

Hic est Raphael? Carlo Maratti and the Figure of the Artist in the Seventeenth Century

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Abstract. As Raphael (1483-1520) had done before him, Carlo Maratti (1625-1713) supervised one of the most renowned artistic schools of the day and became one of Rome's most prominent painters. A major point of comparison between Maratti, Raphael and Annibale Carracci (1560-1609) was that they were the best draftsmen of their time and got much of their inspiration in the ancient world. Based on primary sources such as his biographies by Giovan Pietro Bellori (1613-1696) and Lione Pascoli (1674-1744), as well as his graphic and painterly works, this essay examines how Maratti's image was constructed and displayed. This essay also explores the artist's private life, from his long-lasting affair with a young model to his purported moderation and sobriety. During the Seicento, legitimacy and power were assigned to artists by establishing connections (actual or fabricated) to figures. In biography, these connections were expressed through the reworking of tropes and motifs taken from the greatest biographers of the past. This is the premise behind a joint project that Maratti undertook with his close friend Bellori. The project focused on revalorizing and commemorating Raphael and Annibale Carracci. Indeed, Maratti's biography then served as a legitimizing tool for his own career. The artist's self-fashioning thus contributed to his great success and his championing of the Classicist aesthetic and of an ideal artistic lineage with Raphael at the forefront is essential to understand the image of the modern artist.

Keywords: Baroque; Carlo Maratti; artist's legacy; self-fashioning; artists' biography

[en] *Hic est Raphael?* Carlo Maratti y la figura del artista en el siglo XVII

Resumen. Al igual que Rafael (1483-1520), Carlo Maratti (1625-1713) supervisó una de las escuelas más célebres e influyentes de su época y se convirtió en uno de los pintores más destacados de Roma. Uno de los principales puntos de comparación entre Maratti, Rafael y Annibale Carracci (1560-1609) es que, en vida, lideraban a sus contemporáneos por su gran habilidad como dibujantes. Además, los tres se inspiraban en el mundo antiguo. A partir de fuentes primarias tales como las biografías de Maratti escritas por Giovan Pietro Bellori (1613-1696) y Lione Pascoli (1674-1744), así como también su obra gráfica y pictórica, este ensayo examina cómo se construyó y difundió la imagen del artista barroco; explorando también la vida privada del artista, desde su larga relación con una joven modelo hasta su supuesta mesura y sobriedad. Durante el Seicento, la legitimidad y el poder de los artistas se asignaban mediante conexiones (reales o inventadas) con figuras; en la biografía, estas conexiones se expresaban a través de la reelaboración de temas y motivos tomados de los más grandes biógrafos del pasado. Así, un proyecto conjunto que Maratti emprendió con su íntimo amigo Bellori se centró en la revalorización y conmemoración de Rafael y Annibale Carracci, y esta conexión fue para Maratti una herramienta legitimadora en su carrera. La autofiguración de Maratti contribuyó entonces a su gran éxito y su reivindicación de la estética clasicista; su propuesta de un linaje artístico ideal, con Rafael a la cabeza, es esencial para entender la imagen del artista moderno.

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Palabras clave: Barroco; Carlo Maratti; legado artístico; autofiguración; biografía de artistas

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1. Introduction

It is said that Pope Leo X (r. 1513-1521) cried upon hearing of Raphael's (1483-1520) passing. No artist since antiquity had garnered such pomp and recognition at his death. In the following century the Urbinate became synonymous with artistic perfection and attained a quasi-divine status. He acted as the guiding light of one of the foremost painters of the Seicento. Carlo Maratti (1625-1713), like Raphael before him, ran and supervised one of the leading schools of the day. The former's importance and contribution to Roman Baroque art was immense: Maratti was painter to seven popes, thrice *principe* (or head) of the Accademia di San Luca and became the leading painter of Rome in the late seventeenth century². His authority and production in the city also preceded the end of Roman hegemony over the arts.

