

**THE DRAWING OF THE HEAD
OF THE CHRIST (VENEZIA)
(LEONARDO DA VINCI)**

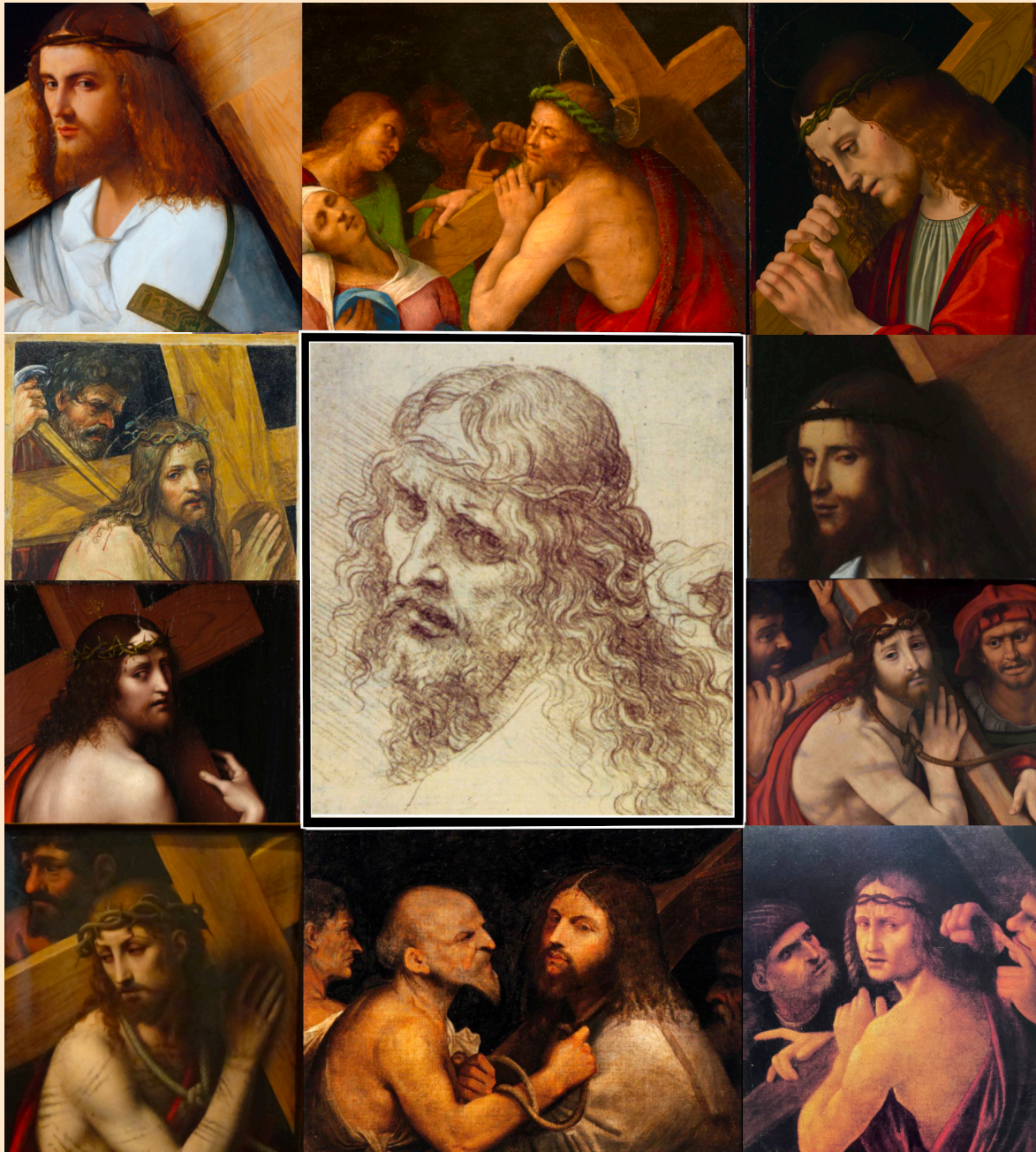


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This study forms the basis for the content presented on the website leonard-christ.com and in the accompanying summary video.

Overview of the Comparative Study

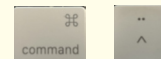
The Five Stages	Sections	Summary Description
1. <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i> and Leonardo da Vinci	1	Leonardo's <i>Drawing of the Head of Christ</i> from Venice and the theme of <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i> .
2. Leonardo da Vinci's drawing of the <i>Head of Christ from Venice</i>	2	Presentation of the <i>Drawing</i> : dating, technique, the ' <i>Ritratto di Spalla</i> ', origin, connection with <i>The Last Supper</i> .
3. The Influence of the <i>Drawing</i> and the various versions of <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i>	3,4	Historians' hypotheses on the possible existence of an original painting (or cartoon) by Leonardo da Vinci. <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i> and the contemporary painters of Leonardo. Setting up a multi-criteria analysis grid to compare the artworks.
4. The study of different versions of <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i>	5 to 15	Comparative analysis of the works of Venetian, Milanese, and other school painters, in connection with the <i>Venice Drawing</i> , using the multi-criteria framework.
5. Summary of the Comparative study	16,17,18	Summary of key findings from the study, identification of the versions closest to the <i>Drawing</i> , and final hypothesis. The presumed model of Leonardo adopted by Giampietrino?

Note regarding navigation in the digital version

To facilitate navigation in the digital version of this document:

- In the 'Table of Contents', click on an entry.
- To return to the 'table of contents' at any time, click on [Table of Contents](#) at the bottom of the page.
- In the text, for a reference to another section, click on, for example, [Appendix 1](#) (in blue). Then, to return to the starting point:

- Apple (iMac, etc.): press both keys simultaneously.
Or 'Preview': 'Go To' - 'Previous'.



- Windows: press both keys simultaneously.
(With acrobat reader)



1. Foreword

At the end of the 20th century, several art historians such as Carlo Pedretti, Pietro C. Marani, and David Allan Brown revitalized research on Leonardo da Vinci and his followers. Although these studies were initiated in 1929 by Wilhelm Suida, whose seminal work *Leonardo und sein Kreis* (Leonardo and His Circle) remains a key reference, they were subsequently suspended for nearly half a century, as noted in a 2011 article published by the National Gallery in London¹:

"It is noticeable that no particularly relevant or systematic studies of Leonardo's followers were pursued between 1929, the year of Wilhelm Suida's fundamental publication 'Leonardo und sein Kreis', and the early 1980s, when renewed interest in Leonardism first appeared. This long period of neglect has resulted in the attribution and chronology of the paintings by Leonardo's followers continuing to be a matter of great and unresolved debate".

This gap in research largely explains the persisting complexity concerning the attribution and chronology of works in Leonardo's circle.

Among these inquiries is a drawing² by Leonardo, preserved in Venice, depicting Christ during the Passion. As early as 1929, Wilhelm Suida was already pondering the possibility that this drawing had served as a basis for several painted variants of the '*Christ Carrying the Cross*', and wondered whether Leonardo himself had produced a painted version:

*"It is likely that Leonardo treated this motif in several variants..."*³.

Half a century later, in 1979, Carlo Pedretti revisited this topic in a publication⁴ highlighting that Leonardo's studies on the *Christ Carrying the Cross*, of which a single surviving example is preserved in Venice, could be evidence of the existence of a lost original.

The *Venice Drawing* has sparked numerous interpretations, yet historians have not conclusively established whether a painted version by Leonardo himself ever existed. Historians have not conclusively established if this drawing led to an original creation by the master, or at least to the production of a cartoon⁵ used by other artists in his circle?

To attempt to answer this question, we have undertaken a meticulous study, based on a detailed comparison between the '*Venice Drawing*' and several versions of *Christ Carrying the Cross* identified by historians. Until now, it seems that most comparisons have been made from the paintings back to the *Drawing*. However, we propose a different method: starting from the characteristic elements of the *Venice Drawing* to identify works that could derive from it. This approach, which we consider more objective, offers a new and rigorous methodological framework for this comparative study.

It is important to note that some of the works analysed have been subject to recent re-attributions or have changed ownership, elements that we mention and integrate into our analysis.

Our first step was to compile a rigorous documentary foundation, though not intended to be exhaustive (see references below):

- Suida, W. (1929) - *Leonardo und sein Kreis* (Appendix 1)
- Pedretti, C. (1979) - *Giorgione and Leonardo's Christ Carrying the Cross* (Appendix 2)
- Pedretti, C. (1983) - *Studi per il Cenacolo* (Appendix 3)
- Marani, P.C. (1987) - *Leonardo e i Leonardeschi a Brera*
- Brown, D.A. (1987) - *Andrea Solario* (Appendix 4)
- Marani, P.C. (1992) - *Leonardo & Venice*

1 : National Gallery London (2011), '*Technical Bulletin N°32, Leonardo da Vinci: pupil, painter and master*', p.78.

2 : '*Head of Christ and a Hand Grasping his Hair*', Gallerie Accademia Venice (N°231).

3 : Suida, W. (1929), '*Leonardo da Vinci und sein Kreis*', pp. 88, 89.

4 : Pedretti, C. (1979), *Giorgione and Leonardo's Christ Carrying the Cross*, L'Almanacco Italiano 1979, pp.236s.

5 : Full scale drawing.

- Bambach, C. (2003) - *Leonardo's Master Draftsman*
- Pedretti, C (2006) - *La Mente di Leonardo, Al tempo della 'Battaglia di Anghiari'*

Our study is based on two main approaches: first, synthesizing existing historical documentation, and second, deepening historians' analyses. Recent technological advancements have enabled more in-depth research and utilize information with greater precision. Additionally, these advancements facilitate the comparative observation of images and improve the quality of visual analysis.

The study is presented in the form of synthetic sheets, compiling essential data and enriched with numerous illustrations and figures directly related to the text. It begins with an in-depth analysis of the *Venice Drawing*, followed by historians' observations on its influence on *Christ Carrying the Cross*. Subsequently, the works mentioned by these historians are presented, before concluding with a synthesis aimed at identifying which one(s) could approximate a possible original by the master.

2. Leonardo's Head of Christ Venice Drawing

Leonardo's drawing, titled '*Head of Christ and a Hand Grasping his Hair*', held at the Venice Academy Galleries, is referred to in this study as the '*Venice Drawing*' or simply '*the Drawing*'.

2.1. Venice Academy Galleries - Commentary no. 231 (10/2024)⁶

Head of Christ and a Hand Grasping his Hair (116 x 91 mm)

"This intense and dramatic drawing held by the Galleries of the Academy is a three-quarter drawing of the face of Christ looking over his shoulder as a hand on the left is grasping him by the hair. The crown of thorns leaves no doubt regarding the identity of the subject, which shows Christ at the moment in which, after having been whipped and scorned, he is made to carry the cross and climb Mount Calvary.

Less certain, however, is when the drawing was undertaken, even though it is now largely agreed that it was executed after 1490–1495, which is when Leonardo, working on the planning of *The Last Supper* for Santa Maria delle Grazie, began a reflection on Christ's Passion. It is not clear whether the sheet belonging to the Accademia is an isolated drawing or a preparatory study for a *lost* or perhaps never executed *painting*. It is nonetheless probable that the composition was brought to Venice by the artist during his brief sojourn during the early months of 1500, as we can make out its influence in the extraordinary and equally intense panel of Giorgione's *Christ Carrying the Cross* at the Scuola di San Rocco.

The luminous reflections we can see, particularly under raking light, would lead us to think that the artist used gold point rather than silverpoint."



Figure 01 : Venice Head of Christ (Leonardo)

2.2. Presentation of the Drawing

According to Carlo Pedretti⁷, this drawing, like others, is intriguing because it is not directly related to any documented project and seems unrelated to Leonardo due to the choice of subject. "*It is a problematic drawing...*". In this poignant depiction of Christ's head, a right hand represented by fingers pulls his hair. One might think that this is why he turns his head toward the viewer. According to Carlo Pedretti, the purpose of the *Drawing* was also to highlight "*the dorsal, neck, and arm muscles*".

- **Dating:** Generally dated between 1490 and 1495, it might have been executed as early as 1488⁸ due to the use of the silverpoint technique, a method Leonardo abandoned around 1490.
- **Silverpoint Technique:** Silverpoint, a medium used similarly to a pencil, demands exceptional precision and technical control. Often practiced during the Renaissance, it necessitates the use of prepared paper and does not allow for corrections once applied. It produces a very fine, almost incised line, demanding a high level of skill in execution. Due to its technical demands, it gives faces a more "engraved" quality, enhancing the emotional impact of the features⁹.

6 : <https://www.gallerieaccademia.it/en/head-christ-and-hand-grasping-his-hair>

7 : Pedretti, C. (1979), '*Giorgione and Leonardo's Christ Carrying the Cross*', L'Almanacco Italiano 1979, pp.236-242. In this article, it is mentioned that Kenneth Clark finds "*this drawing is also unusual in other respects*".

8 : Carmen Bambach suggests that the *Drawing* could be dated around 1488. (Bambach, C. 2003, *Leonardo Master Draftsman*, p. 423s). Similarly, Carlo Pedretti believes it is likely earlier than 1490.

9 : See Leonardo's drawing of Vienna '*Half-figure of an Apostle*' N°17614 (1493-1495) ([infra p. 70](#)).

- **Provenance:** Acquired by the Academy of Venice in 1822, it was part of Giuseppe Bossi's collection¹⁰, which he included in his 1810 work *"Del Cenacolo di Leonardo da Vinci"*.
- **'Ritratto di spalla'** (Shoulder Portrait): The *"ritratto di spalla"* or shoulder portrait is an important artistic innovation developed by Leonardo in his portraits, notably towards the end of the 15th century. The main features of this technique include:
 - A three-quarter pose, where the subject is depicted with the body slightly turned.
 - A rotation of the head, creating a dynamic contrast with the body's position, giving the impression that the subject has just turned around.
 - The subject's gaze directed generally toward the viewer, establishing a direct connection.

This composition brings more life and naturalism to the portrait compared to the static profiles that were common at the time.

Two of Leonardo's portraits exemplify this technique:

- On the left, a small drawing from a study sheet at the National Gallery of Art in Washington¹¹. As in the *Venice Drawing*, the rotation of the head is accentuated by the neck's fold, and the "di spalla" position is marked by a simple line down the centre of the back (white arrows).
- On the right, the portrait known as *'Testa di Fanciulla'* from Turin (1478 -1485), where the shoulder and upper arm are slightly outlined, similar to the *Venice Drawing*.



Figure 02 : Leonardo da Vinci , Study sheet (NGA Washington)



Figure 03 : Leonardo - Testa di Fanciulla (Turin)

According to John Pope-Hennessy¹², beyond the profile portrait style of the late 15th century, Leonardo pioneered the autonomous portrait during this period, which he describes in his notes as capturing *'the movements of the mind.'* The portrait loses its formerly rigid aspect, revealing instead the character's inner thoughts.

An excerpt from Leonardo's *'Treatise on Painting'*¹³ partially illustrates this observation: *"You should never render heads straight on the shoulders but rather turned to one side, to the right or left, even if they look up, down, or straight ahead, as it is essential to ensure their movements appear lively and not rigid"*.

10 : Giuseppe Bossi (1777-1815): Italian writer and painter.

11 : NGA Washington: drawing from a study sheet (16,4x13,9cm) dated 'probably 1470-1480' ([infra p. 70](#)).

12 : Hennessy, J.P. (1979), *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, p. 101: *"The motions of the mind - The change that overtakes the profile portrait in the last decade of the fifteenth century reflects a change of a more general kind, the invention of the autonomous portrait. It was created by Leonardo, and it sprang from the belief that the portrait should portray what is described in Leonardo's Notebooks as 'the motions of the mind'"*.

13 : Chez Jean de Bonnot, (2002), *'Le Traité de la Peinture de Léonard'*, art. 354, p. 149.

- Origin of the model: Its almost engraved quality could have been influenced by German anatomical models, notably those of Schongauer and Dürer, which were well known in Northern Italy at the time¹⁴. *“The sharp, incised quality of the drawing also recalls the influence of German prints on Leonardo (Pedretti 1979), especially works by Martin Schongauer (Brown 1987) and Albrecht Dürer”* (Carmen Bambach 2003).



Figure 05 : Bergognone - Christ Carrying the Cross

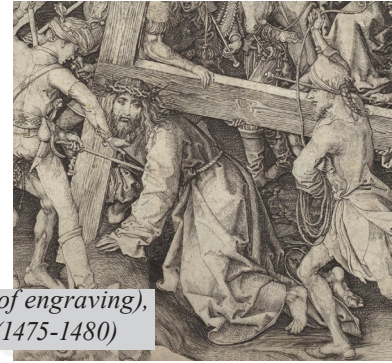


Figure 04 : Schongauer (part of engraving), Christ Carrying the Cross (1475-1480)

It is compared to similar works, such as a painting by Bergognone for the Certosa di Pavia¹⁵, dated around 1491. Given the impossibility of establishing a chronological order for these two works¹⁶, the question of the precedence of one over the other could not be clarified.

- The Venice Drawing and The Last Supper - A Suggested Connection: The *Drawing of the Head of Christ* from the Accademia in Venice is frequently compared to the preparatory studies for *The Last Supper*¹⁷. In 1810, Giuseppe Bossi, then the owner of the drawing, published it in his work *‘Del Cenacolo di Leonardo da Vinci’*, associating it with the apostle James the Greater. Carlo Pedretti (1983) briefly suggested a connection with the figure of Thomas, while Pietro C. Marani (1992) compared the *Drawing* to a sheet from the Albertina depicting Saint Peter, highlighting their stylistic and expressive similarities. He identified a possible link with the *Last Supper* project, although the dating remains uncertain. However, both P.C. Marani and C. Bambach (2003) noted a significant technical difference: the *Venice Drawing* is executed in metalpoint, whereas the known studies for *The Last Supper* are made in black and red chalk¹⁸. This makes a direct preparatory function unlikely. In summary, the drawing may reflect a parallel exploration of Passion figures, without any formal connection to the Milanese fresco.
- The Drawing and Leonardo’s Anatomical Studies: According to Carlo Pedretti (1979), the *Drawing* highlights the dorsal, neck, and arm muscles, illustrating that, at that time, Leonardo was engaged in anatomical studies ([infra p. 68](#)). He adds that: *“Other versions show the subject in the opposite direction, but always according to the principle introduced by Leonardo of showing Christ from the shoulder with his head turned toward the viewer. {...} where the dorsal muscles, shoulders, and neck prefigure the same anatomical studies by Leonardo from 1510”*.

Summary: This ‘problematic’ drawing of the head of a Christ pulled by the hair illustrates the ‘*ritratto di spalla*’. It captures the moment when the subject turns toward the viewer, revealing, with intense expressiveness, the inner thoughts of the figure. Although the connection with *The Last Supper* is plausible but unconfirmed, it is supported by the fact that both the *Drawing* and *The Last Supper* depict scenes from the Passion, and are therefore thematically very close. This drawing stands as a remarkable example of Leonardo’s anatomical studies, highlighting the muscles of the neck and back.

14 : Marani, P.C. (1992), *Leonardo & Venice*, p.346.

15 : Bergognone, *Christ Carrying the Cross* (1491/97) - Oil on panel (166 x 118cm) - Pavia - Pinacoteca Malaspina.

16 : Pedretti, C. (1979), *L’Almanacco Italiano 1979*, pp. 236-242.

17 : Marani, P.C. (1992), *Leonardo & Venice*, p. 344.

18 : Marani, P.C. (1992), *Leonardo & Venice*, p. 344.

3. The influence of the Venice Drawing, historians and Christ Carrying the Cross

“At the end of the Quattrocento, Leonardo likely also explored various other themes, though the originals have not survived; only the versions provided by his disciples remain.” (Pietro C. Marani¹⁹).

Since the 1980s, art historians have explored the relationship between the *Venice Drawing* and Italian artists' interpretations of *Christ Carrying the Cross*. In addition to the main scholars already mentioned, (Wilhelm Suida, Carlo Pedretti, Pietro C. Marani, David A. Brown, Carmen Bambach), other specialists have also examined this question: Kenneth Clark, Larry Keith of the National Gallery in London, Martin Kemp, André Chastel, and Ludwig Goldscheider.

- **Wilhelm Suida**²⁰ (1929), concerning the *Venice Drawing* and *Christ Carrying the Cross*: *“It is likely that Leonardo treated the motif in several variations, according to his custom, one of which must underpin the remarkably consistent works of the Lombard artists”*.
- **Carlo Pedretti**²¹ (1979): *“Undoubtedly, Leonardo’s studies for the Christ Carrying the Cross, of which the only surviving one is now in Venice, led to a series of versions produced by his studio, hence with marked Lombard characteristics that suggest the work of Gianpietrino, Solario, and Luini”*.
- **Pietro C. Marani**²² (1992): *“The theme of the Christ Carrying the Cross by Leonardo on folio 231 from the Accademia in Venice [...] and one of the most difficult problems facing us in our consideration of the links between and the Venetian painting [...] nor is there mention of one in any of the documents. There are, however, some derivations from the supposed Leonardo prototype [...]. These works serve, if nothing else, to render plausible the theory of the existence of much better exemplar [...] perhaps the work of Leonardo himself”*.
- **David A. Brown**²³ (1987): *“Contrary to previous claims, Bellini’s ‘Christ Carrying the Cross’ has no connection with what Leonardo was experimenting with toward the end of his stay in Milan. This latter composition, which may have reached the stage of a cartoon, can be reconstructed based on a metalpoint drawing of Christ’s head at the Gallerie dell’Accademia in Venice, in combination with some copies made by painters within Leonardo’s circle”*.
- **Carmen Bambach**²⁴ (2003): *The Venice Drawing as a study for a Christ Carrying the Cross - “the possibility that the drawing may be a first idea for a more articulated composition later elaborated by Leonardo in a cartoon that he intended to make into a painting cannot be excluded”*. Carmen Bambach proposes that the *Drawing* could be dated to 1488.
- **Kenneth Clark**²⁵ (1939, 1967, reissue in 2008): *Concerning the San Rocco’s (Venice) Christ Carrying the Cross by Giorgione where “Leonardo’s imitation is obvious”- “This design is known to us as a whole through the replicas of Milanese pupils, evidently taken from a lost cartoon”*.

19 : Marani, P.C. (1987), *‘Leonardo e i Leonardeschi a Brera’*, p. 37.

