



ITINERARIO LIBERTY



Pietro Alessio Chini

Born in 1800 in Borgo San Lorenzo from Alessio Degl'Innocenti e Maddalena Ceni, he later adopted the surname of the Chini family who had welcomed him as a boy in their own home. He did not attend art schools, but it was a painter, Pietro Paolo Colli from Borgo Sansepolcro, who was active in Mugello from 1813, who initiated him to the trade of decorator, taking Pietro with him as an apprentice, after noting the figures which Pietro Alessio painted, following his own creativity, on the external walls of his father's house.

He perfected the techniques learned from Colli through the direct study of antique and modern painting, reading about the lives of vase-makers and through treatises of architecture.

When Colli transferred to Florence in 1823, Pietro Alessio remained the only painter – decorator in the area capable of satisfying the most varied requests, from the restoration of antique churches, which often included the addition of new decorations, to the painting of friezes and baseboards of the ceilings of elegant homes, and right down to the simple jobs of re-painting.

Not much of his vast activity is preserved – an activity, which began with the pictorial decoration of the dome of the oratory of Santa Maria in Valdastra (1824), continuing almost until his death in 1876, often taking advantage of the help of his elder sons Tito and Pio.

In more than fifty years of activity, seemingly praised by contemporary artists like Giuseppe Bezzuoli and Luigi Sabatelli, we know that he worked in the main religious complexes of the area, for example the parish church of San Giovanni Maggiore and the convent of Bosco ai Frati, as well as in the two smallest and most isolated churches, and also in many villas in the village of Borgo San Lorenzo and in the Florentine countryside.

To quote some of them : the Pecori Giraldi Villa, the Torrigiani Villa in Còrniolo, Villa Corsini in the Mozzete and in the Medicean villas in Cafaggiolo, Pratolino and Poggio in Caiano. Judging from the surviving works, vaults and ceilings in which illusionistic prospects of open skies, landscapes or architectural perspectives unfold, often with few figures grouped at the centre of the composition, or populated by fluttering little angels, his painting took inspiration, above all, from the art of the Renaissance and from Barocco, revised according to a simplification both formal and compositional.