Both Maratti and his master Andrea Sacchi (1599-1661) represented the Classical and scholarly inclination in the Eternal City³. They revered and referenced Raphael and Annibale Carracci (1560-1609) throughout their careers. This was also a key aspect in the long-lasting and collaborative friendship Maratti developed with the art theorist and biographer Giovan Pietro Bellori (1613-1696), the greatest exponent of classical idealism in the seventeenth century. Together, they embarked on a joint project of revalorization and commemoration of Raphael and Annibale Carracci that left an enduring mark on the culture of their time.

The current issue of the *Anales de Historia del Arte*, dedicated to the image of artists, offers a perfect opportunity to examine Carlo Maratti's persona, his self-fashioning, and the role of biography in cementing his legacy. To gain insight into the construction and display of his image, this article will use primary sources such as Giovan Pietro Bellori and Lione Pascoli's (1674-1744) *Vite*, as well as graphic and painterly works by Maratti.

² The Maratti catalogue raisonné by Stella Rudolph and Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò will be published in the near future by Ugo Bozzi, Rome. See also Liliana Barroero, Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, and Sebastian Schütze (eds.), *Maratti e l'Europa* (Giornate di studio su Carlo Maratti nel terzo centenario della morte (1713-2013), Roma: Campisano editore, 2015) and Sybille Ebert-Schifferer and Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò (eds.), *Maratti e la sua fortuna* (Rome: Campisano Editore, 2017).

³ See Ann Sutherland Harris, *Andrea Sacchi* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1977) and "Andrea Sacchi and Carlo Maratti, 1630 to 1660," in *Maratti e l'Europa*, edited by Liliana Barroero, Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, and Sebastian Schütze (Rome: Campisano editore, 2015), 13-24.

2. Extraordinary beginnings

One of the points emphasized by this special issue of *Anales* is the reflection on the image of the artist as “genius”. However, this term must be taken with a grain of salt. The image of the artist as a tormented character gained weight in the nineteenth century, though biographers usually mentioned the taciturn or unruly nature of certain artists such as Annibale Carracci or Caravaggio to name a few. Indeed, in their seminal work *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist* Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz discuss how certain “divine artists” personalities, interests, and appearances could be in complete opposition to each other, with one resembling a tormented genius and the other an elegant and princely intellectual⁴. A motif in artists’ biographies stressed by Kris and Kurz is the triumph of youthful talent against heavy resistance from the artist’s close entourage⁵. As a child, Maratti was first sent to Rome to develop his talent by helping his brother Bernabeo. In his *vita* of the painter, Bellori writes: “Fate, however, did not fail to stand in the way of the young man’s growing genius, through his meddling brother Bernabeo, who thwarted him to block the path on which he was so well launched”⁶. Another point highlighted by Kris and Kurz is that the development of genius and talent usually starts from an early age⁷. Bellori recounts that Maratti’s exceptional skill and passion for drawing started from a very young age⁸. At eleven, Maratti entered the workshop of Andrea Sacchi where he thrived studying and copying the works of Raphael, who was held in the highest esteem by his master⁹. Bellori recounts that from the very beginning, the master remarked

the fine nature of this boy and the great promise he showed in some drawings copied after Raphael at that time, he [Andrea Sacchi] gladly took him into his school, where Carlo attended sessions with great fervor and studied with such perseverance that he then continued there until Andrea’s death¹⁰.

This accentuation of the artist’s early predilection for drawing is of vital importance for Bellori’s conception of “l’idea” and what the perfect artist should strive

⁴ Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *La légende de l’artiste: un essai historique*, trans. Laure Cahen-Maurel (Paris: Allia, 2010), 114.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁶ Giovan Pietro Bellori, *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors, and Architects: A New Translation and Critical Edition*, edited by Hellmut Wohl and Tommaso Montanari, trans. Alice Sedgwick Wohl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 309. The original text in Italian: “Non lasciava però la fortuna di far contrasto alla virtù crescent di questo giovane per mezzo dell’indiscreto fratello Bernabeo, che egli si attraversava per impedirgli il sentiero si bene incamminato” Giovan Pietro Bellori, *Le vite de’ pittori, scultori e architetti moderni*, edited by Evelina Borea (Turin: Einaudi, 1976), 578. A new bilingual (Italian–German) edition of the *Vite* is currently being prepared by the Bellori Edition Project of the Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome and published by Wallstein Verlag. Bellori’s biography of Maratti is scheduled to be published later this year, edited by Sabrina Leps and Anja Brug.

