

Francesco Maratti

Italian sculptor
(1669-1719)

Francesco Maratti (Moratti) was probably born in 1669 (based on the age declared in the act of death); the place of birth is generally identified in the city of Padua, where his artistic training took place and from which he took the name of Padovano.

The training as a sculptor took place in the workshop of the Genoese F. Parodi, engaged in the Basilica of the Saint; a direct collaboration with Parodi occurred in all likelihood for the *Monument of Count Horace Secco*, around 1686. The young Maratti is ascribed the figure of the man seated on a breastplate in the act of choking a snake.

At least since 1692 Maratti was in Rome, where the first news of his presence dates back to the participation in the competition announced by the Academy of St. Luca, in which two students of Parodi were affirmed: on January 25 of that year the prizes of first sculpture class were assigned to the first place to the Genoese A. de 'Rossi and to the third to "Francesco Murati di Padua".

Since 1693 there have been payments in favor of Maratti by Prince Livio Odescalchi for the tomb of Innocenzo XI carried out by P.É. Monnot, partly based on drawings by Carlo Maratti (Maratta). The collaboration is confirmed by a model of the tomb, with wax figures, reported in the inventory of the goods of Maratti (in Marchionne Gunter); the design phase could refer to the terracotta sketch of the Museum of the Palazzo di Venezia, traditionally ascribed to P. Le Gros, only recently attributed by Walker to Maratti and linked to a payment received on 7 January. 1696.

The first important Roman work was for the altar of St. Ignatius of Loyola in the Church of Jesus, a grandiose undertaking directed by A. Pozzo in which French sculptors were established and some young men who proposed an alternative to the imperious Bernini models. The assignment for the two pairs of angels destined to the side walls was entrusted to C. Rusconi, who executed the angels under the organ in the right wall, and to Fr. Papaleo, who renounced the assignment; the commission for the left wall then passed to Maratti (angel on the right) and L. Ottoni (angel on the left).

The marble was delivered in the study of Maratti in the Palazzo di S. Marco on 12 March 1697 and the balance, for a total of 325 scudi, was paid on 20 November. 1699. At the same time Maratti performed two other stucco angels for the tympanum of the high altar of S. Maria in Vallicella; paid 80 scudi on 10th July and 13th October 1698, were realized following Rusconi's drawings, responsible for the completion of the plastic decoration of the nave.

Shortly after Maratti realized the *St. Francis de Sales and the angel* for the homonymous church of Trastevere (now in the Visitation monastery of via Galla Placidia), commissioned by the impresario of marble Giovan Domenico Transi, father of two nuns visitandine ; Maratti signed the contract on 25 Jan. 1699; the sculptural group, costing

575 scudi, was terminated between the death of Transi (20 December 1700) and the consecration of the altar (29 Jan. 1701). Considered his masterpiece, the *S. Francesco di Sales* inaugurates a treatment of surfaces of a slightly rippled liquidity and a refined theatricality, achieved also thanks to the comparison with the painting models of C. Maratti.

The full insertion into the artistic life of Rome was ratified by the entry into the Compagnia dei Virtuosi al Pantheon, which took place on February 14th. 1700; his first assignment was the care of the equipment for the feast of St. Joseph, March 19. At the turn of the 1700s he worked at the *Sepulcher of Francesco Erizzo* in the church of San Marco, commissioned by the Venetian ambassador Nicolò Erizzo, father of Francesco; the funeral monument in the center, between two winged statues of the *Fama*, a bas-relief medallion with the effigy of Erizzo, who died in 1699 at the age of sixteen; the attribution was confirmed by the presence of a "portrait of terra cotta of the Ecc (ellentissi) mo S (ignor) Ambasciator Erricio" (Marchionne Gunter).

Another proof of portraiture was that of *Cardinal Enrico Noris*, owner of S. Agostino; the bust, executed on the terracotta preparatory model recalled in Maratti inventory, is shortly after the cardinal's death (1704); in 1708 it was already described at the side door of the church, from where it was removed during the Vanvitellian works. According to a convincing hypothesis of Guerrieri Borsoi, the work currently on the left of access to the sacristy would not be the one sculpted by Maratti but a replica of G. Sibilla made to adapt it to the new location; while the original should be identified in the most refined version of the nearby Angelica Library. Maratti has also been attributed a *Bust of a nobleman* preserved in the Museum of Rome.

