

Trinity Fine Art

Carlo Maratti

(Camerano, 1625 - Roma 1713)

Ritratto di Gaspare Marcaccioni

Oil on canvas, 96.5 x 72 cm

c. 1672–3



In his *Life of Maratti*, Bellori describes the *Portrait of Gaspare Marcaccioni*, immediately after his own, in these words: “Nor any less praiseworthy is the portrait of Gasparo Marcaccioni, who being the accountant and chief minister of Cardinal Antonio Barberini deploys with both hands a book containing the first three even numbers namely from 1 to 2, from 2 to 4, from 4 to 8, similarly the odd numbers from 1 to 3, from 3 to 9, from 9 to 27; beneath this sits the motto: *NUMERIS NATVRA GVBERNAT*”.

Marcaccioni (1620–74) whom Stella Rudolph argues Maratti may have portrayed at an earlier age than in the picture now in Berlin¹, was the accountant first to Cardinal Antonio Barberini and subsequently to Cardinal Paluzzi Altieri. Maratti probably met him in the Barberini household thanks to Scacchi, of whose will Marcaccioni was an executor², and must have continued to meet him in the Altieri household when he became their painter of choice. Documents unearthed by Salomon tell us that he was also a collector because he owned paintings by both painters, along with others by Ciro Ferri, Giacinto Brandi, Mario de' Fiori and Jusepe de Ribera as well as copies of work by Paolo Veronese. His more significant artistic commissions included the chapel in the church of Santa Maria del Suffragio in Rome, built by Giovan Battista Contini, where he was buried alongside his wife, both of them portrayed in two busts carved by Paolo Naldini³, and which was decorated by Berrettoni and Chiari, two pupils of Maratti who undoubtedly recommended them to the patron commissioning the work.



Fig. 1: Carlo Maratti, *Portrait of Gaspare Marcaccioni (?)*, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie

¹ [Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, oil on canvas, 65.5 x 53.3 cm (inv. 426A). In actual fact, the Berlin painting bears an inscription on the back of the relining canvas stating: AETATIS SVAE XXIV / ET III MENS / IN ROMA 1663 / C.M.F. Thus if we take the inscription at face value, Maratti signed the portrait in 1663 when the sitter was aged twenty-four years and three months; but given that Marcaccioni was born in 1620, there is a clear chronological inconsistency here because by 1663 Marcaccioni was actually twenty years older. Yet as Rudolph points out, there is an obvious similarity. One possible explanation is that there may be a mistake in the inscription on the relining canvas (and the inscription is probably still to be found also on the original canvas beneath it). In the event the original date were 1643, for example, both the chronology and the features of the sitter, portrayed thirty years earlier, would match. In addition to which, the Berlin portrait also displays a more youthful appearance than the version under discussion here in stylistic terms.

² A. Harris Sutherland, *Andrea Sacchi: complete edition of the paintings with a critical catalogue*, Oxford 1977, p. 127.

³ Salomon 2012, see literature, figs. 24, 25.

Our painting, once feared lost, was identified by Loretta Mozzoni⁴, yet recently published first by Costanzi⁵ and then by Salomon⁶ with a reconstruction of the picture's various changes of ownership within the Marcaccioni family. The painting is described in a family inventory draft in 1734 as “a picture portraying Gasparo Marcaccione in the guise of a philosopher, by Carlo Maratta, gilded frame”. A detail explains why the sitter appeared to be “in the guise of a philosopher” to the person who drafted the inventory: the picture reflects the iconography of ancient philosophers such as Euclid, Archimedes and so on developed in a substantial number of paintings by Ribera, Giordano and other painters of the period.



Fig. 2: Carlo Maratti, *Portrait of Gaspare Marcaccioni*, Liechtenstein collection

The summary description of the painting provided by Bellori, however, does not coincide precisely with the picture under discussion here. For example, on the parchment that the sitter is holding with both hands there is no sign of the numbers or the motto that he mentions, a fact underscored by Salomon⁷ who, on the basis of these inconsistencies, posited the existence of two versions of the same portrait: one in which Marcaccioni holds a blank parchment (which can be identified as our version) and the other with the addition of the details described by Bellori, which Salomon argued had been lost. There is, however, another version of the painting in the Liechtenstein Collection in Vaduz⁸ which far more closely reflects the picture described the biographer, who probably had the portrait

⁴ Rudolph 1998, see literature.

⁵ Costanzi 2011, see literature.

⁶ Salomon 2012, see literature.

⁷ Salomon 2012, see literature, p. 635.