⁷ Kris and Kurz, *La légende*, 21.

⁸ Bellori, *Le vite*, 575.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Bellori, *The Lives*, 398. The original text in Italian: “l’indole buona di questo giovanetto e la grande speranza che dava per alcuni disegni allora copiati da Rafaele, volentieri lo ricevè nella sua scuola, ove Carlo con gran fervore frequentava gli studii, e vi studio con tanta perseveranza che la continuò poscia fino alla morte d’Andrea”. *Ibid.*, *Le vite*, 575.

for and excel at. Furthermore, drawing was a discipline oftentimes associated with Raphael, Annibale, and their respective schools.

The young Maratti was described by Bellori as serious, hard-working and well-mannered, avoiding

all youthful frivolity, nor did a day go by that he did not study the ever-commendable works of Raphael, applying himself constantly to achieving and selecting what was most beautiful in the art in those Stanze, where he would be the first to arrive and the last to leave, minding neither heat nor cold, not to mention the extremes of the seasons¹¹.

Here, he is presented as diligent and disciplined though there is something to be said about the obsessiveness and quasi-masochistic quality of his study of Raphael – the working and living conditions could be ignored as long as he was in the presence of his guiding light. One must reiterate the importance placed by Bellori on drawing in Maratti's early biography. The writer retold that the artist was so consumed by drawing that he would sometimes forget to sleep and when slumber would eventually fall on the young man, he would continue to draw in his mind¹².

One of the key criteria used to connect Maratti with Raphael and Annibale Carracci was that he was one of the greatest draftsmen of the seventeenth century. This regard for drawing played a significant role in how his school was run and how he guided his pupils. Much like Raphael, Maratti studied the ancient world and drew inspiration from it, utilizing the latter as a lens through which to view the ideal of art. This served as the cornerstone of Raphael's workshop routine, and Maratti did the same¹³. Their success depended heavily on drawing, which also served as a criterion by which an artist might be evaluated and admired: he who mastered *disegno* also attained new heights of authority.

3. A thoughtful teacher and shrewd businessman

Maratti's personal manner was also discussed by his biographers. Bellori stresses that the painter was very kind towards his students and adopted a gentle and helpful disposition with them, making sure to teach them not only through words “but also in the evidence of the demonstrations he gives by taking now the pencil, now the brush from their hands, correcting defects and resolving doubts and difficulties

¹¹ Bellori, *The Lives*, 398. The original text in Italian: “essendo egli bene accostumato e lontano da ogni leggerezza giovanile, né passò mai giorno ch'ei non studiasse l'opere sempre commendabili di Rafaelle, del continuo applicato a conseguire e scegliere il più bello dell'arte in quelle camere, ove, essendo il primo a venire, ne partiva l'ultimo, non apprezzando né caldo né gelo, nonché l'eccesso delle stagioni.” *Ibid.*, *Le Vite*, 575-76.

¹² Bellori, *Le Vite*, 576.

