



---

## Pier Francesco Cittadini, Jacob And His Family Go To Egypt, 17th Century

32 000 EUR



Signature : Pier Francesco Cittadini (Italie - Milan, 1616 -  
Bologne, 1681) (att.)

Period : 17th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 214

Height : 145

Depth : 10

### Description

Pier Francesco Cittadini (Milan, 1616 - Bologna, 1681)

Jacob and his family go to Egypt

Oil on canvas, cm 109 x 190 (canvas only)

The valuable painting, made in oil on canvas, depicts Jacob and his family go to Egypt and we believe it can be, given the high quality painting, autograph work of Italian Pier Francesco Cittadini (Italy Milan, 1616 - Bologna, 1681) made after 1647. The work, in excellent condition is accompanied by a coeval frame in wood finely carved and golden.

The scene depicted, which was confused with the Flight to Egypt in the past years, is instead identified with the biblical episode of Jacob's journey. In the foreground, reading the painting

### Dealer

**Brozzetti Antichità**

Tel : 0039 348 493 5001

VIA VITTORIO EMANUELE 42/A

Cherasco 12062

from left to right, we see a caravan composed of animals, including donkeys, dromedaries, goats, dogs and horses and people, women, men and slaves, who carry on their journey along the banks of a river, following a path that to the right, would seem to lead to the through of a bridge. In addition to the watercourse is described an environment characterized by large rocks and impervious come far to cover the entire verticality of the canvas. On the left, in the distance, we see the tail of the caravan that runs along the steep path. Large trees enliven and harmonize the environment, as well as white and grey clouds characterize the predominantly clear sky and illuminated on the right by sunlight.

The story is told in the Bible, Book of Genesis, 30, 25, passage in which is described the flight of Jacob from Haran after the contrasts with Laban, father of his wife Rachel. Jacob is the third great patriarch of the Bible. From his descendants originate the twelve generations of the people of Israel. He is the son of Isaac and Rebekah, who led him to flee from the wrath of Esau to Haran to seek refuge from his brother, Laban. At his uncle's house Jacob met his daughter Rachel. As soon as he saw his cousin, Jacob was taken. Jacob will stay seven years in the service of Laban to marry his beloved Rachel. But Laban, with a deception, will give him in marriage first Lia, the least beautiful eldest daughter, and only after another seven years the splendid Rachel. From his first wife he will have several children, while Rachel will give birth to the beloved son, Joseph, who will become viceroy of Egypt.

After years of service, Jacob asked to be paid with every dark-coloured garment among the sheep and every spotted and dotted garment among the goats. Laban accepted and sent away from his sons all the leaders of that kind. So Jacob took fresh branches of poplar, almond and plane tree, and flayed them, and put them in the troughs. The optical suggestion induced the goats and the sheep to conceive and give birth to dark, striped and dotted garments. He also ensured that

all the strongest and healthiest leaders of the flock of Laban would drink near the barked branches, thus assuring a genetic superiority to his part of the flock. His flocks grew numerous and strong and he became richer than his relative, arousing envy. It was clear that Laban would not respect him much longer. At the suggestion of the Lord, Jacob decided to return to Canaan. Trying to avoid any possible dispute, he left with his family while Laban was absent for shearing sheep. But when, three days later, his uncle returned home, he became angry, feeling offended because Jacob had gone secretly and had not allowed him to greet his daughters and grandchildren. In addition, his teraphim, statuettes, or idols, which depicted the family deities, had disappeared. After 7 days of pursuit, Laban and his men reached Jacob's group on Mount Gilead, in the mountainous region west of the Euphrates River, where his uncle and grandson had a stormy conversation. The younger man was outraged at being accused of stealing idols and told Laban to rummage through his family's tents at will. Neither of them could know or even imagine that it was Rachel who took the idols and hid them in the saddle of the camel. During the search, she sat down firmly on the saddle, apologizing for not being able to get up, «because I usually have what happens to women» (Gen 31:35). So the loot wasn't discovered.

