

As it results from the signature, the painter of this wonderful "Probatice piscina", (oil-painting, m. ) is GIAN PAOLO PANINI (Piacenza 1691, Roma 1765).

The first known version of this subject, until today was that of the Collection Canessa, Roma, by me dated between 1720 and 1725, in my work of 1961. (fig. 87) Now, this painting confirms that date, being the companion of the "Cacciata dei profanatori", dated 1724.

The scenographic apparatus is of the same taste, but here the number of the figures is nearly redoubled.

The artist treated this subject many times; usually it acts as companion to the "Cacciata dei profanatori", as to complete a speech, to show two different aspects of Christ. (Sometimes the "Probatice piscina" is substituted by the "Nozze di Cana" or by the "Gesù tra i dottori").

In the later version of the Museum of Monaco (fig. 121), the scene becomes more grand with the change of almost all the crowd around Christ. (remains the gentle figure of the young woman with the child, in the foreground, on the right).

It results changed also the relation figure-architecture, in favour of this last. Then, when he will develop this same subject in one of the four paintings of the Granja (Segovia), 1736, those lucky juvenile productions have not been forgotten at all; in fact, reappears the taste "bibienesco" in the scenographic apparatus, an unexpected recovery, which we can observe also in the version, about 1730, of the collection Baronessa Aretin (England), published by Antal (1964), to document the influence which Panini would have exerted over Hogarth.

It is a very interesting painting, of high quality which I want publish in the second edition of my book.

Ferdinando Arisi

Piacenza, 21 Marzo 1970