The most famous and most successful of Maratti's portraits is that of the painter *Carlo Maratti*, executed in two versions: one finished by 1704 and placed in S. Maria degli Angeli on the funeral monument designed by the same painter commissioner, and an autograph replica, a little later (perhaps the work paid 300 scudi on 11 April 1709), commissioned by Niccolò Maria Pallavicini, then moved to Florence and finally to the Staatliche Museen in Berlin, where it was damaged during the Second World War. The protection by the most influential painter of the time was not due to ties of kinship but to an affinity of taste that drove C. Maratti to support the candidacy of Maratti for the appointment as an academic, obtained in the meeting of May 25, 1711. The close relationships are also witnessed by the numerous maratteschi paintings owned by Maratti.

However, his fame had to be significant as early as 1708, if F. Posterla came to define him "one of the most famous sculptors of our time, as he is testified by his works". The artistic affirmation of Maratti coincides with the pontificate of Clement XI, who also chose him as one of his official portraitists.

A few days after the election of Clement XI, the city of Urbino decided to erect a statue in the main square; the commitment was renewed in 1705, but the pope decided to take charge of the expenditure, thus checking directly that the sculpture responded to his projects of reform of academic taste; the full-length statue dated 1710, already in the ducal palace and today in the cathedral, long unjustly assigned to A. Cornacchini, is instead to Maratti and was initially performed for Montecassino. Numerous busts derived from the Urbino prototype, for which it is difficult to arrive at certain

attributions. A second version of *Clement XI* was sent to Montecassino and placed in the portico of the Bramante cloister of the abbey. This is the last of the four statues that Maratti sculpted for the Benedictines, partially damaged during the last war. From 1703, for the niches of the cloister of the benefactors the figures of the parents of s were realized. Benedict (*Anicio Euproprio Probo* and *Abundantia*, completed in 1708), which was followed by the statue of *Anicio Tertullo*. The contract for the statue of the reigning pope was stipulated on 9 June 1706 and was renewed on 29 May 1708 with the abbot Gregorio Galisio following the first version of the first version to Urbino; the final fee was paid on October 26th. 1711. Del *S. Euproprio* also preserves a sketch in the Martinelli collection in the Palazzo della Penna in Perugia.

The maximum affirmation of Maratti arrived with the commission of *S. Simone* for the cycle of the *Apostles* in the central nave of *S. Giovanni* in Laterano.

Maratti was also entrusted with the task of following the works of *St. Peter*, in the first instance assigned to J.-B. Théodon, for which he executed a model in 1705; but the realization of the work passed to Monnot. The model of *S. Simone* was approved in December 1704 and the roughing of the statue, almost 5 m high, began around 1706; overall Maratti received payments for over 1500 scudi, concluded with the installment of 330 scudi on July 7, 1710. The statue is marked by a moderate Arcadian classicism: contained and lithe pose, concentrated expression, thin and close-fitting cloths.

Also Clemente XI involved Maratti in the restoration of five Egyptian statues found at the Horti Sallustiani and donated to the Roman people in 1714 to be placed in Campidoglio (after a first placement in the Museo Nuovo, in 1839 they passed to the Gregorian Egyptian Museum); Maratti was entrusted with the superintendency of the restoration work and the compensation of the colossal granite figure of Queen Tuya, works paid between December 1714 and September 1716, for a total of 200 scudi.

The last great commitment of Maratti is part of the plan of embellishment of the basilica of *S. Maria* in Cosmedin and of the opposite Piazza Bocca della Verità, arranged by the presidency of the roads on a project entrusted in 1715 to architect CF Bizzaccheri, author of the design of the big fountain.

At the center of the star tank emerges a cliff worked by F. Bai, on which lie the two *Tritons* of Maratti, one from the other shoulders and with the intertwined tails, which hold the cup with the papal coat of arms. The works were started on 11 ag. 1717 and ended on 7 January. 1719; with Clement XI's chirograph, issued three days later, it was established that the fee was to be paid by the Presidency of the Annona.

Maratti died in Rome on the 26th of January. 1719 at the age of 50, without having made a will; he left his wife Antonia Ferrari, and five minor children.

by Claudio Gamba - Biographical Dictionary of Italians - Volume 69 (2007)

Translated from:

[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-maratti_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-maratti_(Dizionario-Biografico))