

ANDREA BACCHI - DAVIDE LIPARI

Bolognese Baroque Classicism

THE SEASONS  
BY LORENZO SARTI

BRUN FINE ART



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CLASSICISM

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## «Lorenzo Sarti 1738» Three Busts and a Mystery

In 1966, Giovanni Mariacher published the three stylistically homogeneous terracotta busts presented here, one of which is signed «Lor[enzo] Sarti 1738», the subject of this study (Figs 1, 3-5, 7-9, 12, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 61). In the Venetian antique gallery where he had first seen them, the busts were (and probably always had been) associated with a fourth signed «1728 / G.M.F.», now in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice (Fig. 2). In his article Mariacher wrote:

Years ago, we happened to notice in a Venetian antique shop, a series of terracotta busts, which are now in a private collection [Count Andrea Emo Capodilista]. It seemed to us that they depicted the four seasons, and were traditionally considered as such: two of them bear the signatures of their authors: indeed, on the

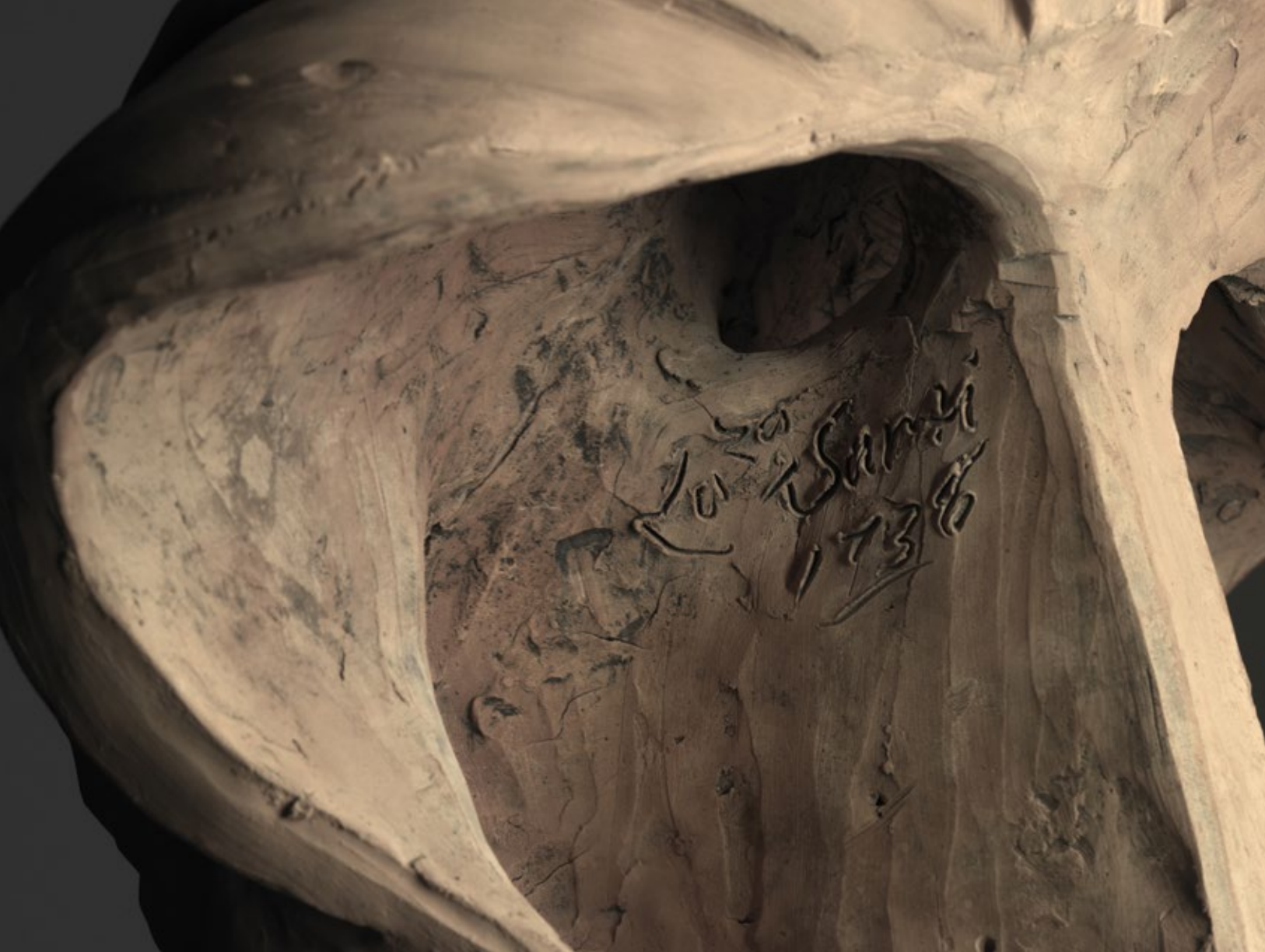


2. Giuseppe Maria Mazza, *Bust of a young man*, Private Collection.









4. Lorenzo Sarti, *Bust of Spring* (detail).

rear of one of the busts we read the text Lo.zo Sarti 1738, and on another G.M.F. 1728. We know of little information about and few works by the former, a Bolognese student of Giuseppe Mazza [...]. The connection between three pieces in the small group is evident: an old bearded man (Winter?), a pretty Spring crowned with flowers, a Summer with little ears of wheat pinned to the chest; all three figures are treated with cold technical skill and elegant refinement. On the other hand, the fourth is different, and is said (but with little plausibility) to depict Autumn: a young man, with a kind of turban wrapped around his head, a cloak draped in the classical fashion, with simple folds around his torso, held by a shoulder strap on his right shoulder. His demeanour is more than serious, almost proud and haughty, the features a little hard, the manner of modelling smooth and conducted almost with blows of the gouge, as if by a master accustomed to working wood. This sparing technique and the concise style contrast with that of the other figures, where by contrast it is soft, redundant to the point of being pretentious: it will suffice for a more secure comparison to closely review two of these figures, that is, the Spring signed by Sarti and Autumn, so different as to even appear antithetical<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Mariacher 1966. *Spring* is 54 cm high; *Summer* 61,5 cm; *Winter* 62 cm. The Bust signed GMF is 60,5 cm high.







6. Lorenzo Sarti, *Temperance*, Bologna, Cathedral, counter-façade.

At the end of his stylistic analysis, Mariacher proposes expanding the initials «G.M.F.» incised on the so-called *Autumn* with ‘Giovanni Marchiori Fecit’, thus assuming that it was an early work by the great Venetian sculptor (1696-1778); only in 1997 did Massimo De Grassi return the bust to the catalogue of the Bolognese Giuseppe Maria Mazza (1654-1741) and not only for stylistic reasons: Marchiori did not sign his works with his initials, but rather in full, in Latin<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, since Lorenzo Sarti was a student and associate of Mazza<sup>3</sup>, it appeared

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<sup>2</sup> De Grassi 1997, pp. 131, 141-142.

<sup>3</sup> This relationship is already attested by the Bolognese historiographer Marcello Oretti (1714-1787) in his biographies of artists active in Bologna, still manuscript (cfr. Riccòmini 1977, p. 83; Massari 2017a, p. 655; *Pitture* 1782, pp. 2, 75, 187, 207, 212, 561; *Pitture* 1792, pp. 2, 79, 205, 226, 232; see also the essay by Davide Lipari below).





logical to see the four busts as a coherent whole, at least in terms of its geographical and cultural origin.

Recently, in her doctoral thesis on Mazza, Silvia Massari identified in the so-called *Autumn* of 1728 «an important testimony of the Bolognese sculptor's late phase», commenting that

the cloak held in place by a shoulder strap and arranged around the bust, presents an essential drapery traversed by linear and rigid folds with sharp profiles and no marked projections, which find parallels in both the *Cardinal Virtues* of the Basilica of San Domenico in Bologna executed in the same year and in the slightly later *Evangelists* of Modena where the same simplification of classical origin can be found.

The nobility of the bust, impressed upon it by the solemn set of the face, defined by severe features and a proud and haughty look, reflects the evolution in a classicizing sense of the sculptor's style in the last decade of his career<sup>4</sup>.

Of the other three terracottas, the only one signed by Sarti is *Spring*, but, as Mariacher himself had pointed out, *Summer* and *Winter* are undoubtedly attributable to the same artist. The face of the former can be compared to that of the *Figure with a Putto* in Palazzo Levizzani in Modena and the profiles of the allegories of *Temperance* and the *Church* modelled by the sculptor for the counter-façade of Bologna cathedral (Figs 5-12, 53)<sup>5</sup>. Also noteworthy are the wavy edges of the cloak of *Summer* and the turban of *Winter*: a feature that we find in the cloak of the *Pietà* signed and dated 1722 (private collection) and in the bands holding the hair of the allegories of *Faith* and the *Church* in the cathedral and of the Levizzani's *Figure with a Putto* (Figs 13-14, 33, 53). The features of the face and beard of *Winter* are easily comparable to *St Mark* and *St Jerome* in the Bologna cathedral, as well as to *God the Father* in the collegiate church of San Biagio at Cento (Figs 15-20).

Currently neither the archives nor the sources seem to shed light on the history of these works. We do not know if the patron of the bust by Mazza dated 1728, commissioned Sarti to create new ones to display alongside the master's work ten years later, in 1738 (the year engraved on the rear of *Spring*), or if the group was assembled at the behest of the individual who may have come into possession of that bust at a later date. Although it is impossible to formulate a hypothesis supported by concrete evidence, the present author favours the second possibility: it is likely that Mazza's work changed hands at least once before the other three terracotta pieces were added to it, thus explaining the substantial iconographical incoherence of the cycle. It is impossible that Mazza's bust originally depicted an *Autumn* (more likely, incidentally, that it was a *David* without many attributes)<sup>6</sup>, and yet it would seem that this is how it was interpreted by the patron and artist (Sarti) when the three new busts clearly depicting the remaining *Seasons* were made.

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<sup>4</sup> Massari 2013, p. 824.

<sup>5</sup> For further information about the works of Sarti mentioned in this essay, see Davide Lipari's text below.

<sup>6</sup> The young man depicted in the bust wears a turban adorned with a jewel and a feather (partially lost).

It is fundamental to note that 1738 was a sadly significant year in Mazza's biography: the sculptor, already over eighty, suffered an apoplectic fit that in practice interrupted his career, making him destitute, as attested by a plea to the Bolognese Senate in 1740, just a year before his death<sup>7</sup>. In 1738 turning to the student professionally and stylistically closest to the master was the only option left to patrons faithful to the manner of Mazza, since his other true follower, Andrea Ferreri (1673-1744), had moved to Ferrara in the early 1720s<sup>8</sup>. It is thus very tempting to see in the commission of these three busts a celebration of the venerated master of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Bolognese sculpture by one of his ardent admirers.

In these three busts, Sarti competed successfully, at a chronological distance, with his teacher, putting to original use every lesson learned in the studio where he had trained. Compared to the young man by Mazza, for the three *Seasons* Sarti opted for busts with a more rounded base. Whilst the master's work presents a drapery still mindful of the stylistic solutions of the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, from Guido Reni to Alessandro Algardi, Sarti's *Seasons* have more ruffled garments, more fully 18<sup>th</sup>-century. *Winter's* turban wraps obliquely around the head, generating very eccentric frills; in *Summer*, the ears of wheat become an ornament for one of the pins that barely hold up the woman's revealing garments; these precious pieces are part of a set of jewellery also including the diadem that enriches the personification's hairstyle. Thanks to these stylistic choices, Sarti shows his independence from Mazza, measuring himself against the irregular and capricious rhythms of Angelo Gabriello Piò (1690-1768)

As Anne-Lise Desmas and Francesco Freddolini have demonstrated that, in Roman palaces, in the Baroque era, it was not unusual to exhibit sculptures of the same type created by coeval artists or by artists of different generations or eras next to each other, to encourage viewers to compare the different pieces and elicit a debate<sup>9</sup>.

Bologna is no exception. The residences of the city hosted eloquent examples of comparison of the art objects produced by the school of Mazza.

Monsignor Antonio Ghislieri (1685-1734) had in his palace «a marble statue of Apollo» by Angelo Piò (1690-1769) «companion to a Diana by» his master «Mazza»<sup>10</sup> – a rare example in Bologna of statues in a noble material. In the Bassani residence, too, a similar competition was established between Mazza and Piò, but with two terracotta bas-reliefs on a sacred subject<sup>11</sup>. Senator Antonio Lorenzo Sampieri, in his residence at the start of Via Santo Stefano, extended the comparison to three generations. At his home, one could admire «a large low relief with

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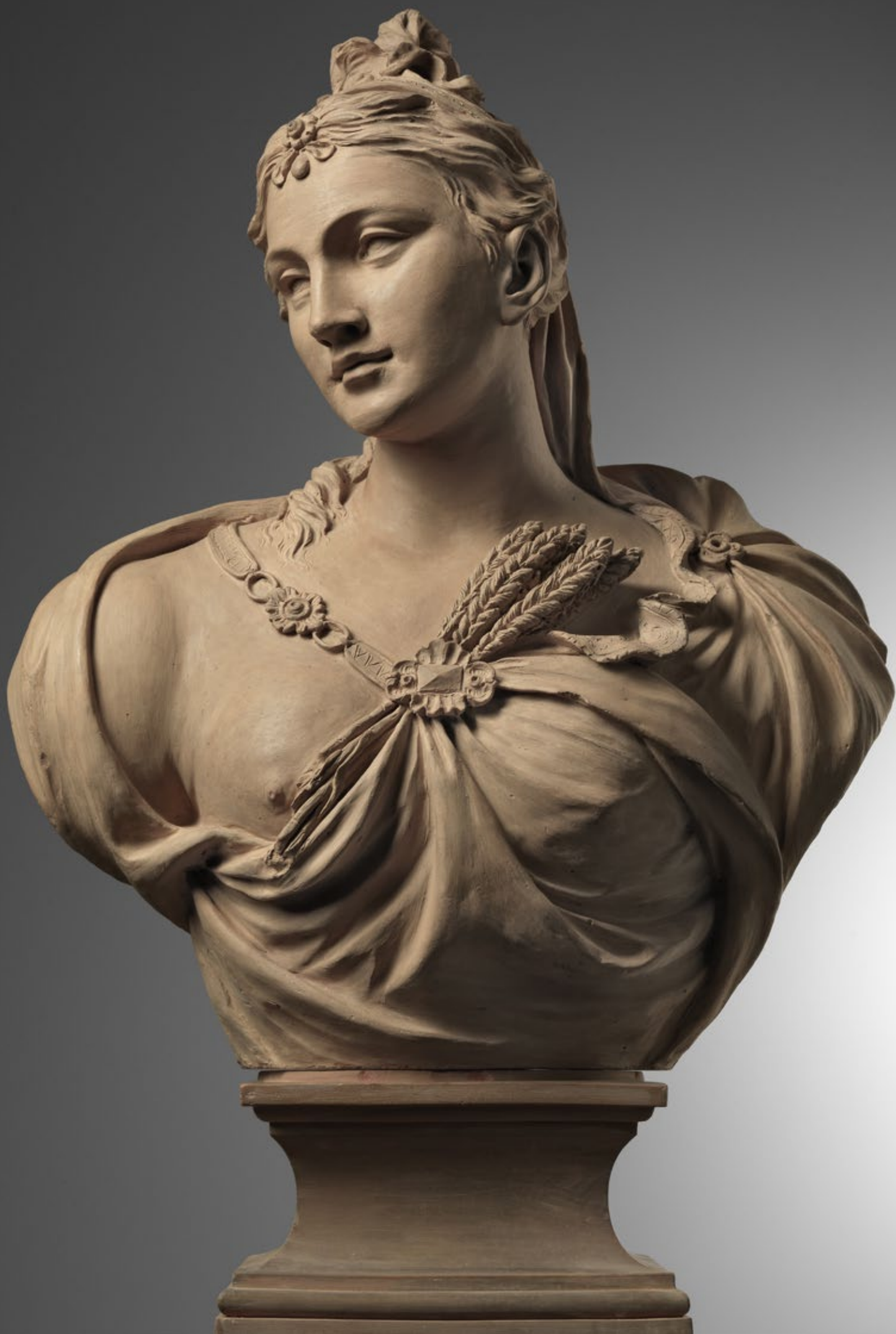
<sup>7</sup> Massari 2013, p. 217.

<sup>8</sup> For Ferreri see Riccòmini 1977, pp. 84-89; Giovannucci Vigi 2004, pp. 97-123.

<sup>9</sup> Desmas-Freddolini 2014, pp. 267-271.

<sup>10</sup> Zanotti 1739 II, pp. 248-249.