20 : Suida, W. (1929), *‘Leonardo und sein Kreis’*, Editions: Verlag F. Bruckmann A.- G. (Munich), p. 88.

21 : Pedretti, C. (1979), *L’Almanacco Italiano 1979*, pp. 236-242.

22 : Pietro C. Marani, *‘Leonardo & Venice’*, Editions Bompiani 1992, pages 344 and 345.

23 : Brown, D.A. (1987), *‘Andrea Solario’*, Editions Electa (Milan).

24 : Bambach, C. (2003), *Leonardo Master Draftsman*, p. 423s.

25 : Clark, K. (1939), *‘Leonardo da Vinci’*, Cambridge at the University Press, p.106.

- **Larry Keith**²⁶ (1996): “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). {...} 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...”.
- **Martin Kemp**²⁷ (2003): “No artist ever inspired more copies, variants and pastiches than Leonardo. The working of variations on Leonardo’s favourite themes appears to have become something of an industry in Milan after his departure in 1513; [...] Variants that appear to reflect inventions by Leonardo himself include images [...] Christ Carrying the Cross ...”.
- **André Chastel**^{28,29} (1968): “a dozen works commissioned from the artist and planned by him, of which no one can say whether they were completed or even begun [...] Christ Carrying the Cross around 1497”.
- **Ludwig Goldscheider**³⁰ (1959): “The small drawing shows just the head of Christ crowned with thorns [...]. It seems feasible that of this composition Leonardo executed not only one but two cartoons, which are lost and known only by different imitations. In the first cartoon Christ was turned to the left (as in the drawing) [...] as most imitations I know of this version belong to the Venetian School [...] Giovanni Bellini workshop [...] Giorgione [...]. In the other, and later, version Christ was turned to the right, and this composition was imitated only by Milanese painters”.

Summary: although historians have not reached a definitive conclusion, the hypothesis of the existence of an **original work by Leonardo da Vinci**, or at least a cartoon, seems widely accepted.

26 : National Gallery London (1996), Larry Keith and Ashok Roy, Technical Bulletin N°17, ‘Giampietrino, Boltraffio, and the Influence of Leonardo’.

27 : Oxfordartonline (2024), <https://www.oxfordartonline.com> (The reference is no longer accessible without prior registration).

28 : Chastel André (1912-1990), French art historian, Italian Renaissance scholar.

29 : Flammarion (1968), documentation Ottino della Chiesa, A. ‘Tout l’œuvre Peint de Léonard’, p.6.

30 : Goldscheider, L. (1959), (reprinted 1975), ‘Leonardo, Paintings and Drawings’, Phaidon Press (London), p.152.

4. The Drawing and the various versions of Christ Carrying the Cross

4.1. The different versions of *Christ Carrying the Cross* (circa 1500)

Below are the various versions of the *Christ Carrying the Cross* (c. 1500) as identified by art historians. These works are grouped according to their respective artistic schools.

The Venitian

- The followers of Giovanni Bellini
- Giorgione³¹ or Titian³²

The Milanese³³

- Giampietrino³⁴
- Andrea Solario³⁵
- Bernardino Luini
- Cesare da Sesto

Other Schools

- Sodoma³⁶ (associated with Siennese painters, possible transition to Milan?)
- The *Christ Pulled by the Hair* (including a Milanese version '*in the manner of Giampietrino*'). These are the only versions to depict a hand pulling Christ's hair. We present them first due to the interest they may have generated.
- Marco d'Oggiono (Milanese³⁷), Francesco Maineri (associated with the Ferrara school).

These different representations are then compared with the *Venice Drawing*.

4.2. A '*Drawing to Painting*' approach

It should be noted that this comparison aims to identify characteristic elements of the *Venice Drawing* that appear in the paintings (*a 'Drawing-to-Painting' comparison approach*)³⁸. It is essential to first list the characteristic elements of the *Venice Drawing*, which will serve as the foundation for analysing potentially derivative paintings.

4.3. Characteristic Elements of the *Drawing* (Comparison Grid)

To facilitate a comparison between the *Venice Drawing* and the various versions of *Christ Carrying the Cross*, we have established a *comparison grid*. While this grid may not be exhaustive, it includes several essential criteria:

- The rows of the grid represent characteristic elements derived from the *Drawing*.
- The columns correspond to a selection of paintings.

The grid has nine criteria, each answered clearly as yes (✓) or no (✗).

The nine criteria of the grid

1. Overall plausible appearance: This first criterion serves to eliminate paintings that, although inspired by the *Drawing*, are clearly not close to an original by Leonardo.

31 : Giorgione (1477 - 1510), Venetian painter.

32 : Titian (circa 1488-1546), Venetian painter.

33 : "With the second generation of Milanese followers, the motif gained even more popularity, having also been treated in the meantime by Bellini around 1500..." - Marani (1987), *Leonardo e i Leonardeschi a Brera*, p. 37.

34 : Giovan Pietro Rizzoli known as Giampietrino (Circa 1480-85, 1549), Milanese painter.

35 : Andrea Solario (1460-1524), Milanese painter.

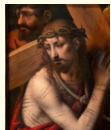
36 : Giovanni Antonio Bazzi known as Sodoma (1477-1549), a painter trained in the Lombard school, associated with the Siennese school.

37 : On the theme of *Christ Carrying the Cross*, his work is more closely associated with that of Francesco Maineri.

38 : Brown (1987): Our approach aligns with D.A. Brown's analysis in his study on the *Venice Drawing* and *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Andrea Solario: "Although Leonardo's concept perhaps included a pair of persecutors, here we will focus our attention on the figure of the Savior." (Appendix 4).

2. **'Ritratto di spalla'**³⁹ (Shoulder Portrait): This is the essential characteristic of the *Venice Drawing*. The portrait, generally shown in a three-quarter front or back view, depicts the head over the shoulder, either facing the viewer or directed elsewhere.
3. **'Ritratto di spalla'**, three-quarter back view: The shoulder portrait is seen from a three-quarter back view, as in the *Drawing*. If this criterion is not applicable, it is marked as "NA" (Not Applicable).
4. Portrait oriented to the left.
5. **Head and gaze directed at the viewer.**
6. **Hand pulling the hair.**
7. Hair and beard: general appearance of the hair and beard with two points (bifid beard).
8. Mouth partially open: expression of intense suffering and emotion.
9. Presence of a crown of thorns.

Since the expression of Christ's face is more difficult to assess objectively and is subject to artistic interpretation, it was not included in the grid.

Leonardo da Vinci's <i>Venice Drawing</i> and the versions of <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i> circa 1500-1520						
Characteristics of the <i>Drawing</i>						
1	Appearance (Plausibility)	✓				
2	'Ritratto di spalla' (Shoulder portrait)	✓				
3	'Ritratto di spalla' 3/4 back	✓				
4	Portrait turned to the left	✓				
5	Head and gaze toward the viewer	✓				
6	Hand pulling the hair	✓				
7	Hair and beard	✓				
8	Mouth partially open	✓				
9	Crown of thorns	✓				

4.4. Comparison between *Drawing* and the various versions of *Christ Carrying the Cross*

Each study is presented as a detailed sheet divided into two main parts:

- Presentation of the work: This includes a very brief biography of the artists, observations noted in historians' studies, and, where applicable, specific information or detailed developments.
- Comparative analysis with the *Venice Drawing*: This section employs the criteria grid to provide an overview.

Based on this summary grid, an initial stage (**preliminary synthesis**) allows us to exclude paintings that clearly do not meet the essential criteria, thereby narrowing down the sample for further analysis.

This refined sample leads to a second stage (**final synthesis**) for a more detailed analysis, incorporating additional criteria and observations.

Summary: the contemporary painters of Leonardo who depicted the theme of *Christ Carrying the Cross* have been presented for comparison with the *Venice Drawing*. This comparison will take place in two stages: the first using a grid of nine criteria specific to the *Drawing*, followed by a second phase with additional criteria.

39 : The *'ritratto di spalla'* is also found in other compositions by Leonardo: *'Study Sheet'* at the NGA Washington, *'Testa di Fanciulla'* in Turin, *'Study of a Soldier's Head for the Battle of Anghiari'* in Budapest, *'The Angel of the Virgin of the Rocks'* at the Louvre and NG London, *'La Belle Ferronnière'* at the Louvre, *'Lady with an Ermine'* in Krakow.

5. Christ Carrying the Cross and Venetian painters

5.1. Presentation of the works (Giorgione/Titian and Bellini)

Although there is a clear stylistic difference between Bellini's model and the composition by Giorgione (or Titian), historians' commentary, including that of Pietro C. Marani, has led us to present them jointly⁴⁰: *"The theme of the Christ Carrying the Cross by Leonardo {...} and one of the most difficult problems facing us in our consideration of the links between Leonardo and Venetian painting, particularly Giorgione's."*⁴¹ (P.C. Marani⁴²).

He adds: *"The problem is to establish whether this painting might not in its turn have been influenced not only by the possible Vincian model, but also by a similar, but not identical composition by Giovanni Bellini..."*.



Figure 06 : Christ Carrying the Cross : on the left Giorgione and on the right Bellini's model

Giovanni Bellini's model

Bellini's model is represented by the painting in the Toledo Museum of Art (Ohio). According to the museum, at least fifty-five versions of this subject exist. This intimate painting, with its dramatic close-up of Jesus, was used for private devotion. The Toledo version is considered one of the finest.

Christ Carrying the Cross
Follower⁴³ of Bellini
Toledo Museum (Ohio) (Inv. 1940.44)
Dating: 1500-1510
Dimensions: 49,5cm x 38,7cm
Oil on wood panel

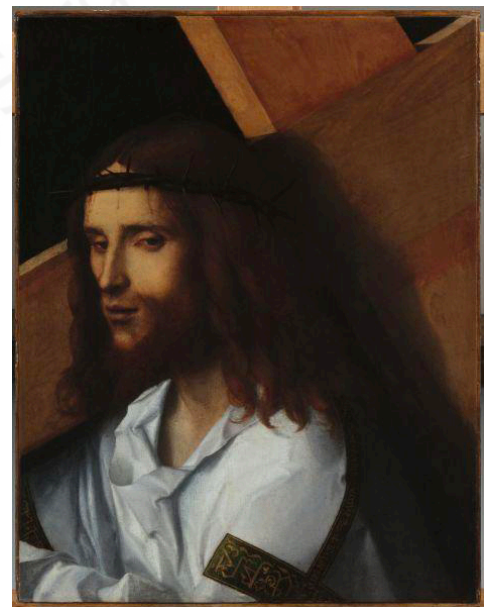


Figure 07 : Follower of Bellini, Toledo (Ohio)

40 : The detailed study of Giorgione's *Christ Carrying the Cross* is the subject of the following sheet.

41 : Giorgione, Venetian Painter (1477 - 1510).

42 : Marani, P.C. (1992) *'Leonardo & Venice'*, p. 344.

43 : After cleaning in 1986, art historians concluded that the work was created by an assistant in Bellini's workshop, with contributions from the Master himself in the execution of the drapery folds and the inscriptions (Toledo Museum).

Another nearly identical painting, now attributed to Bellini's circle, was acquired by the Gardner Museum in Boston in 1896 under the name of Giorgione. According to the museum, this work is based on Bellini's model preserved at the Toledo Art Museum (Ohio) and may have been recreated by a disciple, Vincenzo Catena (c. 1470–1531).

Christ Carrying the Cross

Circle of Bellini
Gardner Museum (Boston)
Dating: 1505-1510
Dimensions: 49,5cm x 38,5cm
Oil and tempera on wood panel



Figure 08 : Circle of Bellini,
Gardner Museum (Boston)

Giovanni Bellini⁴⁴

Giovanni Bellini (c. 1430–1516) was an Italian Renaissance painter from Venice. Trained in his father Jacopo's workshop and influenced by Andrea Mantegna, he developed an innovative style, characterized by a refined use of light and colour. Bellini revolutionized Venetian painting with his harmonious and spiritually resonant compositions. {...}. A master of light, he profoundly influenced the next generation of artists, including Giorgione and Titian, playing a decisive role in the development of the Venetian school.

Historians

- Pedretti C. 1979 ([Appendix 2](#)): *"It may be that Leonardo, in turn, had in mind a northern model, similar to one originating from Antonello (da Messina) and known in versions that lead to the famous 'Christ Carrying the Cross' in Boston, variously attributed to Giovanni Bellini and Giorgione"*.
- Brown D.A. 1987 ([Appendix 4](#)): *"Contrary to previous claims, Bellini's 'Christ Carrying the Cross' has no connection with what Leonardo was experimenting with toward the end of his stay in Milan; in fact, this latter composition may have reached the stage of a cartoon..."*.
- Marani P.C. 1992 (*Leonardo & Venice*, p344): *"The Bellinian prototype differs sensibly from Leonardo's composition..."*.

44 : Source: Encyclopedia Treccani.

5.2. Comparison with the *Venice Drawing*

The two paintings derived from Bellini's model are clearly distinct from the *Drawing*, as they do not depict a shoulder portrait. Instead, Christ is shown in a three-quarter view, oriented toward the left, with his head and torso aligned with the cross. Additionally, the figure appears younger than in the *Drawing*.

Leonardo da Vinci's <i>Venice Drawing</i> and the versions of <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i> circa 1500-1520		Characteristics of the <i>Drawing</i>		
				
1	Appearance (Plausibility)	✓	✓	✓
2	'Ritratto di spalla' (Shoulder portrait)	✓	✗	✗
3	'Ritratto di spalla' 3/4 back	✓	Not Applicable	NA
4	Portrait turned to the left	✓	✓	✓
5	Head and gaze toward the viewer	✓	✗	✗
6	Hand pulling the hair	✓	✗	✗
7	Hair and beard	✓	✓	✓
8	Mouth partially open	✓	✓	✓
9	Crown of thorns	✓	✓	✓

Summary: According to P.C. Marani the theme of *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Leonardo, in connection with Venetian painting, is a complex issue. The model of Bellini's would be represented by the paintings from the Toledo Museum (Ohio) and the Gardner Museum in Boston. These works resemble those of Marco d'Oggiono and Francesco Maineri, but, according to David A. Brown, have no connection to Leonardo da Vinci.

6. Christ Carrying the Cross Giorgione/Titian (Venetian)

6.1. Presentation of *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Giorgione

Christ Carrying the Cross

Giorgione or Titian
Scuola di San Rocco of Venice
Dating: 1508-1509
Dimensions: 68cm x 88cm
Oil on wood panel

This version of '*Christ Carrying the Cross*' is generally associated with the name of Giorgione, with Titian's name being mentioned less prominently. Christ is surrounded by three figures.

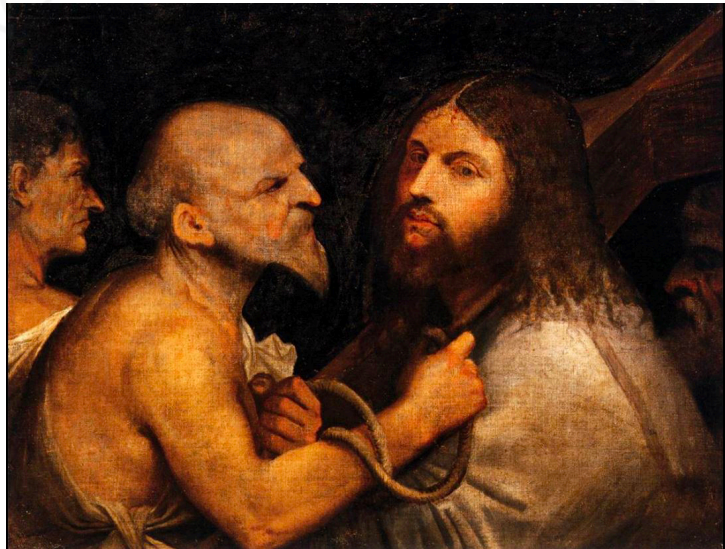


Figure 09 : *Christ Carrying the Cross*, Giorgione San Rocco

Figure 10 : Giorgione,
Third character



A third character⁴⁵

To the right of Christ, a third figure can be faintly seen. Unlike the two others on the left, this figure does not appear to pose a threat. To highlight this obscured figure, the image's color was digitally adjusted (Mantiuk, 2006).

Giorgione or Titian (Treccani it)

- Giorgione: "Name by which the painter Giorgio da Castelfranco is known (born in Castelfranco Veneto, possibly in 1477 - died in 1510). A leading figure of the Venetian school of the Cinquecento, his work had a profound impact on the young Titian and Sebastiano del Piombo, also prompting a decisive update to the style of the elder G. Bellini, his presumed master. {...} The attribution and dating of Giorgione's works remain among the most controversial issues in art history... {...} as well as other works in which it is difficult to distinguish Giorgione's personality from that of the young Titian".
- Titian: "Painter (Pieve di Cadore 1488-90 - Venice 1576). Due to conflicting sources, Titian's exact birth date and therefore his place within the broad Venetian art scene at the beginning of the 16th century remains unresolved. After an apprenticeship with the mosaicist S. Zuccato, Titian worked in the studio of Gentile Bellini, and later with Giovanni Bellini. His artistic direction was, from the start, both assured and brilliant, drawing on influences from Bellini, Giorgione, Dürer, as well as Raphael and Michelangelo..."

Historians

- Suida, W. (1929) on the connection between *Christ Carrying the Cross* at San Rocco and Leonardo: 'Nevertheless, there are instances where, in front of a painting by Titian, Leonardo's name spontaneously comes to mind. The '*Christ Carrying the Cross*' at San Rocco in Venice is likely an early work by Titian, rather than, as is commonly claimed, a work by Giorgione.' ([Appendix 1](#))

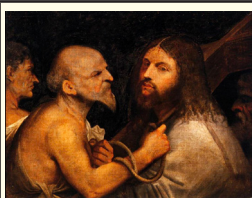
45 : This figure bears a strong resemblance to the one, placed in the same position, in Sodoma's *Christ Carrying the Cross* at the Palazzo d'Arco in Mantua ([infra p. 70](#)).

- Pedretti. C. (1979): “In discussing the relationship between Giorgione and Leonardo: “*Less attention has been given to the most compelling link, namely Leonardo’s drawing in Venice depicting a ‘Christ Carrying the Cross’, which can rightly be considered the prototype for Giorgione’s painting on the same subject at San Rocco.*” ([Appendix 2](#))
- Clark K. (2005)⁴⁶: “*We have material evidence of its influence in Giorgione’s painting at San Rocco, ‘Christ Carrying the Cross’, where the imitation of a drawing by Leonardo is evident. This drawing is known to us in its main elements through copies made by his students in Milan, based on a now-lost cartoon.*”

Regardless of the attribution issue to Giorgione or Titian, historians appear unanimous in recognizing Leonardo’s influence. Carlo Pedretti also draws a connection to the figure immediately to Christ’s left, which he compares to a drawing by Leonardo in the Ambrosiana⁴⁷.

6.2. Comparison with the *Venice Drawing* (Giorgione).

The loose garment of Christ leaves part of the shoulder visible, but the torso is depicted in profile rather than from the back. The head turned toward the viewer aligns with the characteristics of a ‘*ritratto di spalla*.’ Compared to the *Venice Drawing*, three additional figures have been added. However, the ‘hand’ and the crown of thorns are absent.

Leonardo da Vinci’s <i>Venice Drawing</i> and the versions of <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i> circa 1500-1520		 	
Characteristics of the <i>Drawing</i>			
1	Appearance (Plausibility)	✓	✓
2	‘ <i>Ritratto di spalla</i> ’ (Shoulder portrait)	✓	✓
3	‘ <i>Ritratto di spalla</i> ’ 3/4 back	✓	✗
4	Portrait turned to the left	✓	✓
5	Head and gaze toward the viewer	✓	✓
6	Hand pulling the hair	✓	✗
7	Hair and beard	✓	✓
8	Mouth partially open	✓	✗
9	Crown of thorns	✓	✗

Summary: The resemblance between Giorgione’s (or Titian’s) painting and the *Venice Drawing*, marked by a shoulder portrait, is evident and confirmed by the consensus of historians. Only Pietro C. Marani also mentions a possible influence from Bellini.

46 : Clark, K. (2005 reissue), ‘*Leonardo*’, Le Livre de Poche, p. 219-220.

47 : Pedretti, C. (1979), ‘*Giorgione and Leonardo’s Christ Carrying the Cross*’, l’Almanacco Italiano 1979, p242.

7. Christ Carrying the Cross: Giampietrino (Milanese)

7.1. Presentation of the Works



With contributions from his workshop, Giampietrino produced multiple versions of *Christ Carrying the Cross* derived from a single model⁴⁸.

Although additional versions may exist, six have been clearly identified:

- National Gallery, London (1510-1530) - (47 x 59.7 cm), oil on poplar wood.
- Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest (1519-1520) - (48.5 x 61.8 cm), oil on poplar wood (?).
- Royal Museum of Turin, Galleria Sabauda (1500-1524) - (50 x 64 cm), oil, transferred to canvas.
- National Museum, Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome (1500-1549) - (35 x 44 cm), oil, transferred to canvas.
- Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (1510-1530?) - (58 x 77 cm), oil on poplar wood.
- Museo Diocesano, Milan (1510-1530?) - (59 x 74 cm), oil on wood.

Even though the panels of the first three versions ('London', 'Budapest', and 'Turin') are slightly different in size, these works are exact replicas of a single model, with identical dimensions for Christ in each representation. This confirms that while the panels themselves vary, Christ is rendered in the same size in each version, with nearly perfect overlay of the outlines.

An analysis by the National Gallery in London suggests that the London and Budapest panels likely originated from the same cartoon ([Appendix 5](#)). The Rome version, which was likely cut on the right and at the bottom, could correspond to the three preceding versions. Those in Vienna and Milan, approximately 20% larger, appear to derive from an enlarged cartoon and show, on the left, the complete robe of Christ (cut in the first three versions).

Giampietrino

Giampietrino's name is more closely associated with his work; the National Gallery in London provides some information: "*Little is known about Giampietrino {...} Although there may be some*

48 : National Gallery London (1996), Technical Bul. N°17, '*Giampietrino, Boltraffio, and the Influence of Leonardo*'.

doubt about their attribution the paintings ascribed to this artist do form a stylistically coherent⁴⁹ whole. They reflect the influence of Marco d'Oggiono, Cesare da Sesto, and above all Leonardo.”

