

Antonio Mariani della Cornia (della Corgna)

Italian Painter
(1584-1654)

He was born in Milan to Bernardo, probably in 1584.

From 1625 he is documented in Rome, where he worked for a long time as a painter and as an admirer of works of art. In October of that year he declared that he had painted a picture with «the figure of Saint Helena with the Invention of the Holy Cross».

Among his most illustrious patrons were the Barberini family, Cardinal L. Ludovisi, the Maccarani family, Giulio Mazzarino (then a papal diplomat), the Savoy court and Cardinal Fabio Chigi. Ludovico San Martino d'Agliè, Marquis of San Damiano, Savoy ambassador in Rome, defined him as «intendent of the diversity of painters' manners to give judgment on the best paintings since he is the only one in this matter in Rome», specifying that his «fame » was «more in judging, than in operating with one's own hand».

In 1631 Mariani made a copy of the *Marriage of S. Caterina del Correggio* for the Barberini family (now Paris, Louvre), destined for Cassiano Dal Pozzo, and a panel «of Our Lord». Two years later he took care of the inventory of Cardinal Ludovisi's collection and took care of the purchases of works of art still on behalf of the Barberini family. The following years were those of the Maccarani patrons and of Mazzarino, who between 1634 and 1635 commissioned Mariani a series of paintings. On 15th Apr. 1635 Mariani, following a proposal from San Martino d'Agliè, left for the Savoy court, where he remained a couple of months during which he made the inventory of the paintings of Duke Vittorio Amedeo I.

Back in Rome, in 1636 Mariani made a copy of a *Madonna del Correggio* for Mazzarino and in 1639 the paintings with *Samson and Delila* and *Lot and his daughters* destined for France, as evidenced by the 1639 payment noted in the Barberini family ledger.

From 1632 to 1639 Mariani lived in vicolo degli Otto Cantoni with his brother Enrico and the painter Andrea Pancrazio da Terni. In that house he began to collect paintings, furniture and silver, as evidenced by the inventory of assets drawn up after his death.

In June 1640 he married Angela Adobata, precisely in view of the marriage, after having just refused Mazarin's invitation to go to France. From this bond were born the children Giulia, in 1641, and Francesco, in 1647.

Mariani appears in the documents of the Accademia di S. Luca, with the title of censor, in the session of 5 August 1640 and as an "appraiser of paintings" in 1643.

In 1646, by the will of Paolo Maccarani, Mariani created The Assumption of S. Maria dell'Umiltà, placed on the high altar of the chapel designed by Martino Longhi the

Younger. For the same church he executed a series of saints: *S. Elena*, *S. Maria Maddalena* and *S. Francesco*, in which the stylistic references to G. Baglione and A. Camassei are evident. In 1653, at the behest of Cardinal Fabio Chigi (future Pope Alexander VII), Mariani retouched the four roundels by F. Salviati in the family chapel in S. Maria del Popolo.

On 22nd Jan. 1654 he left his testamentary dispositions appointing his wife guardian of the children as well as universal heir (with the obligation to maintain the condition of widower and to compile the inventory of assets separately on the testator's death); among the executors, P. Maccarani, the abbot E. Benedetti and Cardinal FM Marino.

The Mariani died in Rome on 29 January. 1654, when he must have been about seventy years old.

by Barbara Di Sabatino - Biographical Dictionary of Italians - Volume 70 (2008)

Translated from:

[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mariani-della-cornia-antonio_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mariani-della-cornia-antonio_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)