<sup>11</sup> «A low relief in terracotta, representing the Blessed Virgin, half-figure, by the skillful Giuseppe Mazza / Another, also very good, of terracotta with the Blessed Virgin, Child and St Charles Borromeo, St John the Baptist, by Angelo Piò» (BCAB, Oretti, ms. B109, fol. 13; see also the passage in Oretti's biography of Mazza transcribed in Massari 2013, p. 976).









10. Lorenzo Sarti, *Figure with a putto* (detail), Modena, Palazzo Levizzani.



the Saviour in the air, in a glory of angels, and underneath St Agnes and Angels» by Gabriele Brunelli (1615-1682), flanked by a work by his pupil Mazza, that was «a small oval with a low relief with the Blessed Virgin, Child and Young Baptist», next to a relief by Piò, «a small oval with St Antony of Padua, the Child, made as a companion to the aforementioned in terracotta»<sup>12</sup>. We can see that the more recent reliefs were smaller than the older one by Brunelli, as if to establish a sort of visual hierarchy, outlining the historical value of the three pieces. This is even

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<sup>12</sup> BCAB, Oretti, ms. B109, fol. 34 (second part of the manuscript); see also Calbi-Scaglietti Kelescian 1984, *ad vocem*.



11. Lorenzo Sarti,  
*Temperance*, Bologna,  
Cathedral, counter-  
façade.

more true when we examine the instances involving his faithful student Lorenzo Sarti, or better yet, to use Marcello Oretti's expression, 'Lorenzino del Mazza'.

The Fava family, Mazza's first patrons, had commissioned from Sarti a *Virgin and Child*, for the staircase of their palace, which the sculptor «copied from the original by Mazza» located in their «Gallery»<sup>13</sup>. Just as the Grassi family, in their own residence, must have enjoyed comparing teacher and student:

Palazzo Grassi, in the apartment on the *piano nobile* he made four naked putti, two for each door, in the bedroom, in competition with his master Mazza, who made the rest<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> BCAB, Oretti, ms. B133, fol. 29 (transcribed in *Appendix*, doc. 2).

<sup>14</sup> *Appendix*, doc. 2.







13. Lorenzo Sarti, *Figure with a putto* (detail), Modena, Palazzo Levizzani.

Therefore, to this specific and refined Bolognese collecting tradition, unfortunately attested only by the sources (none of the pieces mentioned above has been identified) we could today add the case-study concerning the *Spring*, *Summer* and *Winter* by Sarti with the so-called *Autumn* by Mazza.

According to the sources, during the Baroque period, in sculpture, the theme of the four seasons does not really seem to find space within the aristocratic residences of Bologna. For the 17<sup>th</sup> century, in the manuscript catalogues of the city's private patrimony, Marcello Oretti notes only a group of «four terracotta statuettes representing the seasons of the year»<sup>15</sup> by Mazza's father, Camillo (1601-1672), then in the house of the *gonfaloniere* Lorenzo Radisini in Via del Pratello. Indeed, even in the modern period, within the walls of

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<sup>15</sup> BCAB, Oretti, ms. B109, fol. 86. See also Massari 2013, pp. 980, 984.









16. Lorenzo Sarti,  
*St Mark* (detail),  
Bologna, Cathedral.

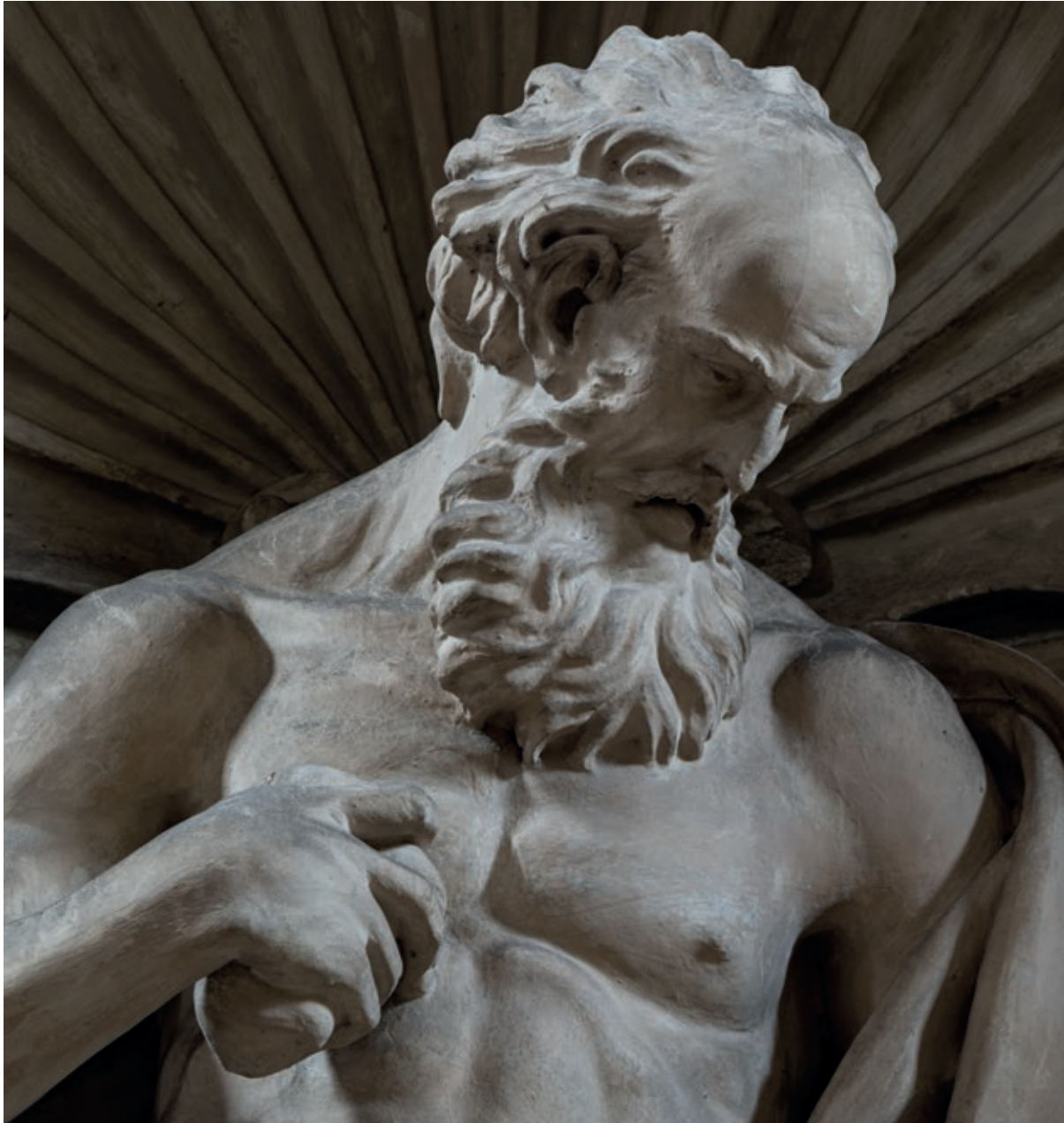


Bologna, it was above all sculptures on sacred subjects that occupied the walls and console tables of aristocratic palaces<sup>16</sup>. Of course, the pieces made by Mazza, Piò and Sarti precisely described in the inventories mentioned above did not fall into this category, since they were pieces that did not have a devotional function, but were instead associated with the paintings in the galleries hosted in the same buildings. In any case, the sculpture on secular subjects present in the Bolognese art collections of the time seems to be very limited: it was possible,

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<sup>16</sup> Cfr. Perini 1990, pp. 335-336; Tumidei 1991. See the manuscripts of Marcello Oretti in the Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio in Bologna, ms. B104 (indexed by Calbi-Scaglietti Kelescian 1984) and ms. B109.





17. Lorenzo Sarti, *St. Jerome* (detail), Bologna, Cathedral, counter-façade.

of course, to find full-length deity figures as an ornament for fireplaces<sup>17</sup>. Only at the time of Mazza, and specifically in the wake of his success, did deity busts also begin to become common in Bologna. The preparatory terracotta for the busts in marble of the latter subject sent to the Prince of Liechtenstein remained in Bologna, and almost certainly helped to fuel

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<sup>17</sup> See some instances in the catalogue of Gabriele Fiorini (active 1588-1605; Riccòmini 1972, cat. nos 31, 34-36, 39; Samuel Vitali returns the sculptures in Palazzo Magnani to the catalogue of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Lombard sculptor Ruggero Bascapè, Vitali 2009, p. 100), and Giovanni Tedeschi (Riccòmini 1972, cat. nos 50, 56; Collari 2020, cat. nos 5, 9, 16).











20. Lorenzo Sarti, *God the Father*, Cento, Collegiata of St Biagio, main altar.

private collecting<sup>18</sup>. It should also be pointed out that in the case of the cycle in question, it does not seem conceivable that the terracottas were preparatory models for translation into marble, since the Liechtenstein commission was the exception and not the rule in Bologna,

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<sup>18</sup> For these works see Massari 2014, cat. no. 61-62, 86-87. The terracotta bust depicting *Bacchus*, found in Palazzo Caprara by Stefano Tumidei, was linked by Silvia Massari to the figure of Enea Silvio Caprara (1631-1701), a general in the service of the Habsburg Empire and, perhaps, one of the agents for the Viennese commission of busts (Tumidei 1991, p. 28; Massari 2013, pp. 152-153, and cat. no. 85). The two marble busts depicting *Diana* and *Endymion*, mentioned by the sources as in Palazzo Isolani in Bologna, are not currently traceable (BCAB, ms. B130, fol. 112; Zanotti 1739 II, p. 11; Calbi-Scaglietti Kelescian 1984, p. 133).



where terracotta was always preferred to marble (given the objective difficulty of sourcing the latter). Busts of emperors, or in any case *all'antica*, were already in use at the time of the decoration of the Magnani palace, between the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>19</sup>, but apart from the extraordinary collection of antiquities of the Aldrovandi family<sup>20</sup>, until the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were no significant instances of this kind in Bologna. More frequent were the commissions of series of portrait busts depicting illustrious ancestors or local notables. Very important, given also their precocity, are the eight marble busts of the ancestors of the Calderini family by Lazzaro Casario<sup>21</sup>. From Casa Fibbia come the twelve terracotta busts of famous Bolognese ladies (dating to 1680-1690) now in the Museo della Storia in Bologna<sup>22</sup>. The busts of the ancestors of the lawyer Alessandro Macchiavelli (1693-1766) executed in terracotta by Domenico Piò (1715-1799) and Ottavio Toselli (1695-1777) seem now lost<sup>23</sup>, as do the fifteen busts representing members of the Oretti family, owned by the aforementioned Marcello, which were the work of three sculptors of different generations: Giuseppe Mazza, Giovanni Battista Bolognini (1698-1760), and finally Gaetano Pignoni (doc. 1762-1782), the grandson and pupil of Piò<sup>24</sup>.

The theme of the seasons was of course recurrent, even in Bologna, in garden ornaments. Terracotta statues on this subject are recorded in the courtyard of the Oretti residence on the Naviglio, created by the pupil of Piò, Antonio Schiassi (1712-1778)<sup>25</sup>. «Seasons of the year, four statues of fired clay, life-size» are also documented in the Japelli residence, moulded by the Bolognese sculptor Luigi Dardani (1723-1787), perhaps better known for his wax portraits<sup>26</sup>.

Currently, however, the mention inside the property of the well-known family of musicians Pedrieri<sup>27</sup> of the following unattributed works remains unique:

Statues in relief, life-size heads and busts, representing the seasons of the year<sup>28</sup>.

In this case, as we have seen, we are dealing with a cycle of busts, of which neither the artist nor whether they were in marble or terracotta was specified. Although it is certainly impossible to suggest the identification of the busts discussed here as the pieces exhibited by

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<sup>19</sup> Riccòmini 1972, cat. no. 34; Vitali 2009, pp. 129, 133.

<sup>20</sup> Calbi-Scaglietti Kelescian 1984, pp. 216-218; Bacchi 1996, pp. 73-74, 86-87.

<sup>21</sup> Calbi-Scaglietti Kelescian 1984, p. 216.

<sup>22</sup> Tumidei 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Tumidei 1991, p.21.

<sup>24</sup> BCAB, Oretti, ms. B109, fols 31-32. See also Massari 2013, p. 824, note 4.

<sup>25</sup> Calbi-Scaglietti Kelescian 1984, p. 174. For Schiassi, Riccòmini 1977, pp. 77-81.

<sup>26</sup> Riccòmini 1965, pp. 119-120.

<sup>27</sup> For the Pedrieri, see Mellace 2016 (with preceding bibliography).

<sup>28</sup> BCAB, Oretti, ms. B109, fol. 43.

the Pedrieri in their dwelling, for the purposes of this study the latter constitute an instance of particular interest.

Sarti's relationships with the Fava and Grassi families have already been mentioned, while for the Buratti, in their palace «at San Martino», he made «the figures» and «the sculptural ornaments» around two fireplaces, as well as «two beautiful life-size putti at the top of the large painting in the room»<sup>29</sup>. He also decorated the fireplaces of Palazzo Tanari in Via Galliera<sup>30</sup>. He executed some unidentified bas-reliefs for the gallery of the senatorial residence of the Pepoli family in Bologna<sup>31</sup>, and four terracotta ovals for their country retreat in Trecenta, near Rovigo<sup>32</sup>; he was also active for the Modenese aristocracy. Finally, only recently, two works related to private collecting have appeared on the antique market: a terracotta *Pietà* signed and dated «Lorenzo Sarti F[ecit] [1]722», traced by the present author<sup>33</sup>, and a large terracotta relief depicting the *Intercession of St Antony of Padua with the Virgin for the Souls in Purgatory* attributed to him by Davide Lipari (Figs 31-33, 55, 58).

Neither the very generous Oretti, nor the evidence of the works that have survived until the present attest to a significant involvement of Sarti in the field of gallery busts; at the same time, in Bologna, patrons had not requested even from Mazza many pieces of this type. The busts presented here therefore constitute a chapter of great importance in the artist's career and in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Bolognese sculpture.

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<sup>29</sup> BCAB, Oretti, ms. B109, fol. 66.

<sup>30</sup> *Appendix*, doc. 2.

<sup>31</sup> BCAB, Oretti, ms. B104, fol. 37, reported in Calbi-Scaglietti Kelescian 1984, p. 172.

<sup>32</sup> BCAB, Oretti, ms. B95, fol. 236r (transcribed in *Appendix*, doc. 1); *Appendix*, doc. 2.

<sup>33</sup> Bacchi 2016, pp. 32-35. In 2014, with Silvia Massari, I proposed, albeit hypothetically, the attribution to Sarti of two monumental terracotta reliefs with figures of saints (Bacchi-Massari 2014). However, according to Davide Lipari (who will discuss the matter in an upcoming essay) the two reliefs were executed by a different sculptor.





# Who was Lorenzo Sarti called ‘Lorenzino del Mazza’?

A biography of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Bolognese sculptor  
with new works and new documents

The sculpture of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in Emilia and Romagna deserves new and systematic investigation. Monographic studies on relatively obscure artists like the sculptor discussed here may still offer unexpected revelations. The critical neglect of Lorenzo Sarti, called Lorenzino del Mazza as he was a student and associate of the famous Giuseppe Maria Mazza, has prevented us from fully understanding the true importance of his career. To remain within the confines of Mazza’s workshop, perhaps best known are the success of Angelo Gabriello Piò’s *atelier* in Bologna, the monopoly attained in Ferrara by Andrea Ferreri and his followers, the prestigious commissions of Giovanni Battista Bolognini as architect and sculptor to the Este family in Reggio Emilia, and again the Roman renown of Agostino Corsini. Despite the critical silence afflicting the figure of Sarti between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, his career was in no way marginal in Emilian society: he earned the trust of the Modenese aristocracy, as well as that of Cardinal Lambertini, later Pope Benedict XIV, and developed an original interpretation of Mazza’s celebrated expressive language which we will attempt to better pinpoint below.

