

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture for Sustainability
Honors theses

Musso Clemente's decorative undertaking.

Public building sites in Turin (1888-1911)

by Monica Silvello

Tutor: Costanza Roggero

Co-tutor: Elena Gianasso

In 1989 Maria Grazia Clemente Chicco gave to the Polytechnic University of Turin a great amount of materials, including architectural drawings, decorative projects, photographs, building site's documents and correspondence, belonged to the Musso and Clemente's families who were titular of an artistic enterprise of notable importance during Turin Eclectic period, between the second half of the Nineteenth century and the first decades of the Twentieth. Today, the material composes a documentation kept in History and Artistic Heritage's Laboratory situated in Castle of Valentino in Turin. It is about a lapse of time from the last years of 1880 to the half of 1970.

My thesis, with a research largely unpublished, has deepened the study of the professional activity of Musso and Clemente's families. Carlo Bartolomeo Musso, his son Paolo Musso and the husband of one of his daughters, Giovanni Clemente, who is the father of the donee Maria Grazia Clemente Chicco, were the key-figures for the realization of decorative architectures in prestigious public and private buildings.

Carlo Bartolomeo Musso, sculptor graduated from the Albertina Royal Academy, established the firm "*Fratelli Musso e Papotti Francesco*" with his brother Secondo and with the decorator and plasterer Francesco Papotti. The firm was working from 1886 till 1936, changing its name in "*Carlo Musso*" in 1908, when Carlo became the only owner, after his brother death.

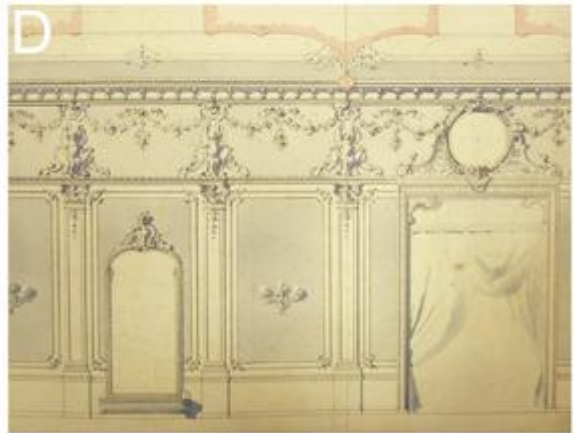


POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF TURIN, HISTORY AND ARTISTIC HERITAGE'S LABORATORY, MC 418, *Families*, Montà d'Alba, 1910-1913. We can see: Carlo Musso (the first sitting to the left), Paolo Musso (the first standing to the left) and Giovanni Clemente (the first standing to the right)

The firm, which was known because of its quality about interior and exterior decorations, executed works with gypsum and stucco in imitation of marble, cement and artificial stone.

I studied exterior and interior ornaments mostly made by the "*Fratelli Musso e Papotti Francesco*" firm, which later became "*Carlo Musso*". I analyzed the Umberto I Arcade, the Mole Antonelliana, that is the symbol of the 19th century Turin, the Poste e Telegrafi Palace, building sites in Vittorio Alfieri Street and the Porta Nuova railway station, that was the symbol of cultural progress of Eclecticism. These were public commission's buildings that offer a detailed account of work's organization and site management.

Were compared information in the Musso Clemente's fund with those of various chancery including Historical Archives of the City of Turin, Archives of Mauriziano Order and Royal Library of Turin. A well-established historic architectural research methodology allowed to reveal the work of the firm and to find some information about organization of workers and yards, revealing their cost too. This data is not always easily identifiable.



(A) POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF TURIN, HISTORY AND ARTISTIC HERITAGE'S LABORATORY, MC 693.2, *Project of No. 7 groins to be carried out in Umberto I Arcade* made by painter Placido Mossello, Montà d'Alba, 29 September 1889.

(B) POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF TURIN, HISTORY AND ARTISTIC HERITAGE'S LABORATORY, MC 94.2, *Mole Antonelliana, Turin: monochrome positive*. Workers photographed on scaffolding under the arches of the third order, Turin [1905-1906].

(C) POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF TURIN, HISTORY AND ARTISTIC HERITAGE'S LABORATORY, MC 57.2, *Poste e Telegrafi Palace. Ceiling of the vestibule*. Project for decoration of the elliptical entrance hall ceiling, Turin [1906-1911].

(D) POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF TURIN, HISTORY AND ARTISTIC HERITAGE'S LABORATORY, MC 242, *Musso's project for decoration of the Royal Room in Porta Nuova railway station*, Turin [1898, 1908-1911]

Musso and Clemente, very important artists and craftsmen, collaborated with some of the most famous project planning office, creating business relations, above all, during the Exhibitions, which were opportunities for promotion of their abilities and professionalism. In addition to Carlo Ceppi, Giovanni Chevalley and Annibale Rigotti, with whom it was established a deep cooperation, it is possible to find Costanzo Antonelli, Adolfo Dalbesio, Ernesto Ghiotti, Costantino Gilodi, Lorenzo Rivetti and Giacomo Salvadori di Wiesenhoff, expression and confirmation of the great importance in Turin, between the Nineteenth and Twentieth century, of this artistic firm so far little studied.

For further information, e-mail:

Monica Silvello: monica.silvello@libero.it