Domenico Fontana Encyclopedia Article

Domenico Fontana

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Domenico Fontana

1543-1607

Italian architect and engineer who designed some of Rome's most famous structures, including the Vatican library and St. Peter's Basilica. Fontana was born in Melide in 1543. He traveled to Rome in 1563, where he was hired by Cardinal Montalto (1521-1590) (who would later become Pope Sixtus V) to design a chapel in the church of St. Maria Maggiore (1585). Assisting the Pope in his plan to modernize Rome, Fontana designed the Vatican library (1587-1590), the Lateran Palace (1587), and collaborated with Italian architect Giacomo della Porta (1541-1604) on the completion of St. Peter's dome (1588-1590), following the plans left by the great artist Michelangelo (1475-1564). Fontana was most famous for moving the Egyptian obelisk from the Vatican to the front of St. Peter's.