¹³ See John Shearman, “The Organization of Raphael's Workshop,” *The Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 10 (1983); Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, “Maratti e il ‘primato del disegno’: il caso di Palazzo Altieri”, in *Maratti e l'Europa*, edited by Liliana Barroero, Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, and Sebastian Schütze (Rome: Campisano editore, 2015), 85-125; Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, “Trasmissione dei modelli a Roma nel Seicento: il disegno”, in *La tradizione dell'“Ideale classico” nelle arti figurative dal Seicento al Novecento*, edited by Michela di Macco and Silvia Ginzburg (Genoa: Sagep Editori, 2021), 391-98.

on the work”¹⁴. In his *vita* of Raphael, Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) also tells us that while working with Raphael:

Such harmony never ever existed in any other time than his. And this came about because these artists were won over by his courtesy and his skill, but even more by the genius of his good nature, which was so full of nobility and kindness that even animals loved him, not to mention other men. It is said that when other painters who knew him (and even some who did not) asked Raphael for some drawing that they required, he would leave his own work to assist them. And he always kept a great number of artisans at work, helping them and teaching them with the kind of love that is more appropriately given to one’s own children than to other artisans¹⁵.

Bellori goes further and writes that sometimes Maratti corrected so much that the pupils could sell the work as one done by their master and reap the profits¹⁶. Giulio Romano reported to Vasari that Raphael used to sometimes go over the works of his assistants until they resembled his own¹⁷. The topic of Maratti’s authorship was brought into question in the first years of the eighteenth century when critics requested that his paintings executed for St. Peter’s Baptismal Chapel be moved. In a 1710 letter to Pope Clement XI, the furious Maratti discussed his conception of authorship and the master-student dynamic – ultimately, it didn’t matter who had applied the paint on the canvas, as a work’s underlying idea was directly derived from the master’s mind¹⁸. One of Maratti’s rebuttals to the criticism he received was to explicitly compare himself to Raphael and point out that no one had ever dared attack the Renaissance master’s works in the pontifical palace.

Maratti’s *vita* also emphasized the artist’s goodwill towards those in need of help, from students to ordinary citizens:

it has sometimes happened that some workman, having done a job for him or for his household for which a small sum was due, when it came time for payment, refused the recompense, and by admitting his poverty moved Carlo to help him with some product of his brush, with which he could get a dowry for his daughter or pay his debts and give relief to his family¹⁹.

¹⁴ Bellori, *The Lives*, 424. The original text in Italian: “ma coll’evidenza delle dimostrazioni con toglier loro di mano ora la matita ora il pennello corrigendo i difetti e risolvendo i dubbii e le difficoltà su l’opera confermata dale ragioni” *Ibid.*, *Le Vite*, 632.

¹⁵ Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 211-212. The original text in Italian: “lavorando ne l’opere in compagnia di Raffaello stavano uniti e di concordia tale che tutti i mali umori nel vedere lui si amorzavano, et ogni vile e basso pensiero cadeva loro di mente: la quale unione mai non fu più in altro tempo che nel suo. E questo avveniva perché restavano vinti dalla cortesia e dall’arte sua, ma più dal genio della sua buona natura: la quale era sì piena di gentilezza e sì colma di carità, che egli si vedeva che fino agli animale l’onoravano nonché gli uomini. Dicesi che ogni pittore che conosciuto l’avesse, et anche chi non lo avesse conosciuto, se lo avessi richiesto di qualche disegno che gli bisognasse, egli lasciava l’opera sua per sovvenirlo; e sempre tenne infiniti in opera, aiutandoli et insegnandoli con quello amore che non ad artefici, ma a figliuoli propria si conveniva [...]” Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de’ Più Eccelenti Pittori Scultori e Architettori*, ed. Rosanna Bettarini and Paola Barocchi, vol. IV (Florence: Sansoni, 1987), 211-12.

¹⁶ Bellori, *Le Vite*, 632.

¹⁷ Shearman, “The Organization of Raphael’s Workshop,” 47.

¹⁸ Francesca S. Croce, “An Indignant Letter: Carlo Maratti and Raphael as Paradigm,” *Paragone Arte*, no. 171 (2023): 42-58.

