

Filippo Luzzi

Italian painter
1665-1722

He was born in Montecompatri, near Rome, on July 5, 1665 by Carlo and Maria Giulia Leonori and was baptized with the name "Petrus Paulus Philippus Lutij" on July 10 in the parish church.

He moved very young to Rome where he embraced ecclesiastical life and, after initially dedicating himself to the study of literature, driven by his love for painting, he entered the workshop of the Cortonese Lazzaro Baldi, of whom he became a favorite pupil and faithful friend. The bond between the two was consolidated during a cohabitation that lasted more than twenty years in Baldi's home. From the same Pio and from the archival documents we deduce the appreciation and the trust that the teacher had for the pupil: in the will he appointed him first testamentary executor and first chaplain of the chapel of S. Lazzaro in the church of Ss. Luca and Martina. Luzzi participated in two competitions organized by the Academy of S. Luca: in 1683 he won the first prize in the second class with the drawing depicting the *Roman soldiers kill Archimedes writer*; in 1692 he won *ex aequo* the third prize in the first class with the design *Moses builds the temple*, both kept in the Archive of the institution.

On March 20, 1695 he was proposed as an academic of merit by Carlo Fontana, at that time prince of the Academy. On the same day, voting for his appointment took place and the members of the Congregation, including Baldi, expressed themselves favorably. Luzzi officially took possession of the title on 25 Sept. 1695, donating an oil painting with *Ss. Luca and Paolo*, today in the Accademia Gallery. He actively participated in the life of the Congregation: on February 17th. 1715 he was elected administrator of the church, mayor and visitor of the sick and prisoners; according to Missirini he was an academic professor. In all likelihood the portraits of Luzzi and Baldi, today at the Academy, were painted by Luzzi himself; the second was delivered by him personally on July 29, 1703. In 1699 he became a member of the Congregation of Virtuosi at the Pantheon, whose meetings he attended from 1707 to 1715 and again in 1717, he was then regent from 1713 to 1714 and under-secretary in 1719. May 1703 he rented an apartment not far from the master's house, where, starting around July, the painter Dioniso Mioni lodged, of which Luzzi, dead Baldi, became the new master.

Luzzi's artistic career is linked to two prestigious noble families: the Pallavicini-Rospigliosi and the Borghese. The link with the first probably established through Baldi, active for that family. Luzzi on their commission designed some silver basins, the so-called *Piatti di s. Giovanni*, whom the family, according to the testamentary disposition of Cardinal Lazzaro Pallavicini, donated every day on the feast day of S. Giovanni Battista to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. The preserved cash notebooks allow to ascertain the authorship of the projects only from 1716 to 1720; but it is likely to think that Luzzi assumed this commitment from the disappearance of Baldi (1703), who had dealt with it before him, until his death.

For the same family between 1710 and 1711 with Benedetto Luti he took care of the inventory and estimate of the paintings belonging to the Duchess Maria Camilla. The Borghese also made use of the painter's work: Prince Marcantonio, as can be seen from the will of Luzzi drawn up on 5 July 1722 by the notary of the montician Giuseppe Antonio Pitolli, ordered him to decorate the first chapel on the right of the cathedral of Montecompatri, a fiefdom of the family, dedicated to S. Antonio da Padova and destroyed in 1935 for the creation of two parish halls. For his country of origin he probably painted also the canvas with the *Virgin that surrounds with a gold collar s. Teresa of Avila* destined for the church of S. Silvestro, today in the convent. Perhaps commissioned by Prince Giovanni Battista he painted three canvases for the collegiate church of S. Croce in Ardena, formerly Montefortino, another fief of the Borghese family, which was finished rebuilding in 1661. Of the three works, only the heavily restored, the *penitent Magdalene* and the *S John the Baptist in the desert*.

In Rome, various altarpieces are attributed to him in churches located mostly in the Monti district, in which the artist lived. In the church of S. Francesco di Paola he painted in oil three of the seven lunettes in the sacristy with scenes from the life of the founding saint: *in front of King Ferrante of Naples*, *S. Francesco breaks a coin causing blood to flow out*, *S. Francesco di Paola crosses the Strait of Messina* and *S. Francesco di Paola shows the fire to the pontifical emissary*; the others are the work of A. Masucci. In the chapel of S. Anna of the same church the *Holy Family with s. Gioacchino and s. Anna*; for the church of S. Prassede he painted *Il miracolo di s. Bernardino degli Uberti* probably in 1716-17, period in which the chapel today called del Rosario was created, but originally named after S. Bernardino; he adorned the sacristy of the church of S. Maria ai Monti with scenes from the *Passion of Christ*, of which, in the Mancini collection of Rome (Casale, 1983, p. 274 n. 28), what is considered the preparatory drawing of the scene depicting *Christ in the garden*; according to Pio he also painted an altarpiece with *Sts. Antonio and Francesco* in the church of S. Lucia della Tinta and the *Martyrdom of s. Martina* in the church of Ss. Luca and Martina.

In an eighteenth-century manuscript it is reported that in 1706 he performed the *Immaculate Conception* and *St. Joseph with the Child* for the church of S. Maria Nova and the *Last Supper* for the refectory in the Augustinian convent of San Gregorio da Sassola at Tivoli; in the same complex today the *Holy Family* and the *Virgin in glory with s* are also attributed to him. *Nicola da Tolentino*. Perhaps he obtained the commission of these works thanks to his brother Giuseppe Antonio, who became an Augustinian friar with the name of father Ilarione di S. Rosa, prior of the convent between 1695 and 1703.

On 22 May 1989 an oil painting was auctioned by Sotheby in Florence with the *Miracle of a Benedictine saint* ascribed to him by virtue of the similarities with the S. Prassede altarpiece. Some drawings by Luzzi are preserved, characterized by the abundant addition of white lead: the *Raising of the Cross*, the *Self-portrait* and the *Portrait of Baldi* found in the Pio fund of the National Museum in Stockholm. The painter also successfully experimented with engraving, signing the prints with the Latin form of his surname "Lutius": *Maria appears on s. Nicola*, of his invention, signed and dated 1691, as well as *S. Lazarus paints images despite the prohibition of the emperor Theophilus* signed and dated 1692 and the *Martyrdom of s. Orsola*, both translations from drawings by Baldi.

The latter made considerable use of the help of the students for the production of canonization pictures, in which he specialized. On the basis of this, it is difficult to identify the paintings painted by Luzzi as part of the assignments assumed by the shop and to distinguish his hand from that of the master, since his style is strongly indebted to him. His intervention has been proposed in some paintings commissioned to the master depicting facts from his life. Giovanni di Dio executed around 1690, two preserved in the church of the S. Juan de Dios hospital in Granada and one in the collection of the Banca di Roma. On the basis of the codicil of 18 July 1722 We can add unpublished to his catalog: the document reveals, in fact, that the artist left all his drawings, prints, chalks and studies to his pupil Mioni; a painting with *Jesus in the garden and the three sleeping apostles* to Agostino Passavanti, the *dying Blessed Margherita Falconieri* and a *Gloria di putti* to Felice Antonio Palonio, all works of unknown location, and a canvas with the *Disputa di s. Stefano* for the sacristy of the Camaldolese hermitage of Monte Porzio Catone, now scattered.

Luzzi died in Montecompatri on 23 July 1722.

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