

Et in Aricia Ego: Locating an Antiquarian Interest of Cassiano dal Pozzo and the Barberini in Three Early Roman Paintings by Poussin

Abstract

This article corrects the recent misidentification of two versions of an early Roman landscape by Nicolas Poussin by demonstrating with new evidence that the established title, *Landscape with Numa Pompilius and the Nymph Egeria*, reflects a specific, documented interest of the artist's patrons in these legendary figures and their association with the ancient Roman *municipium* of Aricia. Through an examination of the correspondence and literary output of Cassiano dal Pozzo, Cardinal Francesco Barberini, Lucas Holstenius, Pope Urban VIII, and their extended antiquarian circle at the time the paintings were created, this essay demonstrates, for the first time, a direct link between Poussin's patrons and the topography and iconography of a landscape from the artist's first years in Rome. It also establishes the correct subject matter of a third, closely related adaptation of the painting, initially misidentified as *The Contest of Apollo and Marsyas*, in which Poussin reverses the moral lesson of the earlier two versions. Taken together, the three works form a conceptual unity that illustrate the philosophical engagement of Poussin and his Roman patrons with Numa Pompilius, Apollo, virtue, vice, and ancient pagan exemplarity. Through the analysis of extant archival documents, including newly published material from the Dal Pozzo-Boccapaduli inventories, this study also clarifies the Dal Pozzo provenance of *The Judgment of Midas*. Lastly, these inventories reveal an original Dal Pozzo provenance for Poussin's *Midas and Bacchus*, which is misidentified in the inventories themselves as *Midas and Apollo*.