

Sabine Eiche: GIROLAMO GENGA THE ARCHITECT: AN INQUIRY INTO HIS BACKGROUND

The earliest known critical appraisal of Girolamo Genga's architecture is to be found in a letter of December 1543, sent by Pietro Bembo to Leonora Gonzaga, Dowager Duchess of Urbino, in which he relates personal events of the past months. It had been late summer or early autumn, Bembo writes, when he visited Pesaro: *dove fui ricevuto per ordine del Sig Duca onoratamente, e vidi l'Imperiale di V. Eccell. con infinito piacer mio, sì perché io desiderava molto di vederlo, e sì perché è fabbrica per quello ched [sic] ella è meglio intesa e meglio condotta con la vera scienza dell'arte, e con più modi antichi e invenzioni belle e leggiadre, che altra, che a me paja aver veduta fatta modernamente. Di che con V. Sig. mi rallegro grandemente. Certo il mio Compare Genga è un grande e raro architetto, ed ha superato d'assai ogni espettazion mia.*¹

If only we knew today what Bembo had known then about Genga and his background in architecture. 'He has far surpassed my expectations' is a tantalizing statement: why was Bembo so pleasantly surprised? Even though the Villa Imperiale (Figs. 1-3) is generally recognized as his greatest achievement, most studies of Genga have concentrated on young Girolamo, the painter.² Thus Genga's move to architecture continues to be accepted without serious reflection upon the preliminaries. Indeed, when confronted with the problem, art historians have tended to perceive the seeds of his later architectural talents in ephemeral decorations (no traces of which survive), designed for festivals and theatre productions at the Urbino court.³ Such an assumption detracts attention from the crucial moments in Genga's career; from the experiences, that is, that led to the design of a building good enough to arouse the admiration of Bembo, who was a qualified critic. It is my intention here to subject the pre-Imperiale years to a closer scrutiny, in order to clarify Genga's move from principally painter to principally architect.

In an attempt to clear away preconceptions and misconceptions, it will be useful to begin with an examination of the early biographers, as they have contributed to the confusion. The best known and still most frequently consulted is Vasari, who begins his *Vita* by mapping out Genga's painterly career.⁴ He traces Girolamo's movements from Urbino, to the workshops of Signorelli and Perugino, on to Florence and Siena, back to Urbino, then to Cesena and Rome. Vasari's chart, however, does not convey the complexity of Genga's travels, nor is it always accurate with regard to chronological sequence.

Consequently, two aspects of Genga's life have been repeatedly misconstrued. First of all, greater significance than is warranted has been attached to Genga's early connections with the dukes of Urbino, and this has led to his being cast prematurely for the role of court artist/architect.



1 Aerial view of the Villa Imperiale.

Admittedly the young Genga had been a familiar figure at court: in a letter of 1522, addressed to Francesco Maria della Rovere, brought by Genga from Rome to Urbino when he was about to enter della Rovere's service, the duke's Roman agent wrote: ... *hieronymo da gengha sarà laportator' di q(ues)ta e viene in sule Ceste col prete di Raffaello durbino, servitori am(b)idoi ta(n)to affectionati a v. X.a, q(ua)nto sia alcunaltro suo vasallo: di hieronymo no(n) dico ch'ella il cognosce.*⁵

Early instances of ducal patronage are mentioned by contemporary writers. Vasari states that Guidobaldo da Montefeltro employed Genga to make sets for comedies.⁶ According to Baldi, in his biography of Guidobaldo, written around 1600, Genga had worked on the catafalque for the duke's funeral in May 1508.⁷ Vasari also credits Genga with some of the decorations made at Urbino in December 1509 for the triumphal entry of Leonora Gonzaga, bride of the new Duke of Urbino, Francesco Maria della Rovere.⁸ However, a handful of ducal commissions hardly suffices to earn for him the label of court artist. Furthermore, Genga was as often as not engaged on work outside the court milieu.