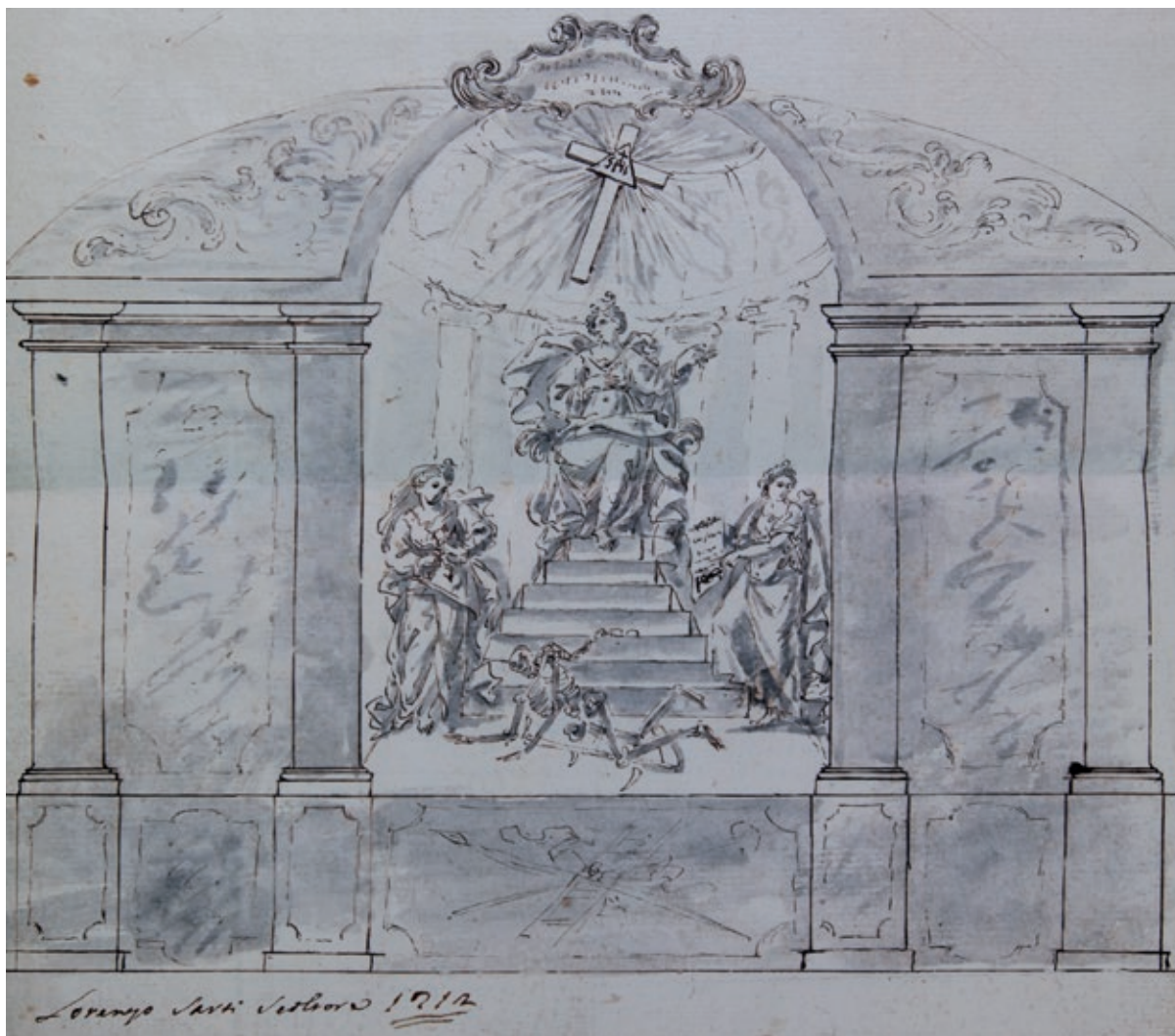
## *Critical fortunes*

The primary source for reconstructing Sarti’s career remains the biographical vignette composed by the Bolognese historian Marcello Oretti (1714-1787) in the eleventh volume of his manuscripts entitled *Notizie de’ professori del disegno* drawn up between the 1760s and 1780s<sup>1</sup>.

The dates of the artist’s birth and death are not yet known, but he is documented as active from the second to the sixth decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He was perhaps the most faithful student of Giuseppe Maria Mazza (1653-1741), so much so that he was known to his contemporaries as ‘Lorenzino del Mazza’. Despite his involvement in high-profile worksites – especially that of Bo-

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<sup>1</sup> BCAB, ms. B133, fols 29-31 (transcribed in *Appendix*, doc. 2). Some of the information on Sarti transcribed by Oretti was provided by Giovanni Antonio Raimondi, who compiled for the historian a sort of catalogue of works by Sarti and the sculptor Gaetano Lollini (d. 1769), both his friends. These notes are still present among Oretti’s papers in the Biblioteca dell’Archiginnasio in Bologna; only Sarti’s catalogue is transcribed in *Appendix*, doc. 1.



22. Lorenzo Sarti, *Sketch of the Sepolcro for the church of Santi Sebastiano e Rocco in Bologna*, (ASB, Demaniale, 14-6618, no. 283, unnumbered folios).

logna cathedral – he never became a member of the Accademia Clementina, a circumstance that led to his biography being omitted from the two books on the history of the institute composed by the academy’s secretary Giampietro Zanotti (1674-1765) and published in 1739.

Although mentioned by the local travel literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Sarti was long forgotten by scholars. The artist’s first appearance in a scholarly text dates to 1966, when Giovanni Mariacher published the terracotta bust signed and dated «Lor[en]zo Sarti 1738» together with another bust signed «G.M.F. 1728», discussed here in the essay by Andrea Bacchi. In fact, Mariacher said little about Sarti, choosing to focus instead on the Treviso sculptor Giovanni Marchiori (1696-1778), the name with which he proposed to expand the acronym incised on the second bust, later correctly assigned to Mazza by Massimo De Grassi<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The letter ‘F’ has always been interpreted as the first of the word ‘Fecit’. De Grassi 1997, p. 148.



23. Giuseppe Maria Mazza, *Immacolata Concezione with angels*, Bologna, Palazzo Grassi (from Riccòmini 1972).

The decisive moment for Sarti's critical fortunes coincides with the publication in 1977 of the volume by Eugenio Riccòmini, *Vaghezza e Furore: la scultura del Settecento in Emilia e in Romagna* which, in addition to proposing an initial critical approach to the sculptor's artistic characteristics, outlined the salient stages of his career<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Riccòmini 1977, pp. 16, 19, 53, 60, 83-84, 87.



In the last forty years, documentary studies have covered some of the worksites on which the sculptor appears to have been active<sup>4</sup>, while more recently Domenico Medori and Ombretta Bergomi have found a drawing by the artist in the Archivio di Stato di Bologna signed and dated 1712 (Fig. 22)<sup>5</sup>. Finally, after the discovery by Andrea Bacchi of a terracotta *Pietà* signed and dated 1722<sup>6</sup> (Figs 31-33), Silvia Massari wrote a detailed entry on him for the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* in 2017<sup>7</sup>.

### ***Ties to Giuseppe Maria Mazza***

A Bolognese sculptor, he was a pupil of Giuseppe Mazza, and for this reason was called Lorenzino del Mazza; since he had a very graceful character and style, he turned out to be one of the best pupils of this great master, who accepted few students; he worked very expertly in stucco and clay not only in Bologna, but also in Modena and in Cento, and elsewhere where he was sought after<sup>8</sup>.

In the introduction to Lorenzo Sarti's catalogue, Marcello Oretti took pains to connect the sculptor's personality with his style: graceful!

Sarti's master had made 'grace' the only filter through which to represent nature<sup>9</sup>. Mazza's taste and style were shaped by his close association with the painters Lorenzo Pasinelli (1629-1700) and Donato Creti (1671-1749) in the Academy of Palazzo Fava. Much less influential from this point of view was his training as a sculptor with his father Camillo (1601-1672) and the Bolognese student of Algardi, Gabriele Brunelli (1615-1682). The profound harmony of his expressive and formal choices with those of contemporary Bolognese painting, in keeping with the taste of local patrons and intellectuals, ensured that Baroque sculptural decoration attained a novel prominent role in the city's churches and palaces.

Although Oretti himself recalls that he only «accepted few students», numerous and very diverse artists took their first steps in Mazza's workshop: some remained formally or expressively more faithful to the style of their master, such as Andrea Ferreri (1673-1744)<sup>10</sup>, Sebastiano Sarti called 'il Rodelone' (perhaps deceased in 1740)<sup>11</sup>, Paolo Reggiani (by whom no works survive, but who «much imitated his style»<sup>12</sup>); some took more autonomous and at times capricious paths, such

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<sup>4</sup> Samoggia 1983, pp. 256-272; Lenzi 1998; Righini 2005; Lorenzini 2015; Buitoni 2016, pp 105-107.

<sup>5</sup> Bergomi 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Bacchi 2016, pp. 32-35.

<sup>7</sup> Massari 2017a, pp. 655-656.

<sup>8</sup> BCAB, Oretti, ms. B133, fol. 29, henceforth *Appendix*, doc. 2.

<sup>9</sup> On Mazza, see the in-depth monographic study by Massari 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Riccòmini 1977, pp. 84-89; Giovannucci Vigi 2004, pp. 97-123.

<sup>11</sup> We do not know if he was related to Lorenzo Sarti. On Rodelone, see Riccòmini 1965, pp. 95-97.

<sup>12</sup> BCAB, Oretti, ms. B133, fol. 35. On Reggiani, by whom only the statue in the Bernini colonnade executed after his move to Rome survives, see Russo in *Le statue* 1987, pp. 114, 225.

as Angelo Gabriello Piò (1690-1769)<sup>13</sup>, Giovanni Battista Bolognini (1698-1760)<sup>14</sup> and Gaetano Lollini (d. 1769)<sup>15</sup>; yet others explored intonations that – we might say – describe as ‘expressionist’, as was true of Carlo Sarti (active especially in Romagna from the mid-1730s to the early 1770s)<sup>16</sup>; to conclude with Agostino Corsini (1688-1772), who worked in Rome and Naples<sup>17</sup>.

At present, the Bolognese archives do not seem to provide clues of help in shedding light on Lorenzo Sarti’s origins and early life. He is described as ‘Bolognese’ by the sources, but this adjective does not rule out an origin from the surrounding area. «Probably he was born between the eighties and the first half of the last decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and yet, in the absence of a patronymic, he cannot be identified with certainty among the four men of the same name whose birth in Bologna, in this period, is documented by the baptismal records of the cathedral. Similarly, his possible relations of kinship with other members of the local Sarti dynasty are not known»<sup>18</sup>. However, we do know that Sebastiano Sarti, called ‘il Rodelone’, was the uncle of Carlo Sarti<sup>19</sup>.

Regarding Lorenzo’s training, it may be helpful to quote some passages from Oretti’s manuscript in which the author, listing the artist’s works, recounts some anecdotes revealing the ties between teacher and student:

House of the Counts Favi at the church of the Madonna di Galliera, he made the Virgin and Child on the stairs in clay, and copied it from the original by Mazza that is in the Gallery.  
[...] Palazzo Grassi, in the apartment on the *piano nobile* he made four naked putti, two for each door, in the bedroom, in competition with his master Mazza, who made the rest<sup>20</sup>.

Although the works mentioned cannot currently be traced, these memoirs help to explain the nickname ‘Lorenzino del Mazza’, hinting at some interesting aspects of the close relation-

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<sup>13</sup> Riccòmini 1977, pp. 7-17, 50-69.

<sup>14</sup> Bolognini is not explicitly described by the sources as a pupil of Mazza, but rather of his father, the painter Giacomo Bolognini; however, since he also worked as a sculptor in stone, it is highly probable that he was also apprenticed in Mazza’s workshop, the only one of any importance in Bologna during Bolognini’s youth. On Bolognini, see Riccòmini 1977, pp. 91-93; Roli Guidetti 1973, pp. 154, 157-158; Baricchi 2016, pp. 146-148.

<sup>15</sup> Riccòmini 1977, pp. 81-83.

<sup>16</sup> We do not know if he was related to Lorenzo Sarti. On Carlo Sarti, see Pasini 1970; Massari 2017b.

<sup>17</sup> Riccòmini 1963; Ceschi Lavagetto 1983; Desmas 1998; Mampieri 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Massari 2017a, p. 655, citing the following archival documents: AGAB, *Registri battesimali della Cattedrale*, vol. 133, fol. 156v, vol. 134, fol. 118r, vol. 146, fol. 40v, vol. 148, fol. 171v. In part because of his name, very common in Bologna, it was impossible to identify him among the many men named Lorenzo Sarti listed in the Ufficio del Registro of the ASB (II series, vol. 244, fols 94v, 99; vol. 259, fol. 159; vol. 310, fol. 388; vol. 314, fol. 157; vol. 412, fol. 367; vol. 615, fol. 459; vol. 651, fol. 413; vol. 655, fol. 240; vol. 691, fol. 503; vol. 693, fol. 394; vol. 804, fol. 453; vol. 849, fol. 481; vol. 857, fol. 459; vol. 864, fol. 277; vol. 922, fol. 471; vol. 912, fol. 1; vol. 975, fol. 13).

<sup>19</sup> Pasini 1970, pp. 456, 493.

<sup>20</sup> Oretti in *Appendix*, doc. 2.



24. Giuseppe Maria Mazza, *Justice*, Bologna, Basilica of St Dominic (from Riccòmini 1972).



25. Giuseppe Maria Mazza, *St Marc*, Modena, Church of St Dominic (from Riccòmini 1972).

ship between the two artists: the desire to emulate, the dependence on models, the collaboration on worksites. So much so that Silvia Massari, considering the sculptor's youth, wondered if Sarti did not work principally alongside Mazza while the master remained active<sup>21</sup>. This would appear to be confirmed by the fact that only in the early 1730s, when Mazza had completed his last public works, did Sarti's career truly begin<sup>22</sup>.

Finally, it is again Marcello Oretti who notes the presence in Mazza's house

of four statuettes of the Evangelists; these are the models made by Lorenzino Sarti for those he executed in the church of San Pietro in Bologna<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Massari 2017a, p. 655.

<sup>22</sup> See this essay.

<sup>23</sup> BCAB, Oretti, ms. B109, fol. 73. On Sarti's *Evangelists* in the cathedral (1733-1734), see this essay.



26. Lorenzo Sarti,  
*St Luke*, Bologna,  
Cathedral.



Sarti developed his own manner by observing Mazza's mature style. Though no evidence of Sarti's youthful activity survives, if we examine the form of the robes worn by the figures depicted in his 1712 drawing, it is not difficult to find points of contact with some of the works that Mazza created between the 1690s and the early 18<sup>th</sup> century: the central figure in the



27. Lorenzo Sarti, *St Dionysius the Areopagite*, Ferrara, Cathedral.



28. Lorenzo Sarti, *St Ivo of Brittany*, Ferrara, Cathedral.

drawing wears a tunic whose shape is similar to that of Mazza's *Immaculate Conception* placed in the private chapel in Palazzo Grassi (Figs 22-23)<sup>24</sup>, while her mantle, opening out like a sail resembles that of Mazza's female figure on the main altar of the church of Santa Maria dei Poveri<sup>25</sup>; the cloak of the figure on the left is folded at her feet just like the edges of the angels' robes in Palazzo Grassi. That said, looking at the manner developed by Mazza during the 1720s and the 1730s (Figs 24-25, 29) we notice the same elegant warmth, the same refined, polished, and peaceable faces, the same flattened drapery folded at the bottom, often traversed by long furrows, that we will find in all of the works by Sarti to be analysed below, such as the

<sup>24</sup> On the chapel, see Massari 2013, cat. no. 100.

<sup>25</sup> On this work, see *ivi*, catt. nos. 46-50.

29. Giuseppe Maria Mazza,  
*Ecstasy of St Teresa*, Bologna,  
Palazzo Malvezzi.



angels in the Lambertini chapel (Basilica of San Domenico in Bologna, ca. 1730; Fig. 40), the *Evangelists* in Bologna cathedral (1733-1734; Figs 16, 26, 35), and the *Saints* in Ferrara cathedral (1755; Figs 27-28). To conclude, the undulating trains that sometimes embellished the garments modelled by Sarti, as in the *Faith* of Bologna cathedral or the *Angels* in Bologna and in Cento (1730s-1740s; Figs 39, 50, 57), are borrowed from an invention by Mazza – see the female figures in *Santa Maria dei Poveri* or the angel in *Palazzo Malvezzi*<sup>26</sup> (Fig. 29).

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<sup>26</sup> On this work, see Massari 2013, cat. 123.



## Early Works

In Santa Maria degli Occelletti he made the high altar and it was his first public project<sup>27</sup>.

Sarti's debut in Bologna is thus recalled in his manuscript biography. However, the description of his work in the now vanished church of the Uccelletti appears in the local guides quite late, in 1782: «high altar, the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary of fired clay and the ornament with plaster angels are by Lorenzo Sarti»<sup>28</sup>. Yet these projects must have been contemporaneous with or slightly later than the restorations undertaken in the church between 1700 and 1706<sup>29</sup>, since they are described in an unpublished inventory of the building dated 1717:

High altar / there is an image of the Blessed Virgin with the Child in her arms, holding a cross in her hand, all in painted terracotta. This altar is completely covered with sculptures, with two angels above holding a crown of golden stars above this image<sup>30</sup>.

