



Reduced from Ø 72 mm

### Anonymous medallist

### Portrait medal of the architect Carlo Fontana, aged forty-three

### Rome circa 1681

BRONZE, very fine original cast. 72 mm diameter. Pierced at 12:00; traces of verdigris.

*Obverse* Bust to left, a portrait of Carlo Fontana, in the robes of the Knights of Christ. Around, EQVES CAROLVS FONTANA ET | ATIS SVE A. XXXXIII

*Reverse* Modelled in low relief, depicting Architecture holding a pair of dividers in one hand, and a scroll in the other, the instruments of the other Fine Arts (the palette and brushes of Painting; the drill, mallet, and chisels of Sculpture) littered on the ground beneath her feet. Around, SVPEREMIN ET OMNES

PROVENANCE Stonyhurst College, Lancashire — sale Christie's, 'Ancient English and Foreign Coins, Banknotes, and Commemorative medals', London, 6 March 1990, lot 800

**A** **PORTRAIT MEDAL** of Carlo Fontana (22 April 1638–16 February 1714), aged forty-three, wearing the robes of the Knights of Christ, the papal order awarded to successful artists. Fontana had been trained as an architect in Rome, initially by Pietro da Cortona, then by Bernini, who he succeeded in 1664 as *misuratore e stimatore della Camera Apostolica* and in 1666 as *misuratore della Rev. Fabbrica di S. Pietro*. After Bernini's death in 1680, Fontana was put in charge of the secular papal buildings, and made a Knight of Christ. He soon became the leading architect in Rome.

The obverse is also found with the lettering divided E | TATIS and initials of the medallist G.A.L. on the truncation, with various dents, abrasions, and flattenings. Our example, lettered ET | ATIS, has no signature, and is unblemished.<sup>1</sup>

The initials G.A.L. were interpreted by Rizzini to signify Antonio Galeotti, master of the mint at Gubbio under Innocent XI (1691–1700), who struck all the *quattrini* of

<sup>1</sup> Pietro Antonio Gaetani, *Museum Mazzuchellianum* (Venice 1761), II, pp.225–226 and pl. CLVI, fig. 2.

that pope assisted by two brothers, Giuseppe and Michelangelo.<sup>2</sup> No other cast medals, however, are credited to Antonio Galeotti. Others interpret the initials as Giovanni Andrea Lorenzani (1637–1712), a specialist in small religious reliefs in bronze, who is associated however with just one or two medals, issued in 1690.<sup>3</sup> Charles Avery conflates the two attributions, giving the obverse to Galeotti and the reverse to Giovanni Antonio [*sic*] Lorenzani.<sup>4</sup>

It is likely that the pieces signed G.A.L. are ‘after casts’ (*surmoules*) made in the 1690s, when Fontana was at the height of his fame, busy remodelling the baptismal Chapel of St. Peter’s, shortly to be appointed architect of St. Peter’s (1697). As such, they could have been circulated by either Antonio Galeotti or Giovanni Andrea Lorenzani, whose recorded activities date from the 1690s. The author is however surely another medallist, someone capable of executing unusually fine sculptural detail, and working at a date closer to Fontana’s forty-third birthday.

Other examples like ours, with the lettering divided ET | ATIS, and without the signature G.A.L., include

- Madrid, Palacio Real, Patrimonio Nacional, Inv. 3V3–56<sup>5</sup>
- Modena, Galleria e Medagliere Estense, Inv. 3625 (bronze, 70.20 mm)<sup>6</sup>
- Weimar, Goethe-Nationalmuseum (bronze, 72 mm, 126.09 g)<sup>7</sup>