It may have been Vasari's statements that encouraged a misinterpretation of Genga's relationship to the Urbino court, for it is easy to read too much into his words. Moreover, contrary to what his biographer wrote, Genga did not follow the duke into exile in 1516; nor was it Francesco Maria's regaining his state, after the death of Leo X, that determined Genga's return. We should remember that Vasari wrote with hindsight, after both Girolamo and his son, Bartolomeo, had passed many years as bright stars in the ducal household, and that therefore the precise moment when Genga became a permanent member of the court may have seemed unimportant.

Baldi also contributed to a misconstruction of the facts. In his description of Guidobaldo's funeral in the Duomo of Urbino in May 1508, Baldi remarked that the catafalque had been erected *da eccellenti architetti, e particolarmente da Girolamo Genga.*⁹ At the beginning of the 1500s Genga was still in fact a painter, but by the turn of the century, when Baldi was writing, Genga, now long dead, was remembered for what had been his later occupation.

A brief *excursus* on the appearance of the catafalque will be useful at this point. At least two, slightly different, descriptions of it have survived: one, written the day after the event, by an eye witness; the other, by Baldi, composed almost a century later. It is Baldi's account that is invariably cited. In his words: *fu eretto un alto e superbo edificio (ciborio dicesi o catafalco) a guisa d'una mole sepulcrale o mausoleo, sostenuto da più ordini di colonne finte a marmo di colori oscuri, compartiti di maniera, che rendevano l'opera riguardevole insieme, ed all'aspetto lugubre. Negli spazi maggiori fra' colonnati vedevansi dipinte le principali azioni del Duca, e ne' minori, con lettere grandi e romane, titoli ed iscrizioni in sua lode. Ne' luoghi poi più alti ed apparenti, stavano spiegati sull'aste i gonfaloni e le insegne de' carichi di guerra ch'egli avea sostenuto, ed era questo edificizio sì ricco di lumi, che abbagliava gli occhi de' riguardanti. Nel mezzo poi dell'edifizio, a cui l'ordine più basso delle colonne, divise da' grandi archi, facevano corona, era posata la bara coperta di velluto nero, sopra cui in vece del corpo vedevasi steso il manto della Giarettiera.*¹⁰

Giovanni Gonzaga, who represented the court of Mantua at the funeral, wrote a letter to Francesco Gonzaga on 3 May 1508, providing him with the following description: *Così en questi ordini se andeti al Vescovato, El quale Vescovato era aparato secondo ch(e) se apara a Sc.to Francisco cu(m) q(ue)lle Coltrine & cu(m) le arme Ducale & le Torze in cercho in cercho. In mezo de la Chiesa era uno Catafalcho, assai gran' ma no(n) era alto se non tre scalini, sopra li quali scalini sedetti la Familia del .S. Duca morto. In mezo al piano di q(ue)sto Catafalcho era uno Lecto Mortorio tutto negro. In cima esso Lecto era una Coperta de pano d'oro, sopra la q(ua)le Coperta stava uno Manto de Veluto Alisandrino fodrato de Damasco biancho & uno Capuzino al simile: El quale seie [sic] il Manto de la Garatea de Inghilterra: Et erali uno Cosino dove era Il Bastone del Capitaneato de la Chiesa: Q(ue)sto Catafalcho era Coperto: Il q(ua)le Coperto era como fu quello ch(e) fu alle exequie de la bona memoria del Cardinale nostro: & parimente caricho de Candelotti. Sopra li quatro Cantoni del Coperto era quatro Bandere negre cu(m) le Arme Ducale & da ogni lato de dicto Coperto gliera uno stendardo del Capitaneato de papa Julio: ...*¹¹

The most striking difference between the two accounts is the absence in the eye witness report of any specific reference to the details of the covering, which was, in Baldi's words, an elaborate colonnaded and painted structure. What is the reason for this omission? It is possible that the details were extra flourishes provided by Baldi, or by his source. More probably these aspects of the catafalque were indeed so like the one that had been built for Cardinal Francesco's funeral (*Il q(ua)le Coperto era como fu quello ch(e) fu alle exequie de la bona memoria del Cardinale nostro:*), that Giovanni felt a minute description would be superfluous. If we opt for the latter explanation, then the praise poured on Genga and the *eccellenti architetti* must be interpreted with more caution than has been exercised in the past. That is to say, while the catafalque undoubtedly was a magnificent construction, its design, rather than being innovative, was based at least in part on an earlier prototype.

