

Antonio Sarti

Italian architect
1797-1880

He was born in Budrio (Bologna) on October 18, 1797 from Agostino and from Geltrude Alberoni, the first of seven children.

He learned the rudiments of the design from the scenographer Francesco Cocchi and the painter Faustino Trebbi, in 1813 he was sent to the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna, where he attended courses in drawing, ornate, perspective and architecture; in those years he devoted himself to the copy of pictorial works, drawings drawn from English and French publications and architectural details of the main monuments of Roman antiquity, the latter collected in the book *Lucidi of architecture and ornate, made by Antonio Sarti when, being student in Bologna, lacked the means to purchase the originals*, sl or date.

In 1819 he won the Rome class for the architecture class, which provided the opportunity for a young student of the Bolognese institute to reside in the city for a period of four years in order to perfect the knowledge of classical art.

Among the essays sent by Sarti as evidence of the activity carried out are a portion of the so-called Frontone di Nerone in Rome drawn in three tables, the first two just contours, and the third the cornice, freggio and architrave, with each of its ornate watercolored, the restoration of the temple of Venus and Rome (1823), the plans for a criminal tribunal (1824) and a public bath (1825), the latter connoted by two semicircular exedras and a wide Corinthian porticoed path with water-leaf capitals.

In the papal capital Cardinal Ercole Consalvi, who became his protector, introduced him to the most famous architects and painters of the time. In those years Sarti attended courses in architecture and design at the Academy of St. Luca; student of Raffaele Stern, at the death of the master wanted to take care of the publication of his lessons: the first volume was published in 1822 for the types of Giuseppe Salviucci. Dedicated to the practice of engraving, from 1825 he undertook the realization of tables of architectural subject that gave rise to the appreciation of Vincenzo Camuccini; for the Calcografia camerale he created the volume *Inside of the basilicas of Rome and view of ancient and modern buildings drawn and engraved in the strong water*.

The sources of the era date the professional debut in the second half of the twenties: works of a certain importance and object of appreciation by contemporaries were the Lozzano al Corso building and the building (1828) on the square of S. Claudio commissioned by Count Francesco Saverio Parisani, cousin of Cardinal Consalvi.

The new type of rental house was widely used in Rome in the early decades of the nineteenth century: "unlike the building, for which the orders and proportions of the classical examples are worthy of design, it seems to have no model that can fix the character". Giulio Camporese and Gaspare Servi expressed themselves on the «lack of convenience» found in the projects; in the opinion requested in 1826 by cardinal camerlengo Pietro Francesco Galeffi (for whom he made some works of arrangement in

Subiaco and in the Apostolic Palace at Quirinale in 1827) about "what means should be achieved to get the factories to be solid and they come under the good rules of art, to be beautiful and enhance the city's ornamentation", Sarti condemned "that glitz of ornate in the small and private houses, both of columns where they do not have place, and of many other decorations, seeing so many private buildings nowadays dress ornaments that convene public buildings and churches".

An example of the new figurative code elaborated by Sarti, and well-established enough to constitute a real model for the architects of the time, is the project of the reconstructed building (1828) on the Via del Corso on behalf of the banker Antonio Lozzano. In the layout of the façade, the scores make it possible to read the gradation of the height given to the floors, which corresponds to the different treatment of rustication and the processing of window displays. The level of detail of the graphic representation is an important element of novelty: the design drawings include the abacus of the frames and the ornaments.

The connotative elements of the architecture of Sarti were, from the beginning, the scrupulous care of details, never left "to the will of the master boss", and the search for "a balance between bourgeois desire for decoration and respect for a classical order". In the later intervention of completion of the sixteenth century Alberini Ciciaporci in Banchi, commissioned by Count Leonardo Calderari, and completed in 1868, Sarti conferred stylistic unity on the façade, referring to the reconstruction of Paul Marie Letarouilly contained in the first volume of the *modern edifices de Rome* (1840), choosing to standardize the chromatic tones of old and new stone masonry by means of suitable coating interventions.