Examples with the lettering divided E | TATIS and signature G.A.L. include

- Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Münzkabinett (73 mm)<sup>8</sup>
- Brescia, Musei civici d’arte e storia, Gabinetto Numismatico<sup>9</sup>
- Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello (72 mm)<sup>10</sup>
- Florence, Museo Horne (lead, 71 mm)<sup>11</sup>
- Milan, Johnson Collection (bronze, 73 mm)<sup>12</sup>
- Modena, Galleria e Medagliere Estense, Inv. 3626 (bronze, 70.80 mm)<sup>13</sup>
- Weimar, Goethe-Nationalmuseum (two examples: bronze, 73 mm, 126.22 g; bronze, 71 mm, 117.96 g)<sup>14</sup>
- Unlocated<sup>15</sup>
- Unlocated (72 mm)<sup>16</sup>
- art market: Spink in association with Christie’s, ‘An Important Collection of Renaissance and Baroque Medals and Plaquettes [Timothy Clifford collection]’, London, 21 May 1996, lot 277 (brass, 70 mm)
- art market: Morton & Eden Ltd, ‘Auction 31: Coins and Medals including Renaissance and Later Medals from the Collection of Dr Charles Avery’, London, 11 June 2008, lot 521 (74 mm)<sup>17</sup>

REFERENCE Robert J. Eidlitz, *Medals and Medallions relating to Architects, compiled and edited in great part from the collection of Robert James Eidlitz* (New York 1927), p.69 no. 418 (plate 78)

<sup>2</sup> Prospero Rizzini, *Illustrazione dei Civici Musei di Brescia. Parte II. Medaglie. Serie italiana. Secoli XVI–XVIII* (Brescia 1892), no. 960.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Nils Daniel Bildt, *Les Médailles romaines de Christine de Suede* (Rome 1908), pp.123–125; Giorgio Morelli, ‘Giovanni Andrea Lorenzani: artista e letterato romano del Seicento’ in *Studi Secenteschi* 13 (1972), especially pp.197, 225; Jennifer Montagu, *Gold, silver and bronze: Metal sculpture of the Roman Baroque* (New Haven & London 1996), p.229 (note 35).

<sup>4</sup> Charles Avery, ‘Soldani’s models for medals and his training’ in *Studies in the History of art, 21: Italian Medals*, edited by J. Graham Pollard (Washington, DC 1987), pp.14–15.

<sup>5</sup> *Cortes del Barroco: de Bernini y Velázquez a Luca Giordano*, catalogue of an exhibition, Palacio Real de Madrid, Palacio Real de Aranjuez, 15 October 2003–11 January 2004 (Madrid 2003), p.224 no. 5.16 (attributed to Charles-François Chéron).

<sup>6</sup> Elena Corradini, *Museo e Medagliere Estense tra Otto e Novecento* (Modena [1996]), p.67 no. 3 and p.129 no. 47/3 (reproduction).

<sup>7</sup> Jochen Klauß, *Die Medaillensammlung Goethes* (Berlin 2000), p.222 no. 1062 (as Antonio Galeotti).

<sup>8</sup> Lore Börner, *Die italienischen Medaillen der Renaissance und des Barock (1450 bis 1750)*, Bestandskataloge des Münzkabinetts Berlin (Berlin 1997), p.287 no. 1377.

<sup>9</sup> Rizzini (*op. cit.*), p.140 no. 960.

<sup>10</sup> Fiorenza Vannel and Giuseppe Toderi, *Medaglie italiane del Museo Nazionale del Bargello. Volume II: Secolo XVII* (Florence 2005), p.95 no. 797.

<sup>11</sup> Fiorenza Vannel and Giuseppe Toderi, *La medaglia barocca in Toscana* (Florence 1987), p.22 fig. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Cesare Johnson, *Collezione Johnson di medaglie, I. – Secoli XV–XVIII* (Milan 1990), p.235 no. 146 (credited to Antonio Galeotti).

<sup>13</sup> Elena Corradini, *Museo e Medagliere Estense tra Otto e Novecento* (Modena [1996]), p.67 no. 4 and p.129 no. 47/4 (reproduction).

<sup>14</sup> Jochen Klauß, *Die Medaillensammlung Goethes* (Berlin 2000), pp.221–222 nos. 1060–1061 (as Antonio Galeotti).

<sup>15</sup> Allan Braham and Hellmut Hager, *Carlo Fontana. The Drawings at Windsor Castle* (London 1977), p.12 and illustrations 567–568.

<sup>16</sup> Eidlitz (*op. cit.*), p.69 no. 418.

<sup>17</sup> Also reproduced by Avery (*op. cit.*), p.15 fig. 5.