By this time, the old *Virgin of the Rosary*, replaced with that by Sarti, had already been put in the sacristy: «a painted niche in which is set the image of the Blessed Virgin with the Child in her arms formerly on the main altar of the old church with its frontal covered with straw of different colours»<sup>31</sup> – the way in which these works were decorated is of extreme interest, using humble materials enlivened by colourful dyes.

The sculptor's date of birth should therefore be placed in the early 1680s at the latest, considering that an artist capable of managing a worksite of this type must have been at least in his twenties. At the same time, he was also entrusted with constructing the figures for an ephemeral structure for Holy Thursday (1712)<sup>32</sup> and the execution of two reliefs in gilded stucco for the chapel of the Rosary in the Bolognese Basilica of San Domenico depicting *St John the Evangelist* and *St Dominic* (1716; lost)<sup>33</sup>; I believe this confirms that at this date, though perhaps still tied to Mazza, Sarti had attained a fair degree of professional autonomy.

The aforementioned ephemeral structure survives in a drawing recently discovered by

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<sup>27</sup> Oretti in *Appendix*, doc. 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Pitture* 1782, p. 75.

<sup>29</sup> BCAB, Oretti ms. B30, fol. 74; Meluzzi 1969, p. 153.

<sup>30</sup> ASB, *Demaniale*, 6712/2, doc. 6, unnumbered folios.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> See this essay.

<sup>33</sup> Alce 1976, p. 14. In 1734 the ornamental stucco artist Giovanni Antonio Raimondi, a friend of Sarti, had to remake the medallion with the image of *St John* which had been damaged by damp (*Ibid.*, p. 15). Immediately afterwards, in the second half of the 1730s, both reliefs were definitively dismantled to leave room for the frescoes by the illusionistic perspective painter Giuseppe Orsoni (1691-1755), charged with restoring and completing the 17<sup>th</sup>-century frescoes by Angelo Michele Colonna and Agostino Mitelli (*Ibid.*, pp. 16-17).

Medori and Bergomi: to date, this is the oldest surviving document on the sculptor's activity (Fig. 22)<sup>34</sup>. The drawing is a design, or rather a *pensiero*<sup>35</sup>, for a Holy Thursday *Sepolcro* that was indeed erected on 24 March, 1712 in the church of Santi Sebastiano e Rocco on commission from the brotherhood of the same name. The drawing discovered matches the printed description of the structure of that year<sup>36</sup>.

The so-called *Sepolcri* were temporary structures erected in front of church altars, generally the high altars, for the evening of Holy Thursday<sup>37</sup>. Sacred plays and orations were performed around them. Then, during the service, the officiant moved the consecrated host from the tabernacle to the repository evoking the moment of Christ's entombment (hence the name *Sepolcro* given to the entire temporary creation). In Bologna, this tradition began with an ordinance issued by Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti in 1568 and lasted until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century: cyclically, every year, one church in each of Bologna's four city districts<sup>38</sup> was to erect a *Sepolcro* for the Holy Thursday service; the rotation involved sixty churches in all, but one of them always had to be the cathedral. The four buildings were connected to one another by a path created by lining the relevant streets with torches. The structure consisted of theatrical sets made of wood and fabric, fixed and moving mannequins, and artificial lighting. The structures created with these figures might represent biblical episodes (often accompanied by allegorical figures), or purely allegorical scenes, expressed by personifications of abstract concepts and based on edifying doctrinal themes. Actors or precants moved around the ephemeral structures; the words they spoke were printed together with descriptions of the structures in special pamphlets. The structures were designed and built by the workshops of the leading artists active in the city, becoming an important way for sculptors, architects, set designers and painters in various specialities to establish themselves professionally<sup>39</sup>.

The subject of Sarti's *Sepolcro* is the *Reconciliation Between God and the Guilty Man*. At the centre of an apse sits the *Divinity of the Crucifix*, surmounted by a cross with the symbol of the Trinity at the centre. On the left, *Mercy* breaks the bow and arrows, while on the right, *Peace* holds a scroll in her hands. At the centre is *Death* in chains<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> Oretti writes: «he flourished in 1749» (*Appendix*, doc. 2). As already clarified in Massari 2017a (p. 655), this statement cannot be true and we should ask what exactly Oretti meant by the verb 'to flourish', examining all the instances in which this term is used and verifying its reliability. Regardless, in our case the year 1749 seems much too late. See this essay.

<sup>35</sup> An 'idea' or a sketch.

<sup>36</sup> Bergomi 2004, pp. 219-222. The author transcribes the most significant portions of the description (p. 221, 229, note 5).

<sup>37</sup> The information on the *Sepolcri* recapitulated here is drawn from the studies by Bergomi 2004; Galeazzi 2018. Fairly similar were the *Addobbi* connected to the processions of the Blessed Sacrament, accompanied by art exhibitions: see Perini 1990, pp. 303-307, with preceding bibliography.

<sup>38</sup> The four districts are those of Porta Piera, Porta Stiera, Porta Procola and Porta Ravegnana.

<sup>39</sup> Massari 2017a (p. 655) is of a different opinion, considering this type of commission of 'modest prestige'.

<sup>40</sup> Cfr. Bergomi 2004, p. 221.



30. Sebastiano Sarti detto il Rodelone, *Pietà*, Bologna, Church of the Angeli Custodi.



31. Lorenzo Sarti, *Pietà*, Private Collection.

The artist uses a nervy and intermittent drawing style, water-colouring the surfaces with rapid brushstrokes – he does not seem to stray too far from the drawings of his master<sup>41</sup>. Though the figures are only roughly sketched, we can already see the sculptor's interest in balanced and elegant poses, as well as a certain taste for draperies that open out like a sail, ending in overlapping geometrical folds – compare, for example, the figure at the centre and the figure to the left in the composition with *Temperance* and *Faith* in stucco executed by Sarti on the counter-façade of the city's cathedral in the 1740s (Figs 6, 11, 56-57).

In addition to gaining experience on worksites, in these early years of his career Sarti inevitably worked for the market for domestic devotional terracottas<sup>42</sup>, of which we have an example in the *Pietà* signed and dated 1722, traced by Bacchi on the antique market (Figs 31-33).

The group is in a private collection and is just over half a metre high. Exceptionally, it still preserves an antique layer of polychromy, probably original, having escaped the often invasive practices of 20<sup>th</sup>-century restoration, responding to a taste for bare clay that became established during this century (the polychromy would appear to be original since the Virgin's veil is painted with a striped pattern of Middle Eastern origin that matches the sculptor's decoration of her Arabian garment, with the vertical embroideries over the breast executed in relief on the terracotta itself)<sup>43</sup>. A different fate befell the unpublished terracotta group of identical subject and similar

<sup>41</sup> Cfr. Perini 1992, p. 72, Fig. 3; Massari 2013, p. 770, unnumbered Fig.

<sup>42</sup> The study by Tumidei 1991 remains fundamental on this subject.

<sup>43</sup> Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, no work in terracotta (in relief or in the round) could have been consid-





32. Lorenzo Sarti, *Pietà*, Private Collection.



33. Lorenzo Sarti, *Pietà*, Private Collection.

height, to which ours seems to be indebted, created by Sebastiano Sarti called il Rodelone, now in the Bolognese church of the Angeli Custodi (Fig. 30). The inscriptions on the work confirm the identity of the artist, the date of execution, and the patron: «1700 li 10 marzo / Giulio Albornozzi / Rodolone fece». Albornozzi was a surgeon at the Bolognese hospital of Santa Maria della Morte<sup>44</sup> and had his ownership marked directly on the clay, as was customarily done in the same period by another Bolognese collector of terracottas, Count Alessandro Fava, patron of Giuseppe Maria Mazza<sup>45</sup>. This is a practice that says much about the new protagonists of terracotta collecting in Bologna in the Baroque period, and the importance they attached to proudly identifying the pieces in their collections, responding to careful choices and manifesting their taste<sup>46</sup>.

From the compositional point of view, the two *Pietàs* seem similar in the manner in which the body of Christ slumps between the legs of the Virgin; also identical is the way in which the Virgin supports her son's left arm with her hand. However, while in Rodelone's *Pietà* Christ's legs are extended and Mary's sorrowful face turns backwards, her lips open in a lament,

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ered completed by a workshop without a layer of naturalistic polychrome or monochrome paint – generally imitation bronze, rarely imitation marble. Cfr. also Lorenzetti 1991, pp. 70-73.

<sup>44</sup> Cfr. Laffi 1683, p. 530; Dolfi 1725, 513-517; Pastore 1998, p. 111; Barbagli 2000, p. 205.

<sup>45</sup> Tumidei 1991, p. 27, 48, note 31; Massari 2013.

<sup>46</sup> A phenomenon investigated by Tumidei 1991.

in Lorenzo Sarti's *Pietà* both the composition and the emotional mood are more muted: the Virgin turns her gaze downwards, directly towards her son, whose legs are folded up.

These two terracottas are further proof of the circulation of models within the Mazza workshop, or at least of an attitude of openness on the part of Lorenzo, who sought inspiration and reference points in the work of his closest colleagues.

### *A New Altar in the Bolognese Countryside*

During the third decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the worksite for the new Oratory of the Natività di Maria (1724-1732) was opened at Minerbio, built by the company of the Suffragio with the support of the Archpriest Giuseppe Bolognesi<sup>47</sup>. The name of the architect who designed the building is not known, although its style seems attributable to one of the most up-to-date followers of Giuseppe Antonio Torri (1655-1713): Francesco Maria Angelini (1680-1731) or, more probably, Alfonso Torreggiani (1682-1764)<sup>48</sup>. Also unknown is the name of the artist responsible for the stucco figures on the high altar, though they are stylistically compatible with the works of Lorenzo Sarti (Figs 34, 36-38)<sup>49</sup>. A large brick ancona painted in imitation marble houses a shelf of sinuous outline, and is framed by capricious volutes that

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<sup>47</sup> In 1724, the Archpriest Giuseppe Bolognesi (1665-1732), gave the company of the Suffragio a perpetual lease for a plot of land formerly belonging to the demolished church of Santa Maria Assunta del Ponte di Castello on which to construct the new building; the oratory of the Nativity still stands here today. The new structure was erected because Bolognesi was planning to restore and enlarge the old archpriest's church at Minerbio; this would inevitably destroy the old oratory, which was located between the church and its bell tower, in what was known as the 'old sacristy'. Zamboni 1855, pp. 113-115, and also pp. 54, 70-71, 77-78, 125.

<sup>48</sup> Consider the works of the 1730s mentioned by Torreggiani in his autobiography, in particular the high altar of the Oratorio dei Filippini in Bologna – also discussed in this text – and the interior of the church of San Rocco in Parma (Matteucci 1969, p. 55).

<sup>49</sup> Oretti mentions at least one commission for Sarti at Minerbio. He claims that in this small town he made «various altar decorations with figures in the main church» (*Appendix*, doc. 2; see also Biagi 1981, p. 87). The main church is the archpriest's church of San Giovanni Battista, rebuilt by Dotti from 1733 and completed in 1740 (cfr. Matteucci 1969, cat. no. 22; Saporì 2004 I, p. 25-33). Two of the side chapels are adorned with pairs of putti not in the style of Sarti, but closer to that of the circles of Piò. The decoration of the apsidal vault in the chancel was altered in 1811 to a project by Angelo Venturoli with the insertion of Mazza's stucco figures from the deconsecrated Bolognese church of San Gabriele and with the addition of new plaster decorations by Giacomo de Maria. The artist responsible for the two angels on the top of the altar is not known, but it is not Sarti and apparently not even a Bolognese sculptor.

Currently, it is impossible to ascertain the former presence of works by Sarti that have subsequently been lost. We can assume that Oretti (or his source) made a mistake, locating the sculptor's work «in the main church» instead of the Oratory of the Natività.

In future it will also be necessary to study the terracotta statue of the *Young Baptist* above the baptismal font of the archpriest's church in greater depth. It may also be by Sarti, dating to the late 1720s, given its apparent similarity to the stuccoes of the Oratory of the Natività. The face of the *Young Baptist* looks similar in construction to that of the angel on the top right, the locks of hair resemble each other, the drapery of the fur has points of contact with that of *Isaiah*.



34. Minerbio, Oratory of the Nativity, main altar (stuccoes by Lorenzo Sarti).





35. Lorenzo Sarti,  
*St John*, Bologna,  
Cathedral.

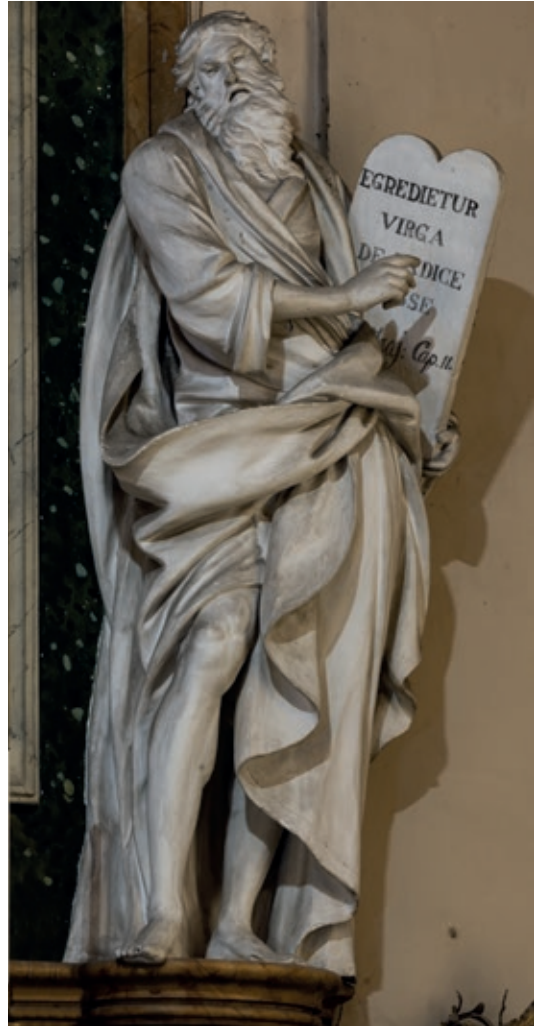
open up diagonally – the design is similar to that of Torreggiani’s altar in the Oratory of San Filippo Neri in Bologna (ca. 1730)<sup>50</sup>. On the large side corbels of the lower order stand two monumental statues depicting *David* and *Isaiah* that present in embryonic form many of the features evident in the *Evangelists* executed by Sarti in the chancel of the Cathedral of San Pietro in Bologna between 1733 and 1734, to which we will return below. Their noble and calm appearance is identical, the garments are rhythmically traversed by ample criss-cross draperies,

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<sup>50</sup> For Torreggiani’s work in the Oratorio dei Filippini, Urbini 2000, pp. 13-18.



36. Lorenzo Sarti, *David*, Minerbio, Oratory of the Nativity.



37. Lorenzo Sarti, *Isaiah*, Minerbio, Oratory of the Nativity.

sometimes crushed – compare the *David* in Minerbio and the *St John* in Bologna (Figs 35-36). The terminations of the draperies may pile up in soft undulating folds at the feet of the figures, as in the *David* in Minerbio and the *St Luke* in Bologna (Figs 26, 36), or end in long zig-zag hems – compare the Minerbio *Isaiah* with *St John* and *St Mark* in Bologna (Figs 35, 37). These drapery solutions can also be found in the 1712 drawing and in the *Pietà* signed and dated 1722 (seen from the side; Figs 32-33). Between the volutes of the altar top sit two angels with flaming wings and hairs, in an attitude not dissimilar to that of the angels in the Reliquary Chapel in the Basilica of San Domenico in Bologna (Figs 38-39).

### ***Working For Cardinals Lambertini and Boncompagni***

At around the same time, the old Dominican basilica in Bologna was being restored. Work was begun in 1727 by the Bolognese architect Carlo Francesco Dotti (1670-1759) and



38. Lorenzo Sarti, *Angels*, Minerbio, Oratory of the Nativity.

officially completed on 27 April 1732<sup>51</sup>. Over time, the Gothic building had been altered by discordant enlargements and the construction of chapels of differing sizes and styles; towards the end of the 1720s an architect was sought capable of giving the church a uniform and elegant appearance. Dotti won the commission by designing a taller space, harmonized by the light tones, full of windows and with an air of magnificence more in keeping with the hall of an aristocratic building than with a sacred building. After the completion of work on the structure and roof, work began in February 1728 to modernize the internal walls, starting with the counter-façade, decorated by the now elderly Mazza between the autumn of that year and the following February<sup>52</sup>. With this project the master passed the reins to the generations of sculptors who had grown up in his workshop, responsible between 1731 and 1732 for the stucco figures in the side chapels. Sarti worked in the Lambertini chapel and in the Reliquary chapel, Angelo Gabriello Piò was active in the Cavazza and Volta chapels on their respective altars, Gaetano Lollini prepared the figures in the Bolognini chapel<sup>53</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> Cfr. Matteucci 1969, pp. 31-32, 102-109. An unpublished invoice from the master mason Giovanni Battista Spinelli confirms that work on the walls was still under way in October 1732 (ASDB, file 12100, doc. 72). For further details on Dotti's restoration work in San Domenico see Alce 1969, where some ASDB folders consulted for this study are mentioned.

