

Annexe-3 : La National Gallery de Londres - Bulletin N°17 de 1996

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Leonardo da Vinci's activity in Milan, datable in two periods from 1482 to 1499 and from 1507 to 1512/13, saw the production of some of his most important paintings, including the National Gallery's own *'Virgin of the Rocks'* (note 1). It was also notable for the emergence of a group of Milanese painters that adopted his manner, whether in appropriating his compositional motifs or in responding to his extraordinary painterly effects. These artists are well represented in the National Gallery, and even a superficial survey of works by Boltraffio, Bramantino, Cesare da Sesto, Giampietrino, Luini, Marco d'Oggiono, Martino Piazza, de Predis and Solario in the Collection shows something of the extent and variety of Leonardo's influence in Milan. The recent cleaning and restoration of National Gallery images by two of these artists – Giampietrino's *'Christ carrying his Cross'* and his *'Salome'*, and Boltraffio's *'Virgin and Child'* (note 2) – has allowed the opportunity to examine closely their materials and technique, and, by extension, to consider more fully the nature and degree of their debt to Leonardo.

While a general scholarly consensus has emerged concerning Giampietrino's oeuvre, only one image is dated, there are no signed works, and therefore all of his works are assigned attributions (note 3). Little is known about his life and the very use of the name Giampietrino is conjectural, it having been applied to this group of images as a result of its appearance in Leonardo's 'Codex Atlanticus' in a list of other painter/pupils (note 4). A tradition dating back to Lomazzo has tied this reference to a 'Pietro Rizzo' or 'Pietro Riccio milanese pittore, discepolo di Leonardo da Vinci' (note 5). Recent scholarship has shown Lomazzo's (Giovanni) Pietro Rizzi to have been active significantly earlier (documented between 1481 and 1493) than the body of work now given to Giampietrino, whose single known dated work is from 1521 (note 6). While Lomazzo's identification of Leonardo's 'Giampietro' in his treatise, itself written between 1497 and 1500, may be correct, recent archival research has linked the images now known as Giampietrino with yet another painter, Giovanni Pietro Rizzoli, who seems to have been active until around 1540 (note 7).

However designated, the paintings traditionally ascribed to Giampietrino (note 8) do form a stylistically individual and coherent whole. His main stylistic influences seem to have been Marco d'Oggiono, Cesare da Sesto and, above all, Leonardo. His several large altarpieces have recently been given a relative chronology based on a perceived stylistic evolution (note 9), but also typical of the artist (and much more difficult to date) is the production of small-format half-length representations of classical or biblical subjects, often executed in multiple versions with varying degrees of studio participation and considerable variation in quality (note 10). Both the *'Salome'* and *'Christ carrying his Cross'* fall into this latter category, and significantly both have compositions that are clearly derived from Leonardesque prototypes.

A silver-point study of 'Christ carrying his Cross' by Leonardo now in Venice is clearly the compositional source of the National Gallery Giampietrino (note 11). Generally dated between 1497 and 1500, it and other preparatory drawings may have been studies for a painting by Leonardo which has been lost or, perhaps no less likely, for a painting executed by a pupil or associate. Giampietrino's image is one of many by a variety of artists active in and around Lombardy which reflect this composition (note 12).

The National Gallery panel is one of several more or less replica versions of the subject by Giampietrino (note 13), suggesting the repeated use of the same studio cartoon. Infra-red reflectography clearly shows the traces of the cartoon transfer (note 14) in the National Gallery version, particularly visibly delineating the contours of the brow, eyes, and nostril. Another version now in Budapest, shows similar traces of cartoon transfer; the use of the same cartoon for both images was proved beyond reasonable doubt by the exact coincidence of a tracing of the London image laid on to the Budapest panel (note 15).

Infra-red examination of two Giampietrino paintings now in the Brera, *'The Magdalen seated in Prayer'* and *'The Magdalen'*, both show traces of the 'spolvero' technique of cartoon transfer, where charcoal is rubbed through holes pricked along the contours of the drawn cartoon (note 16). The fact that other versions exist of each of these images is further indication of the level of production and common reuse of cartoons in the workshop (note 17).

The composition of the *'Salome'* is also derived ultimately from another Leonardo composition, a lost *'Leda and the Swan'*, here shown in a contemporary copy by another Milanese artist close to Leonardo, Cesare da Sesto. Numerous studies from Leonardo's hand have survived which emphasise the indebtedness of Giampietrino to

Leonardo's composition, such as the study for the *'Head of Leda'* from the Royal Collection (note 18). In the cartoon composition. Such a study from Giampietrino does exist for the *head of the Madonna* in the altarpiece, dated 1521, for San Marino a Pavia, now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Notes 11 à 14

11. See Carlo Pedretti, *'Giorgione e il Cristo portacroce di Leonardo'*, *'Almanaco italiano'*, 89, 1979, pp. 8–14, and Marani, *'Leonardo e il Cristo portacroce, Leonardo e Venezia'* (exhibition catalogue), Milan 1992, pp. 344–57.

12. See Marani, *'Leonardo e i leonardeschi a Brera'*, cited in note 4, pp. 37–43.

13. See Davies, cited in note 1, p. 227.

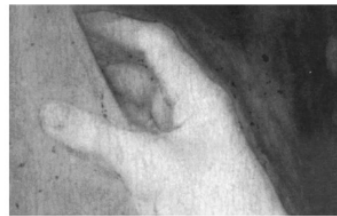
14. The design was transferred either by blackening the reverse of the cartoon with charcoal or inserting a blackened interleaf between it and the panel, after which the contours of the cartoon were retraced with some sort of blunt stylus.

15. The two pictures show distinct differences in paint handling and level of finish, which provides additional circumstantial evidence for the existence of a large workshop. In general the Budapest picture is much tighter in execution and more precisely and finely modelled in its flesh painting than the rather broadly painted London version (although the simply painted shadow across the extended forearm of the London picture is perhaps a more convincing rendering of the falling shadow), while its drapery painting appears slightly more schematic. Interestingly, another version of clearly lower quality now in the Academy at Vienna is markedly larger in scale and could not have been made from the same cartoon.

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Fig. 2 Leonardo da Vinci, *Christ carrying his Cross*, 1497–1500. Silver-point on grey prepared paper, 11.6 × 9.1 cm. Venice, Galleria dell'Accademia.



Figs. 3a and 3b Giampietrino, *Christ carrying his Cross* (NG 3097). Infra-red reflectogram details showing the traces of cartoon transfer. The use of carbon-containing black pigment in the *imprimatura* paint mixture has somewhat reduced the contrast between the black used in the underdrawing and the white gesso ground.



Fig. 4 Giampietrino, *Christ carrying his Cross*. Wood, 62 × 49 cm. Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum.



Figs. 5a and 5b Giampietrino, *Christ carrying his Cross*. Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum. Infra-red reflectogram details showing the traces of cartoon transfer.

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