He is said to have been active between 1508 and 1553. He may have been present as an apprentice in Leonardo's workshop between 1497 and 1500, under the name Gian Pietro⁵⁰, though the connection to the master is not clearly established. Belonging to the Lombard school, he was strongly influenced by Leonardo. With the assistance of his own workshop, he produced a large number of paintings, including copies with variations as well as his own compositions.

According to Frank Zöllner, Giampietrino very likely had direct access⁵¹ to Leonardo's works, particularly for 'Leda'⁵². Initially, he intended to execute Leonardo's 'Saint Anne'. He first transferred the sketch of 'Saint Anne' onto the panel from the master's cartoon, then covered it with the painting of 'Leda'. He (and/or Boltraffio) also made a copy of 'The Last Supper' (Royal Academy of Arts, London).

Historians

- Suida W. (1929): *“The motif has likely been treated by Leonardo in several variants, according to his custom, one of which must underlie the strikingly consistent paintings of the Lombards”*. Among these latter, he then mentions Solario, Sodoma and Giampietrino ([Appendix 1](#)).
- Brown DA. (1987): *“Solario's 'Christ' is essentially shown in a three-quarter view with a frontal head, while Leonardo's turns both back and head towards the viewer, as suggested by the numerous single-figure copies made by his follower Giampietrino”* ([infra p. 56](#)).
- Beni Culturali (Italy) (1998) - 'Turin version': *“{...} following the model created by Leonardo and currently visible in a drawing kept in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice, which likely led to a highly successful (lost) painting by the master and numerous replicas made by the school. Several versions are attributed to the same Giampietrino”* ([Appendix 6](#)).
- National Gallery London (1996): *“A silver-point study of 'Christ Carrying his Cross' by Leonardo now in Venice is clearly the compositional source of the National Gallery Giampietrino”* ([Appendix 5](#)).
- National Gallery London, (Description of the London version Nov. 2024): *“The National Gallery's panel is one of several more or less identical versions of the same picture by Giampietrino, suggesting that he kept reusing the same cartoon”*.

Historians unanimously agree that the *Venice Drawing* is the source of numerous versions by Giampietrino, with some even suggesting it may be a copy of a model by Leonardo (Brown, 1987).

7.2. Comparison with the Venice Drawing

With the exception of the hand pulling the hair and the reversed position of Christ, as can be seen in other Milanese works, the criteria defined by the comparison grid are met. However, these omissions do not significantly alter the essence of the scene. The head's rotation is accentuated by a sharply defined crease in the neck. Notably, Christ's expression of suffering appears softened compared to that in the *Drawing*.

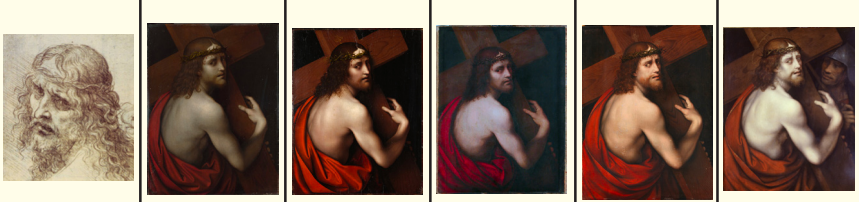
Note: As in similar representations studied (Sodoma, Solario and Luini), the cross rests on Christ's left shoulder.

49 : This is confirmed by the Italian encyclopedia 'Treccani': "There is a lack of documents, and none of his works are signed; his identity is established solely on a stylistic basis".

50 : Codex Altanticus (713r - circa 1497), Biblioteca Ambrosiana (Milan).

51 : Zöllner, F. (2003), *Leonardo da Vinci*, Taschen Editions, p. 246): *“In any case, and as suggested by the comparisons with other paintings and drawings by Leonardo mentioned above, Giampietrino had direct access to his master's works”*.

52 : Zöllner, F. (2003), *Leonardo da Vinci*, Taschen Editions, p. 188, *The Leda (The Leda and her Children)* circa 1508-1513 from the Kassel Art Museum is a copy (without the swan) of the *Leda and the Swan* by Leonardo, today lost, better known through the numerous reproductions that have been made of it.

Leonardo da Vinci's <i>Venice Drawing</i> and the versions of <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i> circa 1500-1520							
Characteristics of the <i>Drawing</i>							
1	Appearance (Plausibility)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	' <i>Ritratto di spalla</i> ' (Shoulder portrait)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	' <i>Ritratto di spalla</i> ' 3/4 back	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Portrait turned to the left	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
5	Head and gaze toward the viewer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Hand pulling the hair	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
7	Hair and beard	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Mouth partially open	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Crown of thorns	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

7.3. Anatomical Comparison between the *Venice Drawing*, Giampietrino, and the Castello Sforzesco version ('*in the manner of Giampietrino*')

This analysis compares the key features and structural lines of the *Drawing* with Giampietrino's Christ, also incorporating the Castello Sforzesco version, executed '*in the manner of Giampietrino*'. The *Drawing* faces left, as does the 'Castello Sforzesco' painting, which is why we have chosen to present Giampietrino's 'Christ' in **mirror** image to facilitate comparison.

In the following figure, where the shoulder appears in the foreground, the bust is positioned identically across the three portraits. However, in the 'Castello Sforzesco' version, the head is upright and oriented⁵³ more toward a frontal view, while in the other two, it leans slightly toward a profile representation.

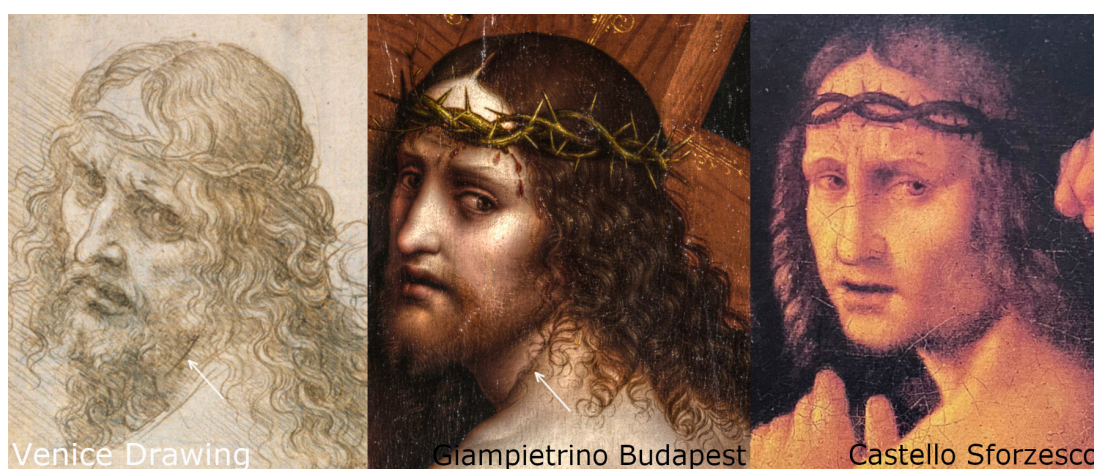


Figure 12 : *Venice Drawing*, Giampietrino's *Christ Carrying the Cross* (mirror) and 'Castello Sforzesco' (Milan)

⁵³ : The rotation of the head, being strictly limited from an anatomical perspective, is not realistic in its representation.

The *Drawing* reveals a distinct dynamic in Christ's posture, captured at the moment his gaze turns toward the viewer, emphasized by the pronounced line of the neck fold (white arrow), which is present in Giampietrino's work but absent in the 'Castello Sforzesco' version. In the latter, Christ's expression of suffering is further softened compared to Giampietrino's, where it is already less pronounced than in the *Drawing*.

7.4. Comparison of the lines (Venice Drawing / Giampietrino)

Following scaling⁵⁴, the principal lines of the *Drawing* align with Giampietrino's portrait of Christ without any alteration in angle. Overall, these lines correspond closely to those in Giampietrino's work. The alignment of the profile of the nose and mouth confirms that both heads share the same tilt and orientation.

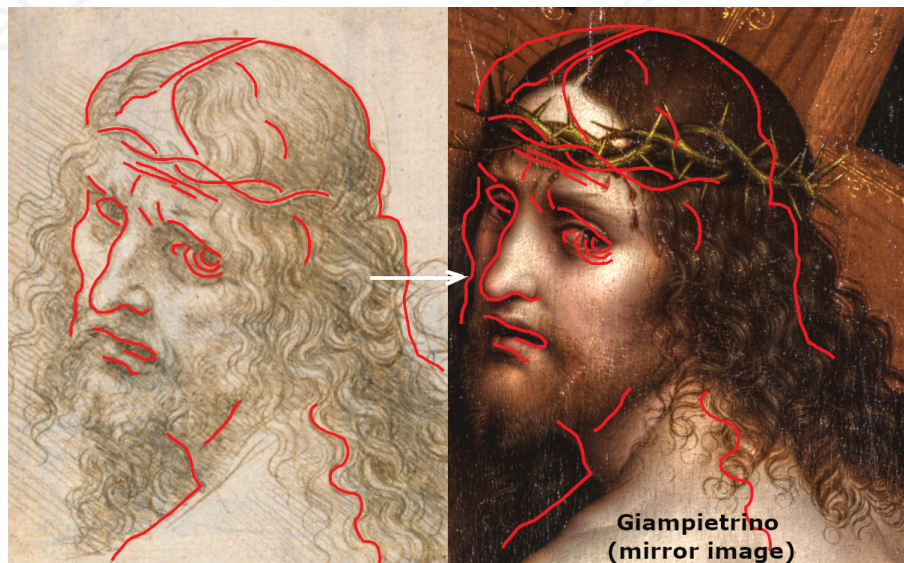


Figure 13 : Transfer of the outline from the Venice Drawing onto Giampietrino's figure (mirror image)

Summary: Giampietrino, heavily influenced by Leonardo, created numerous representations of *Christ Carrying the Cross* based on a **single model**, which would have led D.A. Brown to regard it as "*Leonardo's model*". Apart from the absence of the hand pulling the hair and the reversed position of Christ, the essential characteristics of the *Drawing* are present: a shoulder portrait seen from three-quarters behind, with the head turned toward the viewer. Additionally, the overlay of contours between the *Venice Drawing* and Giampietrino's work reveals a similarity in the main lines and an identical head tilt. It is also noted that the cross rests on the left shoulder, as in other Milanese works.

54 : This scaling is done using the digital layering method. The comparison with the 'Castello Sforzesco' version, which leans toward a frontal face, is of limited interest.

8. Christ Carrying the Cross: Andrea Solario (Milanese) formerly in Magdeburg

8.1. Presentation of the work

Christ Carrying the Cross - Andrea Solario (attributed to)

Art Museum Magdeburg - Destroyed in 1945

Dating: ca. 1510 - Dimensions: 72cm x 56cm

Poplar wood

A lesser-known version of *Christ Carrying the Cross*, distinct from the one in the Borghese Gallery, but showing strong similarities to Giampietrino's model, was once housed in Magdeburg.

This version, formerly in the Berlin Museum and attributed to Andrea Solario, is similar to Giampietrino's model. In poplar wood was originally part of Edward Solly's collection, assembled in Berlin after Napoleon's downfall in 1814. The work entered the collection of the Royal Museum in Berlin in the 1830s under the name Andrea Salaino before being later attributed to Andrea Solario. Later transferred to Magdeburg Museum, it was unfortunately destroyed in 1945, although a record including a photograph was preserved⁵⁵.

Several historians have discussed the authenticity and attribution of the painting. Kurt Badt, in his 1914 catalogue raisonné of Solario, along with Crowe and Cavalcaselle in 1912, regarded the work as authentic. However, in 1987, David Alan Brown argued that the painting should instead be attributed to Giampietrino. He based this on its close resemblance to the version in the Galleria Sabauda in Turin⁵⁶, which Kurt Badt had already noted for its similarity. D.A. Brown likely knew of the work attributed to Solario only through Badt's description, which did not include an image.

While all versions by Giampietrino are based on the same drawing, our in-depth comparative analysis revealed significant differences, particularly in the outline of Christ's head, indicating that the Magdeburg painting was a distinct work. For this reason, despite the ongoing debate over attribution, we have chosen to retain the name of Solario in this study.

Around 1850, two artists created engravings for the Royal Museum in Berlin, providing faithful reproductions. A detailed presentation of the Magdeburg painting, along with a comparative analysis with Giampietrino's work, is explored further in [Appendix 8](#).

⁵⁵ : This photograph was rediscovered by the museum in 2019 following a request we made.

⁵⁶ : According to Kurt Badt, the 'Christ Carrying the Cross' from Magdeburg and the one by Giampietrino in Turin were copies of an original by Solario (Appendix 12).



Figure 14 : Christ Carrying the Cross, Magdeburg, attributed to Solario

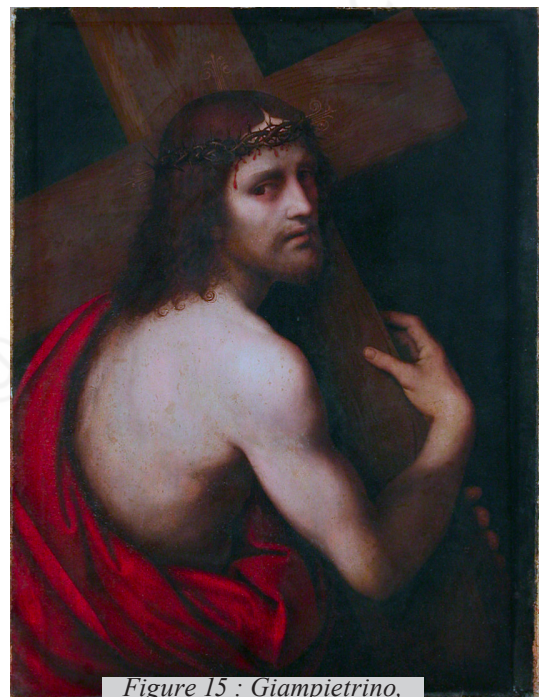


Figure 15 : Giampietrino, Galleria Sabauda (Turin)

8.2. Comparison with the *Venice Drawing*

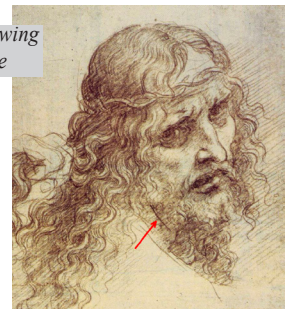
We present the mirrored image of the *Venice Drawing* alongside one of the engravings of the 'Magdeburg Christ' to facilitate a more precise comparison. This approach is preferable to using the original pre-1945 image, which has suffered slight degradation.

Aside from the absence of the hand pulling the hair, the reversed orientation of Christ's figure, and the softened expression of suffering in the painting, the depiction retains the main characteristics of the *Drawing*. These include a 'shoulder portrait' in a three-quarter back view, with the head and gaze directed toward the viewer.

The pronounced line of the neck in the *Drawing* (red arrow), crucial in highlighting the head's rotation, is clearly visible in the painting. The depiction of Christ's robe closely resembles that in the Borghese Gallery painting and in Giampietrino's works ([infra p. 40](#)).

Note: As in similar representations studied (Sodoma, Solario, Luini and Giampietrino), the cross rests on Christ's left shoulder.

Figure 17 : Leonardo's Drawing of Venice - Mirror image



Leonardo da Vinci's <i>Venice Drawing</i> and the versions of <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i> circa 1500-1520		Characteristics of the <i>Drawing</i>	
			
1	Appearance (Plausibility)	✓	✓
2	' <i>Ritratto di spalla</i> ' (Shoulder portrait)	✓	✓
3	' <i>Ritratto di spalla</i> ' 3/4 back	✓	✓
4	Portrait turned to the left	✓	✗
5	Head and gaze toward the viewer	✓	✓
6	Hand pulling the hair	✓	✗
7	Hair and beard	✓	✓
8	Mouth partially open	✓	✓
9	Crown of thorns	✓	✓

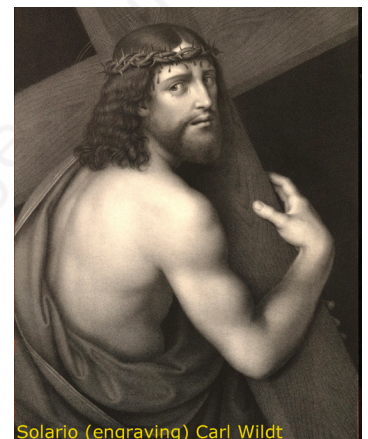


Figure 16 : Solario Magdeburg Karl Wildt's engraving

Summary: This version, formerly in the Berlin Museum and attributed to Andrea Solario, similar to Giampietrino's model, was destroyed in 1945. Specialists disagree on its attribution, with D.A. Brown leaning towards Giampietrino. Although all Giampietrino's compositions are based on a single model, the version attributed to Solario, shows notable differences. Apart from the hand pulling the hair, the figure of Christ retains the main characteristics of the *Drawing*.

9. Christ Carrying the Cross: Andrea Solario (Milanese)

9.1. Presentation of the works

There are two similar versions of *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Andrea Solario: one is housed in the Borghese Gallery in Rome, while the other belongs to a private collection.

Christ Carrying the Cross

Andrea Solario

Gallery Borghese - Rome (Inv. 461)

Dating: 1510-14 / c.1524

Dimensions: 58cm x 67cm

Oil on wood panel



Figure 18 : *Christ Carrying the Cross*, Solario, Gallery Borghese



Christ Carrying the Cross

Andrea Solario

Private Collection (Sotheby's Sale 2009)

Dating: 1505

Dimensions: 51,8cm x 52,4cm

Tempera and oil on wood panel

Figure 19 : *Christ Carrying the Cross*, Solario, Private Collection

A drawing from the Albertina in Vienna, depicting a *Christ Carrying the Cross* with a soldier on the right, is the origin of the version in the Borghese Gallery ([Appendix 4](#)). A strong resemblance can also be observed between Solario's version and Sodoma's at Monte Oliveto Maggiore, where Christ and the cross are arranged in a similar manner.

Andrea Solario⁵⁷

Painter (probably born in Milan around 1465, died 1524), Andrea Solario was Cristoforo's brother. He stayed with the latter in Venice between 1492 and 1495, where he was influenced by Giovanni Bellini and Antonello da Messina (*Madonna between Two Saints*, 1495, Milan, Brera). He worked in France in Normandy at the castle of Gaillon (1507-1509), for Cardinal G. d'Amboise. On his return to Milan, he was mainly affected by the activity of Leonardo (*Crucifixion*, 1503, and *Annunciation*, 1506), two paintings in the Louvre in Paris.

57 : Source: Treccani encyclopedia (Treccani.it).

Historians

- Suida, W. (1929), 'Leonardo und sein kreis': "The motif has likely been treated by Leonardo in several variants, according to his custom, one of which must underlie the strikingly consistent paintings of the Lombards." ([Appendix 1](#)).
- Pedretti, C. (1979), 'L'Almanacco Italiano': "Undoubtedly, Leonardo's studies for the Christ Carrying the Cross, of which the only surviving one is now in Venice, led to a series of versions {...} that suggest the work of Gianpietrino, Solario, and Luini." ([Appendix 2](#)).
- Marani P.C. (1987), 'Leonardo e i Leonardeschi a Brera': "Solario also produced an earlier rendering, closely mirroring what is presumed to be Leonardo's original prototype, a 'Christ Carrying the Cross with Two Ruffians', held at the Borghese Gallery in Rome (Cogliati Arano 1965, p. 83, fig. 76), signed and dated 1511..."
- Brown D.A. (1987), 'Andrea Solario' (p86): "A 'Christ Carrying the Cross', now in a private collection in Princeton (resold by Sotheby's in 2009) after approximately a century of obscurity, derives much more clearly from Leonardo" ([Appendix 4](#)).
- Marani, P.C. (1992), 'Leonardo & Venice' p344: "Witness to the enormous popularity of the Leonardesque composition of the Christ Carrying the Cross are the later version by Solari today in the Galleria Borghese and its graphic study in the Albertina, Vienna".

Character on the left (Gallery Borghese)

The figure on the left is often interpreted as a persecutor. However, the position of his hands⁵⁸ does not convey the aggressiveness or threat typically seen in other representations of the Passion. He is difficult to compare with the figure on the right, dressed in refined attire⁵⁹, who holds the rope placed around Christ's neck.

A very similar figure to the one on the left appears in Luini's *Christ Carrying the Cross*. Facing the opposite direction, he looks toward the Virgin, with one hand resting on her shoulder ([infra p. 27](#)). In works by Sodoma (both fresco and drawing), a similar figure supports or assists Christ in carrying the cross ([infra p. 31](#)). In the right figure, Solario's character, presented in mirror image, is compared to Luini's corresponding figure.



Figure 20 : Character on the left, Solario/Luini

In the *Christ Carrying the Cross* from the Borghese Gallery, can we be certain that the figure on the left is truly a persecutor?

According to Cristina Quattrini⁶⁰, "In Andrea Solario's 'Christ Carrying the Cross' from the Galleria Borghese, either Simon of Cyrene, who helps carry the cross, or an executioner is depicted".

We also consulted a clergyman⁶¹, whose response we reproduce here: "Although no hypothesis prevails at first glance, I am inclined to think that in both cases, the figure in question is indeed Simon of Cyrene. In Solario's painting, the figure appears distinctly to be in a posture of assistance and relief in carrying the cross {...} Once again, my viewpoint is undoubtedly open to caution and disputable..."

58 : His left hand is placed under the cross, and his right hand, suggests that it also supports the cross.

59 : He could represent the Sanhedrin (The supreme Jewish council of antiquity).

60 : Cristina Quattrini, art historian, Ministry of Culture, Pinacoteca di Brera (Milan), Sept. 2024.

61 : The author of this quote has not been mentioned to comply with confidentiality requirements.

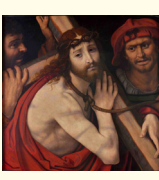
The second case referred to, is *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Bernardino Luini, exhibited at the Brera Museum in Milan.

In 1929, Wilhelm Suida established a link between the ‘Christ’ in the Borghese Gallery and Sodoma’s fresco in Monte Oliveto Maggiore. In this fresco, the figure positioned at the upper left, behind the cross, is not a persecutor but clearly Simon of Cyrene ([infra p. 31](#)).

9.2. Comparison with the *Venice Drawing*

The application of comparison criteria reveals a “shoulder portrait,” without the “hand” pulling the hair. Christ is depicted in a three-quarter view, with his head turned toward the viewer, without truly capturing the exact moment when it shifts direction.