<sup>52</sup> Massari 2013, pp. 826-828, with preceding bibliography.

<sup>53</sup> Cfr. Riccòmini 1977, cat. nos 15, 81-82, 85-86, with preceding bibliography. The description of the stucco decorations in some of the side chapels, as well as the name of the respective artists, appear quite late in the local guidebooks, in 1782 (*Pitture* 1782, pp. 206-214). Here the *Angels* in the Volta chapel (dedicated to St Joseph) were attributed to Gaetano Lollini (*ibid.*, p. 213): an attribution to be re-examined. Riccòmini,



39. Lorenzo Sarti, *Angel*, Bologna, Basilica of St Dominic, Altare delle Reliquie.



Dotti's design for the decorations in the side chapels envisaged two larger than life-size angels seated on the broken pediments of the altars; with the exception of the two chapels in the transept, which, in addition to the side angels, were to have a central glory dotted with clouds, putti and cherubs. The Lambertini chapel by Lorenzo Sarti was of the first type: its two angels are indebted to Mazza's oeuvre for the solemnity of the forms, the composed pose and expressive tenor (Fig. 40). By contrast, the altar of the Reliquary chapel in the left transept allowed Sarti to experiment with more joyful atmospheres: putti and cherubs swim in a merry circle, and the two side angels, compared to those of the Lambertini chapel, become smaller and more slender, occupying the space more freely; the sculptor thus touches for a moment on the tones of the more 'Baroque' vein of Mazza's school, that represented by Piò and Lollini (Fig. 39).

By November 1731, another worksite was completed for which the sources indicate an intervention by Sarti<sup>54</sup>: the construction of the Boncompagni chapel in the Cathedral of San Pietro in Bologna<sup>55</sup>.

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in the 1977 volume, perhaps due to an oversight, attributes the *Angels* in the Volta chapel first to Lollini and then to Sarti (cat. nos 81, 85-86). Irreconcilable with the style of both sculptors, these two *Angels* are perfectly comparable to those by Piò in the Cavazza chapel.

<sup>54</sup> *Appendix*, doc. 1.

<sup>55</sup> Riccòmini 1977, cat. no. 53; Lenzi 1998, pp. 235-236.



40. Lorenzo Sarti, *Angel*, Bologna, Basilica of St Dominic, Lambertini chapel.

A century after the renovation of the nave and the chancel area<sup>56</sup>, in 1725 Cardinal Giacomo Boncompagni had commissioned the erection of the family altar dedicated to San Rocco, the design for which, according to Zanotti<sup>57</sup>, was sent from Rome by Camillo Rusconi (1658-1728), also active for the prelate in the Vatican in the design and execution of the *Funerary Monument of Pope Gregory XIII* (1715-1723)<sup>58</sup>. An architectural triumph in the Roman style, clad in coloured marbles – like the contemporary Aldrovandi chapel in San Petronio designed and executed by Torreggiani<sup>59</sup> –, the Boncompagni worksite was supervised by the Bolognese architect Giuseppe Antonio Ambrosi (1700-1764). The altarpiece was painted by Marcantonio Franceschini (1648-1729), also responsible for the frescoes, assisted by the illusionistic perspective painter Carlo Carpi. The corbel-bearing putti and those on the top of the ancona were

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<sup>56</sup> Lenzi 1998, pp. 234-235.

<sup>57</sup> *Le pitture* 1732, p. 44.

<sup>58</sup> Martin 2019 publishes a letter of 1726 discussing the organization of the journey to Bologna of the Roman stonecutter Marco Antonio de' Rossi, in charge of installing the marble ornaments in the chapel (p. 232, doc. 759). As Frank Martin points out, however, no mention is made in the letter of any involvement on the part of Rusconi. For the tomb of Gregory XIII, cfr. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-52, 88-89.

<sup>59</sup> Montefusco Bignozzi 1984, pp. 122-134.

sculpted in marble by Piò. Sarti executed the stucco ornament of the vault: mixtilinear cornices, scrolls, flowers and cartouches.

The true turning point for Sarti's career came a few years later, between 1733 and 1734, when he executed the four statues of *Evangelists* (Figs. 16, 26, 35) for the niches in the access pillars of the cathedral chancel<sup>60</sup>. This was not only a commission for a very important building in a position of high visibility. With this contract, the sculptor gained confirmation of the support of Cardinal Prospero Lambertini (after the prior commission for the *Angels* in the family chapel in San Domenico), becoming his favourite sculptor and thus subsequently involved in many of the worksites he sponsored in Bologna and its surroundings after his ascent to the papal throne with the name of Benedict XIV (1740)<sup>61</sup>. Pope Lambertini's tastes in art are well-known<sup>62</sup>: he was fond of the painting of the Bolognese school and the new Roman painting of tempered magnificence based on the practice of drawing and the study of classical statuary, performed in Rome by the last heir to the Carraccis, Agostino Masucci, and by Mancini, Costanzi, Batoni and Mengs; he also had a personal passion for the dreamy rarefactions of Subleyras<sup>63</sup>. The Bolognese equivalent of this group of artists, in Lambertini's eyes, were Donato Creti, Ercole Graziani junior and Antonio Rossi<sup>64</sup>. Also known are his critiques of some outcomes of the new Roman architecture of Fuga, Gregorini and Passalacqua, to the extent that when he wished to build the Quirinale coffee house for his private audiences, he did indeed make use of a design by Fuga, but for a pavilion of essential forms in the Doric order. Likewise, in the Lambertini worksites of Bologna the whimsical Torreggiani adopted a less inventive and flowery style than usual.

Given these premises, among the sculptors active in Bologna, Piò could certainly not figure among those favoured by the future pope, and it is unsurprising that he chose to place his trust in the more stately style of Lorenzo Sarti.

When Lambertini became archbishop of Bologna in April 1731, with the exception of the new Boncompagni chapel then being completed, much of the cathedral was still awaiting further work<sup>65</sup>. Lambertini was concerned above all with the erection of his own altar and tomb, entrusting their execution to the rising star Alfonso Torreggiani, then engaged for

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<sup>60</sup> Riccòmini 1977, cat. no. 87; Lenzi 1998, p. 236.

<sup>61</sup> The correspondence (1740-1758) between Lambertini and the general superintendent of the archbishop's mense in Bologna, Filippo Maria Mazzi, shows that the Pope was actively involved in many aspects of the running of the Bologna archdiocese (the letters are indexed in *Due carteggi* 1987, pp. 83-192). Cfr. Casanova in *Due carteggi* 1987, pp. 11-12, 18-25; Miani Belletti 1987.

<sup>62</sup> On Lambertini's taste in painting and architecture, we refer to the exemplary overview by Barroero 2020. For sculpture, see Michel 1998; Mampieri 2008; Desmas 2012, pp. 94-95.

<sup>63</sup> Cfr. Michel-Rosenberg 1987, pp. 92-93, 248-253, 332-343.

<sup>64</sup> Cfr. Biagi Maino 1998.

<sup>65</sup> For the 18<sup>th</sup>-century renovation of the cathedral, see Lenzi 1998, pp. 235-240, with documents and preceding bibliography and Lenzi 2008.



the Aldrovandi family in worksites that were among the most prestigious of contemporary Bologna: their chapel in the Roman style in San Petronio and the irreverent lacy facade of their palace in Via Galliera<sup>66</sup>. Soon the architect was also engaged on the rest of the building<sup>67</sup>. Among his first tasks was the renovation of the two pairs of 16<sup>th</sup>-century niches carved out in the main chapel in the pilasters of the triumphal arch, to render them proportionate to the grandiose structure of the new building. The old niches hosted four statues of *Evangelists* (now lost), executed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by the brothers from Reggio Emilia Bernardino and Vincenzo Bagnoli, but these were to be replaced with new monumental figures in stucco, entrusted to Sarti<sup>68</sup>. According to Oretti, the sculptor created the four statues using a drawing by Vittorio Maria Bigari<sup>69</sup>; however, the latter is never mentioned in the detailed worksite payments and reports. Perhaps an indication of the fact that he was aided by a drawing provided by a painter is the success with which Sarti controls the structure and proportions of the figures, still unstable in previous worksites (controlled in the *Angels* of the Lambertini chapel, more hesitant in the rendering of energetic figures like the *Angels* in the Reliquary chapel in San Domenico and in the oratory of Minerbio, almost clumsy in the Minerbio *David* and *Isaiab*). The slightly elongated appearance of the *Evangelists* may result from a proximity to the style of Bigari, a feature that reappears in Sarti's later statues for the cathedral of Ferrara (1745; Figs 27-28) and in the figures holding up coats of arms on the counter-façade of the cathedral church (1743-1747; Fig. 53)<sup>70</sup>.

Thanks to the chronicle of Giovanni Battista Beliootti we know that the sculptor began work on 2 December 1733, ending on 24 June<sup>71</sup>. The invoices and payment orders confirm these dates<sup>72</sup>, and indicate further work both to restore some ornamental pieces from the 17<sup>th</sup>-century worksite and to create *ex novo* the last decorative programmes, for a total fee of 1100 Bolognese *lire*<sup>73</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> Cfr. Pigozzi 2004, pp. 40-43.

<sup>67</sup> He is documented in the account books of the Fabbriceria di San Pietro from 1734 but must have been under contract at least from the previous year on the worksite of the Seminario entrusted to him by Lambertini. Cfr. Lenzi 2008, pp. 17-19.

<sup>68</sup> Riccòmini 1977, cat. no. 87; Cavazzoni ed. 1999, p. 14.

<sup>69</sup> BCAB, Oretti, ms. B30, fol. 5, cit. in Riccòmini 1977, cat. no. 87.

<sup>70</sup> On these works, see below in this text.

<sup>71</sup> BCAB, Beliootti, ms. B1163, fol. 153, cit. in Riccòmini 1977, cat. no. 87.

<sup>72</sup> AGAB, *Fabbrica di San Pietro in Bologna*, file ex-19, docs 450 (19 December 1733), 470 (15 January 1734), 503 (3 March 1734), 514 (26 March 1734), 526 (9 April 1734), 539 (21 April 1734), 556 (15 May 1734), 583 (8 June 1734), 591 (17 June 1734). The collection is first reported in Massari 2017a, p. 655.

<sup>73</sup> The justification of the balance of payments recapitulates as follows: «balance and full payment of all the invoices he issued for the main chapel of San Pietro Metropolitana for the four Evangelists, for the three scrolls and six wedges, the restoration and refurbishment of the column capitals and large cornices and rosettes» (AGAB, *Fabbrica di San Pietro in Bologna*, file ex-19, doc. 591, partially transcribed in Massari 2017a, p. 655). The scrolls are those on the keystones of the three arches on the high altar, while the wedges

## *Modenese Patrons: the Sorra and Levizzani Families*

The beginning of the relations between Lorenzo Sarti and the Counts Sorra, reported in the artist's biography<sup>74</sup>, should be dated to before the end of the 1730s.

The Sorra were a family of merchants from Modena to whom Rinaldo I d'Este had granted the title of counts in 1698, in particular to the four sons of Francesco (1629-1690): the first-born Andrea, Antonio, Valentino and Pietro. The documentation published by Marina Armandi shows that the Sorra brothers were very close and freely occupied the many properties inherited from their father; in 1739, on the death of the last surviving brother, Antonio, these all passed to Andrea's first-born son, Francesco Maria (1701-1766)<sup>75</sup>. In various ways, we are interested in the palace in Modena on the Canalchiaro near the cathedral square, the villa at Gaggio<sup>76</sup>, and the «houses in Bologna in the Parish of San Salvatore purchased by me [Antonio Sorra] from the Fontana brothers»<sup>77</sup>.

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are the six golden segments making up the outer face of the three arches, decorated with plant tendrils. The capitals are those of the six large fluted columns. The 'large cornices' and the rosettes may be those decorating the vault or those running along the drip moulding of the frieze.

<sup>74</sup> Oretti in *Appendix*, doc. 2.

<sup>75</sup> Armandi in *Villa Sorra* 1983, pp. 90, 113-114, with documentary appendix. For the genealogy of the Sorra family and the changes of ownership, see pp. 32-34, 86-93 in the same volume.

<sup>76</sup> In the countryside between Modena and Bologna.

<sup>77</sup> ASMo, *Archivio Notarile*, I deposit, folder 4741, file 1022, *Testamento di Antonio Sorra (4 July 1721 – 20 December 1723)*, partially transcribed by Armandi in *Villa Sorra* 1983, pp. 126-127. It should first be noted that Antonio Sorra speaks of 'houses' and not a 'house'. He writes in his own hand, leaving his properties to his nephew Francesco Maria, whose father Andrea had already died. Deanna Lenzi, however, publishes a passage from Ludovico Maria Montefani Caprara's manuscript on *Famiglie illustri bolognesi* in which no mention is made of the purchase from the Fontana family, but rather of the «palace that the [Sorra] family had purchased from the Bonasoni 'facing the flank of San Salvatore'» (BUB, ms. 4207, vol. 78, fol. 40, in Lenzi, *Villa Sorra* 1983, p. 44, note 18). The issue seems to be resolved thanks to Guidicini: «1688. On 26 February. Assignment made by Count Francesco Maria, son of the deceased Giacomo Segni, to Fabrizio Maria Fontana, the husband of his sister Maria Ginevra Segni, of the two houses at San Salvatore, neighbouring the properties of the Chiari and of Count Antonio Giuseppe Zambecari, via a small lane and the public streets, in other words of Porta Nuova and Vicolo Stallatici, for the sum of lire 15000 as a dowry, deed drawn up by Carlo Verri. It was later purchased by the Sora. Some have written that it later belonged to the Bolognetti and Bonasoni families, but this is patently false, according to the Cartari deed of 11 July 1554. It may be that it belonged to the Bonasoni after the Roncò family, but proof is lacking. The aforementioned houses were later demolished by Count Carlo Vincenzo Marescalchi to create the present garden [...]. Demolition began at the end of June 1818» (1870, p. 77). The Sorra palace was thus demolished. We refer to Monari 1990 for the 19<sup>th</sup>-century history of the new Palazzo Marescalchi.

The Sorra residence must therefore have been at the present number 7 on Via IV Novembre. In 1811, the plot was sold by the Sorra (by that date already Sorra-Munarini) to Ferdinando Marescalchi, who wished to expand his property, originally limited to the current number 5 (Monari 1990, pp. 270-271). In 1820, Girolamo Bianconi identified the Sorra-Munarini residence as the old Palazzo Belloni, on the corner of Via Barberia and Via de' Gombrotti (Bianconi 1820 II, p. 161). Thanks to Giuseppe Marinelli's research, we know that the property transaction took place in 1815, five years after the sale of the building in Via IV Novembre (Marinelli 2013, pp. 300-301). We do not know if the Sorras, already in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, owned

Oretti's manuscripts repeatedly stress the relationship between Sarti and the Sorra family. «Some sculptures» are reported in the Bolognese properties together with unidentified works in their properties in the city of Modena. It is also specified that: «At Manzolino [i.e. Gaggio], for Count Sora, he made various statues»<sup>78</sup>. Unfortunately, no work by the sculptor for the Sorra family seems to have survived, unless we wish to identify the three busts of the *Seasons* (discussed above by Bacchi) as among the eight listed in the 1766 inventory of the Modenese properties of Francesco Maria Sorra, kept in the room of a residence that is currently unidentifiable:

Building called La Certosa, in the building, separate from the Lodge, in the ground-floor room [...] eight half-bust statues painted in green with their respective pedestals and made of fired clay<sup>79</sup>.

The Sorra brothers must have met Lorenzo Sarti through Alfonso Torreggiani, who in the early 1730s had renovated the Via Galliera residence of the princesses Benedetta and Amalia d'Este<sup>80</sup> under the supervision of Count Valentino Sorra, a churchman, gentleman of the princesses' bedchamber and superintendent of their interests in the Bolognese area<sup>81</sup>.