¹⁹ Bellori, *The Lives*, 424. The original text in Italian: “com’egli ha ecceduto non poche volte in questi atti di carità con rifare ad alcuni e ricuoprir i quadri interi di sua mano, conoscendo la necessità loro. Nella qual beneficenza

Here, Maratti was shown to be generous with his knowledge and resources. Pascoli claims that the painter was very devout and had a special Marian veneration which explained his prolific depictions of the Madonna which early on won him the nickname “Carluccio delle madonne”²⁰. Moreover, Maratti is said to have been quick-witted and industrious. Pascoli writes:

He was not miserly, but somewhat tenacious, and wanted exactly what he requested for his works, especially from those, either who would want them for nothing, or who with beautiful words and with gifts tried to pry them out of his hands [...] ²¹.

He was clear on making a living from his work. The biographer tells us an anecdote whereby a Frenchman acquired a student copy of one of Maratti’s Madonnas and asked the master to retouch it. Maratti agreed and was given a beaver hat in return, the Frenchman then requested further retouching on the figures’ hands and gave the painter some silk garments in return. After more requests for retouching and further gifts and accessories, the Frenchman was about to leave with the painting when Maratti mentioned that they had still not accorded a price for the painting. The Frenchman was flabbergasted and asked why the presents weren’t sufficient for payment. Maratti replied “flattery aside, I am ready to compensate you for the value of your gifts; but I want three hundred *scudi* for the painting”²².

4. Leading ladies: Maratti’s women

In 1653, Maratti married Caterina Pace, though we know nothing about her except that she was registered as his wife for two years until 1654 – it is likely that she died around that time²³. Five years after his first marriage, Maratti wed Francesca Trulli, the sister of Pope Urban VIII’s trusted doctor²⁴. Their cohabitation was extremely short-lived. In her article “Maratti, Bellori e i maccheroni”, Lucia Simonato recounts the riveting affair of Maratti’s trial against his second wife Francesca Trulli²⁵. Trial documents attest that Maratti believed his wife was trying to poison him – the artist’s witnesses called to sign on his behalf were none other than his dear friend Bellori and

s’avanzò non solo co’ medemi discepoli, ma tavolta è avvenuto che alcun operaio avendo fatto qualche lavoro in suo servizio e della sua casa da sodisfarsi con poca somma, nell’atto del pagamento ha ricusato la mercede, e palesando la miseria l’ha commosso a sovvenirlo con qualche tratto del suo pannello, con riportarne una notte alla figlia o con pagare i debiti e ristorar la famiglia.” *Ibid.*, *Le Vite*, 632-633.

²⁰ Lione Pascoli, *Vite de’ Pittori, Scultori, Ed Architetti Moderni*, edited by Alessandro Marabottini and Valentino Martinelli (Perugia: Electa Editori Umbri, 1992), 204 and 206.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 208. Unless indicated otherwise, English translations of Pascoli are author’s own. “Era non avaro, ma alquanto tenace, ed esattamente voleva quel che chiedeva de’ suoi lavori, massime da coloro, o che gli avrebbero voluti per niente, o che con belle parole, e con regali procuravano di cavarglieli dalle mani [...]”

²² *Ibid.*, 209. The original text in Italian: “senza far complimenti, io son pronto a compensarvi il valore de’ vostri regali; ma trecento scudi voglio del quadro.”

²³ Francesco Petrucci, *Pittura di Ritratto a Roma: Il Seicento*, vol. II (Rome: Andreina & Valneo Budai Editori, 2008), 408.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Lucia Simonato, “Maratti, Bellori e i Maccheroni,” *Paragone* 3, n.° 123-124 (2015): 85-103.

student Niccolò Berrettoni. Following the trial, Maratti managed to obtain an official separation from Trulli who was sent to retire to a convent.



Figure 1. Carlo Maratti, *Portrait of Faustina Maratti as a Child*, 1690-1692, red chalk on paper, 375 x 275 mm, Inv. D-1533, Museo de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid.



Figure 2. Carlo Maratti, *Portrait of Francesca Gommi Maratti*, ca. 1701, oil on canvas, 98.5 x 74.5 cm, Cleveland Museum of Art.

