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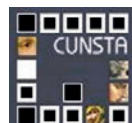
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S. Rudolph, S. Prosperì Valenti Rodinò (2024), *Carlo Maratti (1625-1713) tra la magnificenza del Barocco e il sogno d'Arcadia: dipinti e disegni*, Roma: Ugo Bozzi Editore, 2 voll., cartonato in tela in cofanetto, 1260 pp. 1000 ill. b/n e col.

Carlo Maratti's artistic output cannot easily be accommodated in a traditional monograph: the quantity of paintings, in addition to his engravings and drawings, make the job particularly challenging. This could explain why Stella Rudolph seemingly renounced the task she had set herself and instead published many of her findings in articles, catalogue entries and in a study of 1995 on the painter and his patron Niccolò Maria Pallavicini. By 'completing' Rudolph's work in this book of over 1200 pages, divided into 2 volumes and nearly 1000 illustrations, Simonetta Prosperì Valenti Rodinò has performed a welcome service.

Prosperì Valenti Rodinò's role was an unenviable one: stepping into someone else's shoes is never ideal, and for this she must be applauded. In her introduction she reveals how little is entirely by Rudolph, how much is Rudolph's work revised by herself

and finally what constitutes her own contribution, which comprises the greater part. Not surprisingly, the book suffers from a lack of uniformity which is openly addressed (p. XIII). It consists of eight short chapters, amounting to about 170 pages, covering the painter's *Giovinezza* to his *Fortuna critica*, followed by a ninth chapter devoted to *Maratti e il disegno*, which alone is of over 100 pages. The same imbalance is evident in the catalogue: the vast majority of the entries are devoted to drawings. While this is Prosperì Valenti Rodinò's particular field of expertise, the disparity and layout do Maratti a disservice.

Reference books should be easy to consult, yet this one is hardly user-friendly. The topographical indexes lack the customary references to catalogue entries, and those on *Opere perdute* are neither alphabetical, nor iconographic. Readers are evidently expected to be familiar with the current location of Maratti's works. An additional index by subject would have been far more useful and its absence is particularly regrettable given that this is a first monograph on Maratti since Amalia Mezzetti's dense 1955 study and her 1961 *addendum*. The omission of Maratti him-

self, ideally subdivided thematically, from the index of names is most unfortunate.

Prosperi Valenti Rodinò acknowledges that for reasons of space the book does not address important aspects of Maratti's career, such as his involvement in restoration, his collecting and his engraving, but she promises a future publication about the latter (pp. XIII-XIV) which has since appeared (S. Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, B. Ciuffa, *Maratti invenit et pinxit. Carlo Maratti e l'incisione*, Roma, 2025).

Yet Maratti scholarship has been abundant on just these topics (and more), particularly in the last twenty years, so it was an odd choice to avoid them altogether. Even more puzzling is the decision not to include a biography of Maratti and instead to «redigere una cronologia sulla base dei documenti più significativi» (p. XIII).

Unfortunately, this section, compiled by Elisa Martini, contains many mistakes. For example, Maratti is said (p. 290) to have been appointed by Louis XIV *peintre du roi* on 6 July 1676, instead of 6 July 1681 (A. De Montaignon, *Correspondance des directeurs de l'Académie de France...*, Paris 1887, I, p. 105); or, it is stated (p. 289), that in 1664 Maratti «promuove e finanzia la realizzazione dei busti di Raffaello e di Annibale Carracci, scolpiti da Paolo Naldini al Pantheon». The monuments were completed in 1674, and we have no idea when the scheme was devised (D.L. Sparti, *Giovan Pietro Bellori and Annibale Carracci's Self-Portraits. From the "Vite" to the Artist's Funerary Monument*, «Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz», 45, 2001, pp. 80-82, 96 n. 129). The bibliography recorded by Martini is generally, and in these cases specifically, incomplete, greatly reducing the value of this compilation which also contains inaccuracies of a broader kind. For example, we are told (p. 292) that in 1695 Giovan Pietro Bel-