This brings me to the second point, namely that it seems to have been Vasari's and Baldi's casual application of the title architect to the young Genga that has led later scholars to attribute great architectural skills to Girolamo as the designer of theatre sets. The earliest and most specific of the sources for Genga's work in this field is Serlio. In the section on scenography, in his second book of architecture, he extolls a satirical



2 The main facade of the Della Rovere Villa Imperiale.

scene for a production at the court of Francesco Maria, which he personally had seen.¹² The year is not indicated, but it is likely to have been between 1513-1516, the only period when the duke and Serlio resided in Pesaro contemporaneously.¹³ He calls Genga an architect, but again that is to be explained with reference to the date of Serlio's writings (published 1545), rather than the probable date of the performance. Given that the set was for a satire, it is not surprising that Serlio's lengthy panegyric dwells exclusively on Genga's uncanny skill in devising the artificial flora and fauna, and the exquisite costumes. Less descriptive, but for our purpose more revealing, is a brief passage at the beginning of the second book, where Serlio uses the example of Genga to illustrate the interdependence of perspective and architecture: *Lo intendente Girolamo Genga, non fu ancora lui Pittor eccellente, & nella Prospettiva espertissimo, come ne han fatto fede le belle Scene da lui fatta per compiacere al suo padrone Francesco Maria Duca di Urbino, sotto l'ombra del quale è divenuto ottimo Architetto?*¹⁴ As we shall see, in the last phrase Serlio provides the key to our problem.

Vasari, the other contemporary source for Genga's theatrical activity, limits himself to stating that Duke Guidobaldo hired Genga to do the sets for comedies, ascribing the success of the scenes to Genga's good command of perspective and the principles of architecture (*aveva bonissima intelligenza di prospettiva e gran principio di architettura*).¹⁵ At the risk of being redundant, I must stress that although Vasari is referring to the first decade of the 16th century, he wrote in the second half of the century, after Genga in fact had mastered the principles of architecture.

It remains for us to consider the famous (and unresolved) case of the stage sets for Bibbiena's *Calandria*, repeatedly associated with Genga's name. The play, directed by Baldassarre Castiglione, was performed in the ducal palace in Urbino, on the occasion of Carnival, 6 February 1513. The attribution of the scenography to Genga is not based on documentation. Flechsig maintained that Genga would have been the only person capable of designing the sets, and his suggestion has found popular acceptance.¹⁶

Flechsig, however, based his argument on erroneous premises, which probably derived from Vasari. To clinch his assertion that there was no one but Genga who possessed the necessary skills, Flechsig points out that, in any case, such tasks were always assigned to the court architect, and that therefore there can be no question

regarding the attribution to Genga. But, in 1513, Genga was not yet either an architect or in the service of the court. Moreover, Flechsig's claim that Genga was the only one to fit the role is demonstrably wrong: Baldi speaks of *eccellenti architetti*, who worked with Genga on the catafalque; Baldinucci reveals that Duke Guidobaldo also engaged Timoteo Viti to paint stage sets; and Borghini, without referring to Genga at all, mentions that Viti designed triumphal arches, presumably for the Urbino court.¹⁷

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Genga's early career as recorded in the documents differs from the account written by Vasari mainly in the organization and interpretation of the facts. A brief *résumé* of his commitments and whereabouts during the second decade of the century will be useful at this point.