⁸ Oil on canvas, 99 x 74 cm.

before him when drafting the painter's life story. It is not exactly clear how the portrait of Marcaccioni ended up in the princely family's collection. However, bearing as it does in the bottom left-hand corner the protective seal affixed to the paintings in the gallery by order of Prince Joseph Wenzel I in 1733, it may well have been added to the collection by Johann Adam Andreas I, who is known for having commissioned Maratti – through the good offices of Anton Florian I, the then Imperial Ambassador to the Holy See in Rome – to paint *Bathsheba Bathing*⁹. Whatever the case, even though the portrait had been in the princely family's collection for generations, neither the artist nor the sitter had been identified until very recently. Vincenzo Fanti mentioned the picture for the first time in the first printed catalogue dated 1767, attributing it to Rubens's assistant Erasmus Quellinus the Younger (1607–78). It was subsequently attributed to the Neapolitan school before recently being correctly reassigned to Maratti on the basis of the above-mentioned description provided by his biographer. By comparison with version “a”, our picture has a more intimate, almost suspended feel to it, with the sitter's frank and open gaze, his less cocky, self-assured expression and his softer hair standing out against the neutral background barely touched by zigzagging brush strokes being all elements that it shares very clearly with the portrait of Sacchi¹⁰ painted a few years earlier.



Figs. 3-4: Carlo Maratti, *Portrait of Pietro Bellori*, private collection, *Portrait of Andrea Sacchi*, Madrid, Prado

The two versions of the painting stand both chronologically and stylistically as companion pieces to the picture portraying Bellori¹¹, which comes immediately after them in the biography. Indeed it is

⁹ Now lost

¹⁰ Maratti, *Portrait of Andrea Sacchi*, Madrid, Prado, oil on canvas, 67 x 50 cm.

¹¹ Maratti, *Portrait of Pietro Bellori*, 97 x 72.5 cm, private collection

absolutely similar both in its approach and in the artist's palette, with its shades at once leaden and dazzling white. Yet the subtle psychological exploration that the artist develops in the pictures sets them very distinctly apart. The bust of the biographer is sober, firm and solidly modelled, while the foreshortening of Marcaccioni's half-bust with his sardonic smile is in perfect harmony with the nonchalant brushwork of his shoulder and sleeve. There can be no doubt that the exceptional success of these two portraits was also a result of the sitters' age-old bond of friendship with Maratti.

Where dating is concerned, the proposal to date the pictures to the last two years of Marcaccioni's life is based on the fact that while he appears to be somewhat older than he is portrayed in Naldini's rather idealised marble bust in the church of Santa Maria del Suffragio, his appearance in the two paintings under discussion here perfectly reflects the features of a man of fifty, thus matching the date for the companion piece, the portrait of Bellori.

One final item of interest concerns the frame, which is probably the original frame for which Marcaccioni's widow paid Pietro Barberi on 10 March 1674 and which received Maratti's approval¹².

This factsheet is based on Stella Rudolph's notes, kindly supplied by Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò who will be publishing a monograph on Maratti based precisely on Stella Rudolph's work. I am grateful to Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò both for supplying me with the notes drafted by Stella Rudolph and for her precious advice. I would also like to thank Xavier Salomon and Francesco Petrucci for their generous assistance.

Provenance:

Gaspere Marcaccioni, Rome;
his widow, Elena Pozzi Corticelli Marcaccioni († 1703);
her son, Sebastiano Corticelli (1647 - 1727), Osimo;
Private collection, New York

Literature:

G.P. Bellori, *Le vite de' pittori, scultori e architetti moderni*, (ed. E. Borea, Turin 2009), p. 607 (probably refers to the Liechtenstein version);
S. Rudolph, *Il ruolo problematico e condizionante di Carlo Maratti nella carriera del suo allievo Niccolò Berrettoni*, in L. Barroero, V. Casale (ed.), *Niccolò Berrettoni*, Conference proceedings (Macerata Feltria, 1998), San Leo 1998, pp. 33, 37 note 33;
C. Costanzi, *Spigolature marattesche: appunti e riflessioni su alcune opere di Carlo Maratti nelle Marche*, in C. Costanzi, M. Massa (ed.), *Il magistero di Carlo Maratti nella pittura marchigiana tra Sei e Settecento*, Milan 2011, pp. 50-52, reproduced as fig. 12;

¹² Salomon 2012, see literature, p. 635.

X.F. Salomon, *Gasparo Marcaccioni (1620-74), his portrait by Carlo Maratti and his chapel*, in "The Burlington Magazine", 154, 2012, pp. 630-636, reproduced as fig. 18;

L. Lorzio, *Carlo Maratta e la chiesa di Santa Maria dell'Anima: il restauro della pala di Giulio Romano*, in "Rivista d'Arte", series V, vol. III, 2013, p. 246 note 16;

X.F. Salomon, in V. Sgarbi (ed.), *Da Rubens a Maratta*, exhibition catalogue (Camerano, 2013) Camerano 2013, pp. 156-157, n. 44;

F. Petrucci, *Maratta: nuovi ritratti*, in "Valori tattili", n. 13 (Jan-Jun 2019), pp. 47-48, reproduced as fig. 6;

S. Rudolph, S. Prospero Valenti Rodinò, forthcoming