Note: As in similar representations studied (Sodoma, Luini and Giampietrino), the cross rests on Christ’s left shoulder. In another depiction of ‘*Christ Carrying the Cross and a Carthusian*’ by Solario, displayed at the Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Christ is turned to the left and carries the cross on his right shoulder ([infra p. 70](#)).

Leonardo da Vinci’s <i>Venice Drawing</i> and the versions of <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i> circa 1500-1520				
Characteristics of the <i>Drawing</i>				
1	Appearance (Plausibility)	✓	✓	✓
2	‘ <i>Ritratto di spalla</i> ’ (Shoulder portrait)	✓	✓	✓
3	‘ <i>Ritratto di spalla</i> ’ 3/4 back	✓	✗	✗
4	Portrait turned to the left	✓	✗	✗
5	Head and gaze toward the viewer	✓	✓	✓ (note)
6	Hand pulling the hair	✓	✗	✗
7	Hair and beard	✓	✓	✓
8	Mouth partially open	✓	✗	✓
9	Crown of thorns	✓	✓	✓

Note: The head of the Christ in the private collection is turned to the right, while his gaze is directed downward to the left.

Summary: These two versions by Solario, one of which depicts Christ alone, are unanimously recognized by historians as deriving from the supposed prototype by Leonardo da Vinci. They feature a shoulder portrait, but with Christ shown facing forward. Regarding the version with two additional figures, identified as ‘two ruffians’ according to P.C. Marani, this interpretation is now being reconsidered, as one of the figures may be associated with Simon of Cyrene.

10. Christ Carrying the Cross: Bernardino Luini (Milanese)

10.1. Presentation of the work⁶²

The two-panel painting in the Poldi Pezzoli Museum in Milan shows on the right, Christ bearing his cross and turning toward the Virgin depicted on the left panel.

Christ Carrying the Cross (or 'The Ascent to Calvary')⁶³ - Bernardino Luini

Poldi Pezzoli Museum, Milan (Inv. 1624) - Dating: 1520-1530

Dimensions (Christ): 61cm x 39,6cm - Oil on wood panel



Figure 21 : Christ Carrying the Cross (Luini)

This work can be compared to *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Albrecht Dürer, one of twelve engravings on the theme of the Passion, created in 1498, housed at the Albertina Museum in Vienna (Austria), and printed in Nuremberg around 1510 (see details [\(infra p. 70\)](#)).

Christ carries his cross and turns toward the Virgin, while a figure beside him places a hand on his shoulder. Behind her, Mary Magdalene follows the scene. Does the hand rest gently on the Virgin's shoulder, or does it push her away? The identity of this figure is ambiguous: he could be a persecutor (soldier) or a protector (Simon of Cyrene).

Although positioned inversely to Solario's figure in the Borghese Gallery (mirrored opposite), the resemblance is striking: the same profile, prominent nose, defined lower lip, lines at the corner of the right eye, and hair partially covering the forehead. The similarity between these two portraits, along with the supportive posture of Solario's figure holding the cross, could cast doubt on his often-assumed role as a persecutor.

Figure 22 : Character:
Solario mirror and Luini.



Figure 23 : Helmet
(Luini)

Indeed, two additional elements counter this interpretation. Firstly, the Virgin, with her head slightly inclined forward, looks at Christ with compassion, showing no sign of recoiling from the hand. Secondly, the presence of a soldier (persecutor) is symbolized by the helmet in the background (indicated by the white arrow opposite). Cristina Quattrini, a specialist in Luini whom we consulted, kindly agreed to share her thoughts on this matter. [\(infra p. 25\)](#): “In my opinion, the hand on the Virgin's shoulder could also be a gesture of distancing; I don't know how to resolve this uncertainty.”

62 : See Cristina the monograph on B. Luini by Cristina Quattrini (General Catalogue of the Works, Turin 2019)

63 : Another version, featuring only Christ, is located in the Basilica of San Domenico in Bologna. [\(infra p. 70\)](#).

We also consulted a clergyman, whose response we reproduce here: “*In the case of Luini’s painting, the figure’s physiognomy bears a curious resemblance to that represented by Solario, and although we do not see him assisting with carrying the cross, the hand placed on the Virgin’s shoulder clearly seems to me a gesture of compassion, not repulsion. As for the expression, it is profoundly moving and affects me deeply {...} Once again, my viewpoint is undoubtedly open to caution and disputable...*”.

Bernardino Luini⁶⁴

Painter (born c. 1485 - died 1532). Possibly born in Lombardy, his artistic origins, somewhat complex, are rooted in Lombard painting associated with Bergognone; Bramantino’s influence is also evident, particularly in certain frescoes at the Villa Pelucca. He adopts elements from L. Lotto and M. Marziale, and gradually intensifies, in his works, the example set by Leonardo’s paintings, from which he draws his study of aerial perspective and the delicacy of chiaroscuro...

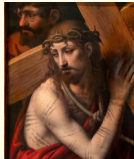
Historians

Carlo Pedretti 1979: “*Undoubtedly, Leonardo’s studies for the Christ Carrying the Cross, of which the only surviving one is now in Venice, led to a series of versions produced by his studio, hence with marked Lombard characteristics that suggest the work of Gianpietrino, Solario, and Luini*” ([Appendix 2](#)).

10.2. Comparison with the Venice Drawing

Luini skilfully captures the precise moment when Christ’s head shifts direction to turn toward the Virgin. The application of comparison criteria reveals a three-quarter shoulder portrait, without the hand pulling the hair and without the gaze directed toward the viewer.

Note: As in similar representations studied (Sodoma, Solario and Giampietrino), the cross rests on Christ’s left shoulder.

Leonardo da Vinci’s Venice Drawing and the versions of Christ Carrying the Cross circa 1500-1520			
Characteristics of the Drawing			
1	Appearance (Plausibility)	✓	✓
2	‘Ritratto di spalla’ (Shoulder portrait)	✓	✓
3	‘Ritratto di spalla’ 3/4 back	✓	✗
4	Portrait turned to the left	✓	✗
5	Head and gaze toward the viewer	✓	✗
6	Hand pulling the hair	✓	✗
7	Hair and beard	✓	✓
8	Mouth partially open	✓	✓
9	Crown of thorns	✓	✓

Summary: the two versions of *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Luini, one of which shows Christ alone, can be linked to the works of Solario and Sodoma. In these versions, Christ is depicted facing forward, with his back half-bare and covered by a red cloth, and the rotation of the head is perfectly rendered. As with Solario, the role of one of the figures remains ambiguous but suggests that he could be Simon of Cyrene.

64 : Source : Treccani encyclopedia (Treccani.it).

11. Christ Carrying the Cross: Cesare da Sesto (Milanese)

11.1. Presentation of the work

Christ Carrying the Cross

School of Cesare da Sesto

Property of the Louvre (on loan to the Grenoble Museum - France, Inv. MG45)

Dating: circa 1520

Oil on wood panel (65cm x 79cm)



Figure 24 : Christ Carrying the Cross - Cesare da Sesto

Commentary from the Grenoble Museum

Sophie Bernard (Curator), 2014: *“This painting is characteristic of the Milanese school of the 16th century, whose works are infused with the naturalism of Flemish painting. In a close-up composition against a dark background, the drama of the climb to Calvary unfolds. The composition is carefully balanced and structured around the cross. Before Christ’s suffering, the grieving Virgin faints, supported by Saint John. The haloed Christ gazes gently at his mother, indifferent to the admonishing gesture of the executioner emerging from the darkness, foreshadowing the impending ordeal. {...} It has been suggested that this painting was inspired by a drawing by Leonardo, now in the Gallerie dell’Accademia in Venice. Long associated with Andrea Solario’s tradition of devotional paintings, it also bears similarities to ‘Christ Carrying the Cross’ by Giovanni Bellini”.*

Cesare da Sesto⁶⁵

Painter, born in Sesto Calende in 1477, died in Milan on July 27, 1523. Very little biographical information exists about him, and establishing a chronological order of his works is challenging. However, through examining them, one can identify an art style that, while often described as eclectic, remains distinctly personal {...} Leonardo’s influence is evident in the first of his two paintings (‘Saint Jerome’ in the Brera Gallery) ...

“Several of his paintings, generally regarded as early works, display a significant influence from Leonardo.” (Biography, National Gallery, London).

65 : Source : Treccani encyclopedia (Treccani.it).

Historians

The name Cesare da Sesto, in connection with the theme of *Christ Carrying the Cross*, is not mentioned in the works related to this study.

11.2. Comparison with the *Venice Drawing*⁶⁶

Cesare da Sesto's Christ is turned to the left and seen partially from behind. Christ's head and gaze are directed toward the fainting Virgin before him. The cross is carried on his right shoulder and has the distinctive feature of being reversed, with its base positioned in front of Christ rather than behind him. It is likely that the artist deliberately inverted the cross for aesthetic reasons, aiming to balance the composition around the three figures surrounding Christ (the Virgin, Saint John, and an executioner).

Although this interpretation is somewhat unique, it illustrates the influence of Leonardo's *Drawing*.

Leonardo da Vinci's <i>Venice Drawing</i> and the versions of <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i> circa 1500-1520			
Characteristics of the <i>Drawing</i>			
1	Appearance (Plausibility)	✓	✓
2	' <i>Ritratto di spalla</i> ' (Shoulder portrait)	✓	✗
3	' <i>Ritratto di spalla</i> ' 3/4 back	✓	Not applicable
4	Portrait turned to the left	✓	✓
5	Head and gaze toward the viewer	✓	✗
6	Hand pulling the hair	✓	✗
7	Hair and beard	✓	✓
8	Mouth partially open	✓	✓
9	Crown of thorns	✓	✓

Summary: this unique interpretation by Cesare da Sesto, featuring multiple figures and clearly inspired by the *Drawing of Venice*, the base of the cross is positioned in front of Christ. As in the *Drawing*, Christ is turned to the left, but the movement toward the viewer is absent. It also resembles the works of Solario, Luini, and Sodoma in the way Christ is clothed.

⁶⁶ : Cesare da Sesto's *Christ Carrying the Cross* presents a composition similar to that of Luini (Poldi Pezzoli), with shared iconographic elements such as the Virgin, Mary Magdalene, Saint John, and a figure positioned behind the cross.

12. Christ Carrying the Cross: Sodoma (Sienese, transition to Milan?)

12.1. Presentation of the works

Sodoma created several works on the theme of Christ Carrying the Cross, including a painting, a fresco, and a drawing. In the painting shown here, a persecutor holding a hammer handle is also depicted.

Christ Carrying the Cross⁶⁷

Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, known as Sodoma
Monte Oliveto Maggiore (Province of Siena - Italy)

Dating: 1505-1508

Dimensions: 100cm x 51cm

Plaster / fresco painting

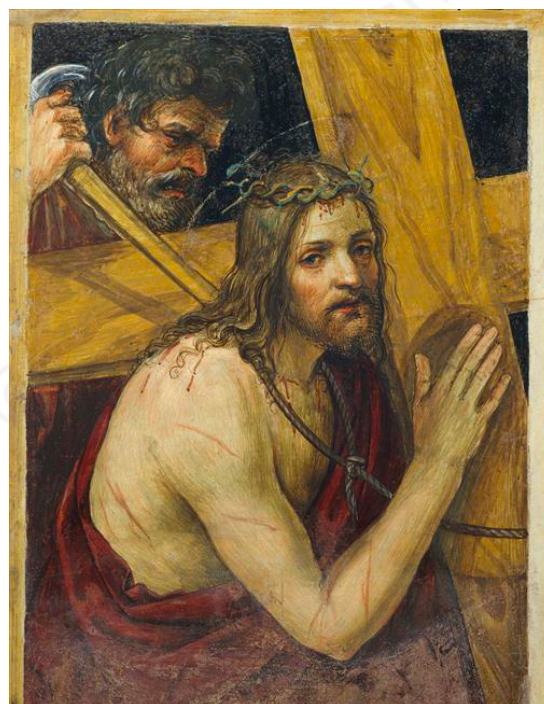


Figure 25 : Christ Carrying the Cross, Monte Oliveto Maggiore (Sodoma)

Among the frescoes created in the cloister of the territorial abbey of Santa Maria at Monte Oliveto Maggiore, one of them portrays *Christ Carrying the Cross* surrounded by several figures, including the Virgin Mary, toward whom He turns his gaze. To the left, in the background, a figure, likely Simon of Cyrene, helps Christ carry the cross.



Christ Carrying the Cross

Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, known as Sodoma
Monte Oliveto Maggiore (Province of Siena - Italy)

Dating: 1505-1508

Fresco

Figure 26 : Christ Carrying the Cross, fresco, Sodoma

Sodoma (Giovanni Antonio Bazzi⁶⁸)

The artist, born in 1477 in Vercelli, a city very close to Milan, and deceased in Siena in 1549, trained under G.M. Spanzotti before being influenced by the followers of Leonardo⁶⁹.

His stay in Milan is not confirmed by any historical document. He is primarily classified as a Sienese painter. In Siena, he completed his first major frescoes at the Monastery of S. Anna in

67 : "The fresco, likely painted by Sodoma during the cycle of 'The Stories of St. Benedict', was completed in the abbey cloister between 1505 and 1508. The dating is inferred from several payment records (Carli 1961)" (Beni Culturali). This fresco is indeed defined as a painting, 'dipinto'.

68 : Biography summary based on the Treccani Encyclopedia.

69 : The National Gallery in London highlights the direct influence of Leonardo.

Camprena (1503-1504) and subsequently finished the frescoes in the cloister of Monte Oliveto Maggiore in 1505. In 1508, he decorated the ceiling of the Stanza della Segnatura at the Vatican, enriching his style through Florentine influences and Raphael.

Historians

- Suida W. (1929): *“The motif has likely been treated by Leonardo in several variants, according to his custom, one of which must underlie the strikingly consistent paintings of the Lombards. Otherwise, it would be inexplicable that the motif, which Giovanni Antonio Bazzi used around 1505 in a mural in Montoliveto Maggiore, reappears in Solario’s signed painting (today in the Borghese Gallery) in 1511, since the latter surely did not know Sodoma’s painting.”* ([Appendix 1](#)).

Wilhelm Suida notably mentions the works by Solario, a Milanese painter, at the Borghese Gallery, and by Sodoma, where Christ is depicted in an opposite direction. He specifies that Solario could not have known the mural painting by Sodoma located in Tuscany, in the Siena region, which reinforces the idea that he, like Solario, would have drawn his inspiration from a model by Leonardo around the year 1500.



Figure 27 : Christ Carrying the Cross, Solario, Gallery Borghese



Suida refers to the mural fresco. As in Solario’s work, there are guards, one of whom pulls Christ by a rope tied around His neck. A figure, likely Simon of Cyrene, is also visible, helping Christ carry his cross, with his right arm positioned under it to provide support (indicated by a white arrow).

Figure 28 : Enlargement fresco, Simon of Cyrene (?)

In a drawing by Sodoma depicting *Christ Carrying the Cross*, preserved at the Los Angeles museum, another figure, positioned far to the left, assists Him in his effort.

Christ Carrying the Cross

Giovanni Antonio Bazzi known as Sodoma
Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles)
Dating: 1535
Drawing



Figure 29 : Christ Carrying the Cross (drawing), Sodoma, Paul Getty

- Bambach, C. (2002), in a study of the *Venice Drawing*, alludes to a connection between Sodoma and Leonardo. Bambach C. (2002)⁷⁰: “Knowledge (by Giorgione)⁷¹ of the *Venice drawing* and of the possible lost cartoon that might have been the source for these works, can be traced as far, perhaps, as Sodoma, who, passing through Milan at the end of the fifteenth century or at the beginning of the sixteenth...” (Leonardo’s Master Draftsman, p423).

12.2. Comparison with the *Venice Drawing*

The application of comparison criteria reveals a ‘*ritratto di spalla*’, without the hand, but faithful to the spirit of the *Drawing*. It features a three-quarter bust portrait with the head and gaze turned toward the viewer. However, this composition does not precisely capture the moment when Christ’s head and gaze shift direction.

With Christ’s right hand resting on the cross, Sodoma’s *Christ Carrying the Cross* is quite comparable to Solario’s version at the Borghese Gallery.

As in similar representations studied (Solario, Luini and Giampietrino), the cross rests on Christ’s left shoulder. In another depiction of *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Sodoma, displayed at the Palazzo d’Arco in Mantua, Christ is turned to the left and carries the cross on his right shoulder ([infra p. 70](#)).

Leonardo da Vinci’s <i>Venice Drawing</i> and the versions of <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i> circa 1500-1520		 	
Characteristics of the <i>Drawing</i>			
1	Appearance (Plausibility)	✓	✓
2	‘ <i>Ritratto di spalla</i> ’ (Shoulder portrait)	✓	✓
3	‘ <i>Ritratto di spalla</i> ’ 3/4 back	✓	✗
4	Portrait turned to the left	✓	✗
5	Head and gaze toward the viewer	✓	✓
6	Hand pulling the hair	✓	✗
7	Hair and beard	✓	✓
8	Mouth partially open	✓	✓
9	Crown of thorns	✓	✓

Summary: Sodoma’s *Christ Carrying the Cross*, less studied, was mentioned as early as 1929 by Wilhelm Suida, who noted a connection with Solario. Carmen Bambach suggests the possible influence of the *Venice Drawing* and a lost cartoon by Leonardo da Vinci on Sodoma, supporting the hypothesis of his association with the Milanese painters’ circle.

70 : Bambach, C. (2002), ‘Leonardo Master Draftsman’, contribution by P.C. Marani, p.423.

71 : A clarification we deemed useful to add.

13. Christ Carrying the Cross pulled by the hair with two soldiers

13.1. Presentation of the works

Two paintings, held at the Castello Sforzesco in Milan and the Pinacoteca in Pavia⁷², depict Christ surrounded by two soldiers (or persecutors), one of whom is pulling His hair.

In a *Beni Culturali*⁷³ record, the Castello Sforzesco⁷⁴ version, 'in the manner of Giampietrino' dated to the first half of the 16th century, is described as a copy of a work inspired by the *Venice Drawing*. Two other Lombard attributions are mentioned: an 'anonymous 16th-century artist' and an 'anonymous Lombard', described as copies after Leonardo.

Note: Unlike in Giampietrino's work, the cross rests on Christ's right shoulder.

Christ Carrying the Cross Mocked by Two Persecutors

'In the manner of' Rizzoli Giovan P. said Giampietrino

Pinacoteca Castello Sforzesco (Inv. 358)

Dating: first half of the 16th century

Dimensions: 44cm x 36 cm

Oil on Canvas⁷⁵

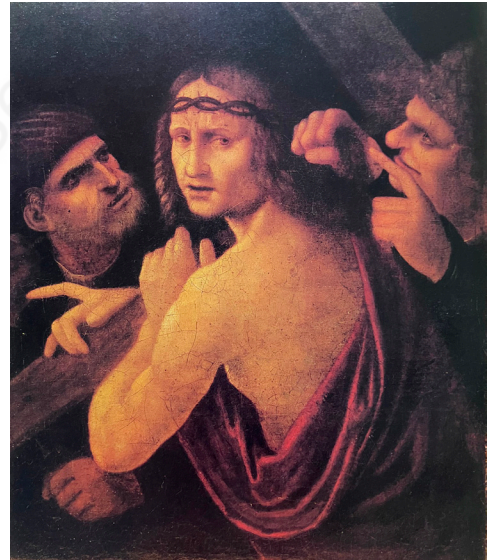


Figure 30 : Christ Carrying the Cross - Castello Sforzesco, Milan

The modest pictorial quality of the small painting at the Malaspina Pinacoteca in Pavia is characterized by a caricatural approach: the faces of the tormentors are exaggerated, with angular features and intense expressions, highlighting their brutality. The anatomical rendering is sometimes imprecise, particularly in the musculature of Christ's arm. This caricatural particularly contrasts with Christ's gentle face, placing emphasis on expressiveness rather than technical finesse.

Christ Carrying the Cross Mocked by Two Persecutors

Girolamo Melegulo? (Painter from Lodi)

Pinacoteca Malaspina Pavia (Inv. P159)

Dating: beginning of the 16th century

Dimensions: 25cm x 21cm

Tempera on wood panel



Figure 31 : Christ Carrying the Cross - Pinacoteca Malaspina Pavia

72 : Marani, P.C, (1992), 'Leonardo & Venice'.

73 : Beni Culturali Lombardy (08/2024) : <http://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/opere-arte/schede/B0030-00200/>

74 : From a strictly anatomical perspective, the head rotation is limited, making the pose toward the viewer exaggerated.

75 : It should be noted that wood panels were the predominant support until the early 16th century. However, the transition to canvas began in the second half of the 15th century, particularly in Venice.

Historians

- Pedretti C. 1979 ([Appendix 2](#)): “The version closest to the Venice Drawing is the one at the Castello Sforzesco in Milan (Suida, fig. 98), which shows the executioner pulling Christ by the hair.’ He adds shortly thereafter: “It may be that Leonardo, in turn, had in mind a northern model, similar to one originating from Antonello (da Messina) and known in versions leading to the famous Christ Carrying the Cross in Boston, variously attributed to Giovanni Bellini and Giorgione”. In the Boston model at the Gardner Museum, now attributed to the circle of Bellini, only Christ is depicted.
- Brown D.A. 1987 ([Appendix 4](#)) (Note 59): “Although Leonardo’s idea may have included a pair of tormentors...”.
- Marani P.C. 1992: (‘Leonardo & Venice’ p344): “{...} see for example, the anonymous painting in the Milanese Sforza Castle deposits, or the one of even worse quality in the Pinacoteca Malaspina in Pavia (Marani 1990, pp. 142 and 161). These works serve, if nothing else, to render plausible the theory of the existence of a much better exemplar {...} perhaps even the work of Leonardo himself”.

The idea of a multi-figure composition by Leonardo is not excluded here, nor is the hypothesis of the existence of another model with Christ alone.

13.2. Comparison with the Venice Drawing

The comparison with the *Venice Drawing* reveals that these two ‘shoulder portraits’ nearly meet the nine established criteria, indicating they were inspired by it. However, it should be noted that, in the *Drawing*, Christ is depicted more in profile. Additionally, the fine two-branch crown of thorns is similar to that in the *Drawing*. These works uniquely feature the hand pulling Christ’s hair, visible in the *Drawing* but with an attached figure. This characteristic is not found in any of the other models studied.