At the time, the Count lived with his brothers in their palace in Bologna and, more often, in Gaggio. Here, from the beginning of the 1710s, the construction of a sumptuous country retreat was planned with a marvellous garden and many plots of agricultural land around the edges; today only a small portion of the park survives together with the main residential building (probably to a design by Giuseppe Antonio Torri completed by Francesco Maria Angelini)<sup>82</sup>. The worksite for the entire property lasted for several decades after the construction of the central building. It was initially supervised by Count Antonio Sorra (1666-1739) and, on his death, by his beloved nephew Francesco Maria, perhaps already at his uncle's side since he came of age (in about 1726).

Nothing is left of the villa's sculptural decorations<sup>83</sup>, but the inventory of 1766, among other things, notes the presence in a warehouse of «a gigantic statue of terracotta in 14 pieces

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one or more plots bordering Palazzo Belloni and simply decided to enlarge it with the appropriation of 1815.

<sup>78</sup> Oretti in *Appendix*, doc. 2.

<sup>79</sup> ASMo, *Archivio Fròsini*, file 113, *Inventario dell'eredità modenese del fu signor conte Francesco Maria Sorra dell'anno 1766*, fols 136v-137r. Prior to the most recent restoration of the three busts, the latter presented traces of a dark patina probably imitating bronze.

<sup>80</sup> Matteucci 1969, pp. 2, 54.

<sup>81</sup> Armandi in *Villa Sorra* 1983, p. 90.

<sup>82</sup> Cfr. Lenzi in *ivi*, pp. 32-45.

<sup>83</sup> Except for a wooden crucifix painted in imitation bronze of poor workmanship, now in the storerooms of the Gallerie Estensi of Modena (not inventoried).





41. Anonymous painter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, *View of the gardens of Villa Sorra in Gaggio, Modena*, Gallerie Estensi (deposit).



42. Domenico Vandelli, *Map of Modena* (detail), 18<sup>th</sup> century, Modena, Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, C.G.A.6.B..

with a bow and its iron arrow for a perspective to be placed at the top of the garden, under the mountain»<sup>84</sup>.

In one of the six canvases with views of the garden, dated by critics to between the 1730s and 40s<sup>85</sup>, once part of the interior decorations of the villa and now in the storerooms of the Gallerie Estensi<sup>86</sup>, we see the large niche below the artificial hill with a monumental statue inside; however, it presents the attributes of a *Flora* (Fig. 41). Was this a liberty on the part of the painter? Perhaps there was more than one monumental statue? Or – this is merely a hypothesis – depending on the time of year, or on specific occasions, the attributes of the sculptures may have been changed, passing from a bow with an arrow to a garland of flowers. According to Marina Armandi, the monumental figure was made in several pieces so that it could be placed in storage during the winter<sup>87</sup> (and also fired and transported more easily from the kiln or the artist's studio to the patron's Villa<sup>88</sup>). Alongside this proposal, we should contemplate the hypothesis that sculptures such as these, in spectacular contexts like the Sorra garden – or the Baroque garden in general –, were sometimes considered by the patron to be moveable and interchangeable, to create constantly evolving theatrical solutions.

The same method of assembly was used for at least one of the three statues still in the Levizzani palace on Canalchiaro in Modena (separated from that of the Sorras only by the Forni palace, belonging to the family of Levizzani's wife; Fig. 42), enlarged and renovated by

<sup>84</sup> ASMo, *Archivio Fròsini*, file 113, *Inventario dell'eredità bolognese del fu signor conte Francesco Maria Sorra dell'anno 1766*, fols 44v.

<sup>85</sup> Landi in *Villa Sorra* 1983, pp. 72-73.

<sup>86</sup> Not inventoried.

<sup>87</sup> Armandi in *Villa Sorra* 1983, p. 90.

<sup>88</sup> These are at least two of the reasons that compelled Sarti to operate in this same way for the statues of the Levizzani. See below in this text.





43. Lorenzo Sarti, *Hercules*, Modena, Palazzo Levizzani.





44. Lorenzo Sarti, *St Jerome*, Bologna, Cathedral, counter-façade.

Torreggiani between 1741 and 1743<sup>89</sup>. Though not mentioned by the sources, these sculptures, currently unattributed, should be ascribed to Lorenzo Sarti.

They are a *Hercules* accompanied by two female figures of obscure iconography, perhaps *Amazons* or *Hesperides*, both dressed in garments and drapes held up by belts; one of them held a lost object in the left hand and is flanked by a putto, the other holds in the left hand an item of jewellery in the shape of an *ouroboros* (Figs. 10, 13, 43, 45, 47-48)<sup>90</sup>. The courtyard has undergone various alterations over time and three sides of its portico have been closed (Fig. 46). The *Hercules* is still on the north side of the courtyard in its original position, the only side still open, within a complex and sinuous niche more similar to a church altar. The figure with the

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<sup>89</sup> On the sources, Matteucci 1969, p. 55. For an in-depth study of the architectural history of the palace, Martinelli Braglia 1983 III, pp. 150-153; Bertuzzi 2000 II, pp. 73-84.

<sup>90</sup> Due to their current placement, it was impossible to obtain a complete photograph of the *Figure with Putto* and the *Figure with Ouroboros* in Palazzo Levizzani.

*ouroboros* is also still in its original niche, of less complex but equally whimsical workmanship, on the east wall, now inside a space that houses business premises. It is not known, however, in which part of the courtyard the figure with the putto was placed before it being put in its current position, on the south side of the portico, free-standing, with its face towards Canalchiaro and back facing the internal courtyard; it is not worked on the rear and must certainly have stood in a niche like the others.

The unpublished correspondence dated to between April and October 1741 between Torreggiani and the owner of the palace, Marquis Ippolito Levizzani, sheds light on some issues concerning the statues, but not on the name of the artist or even their locations<sup>91</sup>. Their total number is given: there were five<sup>92</sup>. Since the *Hercules* was in the middle of the north wall, the other four sculptures were likely arranged symmetrically around it, along the perimeter of the courtyard, inside niches identical to that which still hosts the figure with the *ouroboros*.

The letter shows that, in the Marquis's stead, Torreggiani managed relations with the Marquis. This is at least one of the reasons that forced Sarti to operate in this same way for the statues of the Levizzani «statuarist» (never named) in Bologna, reassuring his patron that he kept «with [him] the well-known sheet for the arrangement of the attitudes and clothing of said statues». This confirms the existence of an iconographical programme to be respected, perhaps devised by the Marquis himself.

From the first letter onwards, another figure of relevance to us also appears: the «cavaliere Sora»<sup>93</sup>. It is he who helps Torreggiani to negotiate the sculptor's fee, about which Levizzani had complained<sup>94</sup>. The «cavaliere Sora» must be Count Francesco Maria, who is also given this name in his *post-mortem* inventory (1766)<sup>95</sup>. He clearly has a degree of familiarity with the sculptor and may have recommended him to his friend Levizzani<sup>96</sup> precisely because he had already employed him for the estate at Gaggio. This hypothesis would appear to be corroborated by the letter of 7 August 1741 sent by Torreggiani to Levizzani, where the Sorras are explicitly mentioned in a discussion of the means of transporting the sculptures from Bologna to Modena:

In the meantime, I beg you to inform yourself on how to bring the said statues here, for which two wagons are required with straw inside to wrap up the aforementioned statues, so that they arrive intact, so please inform yourself about what the Sora gentlemen did so you can do likewise<sup>97</sup>.

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<sup>91</sup> *Appendix*, docs. 3.1-3.7.

<sup>92</sup> *Ivi*, doc. 3.5.

<sup>93</sup> The knight Sora. *Appendix*, doc. 3.1.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> In 1741 (the year of the correspondence) he was the only living male heir to the Sorra family.

<sup>96</sup> It is worth remembering that the Sorra and Levizzani families were 'neighbours' in Modena (see Fig. 42). We will see that Marquis Levizzani was also linked to the Este court and the city of Bologna (see this essay).

<sup>97</sup> *Appendix*, doc. 3.5.



45. Lorenzo Sarti, *Hercules* (detail),  
Modena, Palazzo Levizzani.

The thick layers of whitewash currently present on the three statues preclude a detailed analysis of their materials. In any case, as with the construction of the Sorra *Diana*, the *Hercules* seems to consist of large terracotta blocks stacked one on top of the other. For this reason, Sarti was forced to avoid any projections in the silhouette: the figure is restricted, its limbs held tight against the torso. However, the fluttering drapes around *Hercules'* arms appear to be made of stucco. They were necessarily executed *in situ*:

said statuarist tells me that, when he arrives here to put in place the aforementioned statues, he is keen to position the Hercules in the niche, as it seemed to him that work on it was behind when he came to pay his respects to Your Excellency<sup>98</sup>.

Here we see Sarti's stylistic traits: an elongated figure, slightly loose limbed, with a face that has a crushed, almost concave, profile and placid expression; the crossed draperies open out laterally like a fan or end in ample undulating edges. The construction of the body and the organization of the musculature is very similar to that attempted by the sculptor in the *St. Jerome* of the counter-façade of Bologna cathedral (ca. 1747; Figs 43-44).

The two female figures move in space more freely. In this case it is thus more likely that only the central core of the statue (bust and face) was made of clay and sent for firing to the

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<sup>98</sup> *Appendix*, doc. 3.5.



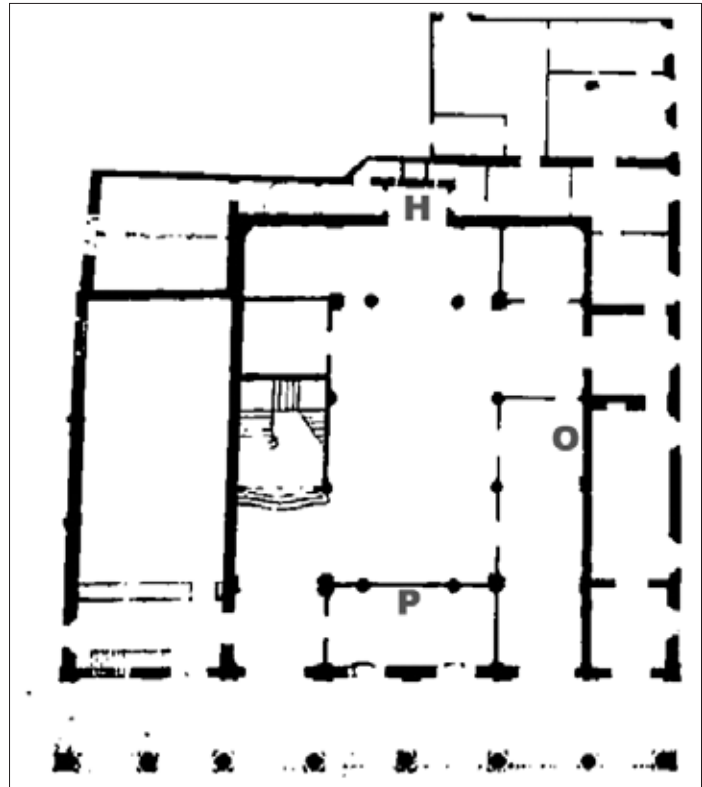
46. Map of the current conformation of the ground floor of the Levizzani Palace (from Bertuzzi 2000 II) here adapted with the addition of the statues position.

Legend:

H) Hercules;

O) Figure with ouroboros;

P) Figure with the putto.



«fornasaro»<sup>99</sup> of Bologna – as confirmed by one of Torreggiani’s letters<sup>100</sup> –, while other protruding parts, such as the arms and drapes, must have been executed *in situ* using reinforced plaster.

The only figure legible today is that flanked by the putto. Some features of Sarti’s style are apparent: the ample, slightly crushed central drape and the garments heaped at the foot of the statue – as in the *Evangelists* of the cathedral church or in the left-hand angel in the Reliquary chapel–; the draperies that fall sinuously, like those of *St Jerome* in Bologna cathedral (Figs 44, 47); the sleeves opening out like a sail – as in the angels in San Domenico and San Biagio – (Figs 39-40, 47, 49-50, 59); the ribbon in the hair terminating in an undulating edge as in the mantle of the *Pietà* of 1722 and in the headdress of the *Winter* (Figs 13-14, 33); the shape of the face and its imperturbable expression – see the face of the left-hand angel in the transept of San Biagio at Cento (Figs 10, 49).

Finally, it is worth discussing the patron of these works, Marquis Levizzani, a figure who has escaped the notice of modern studies, whilst his brother Giuseppe (1688-1754) and son Carlo (1722-1802), both cardinals, are better known<sup>101</sup>. Yet Ippolito must have been a prominent figure in the Modena of Francesco III d’Este.

<sup>99</sup> The kiln owner. For more on this subject, see Lorenzetti 1991, pp. 68-70.

<sup>100</sup> *Appendix*, doc. 3.6.

<sup>101</sup> On Cardinal Giuseppe Levizzani, see Pasztor 1986 and Paviolo 2021a. On Cardinal Carlo Levizzani, Moroni 1846 XXXIX, pp. 79-80; Paviolo 2021b.



47. Lorenzo Sarti, *Figure with a putto*, Modena, Palazzo Levizzani.

48. Lorenzo Sarti, *Figure with ouroboros* (detail), Modena, Palazzo Levizzani.



The Levizzani were connected to the Este family from at least the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Giovanni Francesco, Ippolito's grandfather, was «Gentleman and director of the antechamber of the Most Serene Prince Rinaldo I»<sup>102</sup>, and in 1682 had acquired from him the Este country estate of Rivalentella<sup>103</sup>.

Regarding Ippolito's career at court, a printed source of 1753 describes him as «now Master of the Chamber of his Serene Highness»<sup>104</sup>, but his personal relationship with the prince and later Duke Francesco III must have gone back at least twenty years, since in the unpublished correspondence between the two, perhaps incomplete, the first letter is dated 24 December

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<sup>102</sup> *Festeggiandosi dal marchese Giambattista Cortese in propria casa con pubbliche rimostranze la felice esaltazione al cardinalato di Monsignor Giuseppe Livizzani* 1753, p. LIX [henceforth *Festeggiandosi* 1753]. Rinaldo I was cardinal from 1686, and Duke from 1695.

<sup>103</sup> The estate was later reacquired by the ducal family in 1724 for the gilded exile of Francesco III and his wife Princess Charlotte Aglae d'Orleans. At that time the owner was our Ippolito Livizzani. See Cadoppi 2007.

<sup>104</sup> *Festeggiandosi* 1753, p. LX.



1728 and is extremely intimate in tone<sup>105</sup>. The letters cover a period from 1728 to 1736. They were sent to Levizzani when the latter was in Bologna and suggest that at the time the Marquis had some sort of diplomatic role: among other things, he was asked to act as an intermediary on behalf of the duke with the cardinal legate of Bologna<sup>106</sup> and to maintain contact with the Modenese embassy to Rome<sup>107</sup>. In 1740 he is attested as administrator of the payments of the Ducal Chamber to sculptors active at the estate of Rivalta<sup>108</sup>, while in a document dated 1748 Livizzani is appointed «Councillor of State»<sup>109</sup>.

It is now clearer how between the 1730s and the early 1740s Lorenzo Sarti managed to fill a gap in Modena's patronage<sup>110</sup>, gaining the trust of some of the families closest to the ducal court and even working for the duke himself, as Oretti recalls: «in Modena he worked for the Duke» (Rinaldo I or Francesco III?)<sup>111</sup>. A fairly reticent mention on the part of the historian, of little help in identifying documentary evidence or a surviving work. Sarti is not documented among the numerous sculptors who adorned the gardens of Rivalta<sup>112</sup>. We have seen that at least in 1740 Marquis Levizzani was involved in managing the worksite. If Sarti did contribute to the sculptural decoration of Rivalta, this certainly did not happen before 1741, the year of his work at the Levizzani house, since in the aforementioned correspondence between Torreggiani and the Marquis, the latter seems unfamiliar with the sculptor. Sarti may have been involved

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<sup>105</sup> «Most illustrious lord Marquis, with your lordship's letter of the 4th of the present month we receive the good wishes that you desired to send us for the Holy Christmas, and we are certainly fully persuaded of your affections and the good will that you express towards us. We thank you for this and wish to make known to you our partial feelings towards you on whatever favourable occasion may present itself. We will be happy to receive the cart of [gap in the letter] sent by the agent Vecchi for us when it arrives; and we certainly wish you every happiness warmly and with all sincerity. At Your Illustrious Highness' pleasure, Francesco Maria d'Este III. Genoa, 24 December 1728» (ASMo, *Archivi Privati*, Archivio Bernardi-Sanson-Levizzani, file 279, unnumbered folios. The Duke's letters are always sent from Reggio or Rivaltella, with the exception of that cited, from Genoa, and another from Paris, dated 28 December 1736).