In the 1670s, Maratti met the younger Francesca Gommi (1660-1711), who served as his model, with whom he began a long love affair. In 1679, their daughter

Faustina (fig. 1) was born. Since Maratti was still married to his second wife, albeit officially separated, it was not acceptable for him to live with his lover and daughter in the same house. Thus, he placed Faustina and Francesca in a house in front of his. In 1700 Maratti's wife Francesca Trulli died, and the painter was finally able to marry his long-time mistress, Francesca Gommi. It is in this climate of newly found legitimacy that Maratti painted the beautiful portrait of his bride displayed today at the Cleveland Museum of Art (Fig. 2). Aside from creating portraits of important patrons, Maratti was in the habit of portraying those closest to him such as his wife and daughter as well as close friends, as is attested by the vast collection of portrait drawings by Maratti at the Real Academia de San Fernando in Madrid. These drawings of a more private nature, were kept at the artist's home where they were exhibited.²⁶ Simonetta Prosperi has pointed out that the inclusion of pearl and gold jewelry on the infant Faustina as well as the luscious garments and jewelry worn by Francesca in her portrait functioned as a statement on the Maratti family's growing social status²⁷.

Maratti's union with Gommi was fruitful in many ways including business. According to Paolo Coen, the one to cement the canon of the high-level merchant-artist in the eighteenth century was undeniably Maratti, who not only sold works himself but also delegated to his wife²⁸. The latter was responsible for selling works by her husband of lesser importance and those by his students such as Giuseppe Chiari or Andrea Procaccini – in this way, by using his wife as a shield, Maratti was never involved in “minor” affairs that could tarnish his reputation²⁹. In addition to being a salesman, Maratti was also a collector, in fact, in his house at the Quattro Fontane, the artist exhibited works with a classicizing tendency by Carracci, Domenichino, and Reni among others³⁰.

5. The artist's self-fashioning

In the same way Maratti paid attention to presenting his wife and daughter in fine garments and jewelry, he was also very attentive to his own appearance in self-portraits (figs. 3 and 4). The Wittkowers' *Born Under Saturn* highlights that artists' eligibility for a public award was tacitly acknowledged as a rise of status from an older class of lesser artisans and that sixteenth and seventeenth-century artists considered this endorsement a way of satisfying their social aspirations.³¹ This desire to conform to the upper echelons of society was also illustrated by their manner of dressing.³² Maratti's presentation in the famous canvas for the Marchese Pallavicini bears wit-

²⁶ David Leonard Bershady, “The Newly Discovered Testament and Inventories of Carlo Maratti and His Wife Francesca”, *Antologia Di Belle Arti* 25/26 (1985): 70-72.

²⁷ Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, “Carlo Maratti e i ritratti disegnati della figlia Faustina”, in *Scritti di donne: 40 studiose per la storia dell'arte*, edited by Stefania Macioce (Foligno: Etgraphiae, 2022), 349-351, and Prosperi, “Le Donne Di Carlo Maratti” (Presentation in the foundation's series “Arte al femminile,” Fondazione Ernesta Besso, Rome, November 25, 2022), <https://youtu.be/BrAnUtuyUFo>

²⁸ Paolo Coen, *Il mercato dei quadri a Roma nel diciottesimo secolo*, Storia, Letteratura, Paleografia (Rome: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2010), 52-53.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 53 and 182.

³¹ Rudolf Wittkower and Margot Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn; The Character and Conduct of Artists* (New York: Random House, 1963), 235.

³² *Ibid.*, 238.

ness to this fact.³³ The artist is dressed elegantly, dons his signature wig and a large golden cross around his neck. In 1704, Maratti was knighted *Cavaliere del Sacro Ordine di Cristo* by the Pope for his services to the arts and more particularly for his recent restorations of Raphael's frescoes in the Vatican. Pascoli tells us that Maratti



Figure 3. Carlo Maratti, *Self-Portrait*, 1680s, black and red chalk, 505 x 363 mm, Inv. 1042, The Albertina Museum, Vienna.