Leonardo da Vinci’s Venice Drawing and the versions of Christ Carrying the Cross circa 1500-1520		Characteristics of the Drawing		
				
1	Appearance (Plausibility)	✓	✓	✗
2	‘Ritratto di spalla’ (Shoulder portrait)	✓	✓	✓
3	‘Ritratto di spalla’ 3/4 back	✓	✓	✓
4	Portrait turned to the left	✓	✓	✓
5	Head and gaze toward the viewer	✓	✓	✓
6	Hand pulling the hair	✓	✓	✓
7	Hair and beard	✓	✓	✓
8	Mouth partially open	✓	✓	✓
9	Crown of thorns	✓	✓	✓

Summary: these two multi-figure compositions, likely of Milanese origin and of modest pictorial quality, are the only ones that meet the nine comparison criteria defined for the *Drawing*. One of them, the Pavia version, also exhibits a caricatural character.

14. Christ Carrying the Cross: Marco d'Oggiono, Francesco Maineri

14.1. Presentation of the works

Christ Carrying the Cross

Marco d'Oggiono
Previous attribution: A. de Predis
Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles)
Dating: 1495-1500
Dimensions: 36,8cm x 27,3cm
Oil on wood panel

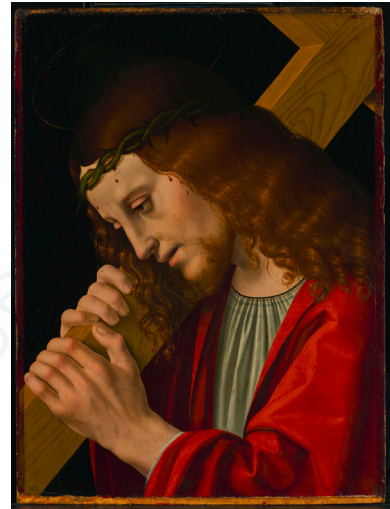


Figure 32 : Christ Carrying the Cross - Marco d'Oggiono

Until the 1980s, this painting was attributed to Giovanni Ambrogio de Predis, known for his collaboration with Leonardo. Some historians (D.A. Brown, P.C. Marani) saw it as possibly linked to the master. However, this hypothesis has been challenged since its attribution to Marco d'Oggiono. It was also associated with a wood painting (engraving⁷⁶) from the Boston Fine Arts museum (shown below), created by an unknown Milanese artist. According to David A. Brown, this engraving, often compared to Solario, “differs in almost every respect” (‘Christ’ Private Collection ([infra p. 24](#))).



Christ Carrying the Cross

Anonymous Italian (Milanese School)
Boston Museum of Fine Arts
Dating: 15th century
Dimensions: 55,1cm x 41,6cm
Hand-coloured wood engraving

Figure 33 : Christ Carrying the Cross - Anonymous Milanese School

This engraving is also believed to have influenced Francesco Maineri (D.A. Brown).

Christ Carrying the Cross

Francesco Maineri
Galleria Estense (Modena -Italy)
Dating: 1500-1505
Dimensions: 62cm x 45,5cm
Oil on canvas

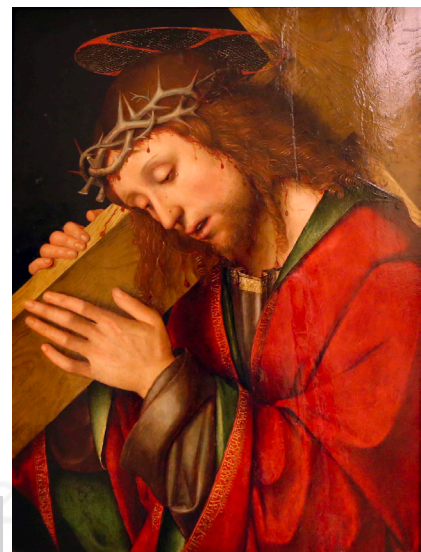


Figure 34 : Christ Carrying the Cross - Francesco Maineri

76 : Wood engraving made from a wood matrix originally intended for series production: Vincenzo Gheroldi, (2012), ‘L’Andata al Calvario di Marco Palmezzano...’, (Laura Aldovini), Accademia Tadini (Lovere It), p.87).

Marco d'Oggiono and Francesco Maineri

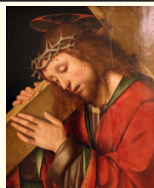
- Marco d'Oggiono: High Renaissance painter (Oggiono in Brianza, c. 1475 - Milan, c. 1530). *"He is possibly the Marco recorded in the studio of Leonardo da Vinci in 1490. Several authenticated works show that his style was strongly influenced by Leonardo's"* (National Gallery London).
- Francesco Maineri: Painter (15th-16th centuries). There is some documentation of his activities from 1489 to 1506. A disciple of Ercole de Roberti, he worked primarily in Ferrara, in the service of the Este court, and in Mantua, with a preference for small devotional images (Trecani it).

Historians

- Brown D.A. 1987 (*Andrea Solario*, p.86,88), concerning Solario's *Christ Carrying the Cross* belonging to a private collection ([infra p. 24](#)): *"A folio woodcut from the late 15th century, {...}. This woodcut has often been cited in relation to Solario, who undoubtedly knew it, yet his formulation differs in almost every respect..."*.
- Marani P.C. 1987 (*'Leonardo e i Leonardeschi a Brera'*) mentions these two artists: *"Within the strictly Leonardesque domain and in the context of the Quattrocento, there is the 'Christ Carrying the Cross' in profile, with a lowered head, currently in the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu (fig. 22), attributed to Giovanni Ambrogio de Predis..."*⁷⁷.

14.2. Comparison with the Venice Drawing

Without entirely excluding Leonardo's influence, the depiction of Christ differs completely from the 'shoulder portrait' (*'ritratto di spalla'*), with the head turning towards the viewer, which characterizes the *Venice Drawing*.

Leonardo da Vinci's <i>Venice Drawing</i> and the versions of <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i> circa 1500-1520				
Characteristics of the Drawing				
1	Appearance (Plausibility)	✓	✓	✓
2	'Ritratto di spalla' (Shoulder portrait)	✓	X	X
3	<i>'Ritratto di spalla'</i> 3/4 back	✓	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
4	Portrait turned to the left	✓	✓	✓
5	Head and gaze toward the viewer	✓	X	X
6	Hand pulling the hair	✓	X	X
7	Hair and beard	✓	✓	✓
8	Mouth partially open	✓	✓	✓
9	Crown of thorns	✓	✓	✓

Summary: based on the attribution of the *Christ Carrying the Cross* at the Paul Getty Museum to Ambrogio de Predis, some historians have drawn a connection between these two works and Leonardo. However, this theory could be called into question by the now confirmed attribution to Marco d'Oggiono.

77 : The hypotheses of D.A. Brown and P.C. Marani were based on an attribution to A. de Predis, which is no longer the case today, as the work in the Paul Getty Museum is now attributed to M. d'Oggiono.

15. First observation on the comparative study: historians and the Milanese model

While most versions do not show a 'hand', its presence in the 'Castello Sforzesco', 'in the manner of Giampietrino', has led some to hypothesize a model inspired by Leonardo, though this theory raises doubts.

The reference to the presence of the hand and the addition of two figures (executioners, soldiers)

- W. Suida (1929), regarding the work in the Castello Sforzesco: "contains the highly striking motif from Leonardo's drawing of the fist gripping Christ's hair, just like an anonymous Lombard painting in the Castello in Milan." ([Appendix 1](#)).
- C. Pedretti (1979), referring to Suida: "The version closest to the Venice drawing is the one at the Castello Sforzesco in Milan" ([Appendix 2](#)).
- P.C. Marani (1992), 'Leonardo & Venice' (P344) referring to the 'Christ' of the Castello Sforzesco: "though the incompleteness of the drawing leaves room for doubt. {...} complete with two soldiers flanking Christ carrying the cross, perhaps even the work of Leonardo himself".

These same historians have expressed doubts and proposed other hypotheses

- W. Suida (1929): "The motif has likely been treated by Leonardo in several variants, ...".
- C. Pedretti (1979): "It may be that Leonardo, in turn, had in mind a Northern model...". In this same text, C. Pedretti made the connection between the Venice Drawing and the Lombard painters (Giampietrino, Solario, and Luini).
- D.A. Brown (1987): "Although Leonardo's idea may have included a pair of tormentors...".
- D.A. Brown (1987): "Additionally, Ringbom states that in painting the panel at the Castello Sforzesco reproduced here, the copyist added the persecutors." ([Appendix 4](#)).

The solution involving two executioners or soldiers is now being called into question

- Andrea Solario's *Christ Carrying the Cross* has often been described as featuring two executioners (P.C. Marani, D.A. Brown), but this theory is now being questioned. The figure on the left might represent Simon of Cyrene, helping Christ ([infra p. 25](#)). A similar question arises with Luini's 'Christ Carrying the Cross', where a comparable figure also presents an ambiguous attitude ([infra p. 27](#)).
- Andrea Solario and Bernardino Luini, who created compositions both with multiple figures and also with Christ alone, likely drew their inspiration from a model centred on a single figure.

The consensus on a Milanese model

Historians agree that Leonardo's model was adopted by the Milanese painters, and D.A. Brown **supports the idea** that a Leonardesque prototype once existed..

- D.A. Brown (1987): "Solario's 'Christ' is essentially shown in a three-quarter view with a frontal head, while **Leonardo's** turns both back and head towards the viewer, as suggested by the numerous single-figure copies made by his follower Giampietrino" ([Appendix 4](#)).
- W. Suida (1929): "one of which must underlie the strikingly consistent paintings of the **Lombards**" ([Appendix 1](#)) C. Pedretti (1979): "Undoubtedly, Leonardo's studies for the Christ Carrying the Cross {...}, led to a series of versions produced by his studio, hence with marked Lombard characteristics that suggest the work of Gianpietrino, Solario, and Luini." ([Appendix 2](#)).
- P.C. Marani (1987): 'Leonardo i e Leonardschi a Brera' (p37 to 43) "This motif gained even more popularity among the second generation of **Milanese followers**...".
- D.A. Brown (1987): "Ringbom believes that in one version, Christ moved to the left, as in the drawing in Venice, while in another he moved to the right, as in a variant executed by **Leonardo's follower known as Giampietrino**." ([Appendix 4](#), note 59).

- Kenneth Clark: “{...} *This design is known to us as a whole through the replicas of Milanese pupils, evidently taken from a lost cartoon.*” (*Leonardo*, (1939, 1967, reissue in 2008).

In summary, historians agree that the possible Leonardo’s model was adopted by Milanese painters. The versions known as “two executioners” are now contested due to the likely identification of one of the characters as Simon of Cyrene, helping Christ.

16. Other observations: Common stylistic elements among Milanese

16.1. Common stylistic elements among Milanese painters



Figure 35 : Christ Carrying the Cross - Milanese painters

The comparative study between the *Drawing* and Christ Carrying the Cross reveals numerous shared characteristics, particularly among Milanese artists in Leonardo's circle and Sodoma.

Among these elements, we can note:

- The half-length portrait oriented to the right, except in the case of Cesare da Sesto.
- Christ's partially bare back, covered with a purple drapery.
- The emphasis on the shoulder and the right hand resting on the cross.
- The cross resting on the left shoulder.
- The bifid beard ([infra p. 69](#)).
- The dark background⁷⁸.

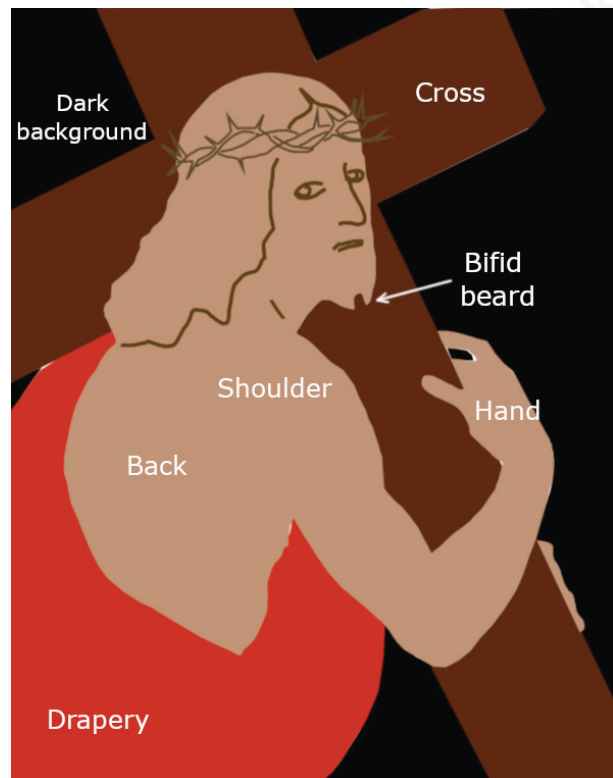


Figure 36 : Milanese - Common elements

16.2 A Special Case: Christ's Robe

Among Milanese artists such as Solario, Giampietrino, Luini, and Cesare da Sesto, as well as Sodoma, Christ is frequently depicted wearing a similar robe, leaving his back partially exposed. This red or purple drapery (referencing John 19:2) is worn in the manner of a Roman toga.

⁷⁸ : Commentary by the Louvre Collections on the female portrait mistakenly called 'La Belle Ferronnière': "In Milan, the artist favours presenting the model against a uniform dark background, a convention typical of the Lombard court. However, instead of the profile that predominates in Milanese portraits, **Leonardo opts for a far more dynamic three-quarter view**, inspired by Flemish examples".

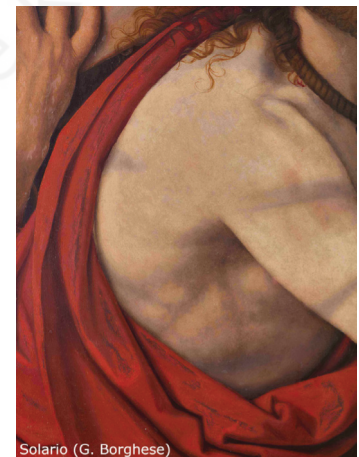
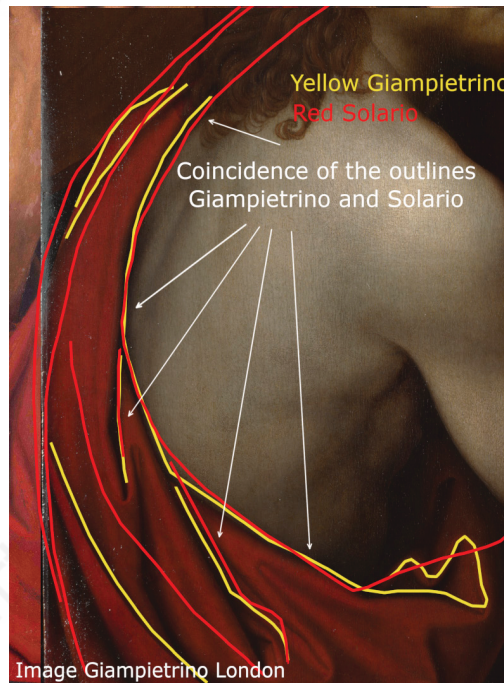
The works of Solario and Giampietrino, both strongly influenced by Leonardo, exhibit remarkable similarities, particularly in the rendering of drapery folds.

The central figure in the comparison illustrates the striking correspondence in the primary contours of Christ's drapery between Giampietrino and Solario. The white arrows highlight the principal outline separating the drapery from the robe.

Figure 38 : Overlay of the drapery outlines - Giampietrino and Solario



*Figure 37 : Giampietrino
London*



*Figure 39 : Solario,
Gallery Borghese*

In summary these observations reinforce the hypothesis of a shared initial model, adapted by Leonardo's disciples. This leads us to the final synthesis of the study.

17. Summary of the first step of the comparative study

17.1. Summary according to comparison criteria

We remind readers that the objective of our study is to examine the various representations of *Christ Carrying the Cross* to identify those that may best align with the *Drawing* and, potentially, with an original by Leonardo da Vinci.

To this end, we first established a comparison grid based on nine objective criteria focused on the figure of Christ, applied to twelve versions, most of which have been identified by historians. It should be noted that this grid is not exhaustive but allows for the elimination of paintings that clearly deviate from these criteria. The summary of this important first step is presented in the table below.

Leonardo da Vinci's <i>Venice Drawing</i> and the versions of <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i> circa 1500-1520 Characteristics of the <i>Drawing</i>		Venice Drawing	Bellini model (Venitian)	Giorgione / Titian	Giampietrino	A. Solario Magdeburg	A. Solario (G. Borghese)	Bernardino Luini	Cesare da Sesto	Sodoma	Castello Sforzesco	Pinacoteca Malaspina	Marco d'Oggiono	Francesco Maineri
1	Appearance (Plausibility)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
2	' <i>Ritratto di spalla</i> ' (Shoulder portrait)	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
3	' <i>Ritratto di spalla</i> ' 3/4 back	✓	NA (1)	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	NA	✗	✓	✓	NA	NA
4	Portrait turned to the left	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Head and gaze toward the viewer	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
6	Hand pulling the hair	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
7	Hair and beard	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Mouth partially open	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Crown of thorns	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

(1) NA: not applicable.

Note: Only two compositions, from the Castello Sforzesco and the Pinacoteca Malaspina, with two added figures, depict the hand pulling Christ's hair (criterion 6).

17.2. Works to exclude

Some works have been grouped together for the purposes of this analysis, and therefore this presentation does not follow the originally defined order.

- **Christ Carrying the Cross from the Pinacoteca Malaspina of Pavia**

Although it is inspired by the *Venice Drawing*, likely indirectly, this work must be excluded due to its overly caricatural aspect, which does not meet criterion 1. Additionally, according to Pietro Marani, it is of "inferior quality" compared to the work held at the Castello Sforzesco, which is already considered to be of lesser quality (*Leonardo & Venice* 1992, p344).

Marco d'Oggiono, Francesco Maineri and the Venetians, according to the Bellini model

Figure 40 : Marco d'Oggiono

Figure 41 : Francesco Maineri

Figure 42 : Follower of Bellini

Figure 43 : Circle of Bellini



These four works, not depicting shoulder portraits, are also excluded due to criterion '2' (*Ritratto di Spalla*). For Venetian painters, D.A. Brown has likewise dismissed any connection between a Milanese model by Leonardo and Bellini: "Contrary to previous claims, Bellini's 'Christ Carrying the Cross' has no relation to what Leonardo ..." ([Appendix 4](#)). Reference may also be made to Leonardo's Treatise on Painting⁷⁹: "You shall never paint heads straight on the shoulders but turned to the side, either to the right or to the left, ...".

Furthermore, another reason leads to the exclusion of the versions by Marco d'Oggiono and Francesco Maineri. Indeed, until the 1980s, the version now attributed to Marco d'Oggiono was considered a work by Ambrogio de Predis, renowned for his close collaboration with Leonardo da Vinci. This attribution strengthened the hypothesis that the work by Marco d'Oggiono derived from a model by Leonardo himself.

- **Sodoma, Andrea Solario and Bernardino Luini**

Figure 44 : Sodoma

Figure 45 : Solario
Galleria Borghese.

Figure 46 : Solario
Private Collection

Figure 47 : Luini



In the Milanese painters' works and Sodoma, Christ is depicted in a three-quarter view, turned to the right, with the right arm forming a 'V' and the hand resting on the cross. Except for Luini's version, Christ's head is oriented toward the viewer.

Although these three versions, which feature a shoulder portrait, raise the question of the existence of an original by the master, they must be excluded in direct comparison with the *Drawing*, primarily because they do not represent Christ from behind. It is also noteworthy that Solario and Luini created similar versions to those in the Borghese Gallery in Rome (Solario) and the Poldi Pezzoli Museum in Milan (Luini) but depicting Christ alone. (For Solario, see the 'Christ' in the private collection, and for Luini, the 'Christ of San Domenico' in Bologna ([infra p. 70](#)).

Additionally, it can be observed that the cross rests on Christ's left shoulder, whereas it is generally carried on the right in the 'Way of the Cross'.

Note: In the *Christ Carrying the Cross* paintings by Solario (Galleria Borghese in Rome) and Luini (Poldi Pezzoli Museum in Milan), where Christ is accompanied by other figures, the role of one of them is now being reconsidered. Long regarded by some historians as an executioner, this figure could actually represent Simon of Cyrene. This new interpretation is particularly significant, as these paintings had previously supported the hypothesis of a Leonardo model featuring two executioners, similar to the version in the Castello Sforzesco.

79 : Chez Jean de Bonnot, (2002), *Le Traité de la Peinture de Léonard*, art. 354, p. 149.

- **Cesare da Sesto**

This unique composition by Cesare da Sesto, stands apart from previous Lombard works while sharing certain common elements. Christ shown from behind, is turned to the left and looking toward the Virgin.

However, the cross, carried on the right shoulder, is reversed, with the base placed in front and three other figures are depicted.

Although it meets some comparison criteria with the *Drawing*, Cesare da Sesto's painting is also excluded due to criterion and '5' ('Head and gaze toward the viewer').



Figure 48 : Cesare da Sesto

- **Specific case of Giorgione's 'Christ'**

In this composition, clearly inspired by Leonardo, Christ is surrounded by three figures: two persecutors or executioners on the left and a third, less visible figure on the right, who seems to be observing the scene⁸⁰.



Figure 49 : Giorgione

Several factors support the elimination of Giorgione's '*Christ of San Rocco*':

- The depiction of Christ's torso is close to a profile position.
- The addition of three figures compared to the *Drawing*.
- The absence of a crown of thorns.
- The beard appears not to be bifurcated.
- The closed mouth, conveying less suffering and emotion.

It should be noted that Giorgione's version deviates from the Milanese model, depicting a half-bare back covered with a purple drapery.

17.3. Summary of the first stage: selected works

This initial analysis highlights the three works most likely to derive from an original by Leonardo or from a direct influence, paving the way for further investigation.

Leonardo da Vinci's <i>Venice Drawing</i> and the Versions of <i>Christ Carrying the Cross</i> circa 1500 - 1520	 Venice Drawing	 Castello Sforzesco	 Solario Magdeburg	 Giampietrino
--	---	---	---	---

The three selected compositions, in which the figure of Christ is clearly inspired by the *Drawing of Venice*, depict a shoulder-length portrait shown in a three-quarter back view, with the head turned toward the viewer. The 'Christ' in the Castello Sforzesco is turned to the left, as in the *Drawing*, while the Giampietrino/Solario version is turned to the right, without the hand pulling the hair.

