

Appendix-2: Biography of Salai (known as ‘Salaino’)

Salai’s biography is developed in the Treccani encyclopedia under the author names:

- CAPROTTI, Gian Giacomo, known as Salaj (Andrea Salaino)¹⁸⁵, complete study.
- and SALAI (o Salaino), Andrea, a brief biography shown after.

“*SALAI (or Salaino)¹⁸⁶, Andrea. - Painter, probably born in Milan about 1480, died there before March 10, 1524. His name was Gian G. Caprotti. He was hired, at the age of ten, by Leonardo, who often noted his name in his codices, also to remember certain small robberies and misdeeds of the young man, who Vasari says beautiful. He followed Leonardo from Milan to Mantua, Venice and Florence, and here he perhaps helped the master to paint portraits. He was in Rome and returned to Milan with him, then accompanied him again to Florence in 1507 and 1508. He did not follow the Vinci in France, but remained in Milan, and inherited from the master half of his vineyard. None of his works can be pointed out with absolute certainty. His activity was totally expressed in the sphere of Leonardo. Lomazzo cites two of his paintings with penitent Saint Jerome in the church of the same name in Milan, which disappeared until 1674. Attributed to the S. is the altarpiece with the Virgin among the Ss. Pietro e Paolo (n. 316) and a fresco (n. 83) in the Pinacoteca di Brera, but with little basis. The same can be said of the Redeemer of the Ambrosiana and other recent attributions*”.

The name of Salai is not mentioned in the list of painters in ‘*Lives of the painters, sculptors and architects*’¹⁸⁷ (1550-1568), by Giorgio Vasari, who wrote about Leonardo¹⁸⁸: “*The Vinci had as a pupil a young Milanese named Salai, whom he loved because of his perfect beauty, his grace and his long undulating and curly hair. He taught him many things. Several works, of which in Milan is attributed to Salai, were retouched by his master*”. It should be noted that Vasari refers to Salai and not Salaino.

According to Maurizio Zecchini (‘*Leonardo da Vinci and Gian Giacomo Caprotti said Salai*’, p65...’), the association of the name Salaino (Andrea) with Salaj is a mystery. No 16th century writer refers to any of his works. In our research, the name of Salaino does not appear in Leonardo’s codices transcribed by the Biblioteca Leonardiana¹⁸⁹ in Vinci. It is also known that the name of Andrea Salaino has often been used instead of that of Andrea Solario¹⁹⁰.

It is also mentioned in the Treatise on Painting of 1651¹⁹¹ a list of Leonardo’s disciples, perhaps in place of Andrea Solario, yet one of the main painters of his school. Some works ‘attributed’ to him:

- *Saint John the Baptist* (Pinacoteca Ambrosian of Milan) whose attribution is contested.
- *Christ the Redeemer*¹⁹² (Pinacoteca Ambrosian of Milan) whose attribution is also contested¹⁹³.
- *Cristo Giovanetto comme Salvator Mundi or Cristo di anni XII (Vinci - Italy)*¹⁹⁴.
- *Ecce Homo* from Cassago Brianza (Italy) parish (cf. p 37).

185 : https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/caprotti-gian-giacomo-de-detto-salaj_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/

186 : *Excerpt from the complete Treccani study about the name Salaino: “With the seventeenth century art writers become more precise - although not credible - about the paintings that they attribute to Caprotti. Morigia, in 1619, was the first to give a paternity to works that he believed to be executed by the artist he called Andrea Salaino. These were two paintings depicting St. Jerome penitent in the Milanese church of St. Jerome, already disappeared when C. Torre remembered them (1674, p. 176). In all probability they were works by Andrea Salerno, with whom Morigia had confused Caprotti...”*

187 : [https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Vies_des_peintres,_sculpteurs_et_architectes/tome_4/1_\(p16\)](https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Vies_des_peintres,_sculpteurs_et_architectes/tome_4/1_(p16))

188 : Leonardo met Salai on July 22, 1490 (Leonardo’s Manuscript C, 15v - Institut de France (Paris))

189 : <https://www.leonardodigitale.com/en/browse/>

190 : Like Salai, Solario died in Milan in 1524.

191 : ‘*Trattato della Pittura di Lionardo da Vinci di Rafaele du Fresne, in Parigi 1651*’ - https://archive.org/details/gri_33125008484301/page/n19/mode/2up

192 : The inscription ‘SALAI’ can be read at the bottom right of the painting.

193 : However, the attribution to Salai is not clear-cut: “*Critics discuss about whether or not this is the artist’s signature on the painting (which would thus be attributed to Caprotti), or if this is a portrait of Salai, who would thus have lent his face as a model for the work*” (Pinacoteca Ambrosiana).

194 : With no certainty.