Sources of the time report that for the decorative apparatuses Sarti took advantage of the collaboration of his brother Giuseppe, perhaps to be identified with the participant of that name in the Clementino competition for the second class of architecture banned in 1824, "who lives by profession in plastic and plaster the various ornaments, which serve the architectural decoration".

In 1830, by the will of the prefect of the congregation of the Good Government cardinal Ercole Dandini, Sarti undertook the drafting of the project of the Borgo Pio church in Terracina.

The building has a basilica plan with three naves with side chapels and a dome at the intersection with the transept; from the hexastyle pronaos, with Ionic columns of neoclassical taste, one enters an endonartece with chapels on the short sides. The presbytery with colonnaded ambulatory recalls neo-Pascalian patterns; the central nave, covered by a vaulted barrel vault, evokes the spatiality of the Roman thermal structures which Sarti gives a new suggestion through marked chiaroscuro contrasts.

The temple was consecrated in 1843; the works, carried out under the direction of the Marches Luigi Mollari, continued until 1847; Sarti is attributed to the intervention of the buildings delimiting the hemicycle of Piazza Garibaldi.

In Frosinone, the architect put his hand, in the early thirties, to the new palace of the apostolic delegate, outlined "with a purely Greek style" (L. Sereni, *necrologico Nen*).

From 1836 he was a teacher of elementary and ornate architecture at the schools of the Academy of St. Luke, of which he was elected a member in 1831; the teaching helped to spread the "moderate line" that characterizes its architectural language. Starting in the 1930s, he became "the architect of the new aristocracy, [...] of the rich bourgeoisie and religious congregations". Here we mention the most significant interventions: the renovations undertaken at the Lavaggi palace and the works of expansion and embellishment carried out for the Duke Marino Torlonia in the Andosilla casino near Porta Pia (1839); the construction, again on his behalf, of a building complex comprising the current Hotel d'Inghilterra and «profitable rental houses with shops on the ground floor; and the reorganization of the seventeenth-century Palazzo Nuñez then Bonaparte, to be used as the residence of the Torlonia family (1839-68).

The intervention led to the enlargement of a section of the via Bocca di Leone to allow the construction of a small representative square. The building was extended towards via Borgognona and the prospect on redesigned Via Bocca di Leone; the fountain at the entrance was similarly erected on the design of Sarti reusing an ancient Roman sarcophagus (1842). For the Torlonia the architect also performed the radical transformation of the Chapel of the Virgin in S. Andrea delle Fratte (1842-49).

The controversial intervention on the main altar of the Church of the Gesù (1841-43) and the works in the church of the Ss. Trinità dei Pellegrini (1847-53) date back to the 1840s. In the fifties, Sarti worked at the Palazzo di Ripetta, the seat of the academic schools, erected by Pietro Camporese the Younger; he then created the Piana library at the service of the Pio and Roman seminaries annexed to the church of S. Apollinare. To the use of the first he also edited the renovation of the villa already Santucci Fabietti in Monteverde (1858). He also performed some works in the palaces Grazioli (1863-74) and Marescotti Antonelli; between the fifties and sixties he created for the Duke Pio Grazioli the general reorganization of the building complex of the Castel Porziano estate.

The second intervention on the Nainer-Bussoni palace (formerly Lozzano) dates back to 1862, following which the building, enlarged and raised keeping the previous layout, became the Albergo Roma (today Grand Hotel Plaza).

From 1860 to 1863 he was president of the Accademia di S. Luca; between 1859 and 1866 he worked on the only public work commissioned by Pius IX, the Manufacture of the Tobacco Factory. The building, for which he chose to refer to courtly models rather than the more proper and current ones of the 'factory', constituted the "fulcrum of the urban intervention of Busiri Vici that, through the opening of via cardinal Merry del Val, he joined the workers' quarter of Trastevere in piazza Mastai".

In 1877, shortly before his death, Sarti donated to the City of Rome his library, now established in the premises of Palazzo Carpegna. He died in Rome on September 24, 1880.