

The contractor-architect and his accounts

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Fontana's career illustrates a feature of the building trades that matters for the economic argument of this chapter. The architect of the Apostolic Chamber was also, in many cases, the contractor who organized labour and materials, advanced wages and was paid on the basis of measurements (*misure e stime*) of work done, checked by official surveyors. Such a position required working capital and credit, because payments from the Chamber arrived in instalments and often late.¹ It also invited suspicion. The investigation of Fontana's accounts after the death of his patron was typical of a system in which the same person designed, executed and certified the work, and in which a change of pontificate could turn a favourite into a defendant.

For the family at home, a career of this type produced both income and risk. Fontana acquired substantial property in Rome and Naples, supported relatives and brought younger members of the family into his workshop. His tomb is in the church of Sant'Anna dei Lombardi in Naples, the church of the Lombard community there, which again shows how the *nazione lombarda* functioned as the institutional home of the lake masters abroad.² From November 2022 to February 2023 the cantonal Pinacoteca Giovanni Züst at Rancate honoured him with an exhibition on his building sites, *Le "invenzioni di tante opere"*, which grew out of research by the Archivio del Moderno of the Università della Svizzera italiana and was prepared with the Vatican Museums.³

1 Carlo Maderno and the façade of St Peter's

Carlo Maderno (1556–1629),⁴ born in Capolago, was the son of Domenico Fontana's sister and came to Rome to work in his uncle's workshop, first as a stucco-worker.⁵ When Fontana left for Naples, Maderno remained and built his own practice. His façade for the church of Santa Susanna, completed in 1603, is regarded as one of the founding works of Roman

Baroque architecture. In the same year Pope Clement VIII appointed him architect of St Peter's, and under Paul V he extended Michelangelo's centralized plan into a longitudinal nave and built the façade of the basilica, which carries the date 1612. He also completed Sant'Andrea della Valle with its dome, built the Palazzo Mattei and directed the work on the Palazzo Barberini from 1625 until his death in Rome at the end of January 1629.

Maderno's position as architect of St Peter's gave the lake network its most important institutional foothold in Rome. The *Fabbrica di San Pietro*, the building office of the basilica, employed stonemasons, carvers and stucco-workers in large numbers, and Maderno filled many of these positions with relatives and men from the villages of the lake. Among them was a young stonemason from Bissone, a distant relative of his, who was to become the most original architect of the century.⁶

2 Notes

1. Studies on the Fabbrica di San Pietro and the Apostolic Chamber, e.g. Delumeau (cited above). ↩
2. Ippoliti, "Fontana, Domenico" (cited above). ↩
3. Università della Svizzera italiana, "Le «invenzioni di tante opere»: la ricerca dell'Archivio del Moderno su Domenico Fontana si fa mostra", news item, November 2022, <https://www.usi.ch/it/feeds/23563> (exhibition at the Pinacoteca cantonale Giovanni Züst, Rancate, opened 26 November 2022); Finestre sull'Arte, "In Svizzera una mostra dedicata a Domenico Fontana, grande architetto del '500", 2022, <https://www.finestresullarte.info/mostre/mostra-domenico-fontana-invenzioni-pinacoteca-zust-rancate> (dates 27 November 2022 to 19 February 2023, organized by the Pinacoteca and the Archivio del Moderno with the Vatican Museums). ↩
4. Repubblica e Cantone Ticino, Cancelleria dello Stato, Oltreconfiniti, "Vite di emigranti e discendenti": "Carlo Maderno (1556-1629)", <https://www4.ti.ch/can/oltreconfiniti/dalle-origini-al-1900/vite-di-emigranti-e-discendenti> ("Da Capolago a Roma, un viaggio di sola andata per l'architetto"). ↩
5. Maria Cristina Loi, "Maderno, Carlo", *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 67 (Rome 2006), [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/carlo-maderno_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/carlo-maderno_(Dizionario-Biografico)/). ↩

6. Nino Carboneri, "Borromini, Francesco", Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani, vol. 13 (Rome 1971), [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-borromini_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-borromini_(Dizionario-Biografico)/), which calls Maderno a fellow countryman and distant relative of Borromini. ↩

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