The author of this work was inspired by the composition of an engraving by Stefano Della Bella (1610/ 1664) of about 1647. The engraving by Stefano della Bella bears the title "Jacob sur ses vieux jours quitte sans fascherie pour voir son filz Ioseph, sa terre et sa patrie" and is signed on the bottom left "Stef. of the Beautiful In. et fe." while on the right it is declared "Cum privil. Regis", that is with license of the king.

Stefano Della Bella (Italy - Florence, May 18, 1610 - Florence, July 12, 1664) was born in a family of painters, sculptors and goldsmiths and was left early orphan of his father sculptor, he dedicated himself first to the art of goldsmith at

the school of Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione and Gasparo Mola, then turning his attention to drawing and engraving. He soon began drawing figures and copying the etchings of Jacques Callot, which inspired his early works. Under the protection of the Medici, in particular of Don Lorenzo, cadet son of Grand Duke Ferdinand I, Della Bella has the opportunity to make study trips to Rome, where he stayed from 1633 to '36; In Rome he met French engravers and publishers of prints such as Israël Henriët and François Langlois, who influenced his decision to move to Paris in 1639, four years after the death of Callot. In Paris he soon reached, thanks to the engravings commissioned by Cardinal Richelieu, the success also worldly; he frequented courtiers, theatre artists and writers, while refusing too oppressive honors. In 1646-47 he continued his travels in the Netherlands to Amsterdam, Antwerp and Dordrecht. He returned to Florence in 1650 and resumed working under the protection of the Medici court, working for his patrons. In 1656 he became a member of the Academy of Artists. The painting object of this study is reasonably attributable to Pier Francesco Cittadini, or Pierfrancesco Cittadini, called the Milanese or the Franceschino (Italy - Milan, 1616 - Bologna, 1681) as some exemplary stylistic comparisons proposed to follow can prove.

Pier Francesco Cittadini was an Italian baroque painter, mainly active in Bologna.

His artistic training first took place with the painter Daniele Crespi; later in 1634 he moved to Bologna, where he followed the teachings of Guido Reni. He then moved to Rome, where he obtained commissions also from Louis XIV, thanks to the success he had with still lifes and landscapes.

In 1650, he returned to Bologna, where on 19 June 1653 he married Giulia Ballarini, with whom he had many children and of whom at least three, Carlo Antonio, Angelo Michele, Giovanni Battista, followed in his father's footsteps. His works are preserved in important museums and

collections such as Villa Estense di Sassuolo, Bologna, coll. Giovannini, Galleria Estense di Modena, Pinacoteca civica di Bologna, Galleria nazionale d'arte antica di Trieste, Pinacoteca civica di Forlì.

The painting in question, of high pictorial quality, certainly belongs to the body of important works of the artist, in which we find depicted the female figure with the turban that the painter likes to insert several times in his paintings.

Characteristic is also the color palette, characterized by saturated colors, bright and full, as well as the special treatment of the sky with clouds streaked and blue intense.

Observing the setting of the canvas in question and the description of the landscape, the rocky reliefs and the games of the most perspective levels it is possible to propose some similar layout, in which there are also subjects that lend themselves to a similar description, such as caravans of wayfarers and herds or the "Return from Egypt" of the Puskin Museum.

Also interesting is a Citizen's China Drawing, kept at the Royal Collection Trust, in which a study for a landscape seems very close to the one then depicted in the canvas, with trees that act as a backdrop to the scene, large rocky reliefs arranged in a way very similar to the final version. It is understood that for the Citizens there is an authentic feeling of the landscape, felt as a protagonist not secondary to the figures.

In conclusion, the work, in good condition, is attributable to Pier Francesco Cittadini and datable following the engraving of Stefano della Bella in 1647, probably made after the return to Bologna of the artist (1650). The canvas is therefore added to the body of works of a representative painter in the development of Baroque painting, especially that of Bologna.

We apologize for any errors in translation from Italian.

Please click on the word Expertise to read the  
expertise in Italian: EXPERTISE