

Bernardo Castelli Borromini

Italian Architect, Sculptor
(1643-1709)

He was born in Bissone, in the Canton of Ticino, from Giovanni Domenico, brother of Francesco Borromini, and from Costanza Gaggini on 20 August. 1643.

From the family he was initiated into art, and at the age of twenty he had already come to Rome, where for several years now his uncle Francesco had collected honors and esteem with his works; and, at the behest of this, which left him heir to all his possessions, he settled there definitively, after having married Maddalena, daughter of Giovanna (of the architect Carlo) Maderno and of the captain Giovan Francesco Pupi.

But he responded only in part to the hopes that Francesco Borromini had placed in him. Castelli "had worked little" in the period in which his uncle was alive, and after his death he "worked even less", devoting himself to domestic affairs and enjoying the "fat leftovers" left him by his uncle.

A signed drawing for the Trevi fountain is mentioned by Castelli, today preserved in Vienna in the Albertina collections. He is attributed the completion of S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, an altar in the church of S. Maria in Via Lata, and collaboration to the large statue *S. Carlo Borromeo in Arona*.

Some documents testify to his activity as an expert: calibration of accounts for the work of a house, located in Rome, belonging to the barefoot Trinitarians of S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane; appraisal with drawing relating to the profile of some vineyards located in "Prati" and to the section of the ditch of "Balduina".

The general fading of the construction activity in Rome in the last part of the 17th century and at the beginning of the 18th century, due to the serious economic crisis, made its presence in the Roman artistic world more and more anodyne.

Castelli died in Rome on 24 Jan. 1709 and was buried in S. Maria del Popolo. His lineage died out in Rome in 1753.

Translated from:

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by Maria Rita D'Annunzio - Biographical Dictionary of Italians - Volume 21 (1978)