

# Christ Carrying the Cross

## Study Summary

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This study examines a Renaissance Italian Christ Carrying the Cross, painted in oil on a poplar panel. The Painting measures 60 × 46 cm unframed. Material and technical analyses indicate that the work is consistent with Italian practices of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: traditional ground preparation, spolvero, pentimenti, layered paint structure, historic retouching and later interventions.

Radiocarbon analysis dates the support to between 1470 and 1650. Scientific imaging has also revealed several important features: a young and androgynous figure to Christ's right, formerly concealed beneath black overpaint; traces of a transferred preparatory design; changes made during the painting process; and a halo whose examination suggests that it was added later.

The reverse of the panel bears a red wax seal of Roman type and several old inscriptions, including the forms 'Salaj/...', 'Leonardo' and 'Salajno'. These elements do not constitute evidence of attribution, but they belong to the material history of the panel and merit particular attention.

The core of the study compares the Christ in the Painting with three versions attributed to Giampietrino, now in London, Budapest and Turin. Leading art historians, including Wilhelm Suida, Carlo Pedretti and Pietro C. Marani, have identified the Venice Drawing, attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, as the graphic source for these versions.

The correspondences are substantial: orientation of the head, overall facial structure, position of Christ, construction of the figure and transfer method. They suggest that the works may derive from a shared cartoon or model based on the Venice Drawing or on a closely related invention.

However, the Painting is not simply a copy after Giampietrino. Several technical, radiographic, morphological and stylistic differences distinguish it: the use of spolvero, pentimenti, paint handling, construction of the cross, Christ's forearm, the parting of the hair, the figure on the right and the different behaviour of the underlying layers.

The Painting may therefore preserve an earlier form of the composition than that recorded in Giampietrino's versions.

These findings do not permit an attribution to Leonardo da Vinci. They nevertheless show why this hypothesis may be examined on the basis of a coherent body of technical, iconographic and comparative evidence.

The website [christcarryingthecross.com](http://christcarryingthecross.com) presents this research in concise form: the Painting is its central subject; the Venice Drawing is its principal source; Giampietrino provides the comparative link; and the study of Thaddeus in the Last Supper extends the investigation to the circulation of models within Leonardo's circle.