80 : This figure bears a strong resemblance to the one, placed in the same position, in Sodoma's *Christ Carrying the Cross* at the Palazzo d'Arco in Mantua ([infra p. 70](#)).

18. Second step and final synthesis of the comparative study

The objective of this second phase of the analysis, which we will develop gradually, based on a smaller sample consisting of the versions from the Castello Sforzesco, Giampietrino, and Solario (Magdeburg), is to identify the work or works that are closest to the *Venice Drawing*, in order to reconstruct the possible original (or cartoon) by Leonardo.

18.1. Comparative analysis, first phase: the nine criteria

Giampietrino is known for his numerous depictions of *Christ Carrying the Cross*, all represented according to a unique model ([Appendix 9](#)), also mentioned by David A. Brown ([Appendix 4](#)).

For this analysis, the model by Giampietrino, as illustrated by the Budapest version and the Magdeburg Christ by Solario, which exhibit significant similarities, are grouped together ([Appendix 8](#)).

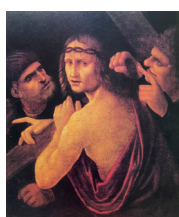
The work from the Castello Sforzesco, an anonymous copy 'in the manner of Giampietrino', indirectly refers to the latter.

This initial phase of the comparative analysis shows that the Castello Sforzesco version, despite its lower quality, is the work that, in terms of conformity to the nine initial criteria, most closely matches the *Drawing*.

Giampietrino's model, although it diverges on some criteria (orientation of the portrait, absence of the hand), remains a work to be seriously considered, particularly because of its direct link to the *Drawing*, the historians remarks, and the painter's closeness to Leonardo.

18.2. Comparative analysis, second phase: the work closest to the *Drawing*

Considering the nine objective criteria (direct arguments) and key findings from the study (indirect arguments), we will aim to determine whether Giampietrino's 'Christ' can be considered the work that most closely aligns with Leonardo's *Venice Drawing*.



The following two tables summarize the direct arguments (green table) and indirect arguments (blue table) that support and oppose the works of the Castello Sforzesco and Giampietrino.

Criteria/Elements	Castello Sforzesco (in the manner of Giampietrino) / canvas	Giampietrino (and Solario Magdeburg) / painted on wood
Compliance with the 9 criteria	9 out of 9 criteria met, but quality perceived as inferior.	7 criteria met out of 9, with differences in orientation and the absence of the hand.
Orientation of the portrait	Conforms to the <i>Drawing</i> (facing left).	Reversed (turned to the right), like in all the Milanese works studied ⁸¹ .
Hand pulling the hair	Hand present, directly recalls the <i>Drawing</i> .	Hand missing, but this absence does not alter the essence of the scene.
Christ's beard	Absence of the beard.	Bifid beard, present in the <i>Drawing</i> and in all the Milanese versions studied.
Crown of thorns	Simple and bifurcated.	More elaborate crown, differing from the <i>Drawing</i> .

81 : With the exception of the unique representation of 'Christ Carrying the Cross' by Cesare da Sesto ([infra p. 29](#)).

Criteria/Elements	Castello Sforzesco (in the manner of Giampietrino) / canvas	Giampietrino (and Solario Magdeburg) / painted on wood
Pictorial quality	Perceived as mediocre ⁸² , with the addition of two executioners that weigh down the composition.	Higher quality painting, respecting Leonardo's style, with greater fidelity in anatomical proportions.
Christ's robe	Same type of robe as Giampietrino, but distinct from the Milanese painters.	Robe consistent with Milanese painters (Solario...) and Sodoma, suggesting the existence of a common model.
Historical influence	Anonymous, difficult to place the work historically.	Giampietrino, heavily influenced by Leonardo, likely had access to his original works or cartoons ⁸³ .
Support, dimensions	Painted on canvas ⁸⁴ , small format, possibly a later work compared to Giampietrino.	Painted on wood, in accordance with Milanese practices in the early 16th century.
The cross	Carried on the right shoulder.	Carried on the left shoulder.
Historians	Some consider the 'Castello Sforzesco' version to be close to the <i>Drawing</i> . However, these same persons express doubts ⁸⁵ about the presence of the two figures.	Historians are almost unanimous on the existence of a Lombard model ⁸⁶ , highly evident in Giampietrino's works, according to D.A. Brown ⁸⁷ .

At the conclusion of this comparative analysis, although the *Christ Carrying the Cross* from the Castello Sforzesco stands out for its conformity to the comparative criteria, certain elements weaken its connection to Leonardo da Vinci's original drawing:

- Its mediocre pictorial quality
- The addition of two figures
- It's likely later canvas support
- The absence of a bifurcated beard
- The depiction of Christ's robe, which diverges from the Milanese model supported by historians.

Furthermore, the theory that Leonardo's model included multiple figures, notably two executioners, previously supported by certain works, is now being reconsidered. Among these, some *Christ Carrying the Cross* paintings by Solario, Luini, and, to a lesser extent, Giorgione may suggest that one of these figures represents Simon of Cyrene assisting Christ.

82 : Marani, P.C. (1992), *Leonardo & Venice*, p.344.

83 : Zöllner, F. (2003), *Leonardo*, Taschen Editions, p.188: Giampietrino very likely had direct access to Leonardo's works particularly for 'Leda' and 'Sainte Anne'. See also National Gallery London (1996), Technical Bulletin N°17, 'Giampietrino, Boltraffio, and the Influence of Leonardo'.

84 : The transition to canvas occurred earlier in Venice, but the use of wood in Milan was still common, at least until the early 16th century.

85 : - "it may be that Leonardo, in turn, had in mind a Northern model..." (Pedretti C. 1979, Appendix 2).

- "...Although the incompleteness of the drawing leaves room for doubt." (Marani P.C. 1992, Appendix 7).

- "Although Leonardo's idea may have included a pair of tormentors..." (Brown D.A. 1987, Appendix 5).

86 : "Undoubtedly, Leonardo's studies for the *Christ Carrying the Cross*, {...}, hence with marked Lombard characteristics that suggest the work of Gianpietrino, Solario, and Luini." (Pedretti 1979, Appendix 2).

87 : - "Solario's 'Christ' is essentially shown in a three-quarter view with a frontal head, while Leonardo's turns both back and head towards the viewer, as suggested by the numerous single-figure *copies* made by his follower Giampietrino" (D.A. Brown, Appendix 5 - note 63).

- Wilhelm Suida quoting Giampietrino: "He preserved several of Leonardo's compositions that we would otherwise have little or only vague knowledge of." (Suida W. 1929 'Leonardo und sein Kreis' p. 215, Appendix 1).

In contrast, although certain divergences remain, the model attributed to Giampietrino, whose stylistic proximity to the Lombard school influenced by Leonardo is notable, offers superior pictorial quality and overall fidelity to the *Venice Drawing*. This fidelity is demonstrated through the superimposition of the Christ's facial tracings.

These divergences could, however, reflect an intentional evolution of the model during its adaptation into painting. Moreover, no Venetian or Milanese painting studied includes a hand pulling Christ's hair, which supports the hypothesis of an original without this element.

19. The original work by Leonardo da Vinci revisited by Giampietrino?

In this final stage of our exploration, we examine the hypothesis that Giampietrino may have reworked a lost model by Leonardo da Vinci. Such a practice aligns with a broader pattern noted by Wilhelm Suida, who remarked: *"He preserved certain compositions by the master, of which we would otherwise have only a vague idea, or none at all"*. This observation underscores the importance of Giampietrino's works in safeguarding Leonardo's artistic legacy.

Let us examine the arguments supporting the hypothesis of a copy or an interpretation of an original by Leonardo.

19.1. The opinions of historians

The hypothesis of the existence of an original work or a cartoon attributed to Leonardo da Vinci for *Christ Carrying the Cross* is today cautiously but widely accepted by historians. They emphasize that Leonardo's works have only reached us in the form of copies or interpretations created by his disciples.⁸⁸

According to David Allan Brown, judging by the numerous "copies" by Giampietrino, Leonardo's Christ was depicted from behind, with his head turned toward the viewer.

In his analysis of Giampietrino's version of *Christ Carrying the Cross* housed at the Sabauda Gallery in Turin, Pietro Marani establishes a direct connection with the *Venice Drawing*. He suggests that this drawing *"likely led to a (lost) painting of great success by the master, as well as to numerous replicas produced by the school."* Kenneth Clark reinforces this hypothesis by referring to a lost cartoon by Leonardo, reproduced by his pupils in Milan.

Finally, Frank Zöllner emphasizes, regarding Giampietrino's copy of *Leda*, that the artist very likely had direct access to Leonardo's works. He also notes that the preparatory drawing for *Saint Anne* in the Louvre had been transferred onto the panel of Giampietrino's *Leda*.

19.2. Technical arguments supporting a copy or interpretation of an original

The 'ritratto di spalla' (portrait from the shoulder): The *'ritratto di spalla'*, a notable innovation by Leonardo da Vinci⁸⁹, is the defining characteristic of Giampietrino's *Christ Carrying the Cross*. As seen in Leonardo's small drawing from the National Gallery in Washington, the figure is presented in a half-bust view from behind, with the head turned toward the viewer, a *"principle introduced by Leonardo"* according to Carlo Pedretti⁹⁰.

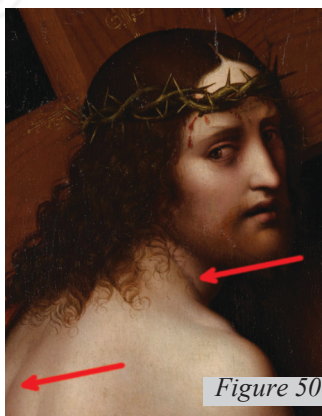


Figure 50 : Giampietrino



Figure 51 : Leonard da Vinci (NG Washington)

88 : P.C. Marani (1987) mentions the loss of the originals, while W. Suida (1929) highlights Giampietrino's crucial role in the dissemination of these compositions by Leonardo.

89 : *Ritratto di Fanciulla* (Turin), the Angel of the *Virgin of the Rocks* (NG London, Le Louvre Paris), la *Belle Ferronnière* (Le Louvre), *The Lady with the Ermine* (Cracow), *Saint-Jean Baptiste* (Le Louvre).

90 : C. Pedretti (1979), *L'Almanacco Italiano*.

The twisting motion, described by Kenneth Clark as *Leonardo's "passion,"* is characterized by two features designed to enhance the dynamic sense of movement. These have been highlighted with red arrows. The first feature is the line of the neck, which indicates the fold created by the twist of the head. The second is the central line of the back, marking the alignment of the spine.

- The *Drawing of the Head of Christ* in Venice by Leonardo da Vinci

This drawing is undeniably the primary source for Giampietrino's *Christ Carrying the Cross*, as noted by historians. However, Kenneth Clark observed that *"some copies made by Leonardo's pupils derive from sketches so succinct that it seems difficult to imagine they could have served as the basis for completed paintings"*. This remark could apply to Giampietrino, for whom the connection with Leonardo is established through the *Drawing*. Nevertheless, additional evidence suggests a more explicit link to the Master.

- Other elements of Giampietrino's Christ visible in the works Milanese painters and Sodoma

In relation to Leonardo's *Christ Carrying the Cross*, Wilhelm Suida⁹¹ mentioned: *"the strikingly consistent paintings of the Lombards"*. Among these artists, one can observe common stylistic elements, notably there is a striking similarity between the drapery of Solario and Giampietrino (*infra* p. 40).

- Leonardo da Vinci's Anatomical Studies

In 1979, Carlo Pedretti established a connection between the *Venice Drawing*, the *Christ Carrying the Cross* works attributed to Leonardo's school, and Leonardo's anatomical studies conducted around 1510, focusing on the dorsal, shoulder, and neck muscles. Among Leonardo's disciples, only the shoulder portrait attributed to Giampietrino aligns with this description, further linking him to the master.



Figure 52 : Léonard, Royal Gallery RCIN 919001 verso

All these elements suggest that Milanese painters such as Giampietrino, Solario, Luini, and even Sodoma had access to a reversed model by Leonardo.

19.3. The presumed model by Leonardo da Vinci revisited by Giampietrino?

The comparative analysis between Leonardo's *Venice Drawing* and the interpretations of *Christ Carrying the Cross*, particularly Giampietrino's version, reveals a connection that transcends mere copying. The study of the *'ritratto di spalla'*, anatomical details, and stylistic correspondences with other Lombard painters suggests the existence of a lost model by Leonardo, to which Giampietrino likely had privileged access. The reversal of the model and the striking similarities in drapery and head details, as highlighted, further reinforce this hypothesis.

However, Giampietrino is not merely a copyist. His interpretation of Leonardo's model, while remaining within the master's tradition, reflects his own artistic sensitivity. As Wilhelm Suida noted, *"Giampietrino certainly preserved some of the master's compositions"*, but *"he should not be underestimated as an independent artist in his own right."*

In conclusion, while the existence of a lost model by Leonardo remains hypothetical, the analysis of Giampietrino's works, in light of the *Venice Drawing*, supports this notion. His work, far more than simple replication, plays a vital role in the dissemination of Leonardo's stylistic legacy.

91 : To the Lombard painters (Solario, Luini, C. da Sesto), he also added Sodoma.

APPENDICES

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Appendix 1: W. Suida - Leonardo und sein Kreis (1929)

'Leonardo and his circle' (Wilhelm Suida 1929) (Excerpts translated from German)

12. Leonardo in Milan until 1499, Saints representations, Jerome, Sebastian, Christ.

Pages 88 et 89: Leonardo's *Drawing of the Head of Christ* and the influence on *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Giampietrino, Titian...)

"Leonardo's engagement with the theme of Christ Carrying the Cross is unequivocally established through the magnificent silverpoint drawing in Venice. In the same, one can see the head of the thorn-crowned Savior turned to the left, whose pain-filled gaze is directed at the viewer, and a fist that grasps several strands of the richly curled hair. A painting by Leonardo's Spanish student Fernando de Llanos, the compositions of four Milanese painters, as well as the painting attributed to Titian in S. Rocco in Venice, are undoubtedly connected to this idea of Leonardo's, some of the aforementioned paintings in the same direction, several of the Milanese in the opposite direction. The motif has likely been treated by Leonardo in several variants, according to his custom, one of which must underlie the strikingly consistent paintings of the Lombards. Otherwise, it would be inexplicable that the motif, which Giovanni Antonio Bazzi used around 1505 in a mural in Montoliveto Maggiore, reappears in Solario's signed painting (today in the Borghese Gallery) in 1511, since the latter surely did not know Sodoma's painting. The main motif, the head and gaze direction, the emergence of Christ's shoulder and arm from the slipped-down garment, the arm position and the placement of the hand on the crossbeam are also retained in the repetitions by the so-called Giampietrino (Gallery in Turin, Academy in Vienna, formerly Layard Collection, Venice, Baron Herzog, Budapest). On the other hand, the painting by the Spaniard Fernando de Llanos, which I encountered several years ago in the Italian art trade, contains the highly striking motif from Leonardo's drawing of the fist gripping Christ's hair, just like an anonymous Lombard painting in the Castello in Milan. Based on the painting in S. Rocco in Venice, Leonardo's design could have been created in Venice by no later than 1499/1500, if not earlier in Milan".

- **Page 200: Solario's *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Gallery Borghese)**

"The clearest evidence of the increased influence of northern art on Solario is the Christ Carrying the Cross with the two thieves⁹² in the Borghese Gallery, which, despite a genuine signature and date of 1511, is often mistakenly considered of northern origin due to its northern character".

Page 215: Giampietrino

"In his carefully crafted, technically masterful paintings, imbued with a heightened sense of harmonious lines and forms, and moderate, tasteful colouring, the so-called Giampietrino contributed, perhaps more than any other artist, to the dissemination of Leonardo's late style. He preserved several of Leonardo's compositions that we would otherwise have little or only vague knowledge of. Yet, he should not be underestimated as an independent artist in his own right".

- **Pages 249 et 250 (Giorgione, Titian)**

"{...} In the oeuvre of Titian, the immediate impression derived from the works of Leonardo and his circle combines early on with the indirect influence through works of artists inspired by Leonardo, especially those of Fra Bartolomeo and Raphael. Yet, there are instances where, in front of a Titian painting, Leonardo's name compellingly comes to mind. The Christ Carrying the Cross in San Rocco in Venice, undoubtedly an early work by Titian and not, as commonly claimed, a work by Giorgione⁹³...".

92 : One of the thieves in question could be Simon of Cyrene (see [Solario](#)).

93 : The debate over the attribution of '*Christ Carrying the Cross*' to Giorgione or Titian remains unresolved.

Appendix 2: C. Pedretti - Giorgione and Leonardo's Christ Carrying the Cross (1979)

Almanacco Italiano 1979

Pages 236 à 242

Excerpts translated from Italian

"{...} Less attention, however, has been paid to the most convincing element of contact, that is the drawing by Leonardo in Venice depicting a Christ Carrying the Cross, which can be considered, precisely, as the template for Giorgione's painting of the same subject in San Rocco..."

"{...} The authenticity of the drawing is generally accepted by Vicentine criticism, though not without some reservations or perplexities which seem mostly to stem from Loeser's drastic judgment: "a true defamation." In the categorization of Leonardo's drawings, Clark associates it with the drawing from the Albertina, the so-called St. Peter (Popham, plate 164), with which it indeed shares technique and style, and places it, as an exception, at the time of the studies for the Last Supper, i.e., after Leonardo appears to have abandoned the use of silverpoint forever. Clark adds that both drawings are unusual also "in other respects..."

"{...} Indeed, these are problematic drawings not only because they are not related to documented projects, but especially because they seem foreign to Leonardo in terms of subject choice..."

"{...} A date prior to 1490 could not be excluded for the drawing in Venice, especially for the technique, which is unusual, if not unique, in a drawing from 1495-97. On the other hand, the metallic character, which would be appropriate for a drawing intended for engraving or inspired by an engraving, aligns with those of Leonardo's technological drawings from the late last decade of the fifteenth century, such as those in the Codex I of Madrid..."

"{...} Undoubtedly, Leonardo's studies for the Christ Carrying the Cross, of which the only surviving one is now in Venice, led to a series of versions produced by his studio, hence with marked Lombard characteristics that suggest the work of Gianpietrino, Solario, and Luini. The version closest to the Venice drawing is the one at the Castello Sforzesco in Milan (Suida, fig. 98), which shows the henchman pulling Christ by the hair. Other versions show the subject in the opposite direction, but always according to **the principle introduced by Leonardo of showing Christ from the shoulder with his head turned toward the viewer.** These works from the school clearly reflect Leonardo's intentions regarding the representation of the human body, where the dorsal, shoulder, and neck muscles anticipate Leonardo's own anatomical studies from 1510..."

"{...} It may be that Leonardo, in turn, had in mind a Northern model, similar to that originated by Antonello (da Messina?) and known in versions that lead to the famous Christ Carrying the Cross in Boston, variously attributed to Giambellino (G. Bellini) and Giorgione"

Appendix 3: C. Pedretti - Studi per il Cenacolo (1983)

Excerpts from page 39 on the theme of Leonardo and the *Christ Carrying the Cross*.

Translated from Italian

"{...} This also explains the problematic drawing at the Albertina, an early study for the Apostle Peter also datable around 1495, although the style and technique (metal point on prepared blue paper) suggest a drawing from ten years earlier. Indeed, for Berenson (no. 1113), it is 'distant in style from the sketches for the Adoration, although already Milanese in its detailing'".

"A similar drawing in Venice, also in metal point, is exceptional for Leonardo even as a subject. The head of Christ crowned with thorns appears in a dramatic close-up. A hand pulls the hair, forcing it to turn over the shoulder and to face the viewer with an expression of anguish on the face. Bossi⁹⁴, who owned it, reproduces it in his book on the Last Supper, recognizing the same type of head as that of James the Greater in the Last Supper".

"The traditional theme of Man and Sorrow merits greater attention due to the popularity it would have gained with Giorgione and Titian. Probably Leonardo did not go beyond this drawing⁹⁵, leaving it to his students to translate it into painting. This explains the different versions of the Mocking of Christ or Christ Carrying the Cross, one of which, at the Castello Sforzesco⁹⁶, shows the detail of the hand pulling the hair".

94 : The *Drawing of the Head of Christ*, acquired by the Academy of Venice in 1822, was part of Giuseppe Bossi's collection, which he included in his 1810 work on Leonardo's *Last Supper*.

95 : However, in 2005, in *La Mente di Leonardo...*, Carlo Pedretti mentioned a lost *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Leonardo.

96 : The *'Christ Carrying the Cross'* at the Castello Sforzesco, inspired by the *Venice Drawing* and considered a copy, is now officially listed in the Italian 'Catalogo Generale dei Beni Culturali' under the name Rizzoli Giovan Pietro, known as Giampietrino ('in the manner of'). Two other attributions are mentioned: 'anonymous 16th century' and 'anonymous Lombard', 'free copy after Leonardo'.

Appendix 4: D.A. Brown - Andrea Solario (1987)

In his work on Andrea Solario (Andrea Solario, 1987), David Alan Brown discusses the theme of *Christ Carrying the Cross* through four compositions:

- *Christ Carrying the Cross* (dated 1505), private collection (resold by Sotheby's in 2009) (pp 86-88 et p. 143).
- *Christ Carrying the Cross* from the Borghese Gallery in Rome (p. 286).
- *Christ Carrying the Cross* preparatory drawing from the Albertina in Vienna (p. 286).
- *Christ Carrying the Cross* from the Museum of Fine Arts in Nantes, France (p. 280).



