

JACOPO da Pietrasanta

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JACOPO from Pietrasanta. - The date of birth of this marble maker, master builder and architect active in Rome in the second half of the fifteenth century, originally from Pietrasanta, son of Cristoforo, Leonardo's brother - is present in the port of Civitavecchia around 1484-85 carpenter of the apostolic palace (Müntz, 1898, pp. 46 pp.) - and of Lorenzo (Milanesi, VI).

Müntz argued that J. was perhaps a member of the local family of the Riccomanni; but the news, based on the simple fact that that family included among its members a Christopher, was excluded from the critic starting with Milanese.

His activity in Rome is well documented since the middle of the century, as well as the increasing appreciation by the pontiffs succeeded by Niccolò V at Innocent VIII. Instead, it is the result of different interpretations of the role played by the most important Roman sites. The documents, most of which are published several times by Müntz, sometimes indicate it as a marbleworker, sometimes as an architect. What is certain is that J., who originated in an area rich in marble quarries and therefore of skilled craftsmen in marble processing, came to Rome just as an expert in this field.

As a "marbleworker" (Müntz, 1878, p. 149) J. began in the Campidoglio yard, promoted by Pope Niccolò V from 1451, carrying chisel work, including coats of arms, thresholds and steps, door and window frames. At the beginning of his career he also had to work with Bernardo Rossellino - the favorite architect of the same pope - if the scope of the catastrophe of 1457 indicates this among the creditors of this, referring to a working relationship at the time already concluded

In 1463-64 J. it turns out to be "superstans fabricae pulpiti" (ibid., P. 282) of the loggia of the blessings, wanted by Pius II Piccolomini at the Basilica of St. Peter. The most recent criticism however intends his role as the director of the maestranze used in the decoration work rather than as an architect: an interpretation confirmed by his role as a stonecutter, subordinate to the direction of a sculptor like Isaia (Ganti) da Pisa, of the tabernacle of s. Andrea, made by Pope Piccolomini inside the Vatican basilica to guard the apostle's head.

Under Paul II he played a prominent role in the important yard of the St. Mark's complex. In 1466 he signed the contract with Francesco del Borgo (Francesco di Benedetto Cereo from Borgo San Sepolcro) and Bernardo di Lorenzo; but, despite being in the group of architects, its operational scope was probably still reserved for architectural decoration. Just as a marble expert, he followed the complex operations of transporting a large ancient urn in the serpentine area of the Coliseum in the area of the Venice Palace. In addition, in 1467, he appeared in the yard as "superstans marmorariis labantibus lapides marmoreos" (Müntz, 1879, p. 15), to direct the maestranze used in the execution of the elements of architectural decoration.

J.'s extensive credit with the pope earned him the nomination in 1468 to "praesidens fabricae palatii apostolici" (ibid., P. 16): a title that indicated it, however, not as an architect in the full sense of the term

but as responsible for stone and marble works. And as such it was recorded in 1468-69 for various works in the Vatican and for the restoration of the coevo of S. Angelo bridge.

He also commissioned under Sixtus IV, who in June 1472 sent J. and Bernardo di Lorenzo to perform an inspection in the basilica of S. Francesco in Assisi, in order to program a not better specified "necessariam reparationem" (probably work stone, Samperi, 1999, pp. 52, p. 52), directed perhaps by J. alone, as evidenced by a payment in February of the following year (Müntz, 1882, p.

Cardinal Guglielmo d'Estouteville's private initiative was the reliance on J., surely on this occasion as a true architect, in his major work: the expansion of the church and the convent of S. Agostino.

In the documents relating to the fabbrica - from the contract of start of work, dated 4 Nov. 1479, until their conclusion in 1482-83 - J. is called "magistrum architectorem principalem". He collaborated with Sebastiano Fiorentino, as J. "peritus in art architecturae" (for all documents: Samperi, 1999, passim). However, J.'s role was very limited from the point of view of decision-making and design. Although the sources attributed to the Cardinal the merit of promoting the reconstruction of the church from the foundations, in fact it was the continuation and conclusion of a yard opened a century ago: this is evidenced by the recent technical analysis of the work, from new documentary findings and lastly from the same late-memory reminiscences which, until the studies of R. Samperi, had contributed to the definition of J. as an ardent architect and backward taste. J. probably only designed the dome, lateral chapels, part of the interior decoration and the facade of the church - elements that point to its modernity, if compared to other contemporary factories.

For Innocent VIII, besides designing the apparatus for the ceremony of his coronation and directing the restoration of the lateran palace, J. collaborated in the construction of the Vatican Belvedere villa. However, his role in the construction of this yard, which lasted from 1484 to 1487 (Redig de Campos), is doubtful. According to Giorgio Vasari (*Le vite ...*, edited by G. Milanesi, III, Florence 1906, p. 296), author of the project was Antonio Benci called Pollaiuolo, although the factory "was conducted by others, for not having much practice wall ". The most recent criticism attributes the direction of the building yard to Baccio Pontelli (Tafari, 1995), or Giovannino (Giovanni) Dolci (Frommel, 1998), and J. conducting works in the more general area of the villa.

J. died in Rome before March 31, 1495, when the Apostolic Chamber made the last payment, but addressed to his wife, for work previously done in the Villa del Belvedere (Redig de Campos).

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