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, letter not dated, unnumbered folios. The letter must date to December 1730 or January 1731. We must remember that on 1 January 1731 Cardinal Girolamo Grimaldi succeeded Cardinal Giorgio Spinola in the Legation of Bologna (Grimaldi was later mentioned in a letter of 4 December 1731).

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, letter of 26 February 1731, unnumbered folios.

<sup>108</sup> Baricchi 2016, p. 147.

<sup>109</sup> The document is a license exempting the marquis from customs duties. ASMo, *Archivi Privati*, Archivio Bernardi-Sanson-Levizzani, file 279, unnumbered folios.

<sup>110</sup> Only further research can shed new light on sculpture in Modena in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Modena-born Antonio Traeri (1669-1732) had left no student in the city capable of continuing his legacy, and as had been the case for almost all of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Riccòmini 1972, pp. 13-25), during the 18<sup>th</sup> century Modena hosted a Babel of 'foreign' styles; a trend interrupted only by the arrival in 1792 as professor of sculpture at the Accademia Atestina of Michelangelo Borghi (1742-1813) from Carpi (near Modena), a student of Giovanni Antonio Cybei (Carrara, 1706-1784) (cfr. Silingardi 2008, p. 214).

<sup>111</sup> Oretti in *Appendix*, doc. 2.

<sup>112</sup> See Baricchi 2016. Among the Bolognese artists, active here were Bolognini and Antonio Schiassi (1718-1777), a pupil of Piò, active in Bologna, Sassuolo and Reggio Emilia for the Emilian aristocracy and on church buildings (Riccòmini 1977, pp. 77-81).



49. Lorenzo Sarti, *Angel* (detail), Cento, Collegiata of St Biagio, left transept.

in the decoration of some other country retreat that no longer survives, or he may have participated in the modernization of the rooms on the *piano nobile* of the Ducal Palace overlooking the square, begun by Rinaldo I and completed by Francesco III by 1744, the year in which the *Descrizione delle pitture esistenti in Modena nell'Estense Ducal Galleria* was published to celebrate the new display of the paintings in the renovated apartments<sup>113</sup>. The fire of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and the 19<sup>th</sup>-century transformations destroyed many of these decorations.

### ***Consecration During the Papacy of Pope Benedict XIV***

During the 1740s, Sarti experienced his true moment of consecration. He was asked to work, again alongside Torreggiani, on three other Lambertini worksites: the renovation of the

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<sup>113</sup> Bentini 1987.

collegiate church of San Biagio in Cento; the erection of the new counter-façade of the cathedral; the restoration of the high altar of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Bologna. The letters sent by the pope to Filippo Maria Mazzi (general superintendent of the Archbishop's Mense, of the Fabbrica di San Pietro, and agent of the Lambertini family<sup>114</sup>) date Sarti's work on the high altar of the collegiate church of Cento to between March and November 1742<sup>115</sup>: a monumental frame, twisting and full of curlicues, holds the canvas by Antonio Rossi (who had already worked with Sarti in the Lambertini chapel in San Domenico), surmounted at the top by an imperious *God the Father* accompanied by two *Angels* (Fig. 50). The reconstruction of the collegiate church had been started in the early 1730s on the orders of Archpriest Girolamo Baruffaldi<sup>116</sup>, best known as the author of the *Vite de' pittori e scultori ferraresi*, thanks to the collections established by the municipality of Cento, but above all thanks to the funding guaranteed by Prospero Lambertini while he was archbishop and later pope<sup>117</sup>. By 1744, Sarti had also finished the two *Angels* on the top of the altar of the Crucifix in the left transept<sup>118</sup> (Figs 49, 59), where he reworked the poses of his *Angels* in San Domenico in a more successful way. Finally, in about 1749, he executed the two putti on the altar of San Marco, the third in the right-hand aisle<sup>119</sup>.

At the same time, the sculptor was engaged in the worksite of the cathedral of Bologna.

Following the demolition of the cathedral façade and the 15<sup>th</sup>-century portico, in September 1743 the construction of a new entrance bay was started, whose sculptural decorations were executed by Lorenzo Sarti (for the counter-façade he created the *Faith* and *Temperance* on the portal, the *Doctors of the Church* in the side niches, the *Abundance* and the *Church* next to the Lambertini coat of arms in the triumphal arch). Giovanni Antonio and Gaetano Raimondi assisted Sarti with the ornamental parts, that is the frieze that, in continuity with that of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, runs along the bay<sup>120</sup>.

In contrast to the thorough documentation that survives on Sarti's work in the chancel, in this case we are guided only by the date of the beginning and end of the works (1743-1748), and by a letter of 15 March 1747 sent by the pope to Mazzi which says: «we approve that you

<sup>114</sup> Miani Belletti 1987, p. 245.

<sup>115</sup> BUB, mss. 4331, vol. 1, fols 112-113, 119, 153, partially transcribed and analysed in Lorenzini 2005, pp. 117-118 (for Sarti's work on the altar of the Crucifix and that of San Marco, see also this essay). Lambertini's correspondence is indexed, but not transcribed, in *Due carteggi* 1987.

<sup>116</sup> The letters mentioned above delimit the sculptor's intervention chronologically, but his name is never explicitly given. It was Girolamo Baruffaldi who reported the name of Lorenzo Sarti in his *Visita delle pitture della terra di Cento* (ed. 2007, pp. 38, 43).

<sup>117</sup> For further information, Samoggia 1983; Righini 2005.

<sup>118</sup> For the dates, Stanzani 2005, pp. 96-97.

<sup>119</sup> For chronological support, Righini 2005, p. 71.

<sup>120</sup> Riccòmini 1977, cat. no. 88. For the worksite of the cathedral entrance bay, for the work on the façade and the counter-façade, see Lenzi 1998, pp. 238-240.



have had the four main Doctors of the Holy Church executed for the remaining niches»<sup>121</sup>. The activity of the sculptors must therefore be comprised within this period.

Interestingly, in this commission Sarti's imagination seems to light up, with controlled yet dramatic results. Already in the *Angels* of the Reliquary chapel in San Domenico the sculptor had experimented with open and slender poses, but the result was still fairly superficial. A further development can be seen, again with regard to the composition of the figures, in the *Evangelists* of the cathedral and later in Cento. But now, in some figures, Sarti seems to successfully render the idea of a sudden movement, a jerk, so that the figures seem not only to occupy space but also time. This is accompanied by a new quest for psychological depth. *Faith* settles with difficulty on her volute, while *Temperance* twists around on herself (Figs 6, 58)<sup>122</sup>. *St Jerome* is absorbed in an emotional meditation (Figs 17, 44). *St Gregory* turns around abruptly to listen in concentration to the voice of the Holy Ghost (Fig. 51). A frowning *St Ambrose* vehemently waves his shield, symbolizing his incisive sermons (Fig. 52).

As Silvia Massari notes, the design of *St Jerome* and *St Augustine* imitate the two bronzes on the same subject created by Mazza for the high altar of the Basilica of the Redentore in Venice (1705-1707)<sup>123</sup>. This seems to be further proof of the strong link between teacher and student already stressed by the sources, as well as evidence of the transmission of drawings or models<sup>124</sup>.

More elongated in shape, more eccentric in their drapery are the figures at the sides of the Lambertini coat of arms (Fig. 53), whose style, moreover, does not seem dissimilar to that of the two angels holding up the Ludovisi coat of arms in the chancel arch (Fig. 54): in my opinion, a restoration by Lorenzo Sarti of the angels executed in 1622 by Giovanni Tedeschi<sup>125</sup>. We see the same rendering of the faces and the same crushed draperies, with parallel lines arranged in a parabola. By contrast, the *Ludovisi Angels* lack the many fluttering draperies that surround the garments of the *Abundance* and the *Church*, betraying what seems to have been a work on restraint, perhaps taking advantage of the shapes of Tedeschi's old figures.

Finally, between 1748 and 1751, the sculptor «adorned the altar and made the putti with

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<sup>121</sup> BUB, mss. 4331, vol. 3, fol. 95.

<sup>122</sup> The drawing with the design of the portal on which the two allegories rest, published by Lenzi 2008 (p. 33, Fig. 20), cannot be attributed with certainty to Torreggiani – as Lenzi explained in her essay. The two allegories look very different from the definitive ones. We must add that Sarti's drawing style cannot be recognized in the sheet.

<sup>123</sup> Massari 2017a, p. 656. For Mazza's small bronzes see Massari 2013, cat. no. 105-113.

<sup>124</sup> Mazza's will has never been traced. Cfr. Massari 2013, pp. 217-219.

<sup>125</sup> The payments to Giovanni Tedeschi (d. 1641) for the two lost *Angels* were discovered by Collari 2020, pp. 53-54, 96 (AGAB, *Miscellanea vecchie*, folder 705, bundle XII). Moving the scaffolding from one side of the church to the other, in an area renovated only ten years earlier, is no small matter; however, I think it is less likely that Tedeschi's angels were remade by Sarti during his work in the chancel (1733-1744), as traces of this operation would have been found in the detailed accounts of those years; these reports are lost for the dates analysed here (1743-1747).



50. Lorenzo Sarti, *God the Father and Angles*, Cento, Collegiata of St Biagio, main altar.









51. Lorenzo Sarti, *St Gregory* (detail), Bologna, Cathedral, counter-façade.

all the ornaments of the main chapel»<sup>126</sup> of Santa Maria Maggiore, completely lost in the subsequent 19<sup>th</sup>-century renovations<sup>127</sup>.

In the turmoil of these years, the sculptor also had the opportunity to accept at least two commissions in Ferrara<sup>128</sup>. In the church of Santa Caterina da Siena he erected four stucco statues (lost) inside the chapel of the Blessed Lucia of Narni<sup>129</sup>, while in the cathedral, at the sides of the altar of San Giorgio are two stucco statues depicting *St Dionysius the Areopagite* and *St Ivo of Brittany* (Figs 27-28). Though the contract of August 28, 1745, discovered by Vincenzo Caputo<sup>130</sup>, stipulated by Sarti with the College of Doctors of the Law *utriusque juris*, makes it possible to ascribe both statues to him with relative certainty – Oretti agrees<sup>131</sup> –, in 1773 Giuseppe Baruffaldi writes:

<sup>126</sup> Oretti in *Appendix*, doc. 2.

<sup>127</sup> Buitoni 2016, pp. 105-107.

<sup>128</sup> On 18<sup>th</sup>-century sculpture in Ferrara, see Giovannucci Vigi 2004 pp. 97-173, on Sarti, pp. 9, 142, 179.

<sup>129</sup> Oretti in *Appendix*, doc. 2; Barotti 1770, p. 78; Scalabrini 1773, p. 88.

<sup>130</sup> Caputo 1953, p. 78.

<sup>131</sup> «Ferrara, in the Cathedral you see by his hand two statues of St Dionysius the Areopagite, the other of St Ivo the Lawyer, which are in the niches of the chapel of San Giorgio, middle crossing» (Oretti in *Appendix*, doc. 2). Barotti 1770 (p. 43) is unhelpful since his description of the cathedral is in this regard quite

52. Lorenzo Sarti,  
*St Ambrose*, Bologna,  
Cathedral, counter-  
façade.





53. Lorenzo Sarti, *Allegory of the Abundance and Allegory of the Church with the Lambertini coat of arms*, Bologna, Cathedral, counter-façade.

The statue in the niches of St Dionysius the Areopagite was modelled by Filippo Suzzi, a Ferrarese sculptor and potter, and the other of St Ivo of his own invention by Lorenzo Sarti from Bologna at the expense of the College of Doctors of the Laws of this City<sup>132</sup>.

The statues, however, express a highly coherent style, compatible with Sarti's various experiments discussed above: the faces with a concave profile; the crushed draperies that intersect or cross the centre of gravity of the figures, ending in undulating lines or soft clusters of folds. The dramatically declamatory pose of *St Dionysius* is in line with Sarti's contemporary psychological experiments in Bologna in the *Doctors of the Church*, especially *St Ambrose*, with whom he also shares the sharp facial features (Figs 27, 52). If Filippo Suzzi did assist in the execution of the *St Dionysius*, he must have adhered strictly to Sarti's model; both the

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superficial: «the 34 stucco or plaster statues placed in as many niches in the pillars that divide the aisles, and at the sides of the altars are works by Pietro Turchi, Giuseppe Ferreri, and Lorenzo Sarti of Bologna, finished in the year 1745». For unknown reasons, this sentence is copied by Oretti and added to the end of his biographical vignette on Sarti (see Oretti in *Appendix*, doc. 2).

<sup>132</sup> Scalabrini 1773, p. 18. Scalabrini's attribution is taken up in the biography of Suzzi by Cittadella 1783 IV, pp. 287-288.





54. *Angels with the Ludovisi coat of arms*, restored by Lorenzo Sarti (?), Bologna, Cathedral, chancel.

contract and the work itself seem to confirm this<sup>133</sup> – see the extreme similarity of the draperies in the *St Dionysius* in Ferrara and in the *St Mark* in the chancel of Bologna cathedral (Figs 16, 27).

Many lost works are mentioned by the sources of which no further documentary evidence seems to survive: the decoration of the now vanished church dedicated to the Madonna di San Luca at Argenta, the statue of St Joseph in the Bolognese monastery of the same name (demolished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and rebuilt), the statues of St Francis of Paola and the Blessed Giacinta Marescotti in the now disappeared church of San Martino della Croce (Bologna)<sup>134</sup>.

<sup>133</sup> Filippo Suzzi is a rather mysterious figure. He was active only in the territory of Ferrara, arriving from Bologna as Andrea Ferreri's assistant in around 1720 to help him in the stucco decoration of the large room housing the monumental staircase of the Archbishop's Palace. Perhaps he was not from Ferrara, as Scalabrini claims, but from Bologna, as noted by Cesare Cittadella – apparently well-informed on the life of the sculptor, since he wrote his biography (Cittadella 1783 IV, pp. 285-288). There is no longer any trace of the works mentioned therein. His only surviving works are the stucco decorations in the Archbishop's Palace in Ferrara and the statue of *St Dionysius*: two works made as an assistant that cannot tell us much about his style (see also Giovannucci Vigi 2004, p. 102, 142). Suzzi is never mentioned in Barotti 1770.

<sup>134</sup> Oretti in *Appendix*, doc. 2.





55. Lorenzo Sarti, *The Intercession of St Antony of Padua with the Virgin for the Souls in Purgatory*, Private Collection (formerly Bologna, Galleria d'Arte del Caminetto).

56. Lorenzo Sarti, *Faith*,  
Bologna, Cathedral, counter-  
façade



57. Lorenzo Sarti, *Faith*,  
Bologna, Cathedral, counter-  
façade







58. Lorenzo Sarti, *The Intercession of St Antony of Padua with the Virgin for the Souls in Purgatory* (detail of the Virgin), Private Collection (formerly Bologna, Galleria d'Arte del Caminetto).

Also lost or untraceable are the many works mentioned by Oretti, created for Bolognese aristocratic families: the Buratti, Fava, Grassi, Pepoli and Tanari<sup>135</sup>.

Recently, however, a large terracotta relief on a sacred subject has re-emerged on the antique market, and should be ascribed, in my opinion, to the hand of Sarti (92 x 67,5 cm; Figs 55, 58).

Probably used for domestic devotion, though currently neither its provenance nor its original location are documented, the relief presents a *Virgin and Child* on the top right, while at the lower left is a *St Antony* asking for the forgiveness of the souls in purgatory at his side.

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<sup>135</sup> See Oretti in *Appendix*, doc. 2; Calbi-Scaglietti Kelescian 1984, p. 172. These commissions were all for Bolognese palaces, except for one of the two commissions from the Pepoli family which concerned their *Delizia* at Trecenta (near Rovigo): four terracotta ovals. This circumstance led Massari 2017a (p. 655) to suggest that Sarti was «active in the Veneto region». However, it is more probable that these reliefs were simply sent from Bologna by the artist or brought in Trecenta by the Pepolis.



59. Lorenzo Sarti, *Angel* (detail), Cento, Collegiata of St Biagio, left transept.

For the compositional balance, for the tempered emotions and for the composure of the figures – some form of academic Bolognese painting transposed into clay – the appearance of the work is closely linked to the style of Mazza, even replicating the compositional structure of his relief with *St Antony and the Virgin* today in the Pinacoteca di Bologna (also an instance of terracotta for private devotion)<sup>136</sup>. That said, the Virgin's cloak, open like a sail on the left shoulder, recalls one of the typical motifs of the drapes created by Sarti in the stucco figures he executed in Bologna and in Cento – see the sleeves and bottom edge of the garment of *Faith* in Bologna cathedral (Figs 55-57), or the sleeves and drapes of the *Angels* in the collegiate church of San Biagio at Cento (Figs 50, 55, 59). Another comparison can be made between the face of the *Madonna* and that of the right-hand *Angel* in the transept of the collegiate church (Figs 58-59). In addition, the folding of the terminal parts of the garments resembles that in many

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<sup>136</sup> Inv. 3918; dimensions 87 x 55 cm.