Figure 53 : Solario - Christ Carrying the Cross, G. Borghese (Rome)

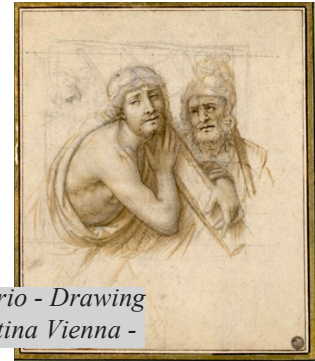


Figure 54 : Solario - Drawing Christ... - Albertina Vienna -



Figure 55 : Solario - Christ Carrying the Cross - dated 1505 - Private Collection - 51,8x52,4cm

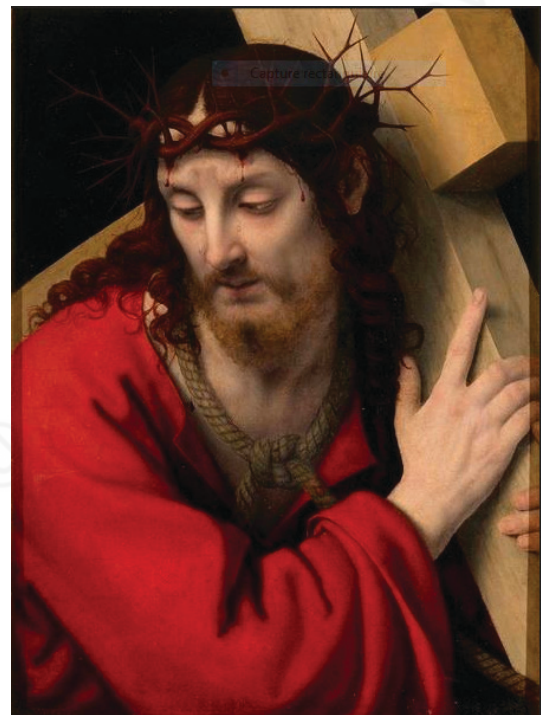


Figure 56 : Solario - Christ Carrying the Cross - Nantes Fine Arts Museum - 45,2x34cm

We will focus on pages 86 to 88 of D.A. Brown's work, dedicated to the theme of *Christ Carrying the Cross* and Andrea Solario (summary).

According to D.A. Brown, the subject of '*Christ Carrying the Cross*' (bearing the inscription "1505") is clearly derived from Leonardo. A very similar composition is found at the Borghese Gallery in Rome, with another slightly different example at the Museum of Fine Arts in Nantes, France.

To understand Solario's interpretation of the theme, D.A. Brown examines other representations presented in sequence, limiting his analysis to the figure of Christ alone.

A woodcut from the late 15th century, potentially linked to Leonardo da Vinci's circle, played a crucial role in spreading this theme throughout northern Italy. Although this engraving has often been associated with the work of Solario, who undoubtedly knew it, the piece itself differs significantly from his style in almost every respect.



Figure 58 : Christ...
Italian School



Figure 57 : Marco d'Oggiono
Getty Museum (Los Angeles)

The connection between this engraving and Leonardo's Milanese circle was strengthened by the discovery of a small painting of *Christ Carrying the Cross*, initially attributed to Ambrogio de Predis, a close associate of the master. However, this attribution has recently⁹⁷ been challenged in favour of Marco d'Oggiono, casting doubt on the initial hypothesis ([infra p. 36](#)).

The '*Christ Carrying the Cross*' dated 1505 is also compared to a lost painting by Antonello da Messina (Note 56 not included) and to Bellini's model in Venice, represented by the *Christ Carrying the Cross* from the Gardner Museum in Boston.

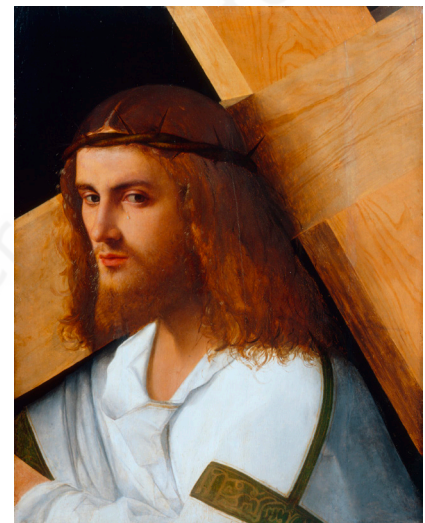


Figure 59 : Circle of Bellini -
Gardner Museum (Boston)

Page 88:

"Contrary to previous claims, Bellini's 'Christ Carrying the Cross' has no relation to what Leonardo was experimenting with near the end of his stay in Milan; this latter composition, which perhaps reached the cartoon stage, can be reconstructed based on a metal point drawing for Christ's head at the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice, combined with copies made by painters in Leonardo's circle".

"Although Leonardo's idea may have included a pair of tormentors, we will focus here on the figure of the Savior".

Notes:

Note 59 (p88): *"Suida, who dates Leonardo's composition to around 1500 at the latest ('Leonardo und sein Kreis', op. cit., pp. 88-89, 153-155), suggests that Leonardo may have experimented with more than one type. Ringbom believes that in one version, Christ moved to the left, as in the drawing in Venice, while in another*

97 : After 1987, the date of D.A. Brown's publication.

he moved to the right, as in a variant executed by Leonardo's follower known as Giampietrino (Wilhelm Suida, 'Leonardo und sein Kreis', op. cit., fig. 99). Additionally, Ringbom states that in painting the panel at the Castello Sforzesco reproduced here, the copyist added the persecutors...".

Note 63 (p88): "Solario's 'Christ' is essentially shown in a three-quarter view with a frontal head, while Leonardo's turns both back and head towards the viewer, as suggested by the numerous single-figure copies made by his follower Giampietrino. See Martin Davies, 'The Earlier Italian Schools', National Gallery, 2nd revised ed., London 1961, no. 3097, and 'Italienische Malerei des XIV bis XVI Jahrhunderts', Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna 1960, cat. no. 7, pp. 11-12. One of Giampietrino's copies, now in Turin (Noemi Gabrielli, 'Galleria Sabauda. Maestri italiani', Turin 1971, no. 138, pp. 133-134, fig. 169), was once exhibited as a work by Solario ('Leonardo da Vinci Exhibition Catalogue', Milan 1939, p. 219). Badt⁹⁸ believed that this work, along with another version formerly in Berlin-Magdeburg, was a copy of a work by Solario (op. cit., pp. 99-100 and 218)".

98 : Comment (Note 63): In 1914, Kurt Badt indeed believed that the Turin version was a copy of a work by Solario, but he had followed Morelli in attributing it to Giampietrino in 1897 (Badt, K. 1914, *Andrea Solario: Sein Leben und seine Werke*, p. 101).

Appendix 5: The National Gallery of London, Bulletin n°17 (1996)

Keith, L. Roy, A. 'Giampietrino, Boltraffio, and the Influence of Leonardo'. National Gallery Technical Bulletin Vol. 17, pp 4–19.

http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/technical-bulletin/keith_roy1996

Excerpt from the Bulletin on the London and Budapest versions of *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Giampietrino.

"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 1500⁹⁹, 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)".



Figure 60 : Christ Carrying the Cross
Giampietrino London

Notes 11 to 15:

11. See Carlo Pedretti, 'Giorgione e il Cristo portacroce di Leonardo', *Almanacco 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...

99 : The generally accepted date is now 1490 - 1495 by the historians ([infra p. 6](#)).

Appendix 6: Beni Culturali - Christ Carrying the Cross Giampietrino's Turin version (1998)

Cristo Trasporta la Croce (1500 - 1524)

Rizzi Gian Pietro known as Giampietrino

Galleria Sabauda Turin

'Beni Culturali General Catalogue' (Italy)

Notice from Pietro C. Marani (1998)

Excerpts translated from Italian

<https://catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/HistoricOrArtisticProperty/0100351274> (08/24)

"Originally on a wooden panel, it was transferred onto canvas..."

"The work is still today considered an autograph piece by Giampietrino, a Milanese pupil of Leonardo, active from the last decade of the 15th century through the first half of the 16th century (Marani, 1998). The 'Christ Carrying the Cross' in question is associated with the corpus of works attributed to this painter, a subject for which multiple versions exist. These were produced within the Leonardo's Milanese and Venetian schools, following the model created by Leonardo and currently visible in a drawing kept in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice, which likely led to a highly successful (lost) painting by the master and numerous replicas made by the school.

Several versions are attributed to Giampietrino himself, including those at the National Gallery in London and the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna..."

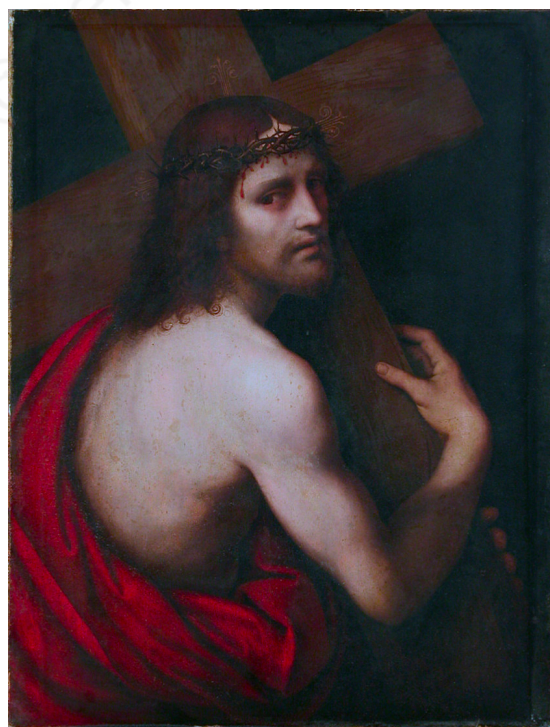


Figure 61 : Christ Carrying the Cross
Giampietrino Turin

Appendix 7: C. Pedretti - La Mente di Leonardo, Al tempo della 'Battaglia di Anghiari' (2006)

**La Mente di Leonardo, Al Tempo della 'Battaglia di Anghiari' (Published by Carlo Pedretti)
Leonardo**

Head of a Man in Right Profile.

Black chalk, lead point, white paper: 220 x 116 mm.

Provenance: Giuseppe Bossi, 1818 collection.

Venice, Cabinet of Drawings and Prints, Gallerie dell'Accademia, N232.

Contribution by A. Perissa Torrini (translated from Italian).

Our Study Synthesis

Despite differing opinions, the detailed examination of the technical and stylistic characteristics of this drawing, along with comparisons to other works, tends to support the hypothesis of its authenticity. Some scholars associate it with a drawing held in Budapest. Carlo Pedretti, however, perceives a connection between this drawing and a lost composition by Leonardo, depicting a *Christ Carrying the Cross* with multiple figures, setting it apart from the studies for the 'Battle of Anghiari'.

"{...} Pedretti's hypothesis, however, takes an opposing direction, {...} Instead, he associates it with the virile face type of a henchman inserted in a lost composition by Leonardo depicting the 'Christ Carrying the Cross', documented by an anonymous copy in the Castello Sforzesco in Milan (no. 358) and another in the Pinacoteca Malaspina in Pavia. Both copies depict henchmen figures alongside the figure of Christ Carrying the Cross. The study also compares the small head depicted in the autograph fragment from the Ambrosiana (Cod. F. 263 Inf. 27), in turn compared to the coarse face in Giorgione's painting of 'Christ Carrying the Cross' at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco in Venice. Further comparison is made to the gritted teeth of the figure sketched by a student on a sheet from the Codex Atlanticus (272r-b [735r]), dated 1495-1497, precisely around the time of Leonardo's drawing 'Christ Held by the Hair' in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice (no. 231), which is preparatory for a 'Christ Carrying the Cross'. The expert thus concludes that this study by Leonardo is for another henchman, placed facing Christ, in the lost composition of Christ Carrying the Cross".

A. Perissa Torrini

Appendix 8: The Christ Carrying the Cross from Magdeburg attributed to Andrea Solario

1. The *Christ Carrying the Cross* from Magdeburg attributed to Andrea Solario

Painting on poplar 56cm x 72cm¹⁰⁰

In the years¹⁰¹ following the fall of Napoleon, an English businessman, Edward Solly, built up in Berlin in five years a collection of about 3000 paintings, with a preference for religious and devotional works of the Italian Renaissance. At that time, through the effects of secularization, many works belonging to the Church passed into the public domain. This was probably the case for this work by Andrea Solario¹⁰².

About half of the Solly collection was sold to the Prussian state when the Royal Museum of Berlin¹⁰³ was established in the 1830s.

In an 1819 inventory by Edward Solly, the painting appeared in the name of Andrea Salaino¹⁰⁴ (Salai).

In a notice¹⁰⁵ published in 1838 in French, by the Doctor G.F. Waagen¹⁰⁶, it appears in the name of Andrea Solario.

From 1845, and according to the information provided to us by the Museum of the City of Berlin (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), it took the number 211 of the gallery's catalogue with the mention "*Kopie nach Solario* (copy according to Solario), *Der dörnengekrönte Christus*". In 1884 it was loaned to the City Museum of Magdeburg.

Unfortunately, the Magdeburg Cultural and Historical Museum which we thank, let us know that the painting had been destroyed in 1945 at the end of the 2nd world war, but that a file card had been preserved. On that file card we can see the name of Solario Andrea, the measurements of the panel as well as an undated photograph.



Figure 62 : *Christ Carrying the Cross* – Solario
(image Kulturhistorisches Museum Magdeburg)

100 : Berlin Gemäldegalerie 1830 inventory.

101 : Robert Skwirbli's conference, New York 20 November 2019, The Frick Collection, 'Edward Solly and his Collection in Berlin 1813-1830'.

102 : Andrea Solario 1460 - 1520 or a little later (Treccani It).

103 : At that time, (Königlichen Gemälde-Galerie).

104 : Andrea Solario has often been confused with Andrea Salaino (Salai), especially by the English (Treatise on Painting Leonardo - Francis Rigaud - 1835). In the Edward Solly collection, another painting by Andrea Solario '*Salome and the Head of Saint-John Baptist*' was previously attributed to Andrea Salaino (Christie's auction - October 2016).

105 : '*Notice of the Paintings exhibited in the Royal Museum*' written by MR Waagen. J. Dielitz (Printing House of the Royal Academy of Sciences – Berlin 1838).

106 : Gustav Friedrich Waagen, first curator of the Berlin Gallery.

According to the German historian Kurt Badt¹⁰⁷, *Andrea Solario – His life and Work* (1914), the work would have been painted after the *Christ Carrying the Cross* of the Borghese Gallery of Rome dated from the year 1510¹⁰⁸. It is also referenced in Crowe and Cavalcaselle's 1912 book, *A History of Painting in North Italy* (p. 377)¹⁰⁹. According to Kurt Badt, the Magdeburg painting was associated with a very similar version in the Sabauda Gallery in Turin¹¹⁰:

Kurt Badt acknowledges the attribution of the Turin version to Giampietrino, but adds, without further detail, that it comes from an original by Solario (see also p197 and p218 of his monograph of Solario). Born in Berlin and living in Germany, he describes the *Magdeburg*¹¹¹ painting with precision, indicating that he probably observed it himself.

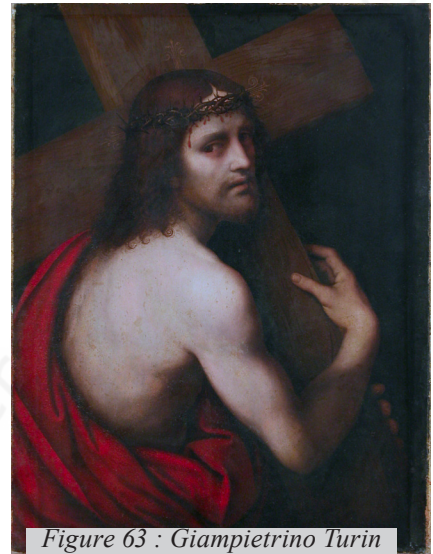


Figure 63 : Giampietrino Turin (Beni Culturali image)

In the description of a *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Solario, marked 'AD MEDIOLANES F 1505'¹¹², David Alan Brown, in *Andrea Solario* (1987) mentions the Magdeburg composition (cf. p143): "*Badt (1914, pp. 37-38 note 1)*¹¹³, *knowing the painting only from Crowe and Cavalcaselle's*¹¹⁴ *description, suggested that it should be identified with a representation of the same theme that he considered a copy of a lost work by Solario; but the painting in question, previously in Berlin and Magdeburg, was in fact a work by Giampietrino*".



Figure 64 : Solario 'AD...1505'

107 : Badt, Kurt (1890-1973). Badt, K. (1914) *'Andrea Solario, seine Leben und seine Werke'*, Klinkhardt & Biermann, Leipzig, p.100 - (<https://archive.org/details/andreasolariose00badtuoft>)

108 : The painting is now dated by the Borghese Gallery 1510-1514, or c.1524.

109 : <https://archive.org/details/northitalypainting02crowuoft/page/n9/mode/2up?q=Berlin>

110 : "Two additional paintings that trace back to a composition by Solario, closely related to that of the *Christ Carrying the Cross* in the Borghese Gallery, are located in Magdeburg and Turin. The surviving panels almost completely agree; the original can no longer be traced". These two compositions are said to be copies of an original by the same Solario.

He adds a little further on: "*The painting in Turin (No. 107 of the Gallery), which faithfully repeats the features of the panel just discussed, is regarded in the collection as a work of Marco d'Oggiono. Morelli, however, has expressly claimed it as an early work of Giampietrino (Della Pittura Italiana 1897, 157, note 1). He does not mention the connection with Solario; yet the author he names for the painting seems entirely likely, as the work shows a change in types and style, pointing to his softer manner. In addition to this fact, the fact that the composition originally comes from Solario remains*".

111 : The town of Magdeburg is closed from Berlin.

112 : This painting by Andrea Solario is similar to *Christ Carrying the Cross* from the Borghese Gallery, but without the tormentors.

113 : We repeat part of note 1, pp 37-38 concerning the Magdeburg painting: "...information from Crowe and Cavalcaselle, who mention that the corresponding half-figure in Berlin can be seen in Museum no. 211: "*Christ crowned with strength, with his right arm embracing the cross, his back turned partially forward and looking around him with pain, also rounded, in wood, closed at the top by a flat arch. 0.67 m high, 0.53 m wide, image with a glassy pale face. "This painting is a copy and is now in Magdeburg*".

114 : D.A. Brown refers to the painting with the mention 'AD MEDIOLANES F 1505' (Private collection).

Until 1945, this painting, attributed to Andrea Solario by the Berlin Museum, where it had entered around 1830 under the name Andrea Salaino, and then transferred to Magdeburg, was considered by historians such as Crowe, Cavalcaselle and Kurt Badt to be an authentic work by Solario. More than forty years after its disappearance, D.A. Brown attributed it to Giampietrino, without further details. Perhaps he drew a parallel with the similar painting in Turin, and also with the other *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Giampietrino unearthed by Suida¹¹⁵ in 1929. D.A.

Giampietrino is the author of at least six versions of *Christ Carrying the Cross* based on a single model, including three identical ones in the museums of London, Budapest and Turin, probably from the same carton. Two other versions, approximately 20% larger, in Vienna and Milan, retain the same proportions.

In the following comparative study of these five works¹¹⁶ by Giampietrino and the painting attributed to Solario, few differences appear at first glance. However, closer analysis reveals significant divergences in the Magdeburg painting, particularly in the tracing of Christ's head. It is less inclined to the horizontal axis, and the neck is about a third shorter. The chin is more voluminous, as can be seen in some of his portraits. These differences, combined with others in the depiction of the cross and the robe, confirm that the Magdeburg *Christ Carrying the Cross* cannot reasonably be attributed to Giampietrino. However, the doubt regarding its attribution remains.

Two engravings were made around 1850 for the Royal Museum of Berlin by A.H. Payne^{117,118} and Carl Wildt, the latter shown here.



Figure 65 : *Christ Carrying the Cross*, Solario, Carl Wildt's engraving (British Museum)

115 : Suida, W. (1929), *'Leonardo und sein Kreis'*, pp. 88-89.

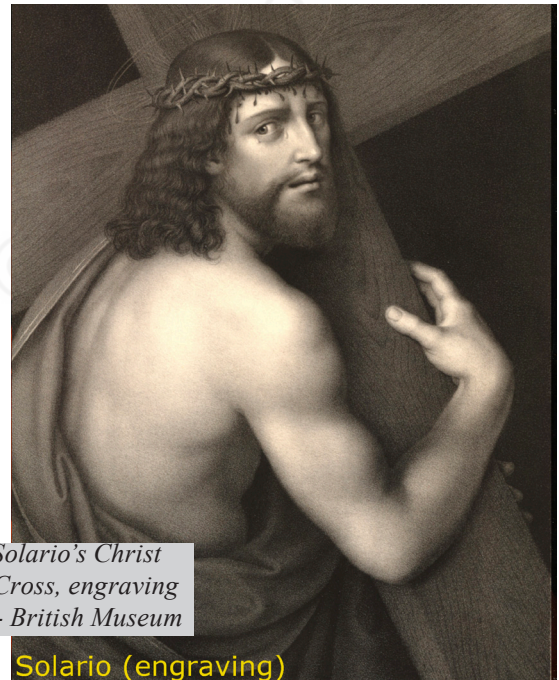
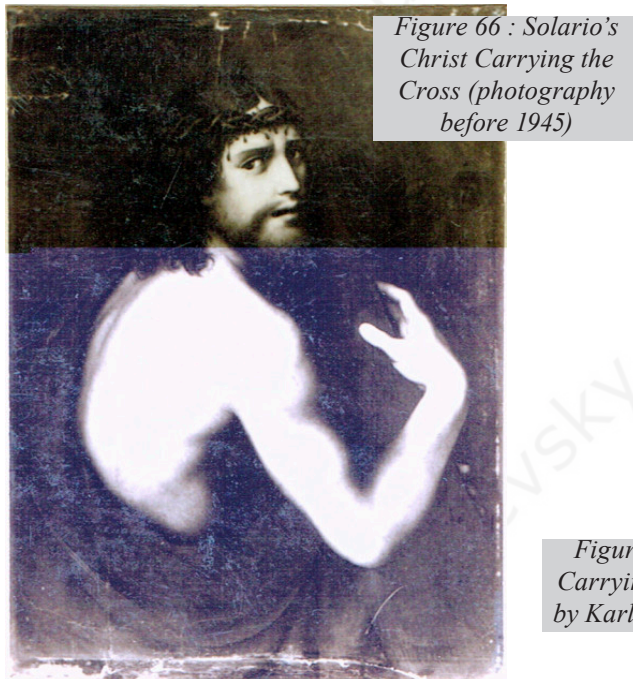
116 : Indeed, the outlines of Giampietrino's five versions coincide almost perfectly (Annexe 13).

117 : Albert Henry PAYNE (1812 London – 1902 Leipzig), engraver on metal, painter, and illustrator.