lori published his *Descrizione delle Immagini dipinte da Raffaele d'Urbino nelle Camere del Palazzo Apostolico* containing «la riproduzione degli affreschi nelle Stanze Vaticane». It includes no imagery at all. The chapters read well but could have been expanded. Thus the one on Maratti's *Fortuna critica* is marred, in the pages authored by Rudolph, by a fundamental misconception: the opinions of artists and non-artists (e.g. Joshua Reynolds and Luigi Lanzi) are equated, overlooking the fact that those of Reynolds (and of Anton Raphael Mengs before him) were addressed to painters and therefore expressed views on Maratti's relevance to their own practice (pp. 154-155). Surprisingly, the friend of Mengs and Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Francesco Milizia is not mentioned. Could this be because he was so critical? He wrote: Maratti «non è che un buon pittore, piacevole sì, ma non interessa punto né per l'invenzione, né per l'espressione, né per il disegno, né per il colorito, né per l'effetto generale. In veder le sue cose, si resta freddo [*sic*]. Egli non fu pittore per talento, ma per fatica» (F. Milizia, *Dizionario delle belle arti...*, Bassano 1797, I, p. 163). For historians negative opinions are just as important as positive ones. There are also imprecisions; among these, it is stated that Bellori's description of Maratti's *Apollo and Daphne* «venne pubblicato per la prima volta solo in appendice all'edizione del 1731 delle sue Vite» (p. 150). The 1728 edition of Bellori's *Vite* does not contain the life of Maratta which instead appeared, indeed in 1731, in a miscellaneous volume of biographies, of which only that of Maratti was, partially, by Bellori. In Prosperi Valenti Rodinò's contribution to the same chapter we are given as examples of the 20th century's «condanna» of Maratti, the opinions of Rudolf Wittkower (1958) and Francis Haskell (1963) on the *Clemency*

fresco in palazzo Altieri taken from their broader studies of the period (p. 158). The idea that these scholars delayed the rehabilitation of Maratti by their comments on a single work, which are much more nuanced than she implies, is unwarranted. The real issue with the book, however, is that Maratti is not there. While Prosperi Valenti Rodinò explains that she devised the book «Rispettando lo schema della monografia tradizionale» (p. X), art history today is no longer about objects alone, to the exclusion of the artist. Despite the great effort that has gone into it, the book is more useful to those in the art trade than to historians. But now that the groundwork has been done, scholars are better positioned to assess the phenomenon Maratti and ask questions about him. For example, why did he look backwards in his work, thus inevitably leading, after his death, to a rapid decline in his appeal among his peers? As Mengs, who scarcely warmed to him, put it, Maratti's school «è stata l'ultima di Roma» (G.N. D'Azara, *Opere di Antonio Raffaello Mengs...*, Parma 1780, II, p. 60). Or, why was he so unusually pre-occupied with his future reputation? Following Romeo Galli and others, Prosperi Valenti Rodinò dates Maratti's self-designed cenotaph in S. Maria degli Angeli and its preparatory drawings c.1704 and believes he designed it to «coronare le sue ambizioni artistiche e sociali» following the knighthood he received that year (pp. 234-236; 1082-1083, A33-A37). She refers to it both as his cenotaph and his tomb (pp. 235, 1082), but Maratti, as Galli stated, is interred near the monument itself with a simple tombstone reading «Solum/Mihi Superest/Sepulchrum» (R. Galli, *I tesori di un pittore del Seicento (Carlo Maratta)*, «L'Archiginnasio», 1927, XXII, 5-6, p. 217). In fact, Maratti evidently obtained rights to burial and to the installation of a monument by 1697, as a guidebook

of that year confirms: «Giaciono sepolti in questo nobil Tempio, li rinomati Cardinali Parisio e Alciato, e Salvatore Rosa Pittore e Poeta Napolitano, havendovi ancor' eletto il suo Deposito Carlo Maratti, famoso pittore Anconitano» (*Descrizione di Roma Moderna formata nuovamente con le autorità del Cardinal Baronio...*, Roma 1697, p. 678). The cenotaph is described as complete in 1700 by G.P. Pinaroli (*Trattato delle cose più memorabili di Roma, tanto antiche, come moderne...*, Roma 1700, II, p. 36: «Vi sono due altri belli Sepolcri di buon disegno ornati di bellissime pietre preziose, uno è di Carlo Maratta ancor vivente Pittore famoso di questo secolo, e l'altro è di Salvator Rosa pure Pittore eccellente, e Poeta di Nazione Napolitano») and a further description is provided in 1702 (F. Martinelli, *Roma di nuovo esattamente ricercata...*, Roma 1702, p. 147: «In questa Chiesa adorna di belle cappelle vi sono molti depositi d'huomini illustri spiccando in gl'altri quelle del celebre Pittore, e Poeta Salvator Rosa, incontro al quale si è fabricato ancor vivente un nobilissimo Deposito il Sig. Carlo Maratta famoso per la sua singolare virtù nella pittura»). The dating explains why Maratti's bust by Francesco Moratti lacks a cross, the attribute of his knighthood. The reason why 1704 appears on the cenotaph is clarified in Maratti's 1731 biography (O. Lioni, *Ritratti di alcuni celebri pittori...*, Roma, pp. 248-249): stating «creatus eques», the inscription was commissioned after his death by his long-time friend pope Clement XI in substitution of a previous one. The newly established chronology of the cenotaph confirms Manuela Mena Marqués's dating of its preparatory drawings which, with no explanation, is rejected in the book (p. 1083).

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