60. Lorenzo Sarti, *St Claire*, Bologna, church of Santa Cristina.

of the figures encountered above – see some portions of the drapery of the Bolognese *Faith* and the drapes that surround the *God the Father* on the high altar of the collegiate church of Cento (Figs 49, 53-54).

A final terracotta of obscure history that seems to be attributable to Sarti is the half-length, life-size figure of *St Claire*, by an unknown artist, set in a small niche on the left side of the nave of the church of Santa Cristina in Bologna (Fig. 60) but originally, according to Nico-setta Roio, from the now demolished church of Santa Chiara outside Porta Santo Stefano<sup>137</sup>. In the garment we see the usual transverse draping, slightly crushed. The drapes are traversed by furrows very similar to those of *St Mark* in Bologna, of the *Father* in Cento, or those of the *Spring* and *Winter* (Figs 1, 15-16, 20, 61)<sup>138</sup>. The model for the work is the *St Claire* by Mazza in the church of the Corpus Domini<sup>139</sup>.

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<sup>137</sup> The scholar does not provide any documentary or bibliographical support (Roio 1997, p. 230).

<sup>138</sup> To conclude, the drawing attributed to him at the MET in New York, a study of architectural ornaments for a portal (inv. 35.73.26), should be removed from Sarti's catalogue. The back of the sheet seems to present the name «Tesi»: Mauro Tesi (1730-1766) was a Modenese architect and illusionistic perspective painter who became a Bolognese citizen. The style of the architectural ornaments drawn on the sheet also seems to match Tesi's style.

<sup>139</sup> On this statue see Massari 2013, cat. no. 60.





## *A Successful Sculptor*

Although open questions remain, hopefully to be resolved by future research, an attempt has been made here to illustrate the complex career of an artist wrongly relegated to the margins of Bolognese art history, since – as we have tried to show – he was in no way marginalized in the artistic patronage of his time. In addition to an in-depth investigation of his best-known works within the walls of Bologna, it has been possible to enrich the artist's catalogue with new creations still present today in the area around the city. Above all, it has finally been possible to give concrete form to the relationships between the sculptor and the Modenese aristocracy, hitherto evoked only by the sources.

His expressive and formal fidelity to Mazza's style did not relegate Lorenzo Sarti to the rear-guard, on the contrary, in the Bologna of the second quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century this was a winning card with which to counter the omnipresence of Piò's *rocaille* abstractions, thus gaining the favour among others of no one less than the Pope.

## Appendix

1.

***Vite di pittori scultori e architetti raccolte da Marcello Oretti (1760-1784 circa)***

BCAB, Oretti, ms. B95

[c. 235]

Lorenzo Sarti

Ha operato in San Pietro di Bologna per le statue che sono nelle nicchie. Ha lavorato in Cento, in Modena per il duca Sorra e anche in Bologna.

[c. 236r]

Lavori fatti dal signor Lorenzo Sarti figurista e quadrista

1. L'altare nella chiesa della Madonna delli Oceleti [Uccelletti]
2. Nelli padri di San Giuseppe in faccia alla porta del convento, un San Giuseppe
3. In Tersenta [Trecenta], 4 ovati di basso rilievo di terra cotta
4. Statove [statue] varie che sono a Manzolino per il conte Sora
5. In Ferrara, nel duomo, varie statove che sono ne nicchi, altre fatte dal signor Giovanni Andrea Ferreri [Giuseppe Ferreri]
6. Il domo di Cento, tutto ornato da lui e statove e puttini
7. Nell'altare Boncompagni in San Pietro, ornato la botte della cappella e il sfondo ornato da lui
8. La cappella grande di Santa Maria Maggiore
9. In casa Tanara vari camini nel partamento di sopra
10. In San Pietro li capitelli delle due cappelle nove, corniciotto di dette, li capitelli nella navata grande e statove tanto dell'altar maggiore e armone, e statove sopra l'arco della porta
11. Argenta, la chiesina dedicata la Beata Vergine di San Luca ornata da lui.

[c. 236v]

[...]

Manoscritto originale di mano di Gaetano Raimondi scultore bolognese amico del Sarti [...].

2.

***Marcello Oretti, Notizie de' professori del disegno cioè pittori, scultori e architetti bolognesi e forestieri di sua scuola (ca. 1760-1784)***

BCAB, Oretti, ms. B133

[c. 29]

Lorenzo Sarti

Fioriva nel 1749

Scultore bolognese, fu scolaro di Giuseppe Mazza, e per ciò detto Lorenzino del mazza, per essere assai



grazioso di personale e di tratto, riuscì uno de migliori allievi di sì gran maestro, già che pochi ei ne volle, operò assai bene in stucco ed in creta non solo in Bologna, ma ancora in Modena ed in Cento, ed altrove ove era ricercato.

In Bologna habbiamo le seguenti operazioni di mano di questo virtuoso scultore.

In San Martino da San Paolo, nella cappella maggiore, due statue al naturale, cioè di San Francesco di Paola, e quella di una santa.

Casa dei conti Favi dalla Madonna di Galliera fece in creta la Madonna col Bambino sulle scale, e la copiò dall'originale del Mazza che è in Galleria.

Casa del conte Sora alcune sculture.

Casa Buratti da San Martino, nella sala, in cima a un gran quadro, due puttini al naturale, ed altre figure nelli due camini delle camere.

Casa Grassi, nell'appartamento nobile fece quattro puttini al naturale, due per porta, nel Ricovero, a concorrenza del Mazza suo maestro, che ne fece il rimanente.

In Cento vi sono sue opere.

[c. 30]

In Modena ha operato per il Duca, e per il conte Sora.

San Domenico, all'altare delle reliquie, li Angeli, e li altri sopra l'altare di Sant'Andrea altri Angioli.

In San Pietro li quattro Evangelisti nelli nicchij, e le due statue sopra la porta maggiore sono sue eleganti operazioni, e li Dottori di Santa Chiesa, li capitelli delle due cappelle nuove, corniciotto di dette, li capitelli nella nave di mezzo della chiesa, la metà del fregio, l'ornato e statue della porta maggiore, l'arma del Pontefice Lambertini con le statue nel grande arco della facciata interna della chiesa.

E nella cappella Boncompagni ornò il volto e il fondo.

Santa Maria Maggiore, ornò l'altare e fece li puttini con tutti li ornamenti della cappella maggiore.

In Santa Maria degli Ocelletti fece l'altare maggiore e fu la sua prima operazione in pubblico.

Alli padri di San Giuseppe fece il detto santo nell'atrio della Porteria.

Casa Tanara, varj camini nell'appartamento superiore.

[c. 31]

In Trecenta nel palazzo del signor senatore Pepoli vi sono di sua mano quattro ovati di bassorilievo in terracotta.

A Manzolino, per il signor conte Sora, fece varie statue.

Ferrara, nel Duomo vi si veggono di sua mano due statue di San Dionisio Aeropagita, l'altra di sant'Ivo Avvocato, le quali sono nelle nicchie della cappella di San Giorgio, crociera di mezzo.

Minerbio, varj ornati d'altare con figure nella chiesa maggiore.

Ferrara, nel Duomo, le statue di stucco che sono 34, poste in altrettante nicchie ne pilastri sono lavoro di Pietro Turchi, di Giuseppe Ferreri e di Lorenzo Sarti, che le terminarono l'anno 1745.

In Santa Caterina da Siena, quattro statue di stucco in nicchij di detto Sarti.

3.

**Letters from Alfonso Torreggiani to the Marquis Ippolito Levizzani (1741)**

ASMo, *Archivi Privati*, Archivio Bernardi-Sanson-Levizzani, file 285, unnumbered folios.

**3.1**

Bologna, 8 aprile 1741

Eccellenza,

Incluso in questa riceverà Vostra Eccellenza il noto disegno della prospettiva da farsi in faccia ed in mezzo il cortile, con sotto la fontana, onde quello abbia permesso il sito, ho fatto e situato in disegno le due note colonne, quali le doveranno ornare il nicchio della medesima, pregandola il condonare il mio debole operato.

Appresso il predetto disegno li mando la sagoma della cornice quale doverà ornare le due porte sotto il portico, e ciascheduna d'esse devano avere braccia 5 di pilastrata fatta di macigno con controfittoni per ripararsi dalle carrozze, ed il residuo farlo di mistura, quali saranno li altri ornati simili di mistura, o bozza, cioè il portone della scala, l'altro consimile in faccia, con quello della prospettiva, ed il simile di mostra, compagno dall'altra parte, facendovi una mesola [sic] nel mezzo delli archi per ciascheduno portone, nella maniera che mostra il presente disegno.

Poscia, colla maggior sollecitudine che potrò, li invierò l'altro disegno della facciata nella guisa in cui restassimo con Vostra Eccellenza.

Circa le note statove [statue] ho fatto tanto che alla fine mi è stato permesso di parlare con il professore delle medesime, et avendole ritrovate quelle alte once 30 di Bologna, che sono di Modena once 21, ove in tale guisa sono assai piccole, e per il meno dovrebbero essere alte braccia due e once 8, che fanno di Bologna piedi 3 e once 10, che quando ciò si facesse in tal misura, resterebbero le medesime nella dovuta proporzione, e simmetria di detta scala.

Dice il detto professore, volendo le dette statue nella guisa descritta di piedi 3 once 10 di Bologna, vole il doppio delle prime che sono lire 24 l'una, ed io avendoli risposto che in questo prezzo è difficile che venghi accordato da Vostra Eccellenza, tuttavia, nella guisa che Vostra Eccellenza mi comanderà cercherò debolmente servirlo. Per altro, se devo dire sinceramente il mio sentimento, ho parlato con altri professori, quali vogliano di più delle lire 24. Ora, se il cavagliero Sora volesse vedere di ridurre il detto statuario a meno prezzo, sarebbe altro che bene, non essendomi riuscito di farlo. Conservo a presso di me il noto foglio per la distribuzione delle attitudini e vestimenta di dette statue; e qui per fine restando con fargli umilissima riverenza, mi protesto sempre

Di Vostra Eccellenza,

Umilissimo, devotissimo et obbligatissimo servitore,

Alfonso Torreggiani

**3.2**

Bologna, li 25 aprile 1741

Eccellenza,

Mediante la gentilissima di Vostra Eccellenza sento [che] il prezzo e circostanze fatte con il statuario vengano da Vostra Eccellenza accordate, onde sul principio dell'entrante mese di maggio darà principio alle medesime, quale mi assicura di avere tutta la sollecitudine per servirla.

Rispetto alli denari per il medesimo ho pensato se Vostra Eccellenza mi rimettesse dieci zecchini, quattro delli quali gli darebbe subito per caparra, e gl'altri d'immano immano secondo caminasse il lavoro. Vostra Eccellenza mi favorirà di far incontrare sul fatto li qui inclusi due fili, uno è la lungheza, l'altro la larghezza delli zoccoli dove posano le statue sopra li pilastrini della scala e se dovessero essere maggiori o minori di misura ella li faccia fare come devano essere, per poscia da me consegnarli al statuario, che è quanto devo dire sopra di ciò, e con rassegnarmi mi dico

Di Vostra Eccellenza

Umilissimo, devotissimo et obbligatissimo servitore,

Alfonso Torreggiani

### 3.3

Bologna, primo maggio 1741

Eccellenza,

Ho ricevuto la lettera di Vostra Eccellenza per mezzo della signora marchesa Camilla, nella quale lettera vi ho ritrovato le quattro sagome, o siano piani delli pilastri, segnati gradatamente come sono in fatti. Poscia unito alli quali ho ricevuto li dieci zecchini effettivi, quattro delli quali li darò al statuario, e gl'altri secondo anderà operando.

Uno delli ordinari seguenti invierò a Vostra Eccellenza il noto disegno della facciata, fatta con ogni minor spesa possibile per l'esecuzione et onato della medesima, e qui per fine restando con farli umilissima riverenza mi dico qual mi protesto d'essere

Di Vostra Eccellenza

Umilissimo, devotissimo et obbligatissimo servitore,

Alfonso Torreggiani

### 3.4

Bologna, 28 maggio 1741

Eccellenza,

Do avviso a Vostra Eccellenza di aver ricevuto le note sagome, le quali avendole subito consegnate al statuario e nell'estesso li ho dato quattro zecchini effettivi, e nella ricevuta di quelli si è obbligato di dare tutto il lavoro di dette statue in capo a due mesi, cioè giugno e luglio, dichiarandosi pure che il tempo lo favorisca per sugare, andando la stagione calda, acciò li sia facile l'operazione, avendoli il tutto raccomandato che sia fatto a dovere e secondo il medesimo solleciterà, anderò somministrando altri denari e per fine con tutto l'ossequio distinto mi dico

Di Vostra Eccellenza

Umilissimo, devotissimo et obbligatissimo servitore,

Alfonso Torreggiani

### 3.5

Bologna, li 7 agosto 1741

Eccellenza,

Do avviso all'Eccellenza Vostra di aver ritrovato il noto statuario essere attorno alla penultima statua, essendovene per ora cotte n. 4 compresovi l'Ercole ove si spera compito e con tutto alla fine del presente mese di agosto, il qual statuario ha ricevuto da me sette zecchini, e quando averà compito la detta opera-



zione li darò il residuo delli tre zecchini, quali conservo appresso di me di ragione di Vostra Eccellenza. Anzi, il detto statuario mi dice che desidera, quando si potrà costi per porrere in opera le suddette statue, avrebbe a caro di porrere in opere l'Ercole nella nicchia, avendoli parso che il lavoro della medesima fosse addietro nel tempo che si portò ad inchinarsi a Vostra Eccellenza.

Intanto la supplico a prendere le informazioni per il modo di condurre costi le dette statue per le quali vi vuole due carri con dentro del strame acciò si possa involgere le suddette statue, a fine vengano sane, onde ella veda in che conformità abbia fatto li signori Sora per potersi regolare. Per tanto la prego a condonare l'incomodo datoli, mentre con tutto l'ossequio destinato mi dico

Di Vostra Eccellenza

Umilissimo, devotissimo et obbligatissimo servitore,

Alfonso Torreggiani

### 3.6

Bologna, 8 ottobre 1741

Eccellenza,

Tempo fa furono compite e cotte le consapute statue di Vostra Eccellenza, ma come che il fornasaro ebbe cotte le medesime aveva l'impegno di andare a diverse fiere secondo l'arte loro, ove ritornano il medesimo fornasaro, ne porgo subito avviso a Vostra Eccellenza acciò le mandi a prendere le suddette statue, premendomi siano caricate dal suddetto fornasaro, la giornata determinata sarebbe la metà dell'intrante settimana, che sarà li 11 del corrente mese di ottobre, rispetto alli carri devano essere due con strame e corde per legarle acciò vengano sicure. Il ricapito del fornasaro, quello sta di casa e fornace dal Crocefisso del Cestello, nella via di palazzo Ranuzzi.

E più pagai il compimento delli dieci zecchini sotto li 2 settembre al consaputo statuario, e quando Vostra Eccellenza comanderà a suo tempo che venghi a porrerle in opera me ne dia avviso acciò si possa concertare il tutto, mentre restando con tutto il desiderio di obbedirla, mi dico per sempre

Di Vostra Eccellenza

Umilissimo, devotissimo et obbligatissimo servitore,

Alfonso Torreggiani

### 3.7

Bologna, li 15 ottobre 1741

Eccellenza,

Mediante la gentilissima di Vostra Eccellenza ho avvisato il noto fornasaro che stia in pronto le giornata delli diciotto del corrente per il caricare le statue, essendomi informato dal medesimo, la corda deve essere più tosto sottile che altro, andandomene da braccia di Bologna n° 50 per carro.

Circa la bolletta non occorre cosa nessuna nel stato di Bologna, così mi dice il fornasaro per altre congetture avute, fra le quali per il conte Sora, resta solo ne diamo avviso alla porta di Modena per l'introduzione delle medesime. Ho avvisato il statuario che sia presente a caricarle, e che a suo tempo verrà a porrerle a lungo, quando l'Eccellenza Vostra comanderà, e per fine facendoli umilissima riverenza mi dico per sempre

Di Vostra Eccellenza

Umilissimo, devotissimo et obbligatissimo servitore,

Alfonso Torreggiani

# Abbreviations

AGAB (Archivio Generale Arcivescovile di Bologna)

ASB (Archivio di Stato di Bologna)

ASDB (Archivio del convento di San Domenico in Bologna)

ASMo (Archivio di Stato di Modena)

BCAB (Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio di Bologna)

BUB (Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna).

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