

Bernardo Castelli Borromini

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

He was born in Bissone, in the Canton of Ticino, by Giovanni Domenico, brother of Francesco Borromini, and by Costanza Gaggini on 20 ag. 1643 (Brentani).

From the family he was initiated into art, and at the age of about twenty he had already come to Rome, where for several years now Uncle Francesco had gathered with his works honors and esteem; and, by order of this, which left him the heir of 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 only partially answered the hopes that Francesco Borromini had placed in him. According to Pascoli, Castelli "had not worked much" in the period in which his uncle was alive, and after his death he still "worked less", devoting himself to domestic affairs and enjoying the "little surpluses" left by his uncle.

Castelli is reminded of a design, signed, for the Trevi Fountain, now kept in Vienna in the Albertina collections (D'Onofrio). He is credited with the completion of S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, an altar in the church of S. Maria in Via Lata, and a collaboration with the great statue of *S. Carlo Borromeo in Arona* (Guidi).

Some documents testify to his activity as an expert: calibration of accounts for the work of a house, placed in Rome, due to the barefoot trinitarians of S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (Archdi di Stato di Roma, *30 Not Capitoline*, Office 18, 549 cc 51 ss.); appraisal with drawing on the profile of some vineyards located in "Prati" and the section of the ditch of the "Balduina" (Ibid., *Notation of the Court of the Waters and Roads*, volume 132, pp. 750 ss.).

The general weakening of the constructive activity in Rome in the last part of the century. XVII and at the beginning of the century XVIII, due to the serious economic crisis, made its presence in the Roman artistic world more and more anodyne.

Castelli died in Rome on 24 January. 1709 and was buried in S. Maria del Popolo.

His descent became extinct in Rome in 1753.

Sources and Bibles :

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M. Guidi, *Diz. of the Ticinese artists*, Rome 1932, p. 52;

C. D'Onofrio, *The Fountains of Rome*, Rome 1957, p. 242 note 46;

L. Brentani, *Ancient masters of art and of Ticino school*, VII, Lugano 1963, p. 96;

P. Tournon, *For the biography of Francesco and Bernardo Borromini*, in *Commentaries*, XVIII (1967), pp. 86-89;

Borrominian references (catal.), Edited by M. Del Piazzo, Rome 1968, *ad Indicem*

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