

Francesco Fontana

(Italian architect and engineer)

He was born in Rome on April 23, 1668, and died at Castel Gandolfo on July 3, 1708, at the age of 40.

Son of Carlo, he was a pupil and collaborator of his father. One of the earliest works was the Chapel of San Gesualdo in the Cathedral of Velletri, built between 1694 and 1698 on commission of Cardinal Alderano Cibo. The work is still affected by paternal influences. A skilled hydraulic engineer, in 1695, he became prefect of Acqua Felice and published, after a year, the Report on the old and new status of Acqua Felice. In 1695 he drafted the project for the reconstruction of the Church of Santa Scolastica in Rieti, then executed by the workers of Antonio Maria Ravazzani. In 1696, on the commission of the Apostolic Hospice, he transformed the so-called Temple of Neptune into customs.

Between 1696 and 1699, on the commission of Cardinal Bandino Panciatichi, he designed the remake of the Palazzo Panciatichi in Florence. From 1697 to 1701 he worked in the transept of the Church of San Salvatore in Lauro, without being able to complete the intervention following the project by Ottaviano Mascherino. At the same time the Benedictines commissioned a project for the Abbey of Fulda, the winning project was then that of the German architect Johann Dientzenhofer; the plan of the Fontana church was similar to that of the Basilica of the Holy XII Apostles of Rome.

Between 1701 and 1705 he was working in Ravenna in the design of the Church of Santa Maria del Suffragio. In 1705 he designed the lowered vault of the Basilica of San Pietro in Vincoli. In the meantime, he took care of the reconstruction of the Church of Santa Maria della Neve at the Colosseum, where he designed the façade in Borromini style. He participated in the foundation of the Model Museum of the Fabbrica di San Pietro, he also restored the wooden model of the project by Giuliano da Sangallo and the Dome of Michelangelo. He worked at the Cortile del Belvedere and at the Secret Garden, and how his father was welcomed at the Accademia di San Luca. Francesco died prematurely in his home in Castel Gandolfo in 1708 and his son Mauro continued the family tradition that became extinct with the latter because he had no children.

Sources and Bibles :

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