On 13 September 1513 Genga was in Cesena to sign the contract for the altarpiece of S. Agostino.¹⁸ He was given three months in which to prepare drawings and cartoons, and was obliged to paint the panel in Cesena. On 18 March 1518 the balance of his fee was paid out; thus we can assume that the altarpiece was finished before that date. No documents have been found that reveal Genga's whereabouts in 1514 and 1515. In February 1516 he was in Rimini, probably only briefly, to arbitrate in a dispute between an artist and patron. He was residing in Cesena at the latest by December of that year. Notarial deeds dated April and October 1517 confirm Genga's continuing presence in the town. He was still called a resident of Cesena in April 1518, when he received the commission to paint the Lombardini chapel in S. Francesco, Forlì (destroyed), which he was required to begin within four months, and to finish within two years of commencing.¹⁹ According to Borghini, Timoteo Viti collaborated with Genga on this project.²⁰

The following year, 1519, was a pivotal one in Genga's career. On 4 July, the Siene community in Rome founded the Arciconfraternita di S. Caterina da Siena.²¹ One of its members, Agostino Chigi, engaged Genga to paint the *Resurrection* for the high altar of their church.²² When was the work commissioned? It had to be before 10 April 1520, when Chigi died; it could have been as early as July 1519.

If we can accept that by mid-1519 the work in the Forlì chapel was either already finished, or being completed by Viti, then there is no convincing argument against Genga's presence in Rome from the second half of 1519 on.²³ Indeed, there is circumstantial evidence that argues for it, which I shall now disclose. Some time before June 1522, Francesco Maria della Rovere instructed one of his agents in Rome, Alessandro Nerio, to find an architect trained by Raphael. We know this from Nerio's response to the duke, in June, stating that he had found such a man: *Ho trovato uno architettor' creato di Raphael, il qual per adesso dice non poter venir' ad satisfar', ma che a questo agosto andará a Loreto, et poi nirà a trovare V. Ex.a. ...*²⁴ In August 1522 Girolamo Genga arrived at the court, with a letter of presentation from another of the duke's Roman agents, Giovanmaria della Porta.²⁵ Travelling with Genga was a cousin of Raphael, who is supposed to have brought the duke a copy of Raphael's description of the Villa Madama, requested by Francesco Maria from Castiglione.²⁶ The case for arguing that Genga was the architect described by Nerio as *creato di Raphael* is thus a strong one.

Let us try to reconstruct the events of 1519-1520 in the light of this new information. Genga came to Rome probably no later than the fall of 1519. Contact with Agostino Chigi will have brought him into direct contact also with Raphael, whom, according to Vasari, he already knew from Perugino's workshop. Given their prior acquaintance, a common background (both natives of Urbino), and no apparent animosity, there is every likelihood that Genga was quickly drawn into the vortex of Raphael's workshop. As was recently pointed out, it was common practice in his shop to recruit help temporarily whenever the workload required it, and the last years of Raphael's life were crammed with work.²⁷

In this hypothetical reconstruction, then, we have Genga preparing to paint Chigi's *Resurrection*, and collaborating with Raphael's team on various projects.²⁸ Raphael's intense archeological and architectural activities of that period must have profoundly stimulated Genga, for the whole concept of the Villa Imperiale is based on a recollection of such experiences.

On 6 April 1520 Raphael died. Although the *bottega* was not immediately dissolved, and Genga's hypothesized involvement thus could have continued, any possibility of learning directly from the acknowledged master was over. The death of one of the greatest painters was followed swiftly by the death of two great patrons: Chigi passed away four days later, and Pope Leo X at the end of 1521. For artists, a future in Rome must have looked increasingly bleak.

In December 1521, Castiglione, responding to a letter from Federico Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, was able to assure Gonzaga that two of Raphael's former students were indeed eager to come and work for him, as soon as they finished painting the *Sala di Costantino*.²⁹ These former students have been identified as Giulio Romano and Gianfrancesco Penni.

Federigo Gonzaga was Francesco Maria della Rovere's brother-in-law, and the two families were rival patrons in the friendliest of fashions. We can argue with some assurance, then, that it was Federigo's intention to import a couple of Raphael-trained men, one of whom was also an architect, that fired Francesco Maria's desire to do the same. He lost little time, as we saw, for by June of 1522 his agent was able to report that the search had been successful.



