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**ABSTRACT**

**TESI DI DOTTORATO**

**The Works of Francesco Solimena from 1674 to 1706.  
Revision and Expansion of the Catalogue of his Works**

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The research was intended to highlight Francesco Solimena's production between 1674 and 1706 and to prove the contribution of the sources and studies from the 1700's to the present day, as well as the integration of the knowledge of the artistic production through the introduction of new works which were deemed worthy of our attention within his production, starting from the early years to his adulthood. The documentary research played a major role, and was carried out at the State Archive of Naples and the Historical Archive of the Fondazione Banco di Napoli, this has allowed us to broaden the analysis of the relationship which took place between the Neapolitan and Venetian commissioning of works of art.

The revision of the painter's early works, reveals the crucial role of his father's workshop, not only for its references to the Roman and Emilian artistic production, but particularly for the artist's practice of drawing, which made it possible to clarify the terms of collaboration of Francis with his father, and to achieve the distinction of his interventions in the field of production which took place between the eighth and ninth decade.

In reference to the initial phase of the artist, further reconsideration has been given to the pivotal role of Cardinal Vincenzo Maria Orsini, who contributed to its inclusion in the Neapolitan sphere, even through contacts with Cardinal Innico Caracciolo.

The initial ecclesiastical protection has also been reconsidered in terms of the acquired relationships with leading architects and designers who were active in the last decades of the 1600's, such as the Arcangelo Guglielmelli, crucial for undertaking the works of the Gesù Nuovo, and Giovan Domenico Vinaccia, for undertaking the works of Santa Maria Miracoli and Donnaregina.

In an effort to expand the catalogue of the works of the young Solimena, territorial polls were conducted (Agro Nocerino-Sarnese, Irno Valley, Irpinia), in order to assess the presence of paintings which were attributed to the artist and to his father's workshop, even in order to refine the chronological grid of interventions.

The placing of newly identified numerous works, as well as new cycles of frescoes helped to identify interesting phases of collaboration and exchanges with his father Angelo. In this context there are the frescoes of the oratory of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Cava dei Tirreni, and the Christ Comforted by the Angels in the refectory

of the Franciscan Convent of the Trinity in Baronissi, which is dated 1681. This last discovery, confirmed the procedures and the support offered by Francis in the execution of works which were commissioned to his father, he helped him with iconographic, structural as well as a compositional choices, and through the identification of the preparatory study of the fresco, which was passed on to the auction Pandolfini in Florence with its erroneous attributions to De Mura.

The numerous sketches which then emerged on the antiques market has helped us to identify the preparatory studies for the paintings of Donnaregina and for the church of the Annunziata in Naples, while another painting depicted the saints Tecla Archelaa and Susanna condotta al Martirio, was placed in relation to the same fresco of St. George in Salerno, to which has been also reconnected a drawing related to the particular horse on the right.

With regard to the cataloguing of the works it should however be noted that it was not intended to carry out a thorough revision of the entire production of the figurative period considered here, but it was intended to select the paintings to highlight the novelties emerged from the studies and therefore providing the necessary additions and clarifications from the stylistic point of view, as well as the documentation and chronological position.

The information which emerged from the documentary research, provides an interesting contribution which was offered by the analysis of the payment policies traced back to the Foundation of the Historical Archive of the Bank of Naples, therefore allowing to set the chronological terms for the realization of the canvas of the church of Santa Chiara in Fiume freddo Bruttium, and to review the role of the Marquise of the Sicilian Valley, Lucretia Ruffo, sister of the famous Cardinal Thomas and wife of Ferdinand Jerome Alarcon y Mendoza. In regards to Solimena's relationship with the Venetian patronage, traces of documentary evidence emerged and they have provided some clarification regarding the purchase and sale of works of art, with reference to the circuit of the sales of book materials. In such a commercial sector it has been possible to identify Nicholas Rispoli, the Neapolitan mediator responsible for the negotiation and payment of works of art on behalf of the Baglioni family: a viable alternative to the role played by the Venetian Residents in Naples.

The payment policies have provided precise chronological information for the work of art *Rebecca con il servo di Abramo* in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice and also for one of the two versions of the *Apollo and Daphne*, present in Venice in the collection Canal and Baglioni, for which has been put forward a proposal of identification with the canvas contained in the private collection in Milan. The motives of the payments made, restored also, the dimensions of *Rebecca che si congeda dal padre*, in the Baglioni collection, enabling you to refute the identification of several proposals made by critics over the years, as has been confirmed by the chronological trace of the canvas *Vulcan che consegna le armi a Venere* in the Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

In the final part of the research it was intended to make a further contribution to Solimena's production, as the expression of a "global" operational method, providing new documentary traces regarding the design of collaborative work between the various craftsmen. Starting from the task of designing of the *Tesoro del Duomo di San Gennaro* in Naples, Solimena's operational principles were revealed and their role in coordinating the various workshops that specialize in works of sculpture, of wood carvings and gilding.