Borgo S. Antonio, the casamento 'dei ovens' and the nearby chapel of S. Leonardo, the new arm of the hospital of S. Giovanni di Dio.

In 1770 he stipulated a contract, with Giacinto de Oliveira d'Abreu Lima, for the restoration and beautification of the second chapel on the left, in the church of S. Antonio de' Portoghesi becoming, from 1774 until 1790, official architect of the same church (the architects of the family served the royal church and the hospice of S. Antonio de' Portoghesi for over a century, after Francesco Antonio, the works were continued by his son Giovanni Domenico junior and later by his nephew Francesco). Between 1772 and 1775, he realized the transformation of a casamento near S. Bernardo alle Terme into a factory of canvas printed with flowers and figures, called calancà. From 1773 to 1801, he held the office of chamber architect and calibrated the accounts of the works carried out by the suppressed Compagnia del Gesù. In 1774 he began and in 1779 he finished the urban plan of the village of San Lorenzo Nuovo on the lake of Bolsena; also in 1774, he was commissioned to renew and expand the convent of the Fathers of St. Bonaventure to the Polveriera for the Pious Work of the Spiritual Exercises. In 1776, together with Giovanni Francesco Fiori, he elaborated reinforcement works of the Alibert theater (also known as the Dame). In 1777 he had the commission to rebuild the papal Mint in the Vatican financed by Pius VI. On December 22 of the same year he drew together with Giovanni Battista Marchetti, Pietro Barnabò, Giambattista Grossi, the funeral apparatus in the church of S. Antonio dei Portoghesi in anticipation of the solemn funeral services of Joseph I, King of Portugal; also in 1777, Oliveira d'Abreu commissioned him to restore the chapel of Our Lady of Bethlehem, destined for his burial, in the same church. In 1778, he was an architect of the Apostolic Chamber and of the chapter of Saints Lorenzo and Damasus and planned the construction of the chapel of St. John of Nepomuk, in S. Maria dell'Anima.

In 1778 he was appointed chamber architect for the bulk of Civitavecchia alongside Carlo and Filippo Marchionni, later replaced by Ubaldo Minozzi and, around 1809, by his son Giovanni Domenico. In 1780, for Cardinal Guglielmo Pallotta, he outlined the project of the new church of S. Maria Assunta in Montalto di Castro. In 1781, with Filippo Prada, he signed the renovation works in the two chamber churches of Castel Sant'Elia. From 1781 to 1796, he worked again in Civitavecchia, for an area for the 'comfortable soldiers' and for the basement of the fortress courtyard towards the port; he wrote a report for the construction of the bastion of S. Rocco.

Between 2 and 3 March 1782, he took care of the decorations of the apartments of Palazzo de Carolis and Palazzo Millini realized on the occasion of the arrival in Rome of Cardinal François-Joaquim de

Pierre de Bernis who arrived in Rome for the celebrations organized in honor of the birth of the Dolphin of France.

In 1784, together with Carlo Marchionni, Michelangelo Simonetti, Giuseppe Dori, Giuseppe Barbieri, Francesco Tiroli and other architects, he signed an attestation on the way of "having to estimate and appreciate work in the countryside, so close to the city of Rome, how close the Provincial Cities, or other Countries "(Chracas, *Ordinary Diary* , March 9, 1782, No. 750, pp. 6-8). In a description of 1785 of the work "to be done" outside the door, S. Pancrazio, is a mess inserted in a vineyard, owned by him, site "where the road starts from Braccetta".

In 1788, he was entrusted by Anton von Maron with the reconstruction of the Pietà chapel in S. Maria dell'Anima, the imperial church (now national) of the Germans in Rome and, together with his son Giovanni Domenico, he was named Imperial Imperial architect; for this reason, in the family home, located in Via dei Banchi Vecchi, for particular privilege, he could raise the German imperial arms. In 1789 the Portuguese Congregation entrusted him with the direction of the works of the chapel of St. Elizabeth; it was later replaced in 1803 by Tommaso Zappati and, in 1804, by his son Giovanni Domenico junior. In 1791, he executed, together with his son, the projects for the new Valle theater (rebuilt in 1819 by Giuseppe Valadier), of which numerous drawings remain (Amadei, 1961). Between 1785 and 1796 he conceived and built, by the will of Pius VI, the church of St. Paul the Apostle in Tor Tre Ponti.