3 The sunken courtyard of the Villa Imperiale.

How experienced an architect was Genga when he arrived at court in August 1522? Even if Raphael had employed him exclusively on architectural projects, a period of a few months is hardly time enough to acquire the necessary professional skills. It cannot have taken the duke long to realize that Genga stood in need of further training. All the same, an employee is an employee, not hired to be idle, and Genga was put to work right away.

The return of Francesco Maria della Rovere and Leonora Gonzaga to their court in 1522 followed a nearly six-year period of exile. Pesaro was now the main seat of the duchy, and Genga's first tasks related to the restoration and modernization of the della Rovere's palace there.³⁰ To judge by the surviving correspondence, he proved himself an able supervisor. By May of 1523 Genga was back in Rome, purchasing antique stones and other costly architectural materials to refurbish the ducal buildings.³¹ In one letter to the duke, Genga related that while the columns and stones were being cut, polished, and packed for shipping, he would go off and draw. He refers to a sketchbook that he was preparing, which he promised to send to the duke after he had added some more drawings of plumes.³² Other drawings, it is not difficult to imagine, will have been of ancient monuments. What Genga produced was apparently good enough to arouse the curiosity of the Marquis of Mantua: he asked to see the sketchbook, and instructed one of his servants, heading for the Duchy of Urbino, to bring it back with him.³³ By the fall Genga had returned to Pesaro, and was again overseeing renovations in the Palazzo ducale.³⁴ The surviving documents reveal nothing about Genga's activities or whereabouts during the years 1524-1526.

In September 1523 the duke was engaged by the Serenissima to lead the Venetian troops against the French in northern Italy. At first the duchess remained at home; then, in 1525, she removed to Padua, joining the duke in Lombardy the following year, and staying with him until 1527. With both patrons absent, probably

little more was done in the way of building at court than basic restoration and maintenance work. Genga may even have been sent back to Rome, to further pursue his studies of good architecture.

The duchess returned late in the spring of 1528, at which time she instructed Genga to build her an apartment in one of the ducal residences in Fossombrone.³⁵ Soon afterwards, she commissioned the fresco decoration of the 15th century Villa Imperiale, outside Pesaro, also a project overseen by Genga.³⁶

It was about ten years after entering the service of the duke that Genga began to design the new Imperiale, laid out as a succession of spaces terraced up the hillside behind the older building (Fig. 1). When Pietro Bembo visited a decade later, he pronounced the villa *meglio intesa e meglio condotta con la vera scienza dell' arte, e con più modi antichi e invenzioni belle e leggiadre, che altra, che a me paja aver veduta fatta modernamente*, declaring that his friend Genga *è un grande e raro architetto, ed ha superato d'assai ogni espettazione mia*.³⁷

Bembo's reaction of surprise at Genga's accomplishment should now be understandable. He first will have met Genga in the years 1506-1511, when Bembo lived at the court of Urbino. Their paths will have crossed again in Rome, where Bembo stayed for about a year, from April 1520 to the spring of 1521.³⁸

While in Rome, he presumably will have been aware of Genga's activities. Thus, when Bembo heard of his return to the Urbino court as an architect *creato di Raphael*, his perception of the situation made him doubtful of Genga's ability to satisfactorily fit the role.

In 1543, when he finally saw the Villa Imperiale, all of Bembo's doubts vanished, and he would have agreed wholeheartedly with Serlio's assertion that it was under the protection of his patron, Francesco Maria della Rovere, that Genga *è divenuto ottimo Architetto*.³⁹

NOTES

¹ *Pietro Bembo*, Opere, Vol. III, Le lettere volgari, Venice 1729, p. 331.

² See the recent study by *Anna Colombi Ferretti*, *Girolamo Genga e l'altare di S. Agostino a Cesena*, Bologna 1985, with all the earlier bibliography.

³ See, for instance, *A. Pinelli and Orietta Rossi*, *Genga architetto*, Rome 1971, especially p. 121. Although their study is useful in many respects, the authors avoid discussing Genga's background in architecture.

