

# Marcantonio Bellavia

Italian painter and engraver  
17<sup>th</sup> century

Sicilian, both the place and the date of birth are unknown. He can only establish himself, by evidence of documents, that between the year 1668 and 1670 he was in Rome, where he also carried out all the activities of painter and engraver known to us. The only news we have about Bellavia's life are in fact those relating to a controversy that arose between him and the painter Girolamo Troppa, of whom he had been a long time help and collaborator. Remembered as a follower of Pietro da Cortona, he left testimony of his activity in the De Angelis chapel in S. Maria in Aracoeli (frescoes on the vault with the Glory of St. Peter of Alcantara and corbels with figures of angels) and in the first chapel to the right of the baptismal font in S. Announced).

His activity as an engraver was used by unscrupulous merchants who published, after the artist's death, his prints as works by Annibale Carracci.

A first time, at the beginning of the 18th century, Vincenzo Belli published 60 engravings by Bellavia with the indication: Various works by Annibale Carracci . They are printed by Vincenzo Bellii in Rome at the Clock at the Chiesa Nova. A(nnibal) C(arracci) I. But their belonging to Bellavia is unequivocally proven by the appearance in many engravings of his monogram ("MAB" and "MABI") and in one - the 39th - even the inscription: "Marcus Antonius, Bellavia in. Et pr. Rome" . Later, Venanzio Monaldini republished 38 engravings by Bellavia, collecting them in a volume entitled: Pensieri diverse lineati et carved d'. To all the pieces Monaldini added the letters "AC IN.". Monaldini's clumsy falsification extends to the title page and to a portrait of Hannibal Carracci, in the next sheet, on which, at the bottom, we read "Anibale Caracci dis. And inc. His Portrait". It is a coarse fake due to the poor quality of the engraving, which also shows a better quality in the body, which he frees in the face, the work of a less skilled and modest artist.

by Mario Pepe - Biographical Dictionary of Italians - Volume 7 (1970)

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