In 1795, he made drawings with a report for the construction of a warehouse in Civitavecchia, near the Corneto gate. In 1797 he was the architect of the Water Court. In 1800, with Giuseppe Valadier, he signed the restoration of the church of S. Rocco in Albano and the payments of the works carried out for the houses and for the chamber houses in Porto d'Anzio. He died in Rome on March 17, 1804. His portrait, performed by the painter Anton von Maron in 1768, is kept in the Academy Gallery of St. Luke.

Giovanni Domenico junior, son of Francesco Antonio and Maria Natalini, was born in Rome on 15 July 1772. Around 1799, during his activity in Civitavecchia, he married Matilde Fiori of "Centum Cellis " and from their union six children were born.

His career as an architect was rapid: on March 2, 1787 he was appointed coadjutor of his father for the works in the church of S. Antonio dei Portoghesi, an activity that he resumed in 1804, after the death of his father. Unlike the other members of the family, his first studies were also literary: in 1789 he received a diploma from the Literary Academy of the Vari for "a particular skill in the studies mainly of Fine Letters" (Amadei, 1960, p.19).

From 1792 to 1793, he set up a partnership with Matteo Lovatti, Vincenzo Cavallini and Giovanni Battista Cipriani, with the aim of preparing a series of drawings for some engravings for a volume containing the depiction of the 16th century factories considered exemplary. In 1794 with Cipriani he published a volume with engravings illustrating the most important monuments of the city of Rome (*New method to learn ... by the architects Giandomenico Navone, Gio. Bat. Cipriani*, Rome, Salvioni, 1794).

On 13 January 1802 he received from the Apostolic Chamber the license, which he held until 1831, as a chamber architect and the chambers of the Province: Allumiere, Civitavecchia, the "Torri del Mediterraneo", Montalto and Corneto. Also in Civitavecchia, in 1802, he built a warehouse for the Manzi brothers; in 1803 he planned the rehabilitation of the arsenal; in 1816 for Camillo Manzi had a house built with a shop on Piazza d'Armi; subsequently he designed and built the Valentini palace (Archive of the Accademia di S. Luca, volume 121, No. 98, 27 December 1861, 2nd). Around the early nineteenth century, as a hydraulic engineer took care of the reclamation work of the Bolsena lake, the river Marta and the marshy lands of the Roman Pescaia.

In February 1802 he directed the celebrations for the translation of the body of Pius VI, from Valence to Rome: first in the church of the Storta, then in S. Maria del Popolo and then in S. Pietro.

From 1809 to 1812, during the Napoleonic government, for the prefect Camillo de Tournon, he made some reconstructions in the apartment on the main floor of the Palazzo della Consulta. In 1820, commissioned by Giovanni VI of Portugal, he designed and executed with the architect Giovanni Gherardo De Rossi, with the sculptor Francesco Massimo Laboureur and with the decorators Gaspare Coccia and Antonio Fornari, the funeral apparatuses set up in S. Antonio de 'Portoghesi for the funeral of Mary I Queen of Portugal (Chracas, *Diary of Rome* , March 20, 1820, No. 24, pp. 5-15). In the same year he was appointed general secretary of the Directorate of Chambers of Commerce for Water and Roads, a post he held until 10 July 1847.

During the pontificate of Leo XII (1823-29) he worked together with his son Filippo, in the casino of the castle of Cecchignola; in 1824 he took care of the construction of some houses in the ghetto, today no longer recognizable because of the demolitions carried out between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; he was also commissioned by the governor to execute a project and a report for the narrowing of Jews in the ghetto (*Project for the narrowing of Jews in the ghetto without prejudice to any Christian family* , Rome 1824). In May 1835 for Monsignor Alessandro Ruspoli, he realized, with his son Filippo, the funeral apparatuses in S. Maria dell'Anima, set up for the exhibition of the funeral of Francesco I of Austria who died in March of that year (A. Ruspoli, *In funere Francisci The Austrians horatio habita in sacello Vaticano ...* , Rome 1835, Chracas, *Diary of Rome* , 20 May 1835, No. 40, pp. 1-3). In 1845 he was part of the jury of the competition for the new theater in Viterbo. In 1847, as an engineer, together with Fabrizio Giorgi, he finished the work of the new powder magazine, built outside the city of Civitavecchia.

He died in Rome on October 24, 1861. A small portrait of him was executed by C. Corradini (Amadei, 1961, p.19).

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