Figure 4. Carlo Maratti, *Marchese Niccolò Maria Pallavicini (1650-1714) Guided to the Temple of Virtue by Apollo with a Self-portrait of the Artist*, 1695-1700, oil on canvas, 299.7 x 212 cm, Inv. 732098, The National Trust, Stourhead, Wiltshire, 39189 NTPL Commissioned (NTPL), ©National Trust Images/John Hammond.

³³ For the Pallavicini-Maratti patronage relationship see Stella Rudolph, *Niccolò Maria Pallavicini: l'ascesa al tempio della virtù attraverso il mecenatismo* (Rome: Ugo Bozzi, 1995).

always dressed, even in old age, not with sumptuousness, but with fine clothes and beautiful wigs. He was very attentive to cleanliness and was well-mannered. He always abhorred luxury, and more than any other that of gluttony; since he was very moderate and sober, he claimed that in order to enjoy good health, sobriety was necessary, fasting was needed from time to time to awaken the mind, and it was necessary to eat scantily in order to live a long life.³⁴

This does not seem to correspond to the lavish lunches Maratti and his crew enjoyed while they worked on restoring Raphael's frescoes at the Vatican in 1702.³⁵ Ultimately, whether Maratti's presumed sobriety and moderation was factual is not of interest but rather how it was highlighted in his biographies. The Wittkowers set out that there were certain rules of conduct for the accomplished gentleman artist—in his *Dialogo di pittura*, Cinquecento artist and writer Paolo Pino argued that the gentleman artist should eat moderately in order to live and dress fittingly, and Leon Battista Alberti stressed that the artist should be man of learning and well-versed in liberal arts.³⁶ Maratti exhibited himself with the utmost propriety, counted one of the leading cultural intellectuals of the day as one of his closest friends and is said to have had special relationships with the pontiffs he served. Pascoli claims that Clement XI would frequently call Maratti to the pontifical palace and treated him “with distinct signs of affection and esteem”³⁷.

A drawing held at Berlin's Kupferstichkabinett (fig. 5) can help us gain further insight into the way Maratti wanted to portray himself and be understood. The drawing shows the elegantly dressed painter, in an interior setting, kneeling before the pontiff and flanked by a female figure. The Berlin Museum has identified this drawing as either *Pope Clement XI elevates Maratti to the rank of Cavaliere di Cristo* or *Pope Innocent XII hands Maratti the letter appointing him custodian of Raphael's paintings in the Vatican and the Sistine Chapel*. I would argue that the drawing corresponds to the latter description because of a curious element in the female figure accompanying the painter. Upon closer observation of the female figure, one can discern that she has a small mask attached to a chain hanging around her neck. This same figure appears in another graphic work by Maratti, then used as a frontispiece in the *Galleria Farnesiana Icones: Annibale Carracci Introduces painting to Apollo and Minerva* (fig. 6). Therefore, according to the identification of the figure in said frontispiece, the woman next to the kneeling Maratti is none other than the personification of painting; this is an incredibly significant statement in the artist's self-fashioning. Painting is standing to his right, her left hand placed on his shoulder in a gesture of support. She brings her hand to her chest in a show of humility. But is the inclusion of this figure not a blatant display of hubris? There is also something to be said about the classicizing architecture in the background; it serves as a reminder of the symbolic weight and authority of antiquity. Maratti had included the personification of painting in reference to Annibale Carracci, a figure which both he

³⁴ Pascoli, *Vite*, 209. The original text in Italian: “Vesti sempre fino all'ultimo di sua vecchiaja non con fasto, ma con buoni abiti, e con belle parrucche. Amò molto la pulisia, e si trattò civilmente. Abominò sempre il lusso, e più d'ogn'altro quel della mensa; e come egli era parchissimo, e sobrissimo diceva, che per goder la salute, si richiedeva la sobrietà, per aver la mente svegliata, era necessario di quando in quando il digiuno, e per vivere assai bisognava mangiar poco.”