⁴ *Vasari-Milanesi*, Vol. VI, pp. 315-322.

⁵ ASF, Ducato di Urbino, Cl. I, Div. G, Fa. 132, c. 241v; published by *G. Gronau*, *Documenti artistici urbinati*, Florence n.d. [Prefazione, giugno 1935], p. 113.

⁶ *Vasari-Milanesi*, Vol. VI, p. 317.

⁷ *B. Baldi*, *Della Vita e de' Fatti di Guidobaldo I da Montefeltro Duca di Urbino*, Milan 1821, p. 242.

⁸ *Vasari-Milanesi*, Vol. VI, p. 317.

⁹ *Baldi* (n. 7), p. 242.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Archivio di Stato di Mantova, Busta 1077, cc. 170v-171.

¹² *Sebastiano Serlio*, *Tutte l'opere d'architettura*, Vol. II, Venice 1618, p. 47v.

¹³ Pesaro had been added to the possessions of the Dukes of Urbino in 1512, after the extinction of the Sforza rulers. Documents recording Serlio's presence in the town from 1509 to 1516 were found by *Paride Berardi* in the Archivio di Stato di Pesaro. I wish to thank Dr Berardi for sharing the material with me.

¹⁴ *Serlio* (n. 12), Vol. II, p. 18v.

¹⁵ *Vasari-Milanesi*, Vol. VI, p. 317.

¹⁶ *E. Flechsig*, *Die Dekoration der modernen Bühne in Italien*, Dresden 1894, pp. 40-41.

¹⁷ *Baldinucci-Ranalli*, Vol. II, p. 94; *Raffaello Borghini*, *Il Riposo*, Florence 1584, p. 401.

¹⁸ See *Colombi Ferretti* (n. 2), for a full discussion of this painting.

¹⁹ See *C. Grigioni*, *La dimora di Girolamo Genga in Romagna*, in: *La Romagna*, XVI, ii-iii, 1927, pp. 174-183.

²⁰ *Borghini* (n. 17), p. 400.

²¹ *Moroni*, Vol. LXVI, p. 20.

²² The commission is noted by *Fabio Chigi* in his commentary, published by *G. Cugnoli*, *Agostino Chigi il Magnifico*, in: *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria*, II, 1878, p. 74.

²³ In a notarial act of 6 December 1519 Genga is still called a resident of Cesena, but that may be interpreted technically rather than practically; see *Grigioni* (n. 19), pp. 176-177.

²⁴ ASF, Ducato di Urbino, Cl. I, Div. G, Fa. 134, c. 234.

²⁵ See n. 5 above. *Nerio*, it seems, had by then left Rome, which explains why della Porta, and not he, wrote Genga's letter of presentation. For *Nerio's* departure see ASF, Ducato di Urbino, Cl. I, Div. G, Fa. 134, c. 122.

²⁶ See *V. Golzio*, *Raffaello nei documenti*, Città del Vaticano 1936, p. 147.

- ²⁷ J. Shearman, The Organization of Raphael's Workshop, in: The Art Institute of Chicago annual lectures, Chicago 1983, p. 41.
- ²⁸ Interestingly, Vasari mentions Genga's sojourn in Rome to paint the *Resurrection* in conjunction with his study of antiquities (*Vasari-Milanesi*, Vol. VI, p. 317). Baldinucci echoes Vasari's statement, concluding with the phrase, *onde divenne ottimo architetto* (*Baldinucci-Ranalli*, Vol. II, p. 94).
- ²⁹ See A. Luzio, La Galleria dei Gonzaga, Milan 1913, p. 239.
- ³⁰ See Sabine Eiche, La corte di Pesaro dalle case malatestiane alla residenza roversca, in: La Corte di Pesaro, Modena 1986, pp. 13-55.
- ³¹ See the letters published by Gronau (n. 5), pp. 114-118.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 115.
- ³³ ASF, Ducato di Urbino, Cl. I, Div. G, Fa. 241, c. 106; from Gobbo to the Duke of Urbino, Mantua, 4 July 1523: *Io ne parlai al S. Marchese de quello libro che vene da Roma a V.S. de desegni. Lui ha voluntà de vederlo, et scrive a V.S. che a la venuta mia da V.S. io lo reportarò.*
- ³⁴ Gronau (n. 5), p. 118.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 121-122.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 123.
- ³⁷ See n. 1 above.
- ³⁸ See the entry on Pietro Bembo by C. Dionisotti in: Diz. Biog., Vol. VIII, pp. 138, 141.
- ³⁹ See n. 14 above.

