

Francesco Fancelli

Italian Stonecutter

(1624-1681)

Family of sculptors from Settignano (Florence), a branch of which settled in Rome. The founder of this branch was Carlo, born in Settignano in about 1577 from Iacopo, as it is derived from the act of death. Transferring to Rome, he married before 1606, Isabella Ghetti, sister of Cosimo.

Francesco was born in Rome on 23 January 1624, seventh son of Charles, and formed in the paternal shop following the example of the brothers Iacopo Antonio and Cosimo. For Prince Giovan Battista Borghese, Francesco worked as a master stone mason with continuity from 1659 to death, under the direction of Carlo Rainaldi, often with the stone mason Pietro Giacomo Mola. His contribution to the decoration of the church of S. Gregorio and Antonino in Monte Porzio Catone, recalled by Pascoli (1736), was consistent.

Built by Prince Charles Borghese on the design of Carlo Rainaldi, the church was founded in 1666, Francesco collaborated with his ornamentation with Mola and his brother Cosimo, and also played a coordinating role among the workers. To make the carvings of all the marble works (frames of three paintings, balustrades and altar and corals shelves, washers with heads of cherubs, coat of arms of Borghese and, on the facade, capitals, cornice and rustic of the frieze) was paid by 1668 to 1678.

For the Borghese, Francesco worked in 1668 at the floor of the Paolina Chapel at S. Maria Maggiore, during the preparation of the quarantine apparatus and in 1670 at two fountains for the villa Pinciana. From 1671 to 1675 he was engaged in the major building business promoted by Prince Borghese, the renovation of the palace of Rome. In addition to chisel work, such as door and window frames, he carved stone carvings for the garden, he made the floor in mixed gallery marbles (1674) and various pieces of furniture such as alabaster fountains and tables. In the Archives of Borghese are also registered payments for chisel work in the following workshops: Montefortino church (1659), villa Pinciana (1663, 1671), barn outside the door of the People (1664), granary at S. Giovanni Decollato (1666) Sister bridge house (1669), Mondragone villa in Frascati (1671, 1675, remembered by Pascoli, 1736), Castel di Pratica and castle of Mentana (1671).

Francesco is attributed to the four statues depicting saints and prophets crowning the apse of S. Maria Maggiore in the Rainaldian arrangement designed by Clement X.

This attribution, and not supported by documentary evidence, is doubtful as it is a purely sculptural enterprise and would be the only example in the production of Francesco, usually active as a stonecutter. In the years of arrangement of the tribune (1670-73), Francesco also received payments for various works outside the chapel Paolina. Next to Francesco on this occasion may have operated the sculptor brother Iacopo Antonio, but this is unlikely given the advanced age of this.

Francesco worked in the church of S. Marta at the Collegio Romano, renovated in 1672-73 by Carlo Fontana, but the stucco interior ornamentation was performed by L. Retti and G. Roncati; they could be Francesco's chisel work. In addition, his intervention in the monastery and church of S. Maria Annunziata of the Turchines in Sforza on the Esquiline, founded in 1671 by the princess C. Orsini Borghese and consecrated in 1676, and recalls "several alabaster fountains and d 'other marble' which was sent to Spain by the Marquis of Carpio.

Francesco lived in the street in Arcione with his family; he married three times: in 1652 with Ippolita Saleri, in 1657 with Maddalena Sarnitani and in 1670 with Marta Rubini, and she had two children, Iacopo and Carlo, who became both stonecutters.

Francesco died in Rome on March 14, 1681 and was buried in the church of S. Nicola in Arcione.

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