³⁵ Edith Cicerchia and Anna Maria de Strobel, “Documenti inediti dell'Archivio Segreto Vaticano sui restauri delle Stanze di Raffaello e della Cappella Sistina nel Settecento,” *Bollettino dei Monumenti Musei e Gallerie Pontificie* 6 (1986): 133.

³⁶ Wittkower and Wittkower, *Born*, 93.

³⁷ Pascoli, *Vite*, 206: “con distinti segni d'affetto e di stima”.

and his close friend Giovan Pietro Bellori claimed to be the new Raphael and savior of painting in the seventeenth century. Together, they strove to build a Classicist lineage of painters in the Seicento which began with Carracci and culminated with Maratti – against this background the Berlin drawing is testament to Maratti’s wish to insert himself within this “divine” lineage. One could hypothesize that this drawing was intended to become a commemorative painting that was never realized.



Figure 5. Carlo Maratti, *Pope Innocent XII Hands Maratti the Letter Appointing him Custodian of Raphael’s Paintings in the Vatican and the Sistine Chapel*, ca. 1693-94, brown pen and pencil on paper, 23.5 x 16.4 cm, Inv. KdZ 16586, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin/Jörg P. Anders.

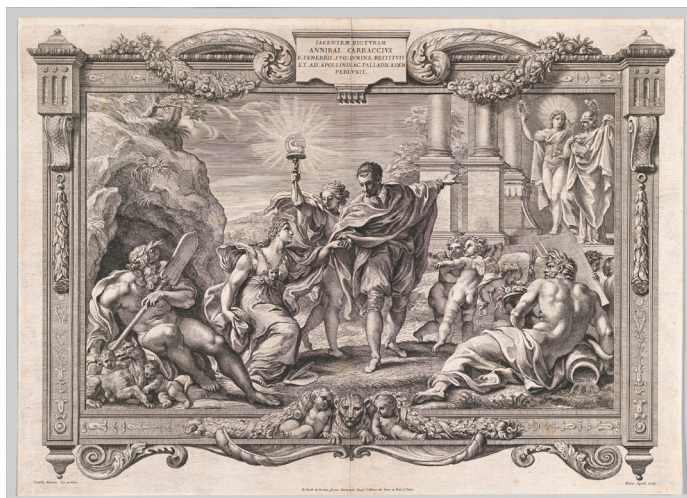


Figure 6. Pietro Aquila after Carlo Maratti, *Annibale Carracci Introduces Painting to Apollo and Minerva*, Frontispiece of *Galleria Farnesianae Icones*, ca. 1674, etching and engraving, 46 × 64.1 cm, Inv. 51.501.2593, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

6. Closing remarks

In his text “The Artist as Genius”, William Wallace writes that genius was transmitted from an individual to a deserving follower.³⁸ Thus, Galileo made the claim that he was born on the day Michelangelo died and made arrangements to be buried next to the artist in Santa Croce.³⁹ Raphael died on Good Friday, the same day he was born, and was buried at the Pantheon. Annibale Carracci, whom Bellori and Maratti considered the true heir of the Urbinate, requested to be buried close to Raphael at the Pantheon. His request was only conceded thanks to the joint efforts of Maratti and the biographer over 60 years after his death.

Wallace goes further and writes that “genius” is more than just natural talent and artistic accomplishments, in fact, it is the geniuses themselves who essentially define the term.⁴⁰ Many intricate and powerful strategies were involved in Maratti’s construction of his image and artistic myth. Legitimacy was awarded by connections to figures – real or constructed – and in biography this played out through the re-elaboration of tropes and motifs taken from the great biographers of Antiquity and the Renaissance. One of Maratti’s greatest achievements was not only his position as an artist, but his promotion of the Classicist aesthetic and reinforcement of an ideal artistic lineage and a legacy of “geniuses” that still remains relevant today as a guide to understand the history of a taste and the image of the modern artist.

6. Conflict of interests

None.

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³⁸ William E Wallace, “The Artist as Genius”, in *A Companion to Renaissance and Baroque Art*, edited by Babette Bohn and James M Saslow (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 159.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 161.

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