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Azienda autonoma di Turismo, Pesaro: Fig. 1. - KIF: Figs. 2, 3.

Gerhard Schuster: ZU EHREN CASANATES.

Père Cloches Kunstaufträge in der Frühzeit der Biblioteca Casanatense*

Die Biblioteca Casanatense ist eine der wichtigsten Bibliotheken Roms. Sie verdankt ihr Bestehen der testamentarischen Verfügung des Kardinals Girolamo Casanate.¹ Den Ratschlägen des Dominikanergenerals Antonin Cloche folgend, vermachte er seine gesamten nicht-neapolitanischen Güter dem Konvent von S. Maria sopra Minerva, mit der Hauptverpflichtung, seine persönliche Bibliothek zu verwalten, zu vergrößern und öffentlich zugänglich zu machen.² Es war Casanates Anliegen, alle Ausgaben aus seiner Hinterlassenschaft möglichst klein zu halten, sofern sie nicht Buchankauf und Bibliotheksverwaltung betrafen. Errichtung und Erhaltung eines Bibliotheksgebäudes sah er nicht als seine Aufgabe an. Sein Begräbnis sollte der Kardinalswürde entsprechend ausgerichtet werden, sein Grab aber bescheiden sein. An Kunst war nicht gedacht, und dennoch wurde ein Teil der Hinterlassenschaft für sie verwendet. Das Bibliotheksgebäude wurde noch zu Lebzeiten des Kardinals begonnen³, und als Architekt wird Carlo Fontana genannt⁴, der jedoch in den Dokumenten nicht greifbar ist; zumindest die Bauausführung lag beim Hausarchitekten der Minerva, Antonio Maria Borione. Als der Kardinal am 3. März 1700 verschied, richtete man ihm — testamentskonform — Exequien in S. Spirito dei Napoletani und in der Minerva aus, für die Antonio Gherardi die Katafalke entwarf.⁵ Bereits mit der Errichtung eines Grabmonuments in S. Giovanni in Laterano geht Père Cloche — die treibende Kraft hinter allen hier behandelten Aktivitäten — weit über die Wünsche des Verstorbenen hinaus. Casanate zu Ehren ignoriert er dessen bescheidene Verfügung, das Grab nur mit seinem Namen zu bezeichnen.⁶

Das Grabmal Casanates

Zu diesem Grabmonument (Abb. 2) sind mehrere Verträge und Rechnungen erhalten, die einen Einblick in die Auftragspraxis der Dominikaner zu dieser Zeit gestatten und vermittels derer ein sehr genaues Datengerüst für das Werk gewonnen werden kann. Der Kontrakt⁷ über die Lieferung des Marmors durch Martino Frugone vom 14. August 1700 ist der erste Hinweis auf die Planung, bezeichnet aber nicht deren Beginn, da eine relativ genaue Vorstellung vom Aussehen des Grabs schon zugrundeliegt.⁸ Die Maße für die drei Blöcke stehen fest, und an der grundsätzlichen Disposition ist nicht mehr viel zu ändern. Frugone verpflichtet sich, vom Marmor für die Liegefigur des Kardinals ein "Triangolo" abzarbeiten, für sich zu behalten und vom Preis für die beiden kleineren Blöcke abzuziehen. Was damit gemeint ist, erklärt sich etwas genauer, wenn man die Zeichnungen für die Marmorblöcke betrachtet — es sind reine Linienumrisse mit Maßangaben, bei