

Francesco Cavallini

Italian sculptor
(17th cent)

There are no documents on the place of birth of this sculptor; born some in Bissone, about 1640, according to others in Carrara. It has been documented since 1672 in Rome, where it soon became one of the best students of Cosimo Fancelli. The first note of work is the sculptural group depicting The Three Graces, decorated in the left fountain of the Borghese palace garden, for which it was paid on July 2, 1672 and again until 1673.

From that moment on, Cavallini, together with M. Maglia, with whom he later worked, became one of the youngest hopes of the last Roman Baroque current. In 1677 the Arcicofraternity of S. Carlo al Corso paid to Cavallini Fancelli and Cavallini, his help, sculptures in the higher altar of the church; this work, today difficult to identify for further transformation of the altar itself, had to give it a greater reputation. This is demonstrated by both his enrollment at the Pantheon Academy of Virtues on July 10, 1678, and the Academic Election of St. Luca on Oct. 8, 1678. 1684, is the renewed and much more important commission (1677) by the Archconfratemit of St. Charles of the series of ten stucco statues of Sante and Saints larger than natural, to be placed within the niches in the pillars of the lower aisles and the ambulatory of the church. For this work, carried out autonomously, payments are made from 1679 until the balance of 31 July 1682..

At this date, Cavallini's style is more precise: on the one hand the rhythm of the drama in the manner of A. Raggi defines the measure of Berninian acceptance, on the other a certain executive facility and certain formal injustices that render unequal the rendered the limits of his abilities, better suited to decorative works than to the true statuary.

As a stuccoer, Cavallini was employed in the vault of the chapel of S. Pietro d'Alcantara in S. Maria in Aracoeli, crowning M. Maglia's work, concluded in 1682; the Cavallini made a fresco of Marcantonio Napoletano a "garland of flowers", held by four putti. For the same church he still worked in the chapel of S. Pasquale Baylon. Perhaps, as early as 1683, it was entrusted to Cavallini the execution of half figures of Cardinals Lorenzo and Alderano Cybo, for the chapel of the family in S. Maria del Popolo made remodelled by the latter by Cavallini Fontana; The chapel, defined as "task" in October of 1686, was inaugurated on May 25, 1687. With the etiquette stereometry that had been designed by the Fountain contrast the two sculptures, unstably projected out of the oval medallions, and the fresh naturalness of the portrait of Alderano Cybo, in contrast to that a bit stereotyped by Cardinal Lorenzo. At Cavallini, the models of the bronze Angels are also supported by the altar canteen.

In these same years the sculptor was simultaneously engaged in several churches. The 28th August 1680 was discovered the highest altar of the church of Jesus and Mary, adorned by four angels on the eaves of the frontispiece and two others holding the Bolognetti coat of arms on the triumphal arch.

At a later time, as well as in Maglia and L. Ottoni, the allegorical figures for the deposits of the Bolognetti family were ordered; at Cavallini they are the two figures in the first and third niches of the right wall, in addition to the tomb of Giorgio (died on August 8, 1686), in which he attempts a naturalistic, though fortified interpretation of the nineteen-year-old prelate, other than Francesco Mario, whose laying remembers the style of Pietro da Cortona mediated by Fancelli. While waiting for these works, the artist was commissioned to participate in the vast decorative program of S. Maria dell'Umiltà, with wide intervention of the Fountain both in the architectural part and in the design of the ornate stucco.

Under the direction of Pietro Vecchiarelli, Cavallini had put stuccos inside the chapel Colonna (of the Crucifix), whose architectural complex was completed in 1685: here the two Angels, supporting one the spear and the other the column, denote the nervous influence and a little melancholic art of the Rages. At Cavallini all the parts of the stucco decoration of the central nave - where he performed the Angels figures in the "coretes" - and the main chapel where there are two lateral reliefs with S. Maria Maddalena and S. Caterina della Rota almost finished in 1686. From 1692 it was the altar of the Conti family in the chapel of S. Anna in S. Maria in Campitelli where, in collaboration with F. Baratta, Cavallini sculpted the elegant Angelo rightfully supporting the marble frame of the painting, while with the Knit he worked on the stucco of the vault. His are also stuccoes with putti, festoons and shells of the vault of the second chapel on the left. Finally, in 1686, there were models for travertine statues depicting S. Marcello and S. Filippo Benizi for the lower order of the church's façade of S. Marcello, set up some time later. In 1703 the other four statues of the upper floor were added: the Blessed Gioacchino da Siena and Blessed Francesco Patrizi to the corners, and the allegories of Faith and Hope on the sections of the pediment. These works, together with the relief round of Rages, completed the decorative program of the facade according to the project of Carlo Fontana (whose design is in Berlin, Staatliche Museen Kunstbibliothek), to which these artists attended faithfully, except for minor minorities. These works also mark the late date of Cavallini's last known activity.

Cavallini's production is reported, without convincing or verifiable arguments, in the church of S. Anna dei Calzettari, demolished in the last century, in the church of the Hospice of S. Maria Assunta in Cielo. There are several sculptures attributed to him: two amphorae in the second poultry of Villa Borghese, a Stucco Crucifix, a marble bust and astucco statue depicting S. Carlo Borromeo in the church of S. Carlo al Corso; two Angels reggistema in the transept of S. Maria in Campitelli. Cavallini's

production does not stand out for originality; the sculptor has developed an eclectic fashion art that embraces all the sculptural tendencies between Algardi and Bernini, not always supported by adequate technical skills. Its qualities are best expressed in the processing of the stucco, which alternates with polished solutions to more jagged, pointing to some pittoricity in the folds of garments. In this sense his ways align with that formal taste that will be defined as a protorococò trend.

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