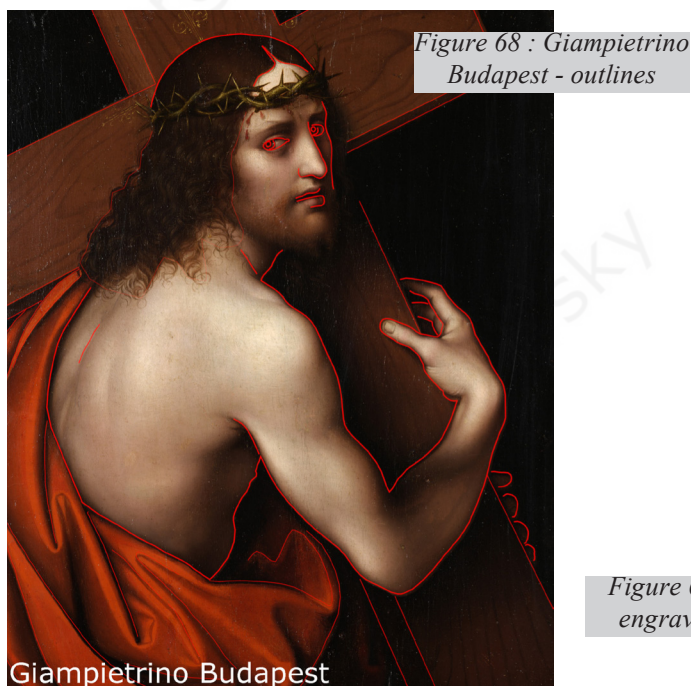
118 : In the engraving by Albert Henry Payne (22.8 cm by 29.5 cm), the following inscriptions can be read: *'A SOLARIO pinxit'* ('Andrea SOLARIO painted it') and *'Published for the owners, the Royal Gallery of Painting in Berlin'*.

2. Comparison with the *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Giampietrino

The photography prior to 1945, due to its insufficient quality, does not allow for accurately tracing the contours of the Magdeburg painting. For the comparison with Giampietrino's unique model, represented here by the Budapest version, we will use the engraving by Carl Wildt¹¹⁹, whose reproduction on the right is of excellent quality.



The engraving by Carl Wildt and Giampietrino's model are scaled to the same size.

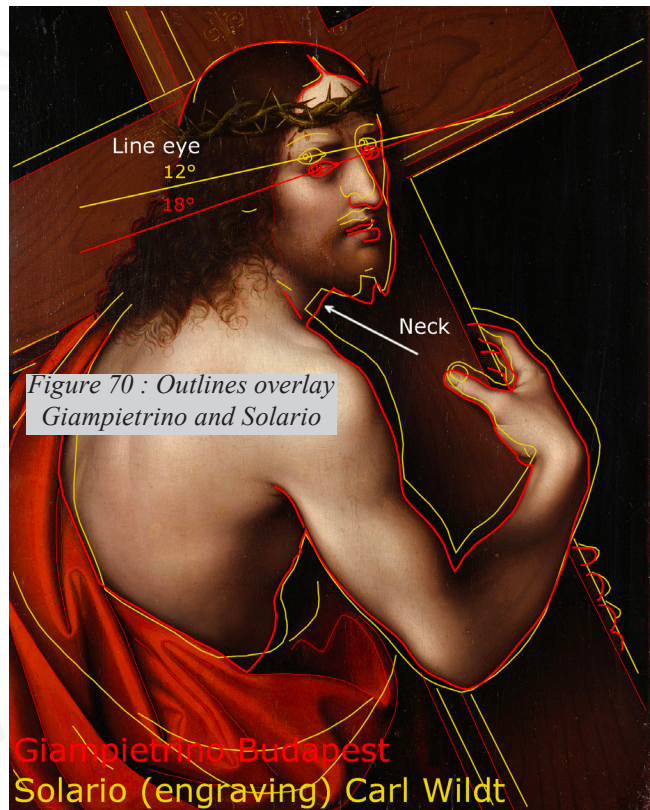
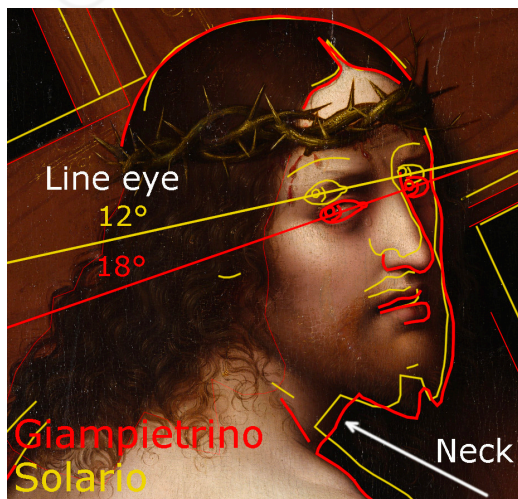


119 : A comparison between the outline of Solario's painting and the engravings (at the time, the equivalent of a photograph) made in the 1850s for the Royal Gallery in Berlin shows faithful reproductions.

Opposite, the outlines of Giampietrino (in red) and the engraving (in yellow) are superimposed.

In the painting from Magdeburg, the upper and right part of the cross intersects the panel, and the robe of Christ flows naturally without exaggerated folds beneath the right shoulder. Additionally, the thick crown of thorns is consistent with the style the other paintings by Solario, featuring a doubling of one of the branches.

The distinction between 'Solario' and Giampietrino primarily lies in the representation of the head. In Solario's representation, the neck is about one third shorter, and the chin appears more pronounced.



Facial features such as the mouth, nose, and eyes are positioned higher, resulting in a slightly different facial configuration. Additionally, the eye line, as illustrated in the enlargement, also shows that the head in Solario's depiction is less tilted.

Figure 71 : Enlargement of the head

The two portraits by Solario, to the right and left of Christ, depict a rather short neck and a very broad chin {*Portrait of Cristoforo Longoni* (NG London), *Portrait of a Man* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)}.

Figure 72 : Cristoforo Longoni portrait.



Figure 73 : Carl Wildt's engraving

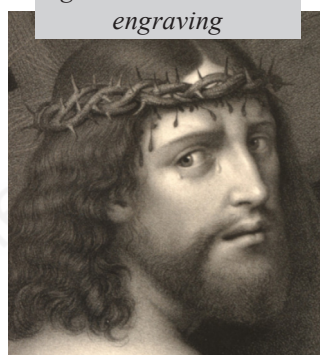
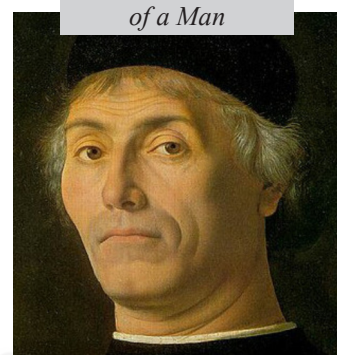


Figure 74 : Portrait of a Man



Solario's composition, dead after 1520, dated around 1510 by the German historian Kurt Badt probably pre-dates those of Giampietrino (c. 1520).

Conclusion: Andrea Solario is believed to have offered a more personal interpretation that highlights a different stylistic and anatomical choice, particularly in the treatment of Christ's head. This differentiates it from the six similar representations by Giampietrino, all of which derive from a same model.

Appendix 9: Giampietrino's single model (Milanese)

1. Giampietrino's six versions

We first present six versions of *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Giampietrino, followed by the overlay of images, demonstrating the existence of a single model that gave rise to multiple replicas.

The panels held in London, Budapest, and Turin form a homogeneous set in terms of dimensions. The Rome version, less legible, is included for reference purposes.

A second set stands out, comprising the versions from 'Vienna' and 'Milan,' which are approximately 20% larger in dimensions.

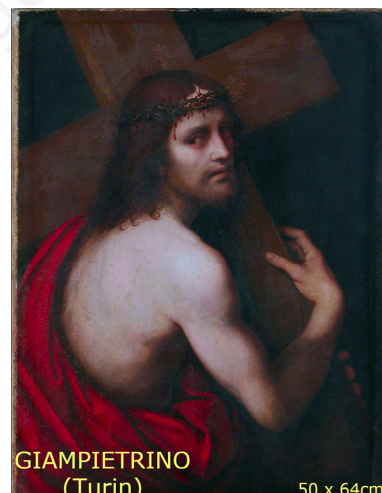


Figure 75 : Giampietrino
London (NG)

Figure 76 : Giampietrino
Budapest

Figure 77 : Giampietrino
Turin

Figure 78 : Giampietrino
Rome

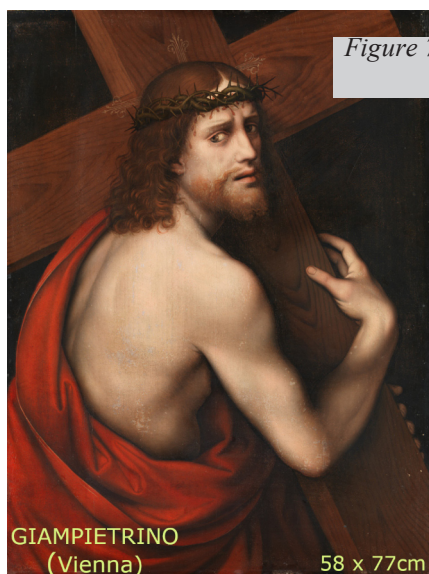
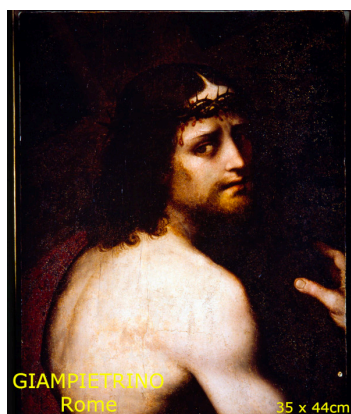


Figure 79 : Giampietrino
Vienna

Figure 80 : Giampietrino
Milan



2. Outlines overlay

Based on the classification into two groups, the approach is to compare the paintings by overlaying traced outlines transferred onto transparent sheets¹²⁰.

21. First group¹²¹: 'London', 'Budapest', and 'Turin'

Analysis from the National Gallery indicates that the panel in London and the example in Budapest likely originated from the same cartoon (Bulletin No. 17, 1996 - Appendix 8)¹²². After scaling the versions in the first group¹²³, the overlay of the Christ outlines reveals an almost perfect match, with the exception of the robe, which differs slightly below the shoulder. The hypothesis of a shared cartoon thus appears entirely plausible.

Key points A, B, C and D, or shared notable points, play a critical role in the structure of the figure of Christ.

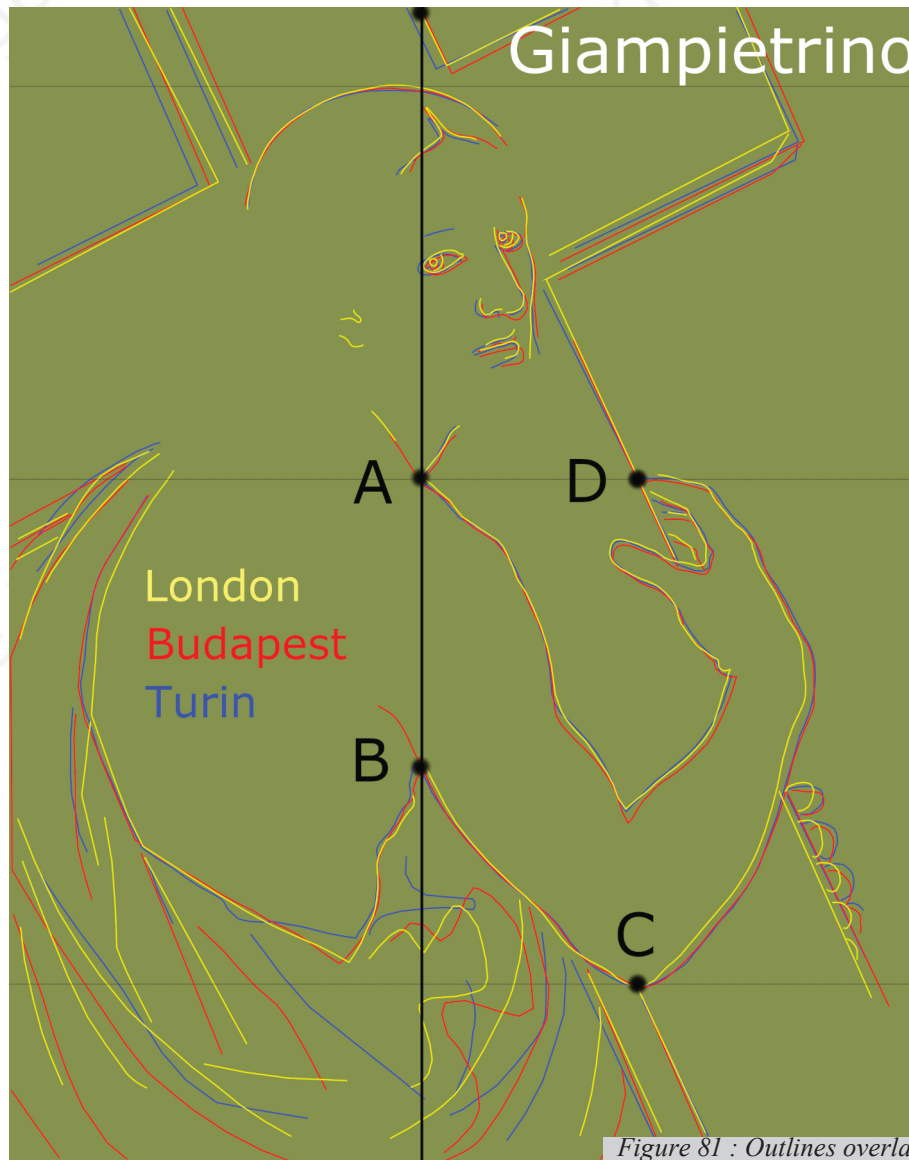


Figure 81 : Outlines overlay 'London', 'Budapest', and 'Turin' (Giampietrino)

120 : For further details on this study, see Kourtchevsky, S. (07/2024), 'Study of a Christ Carrying the Cross from the Italian Renaissance', pp.85s.

121 : The images of Giampietrino's paintings were provided in professional TIF format by the owning museums.

122 : See also National Gallery description: "The National Gallery's panel is one of several more or less identical versions of the same picture by Giampietrino, suggesting that he kept reusing the same cartoon".

123 : Calculations based on the dimensions of the panels in centimetres and the images in pixels demonstrated that the dimensions of the Christ figure were identical. This would confirm the use of the same cartoon.

Second group: 'Vienna' and 'Milan'

The Vienna and Milan versions (second group) are first compared with each other and then with the London version (first group).

The dimensions of the Vienna and Milan versions are approximately 20% larger than those of the first group.

- On the left figure, we see an overlay of the outlines of 'Vienna' (in purple) and 'Milan' (in light blue) after adjusting both images to the same scale. The outlines are similar.
- On the right: the superimposition of the Vienna (purple) and London (yellow) outlines, after scaling to the same size, reveals slight differences¹²⁴, but the overall organization of the composition remains consistent, as illustrated by the key reference points A, B, C, and D.

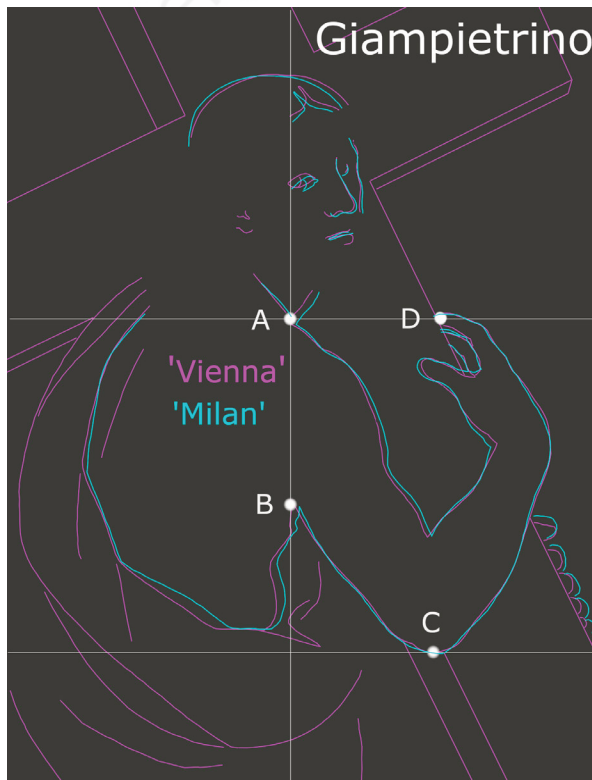


Figure 82 : Outlines overlay
'Vienna' and 'Milan'



Figure 83 : Outlines overlay
'Vienna' and 'London'

3. Summary of the Comparative Study

The comparison of visible outlines would confirm the use of the same cartoon¹²⁵ by Giampietrino for the first group (London, Budapest, and Turin). This same cartoon, in an enlarged form, appears to have been used for the Vienna and Milan versions.

124 : The Vienna and Milan versions are thought to originate from an enlarged cartoon, and therefore not entirely identical to the original.

125 : The question remains open as to whether Giampietrino used his own cartoon or a possible cartoon by Leonardo.

Appendix 10: Leonardo's anatomical studies

As early as 1979, Carlo Pedretti mentioned the connection between the *Venice Drawing* and Leonardo's anatomical studies: “{...} These works from the school clearly reflect Leonardo's intentions regarding the representation of the human body, where the dorsal, shoulder, and neck muscles anticipate Leonardo's own anatomical studies from 1510.” ([Appendix 2](#)).



Figure 84 : Windsor Castle, Royal Gallery, (RCIN 919001 verso)

Several of these studies, two of which are shown here, are preserved in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle. They are discussed in Dominique Le Nen's 2019 book, *Leonardo - The Anatomical Adventure*¹²⁶, p. 173.



Figure 85 : Windsor Castle, Royal Gallery RCIN 919005 verso

126 : D. Le Nen, retired University Professor and Surgeon at the University Hospital of Brest (France).

Appendix 11: Christ bifid beard

In Leonardo's *Drawing*, Christ has a bifurcated beard.

The same Milanese artists depicted Christ with a bifid beard, as seen in the *Drawing*. In contrast, the 'Castello Sforzesco' versions 'in the manner of Giampietrino' and Giorgione's 'San Rocco' do not display this characteristic. In Venetian compositions, as well as those by Marco d'Oggiono and Francesco Maineri, the almost-profile views of Christ make this detail difficult to observe. This depiction among Milanese painters suggests they may have drawn inspiration from a model by Leonardo in which Christ bears a bifid beard.

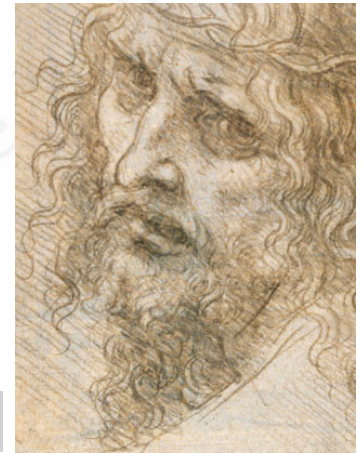


Figure 86 : Bifid beard
Venice drawing

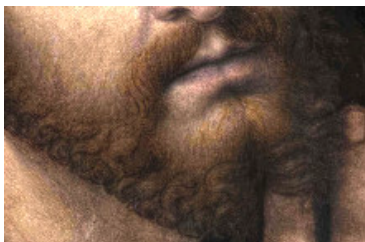


Figure 87 : Solario
(G. Borghese)



Figure 88 : Giampietrino

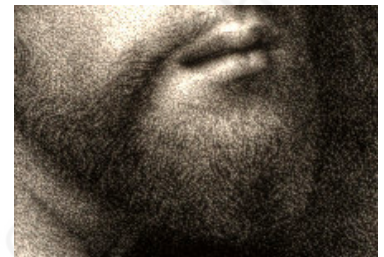


Figure 89 : Solario
(Magdeburg)



Figure 90 : Luini (Bologna)



Figure 91 : Sodoma

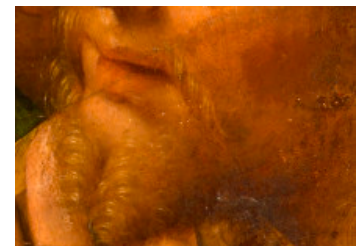


Figure 92 : Cesare da Sesto

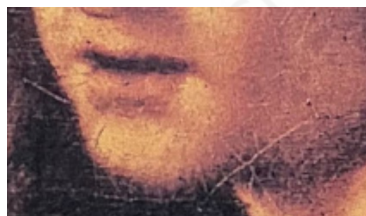


Figure 93 : Castello Sforzesco

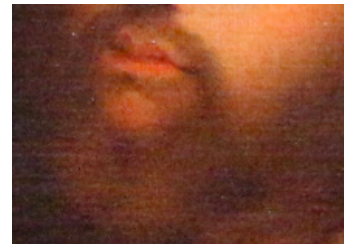


Figure 94 : Giorgione

Appendix 12: Various images



Figure 95 : Leonardo da Vinci Study for the Last Supper (Albertina Vienna)



Figure 96 : Leonardo da Vinci Study sheet - NG Washington



Figure 97 : Sodoma, Christ, Carrying the Cross - Palazzo d'Arco, Mantua

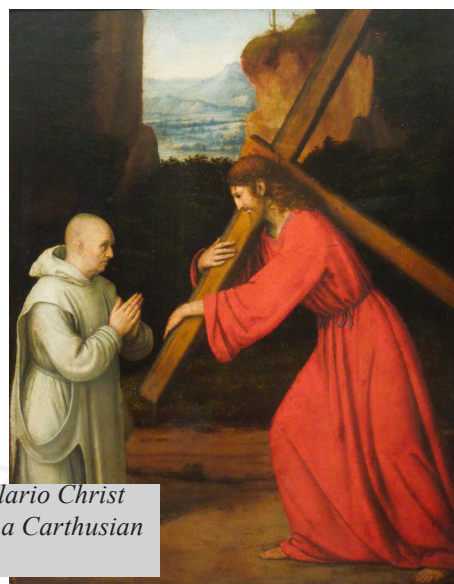


Figure 98 : Andrea Solario Christ Carrying the Cross and a Carthusian (Brescia)

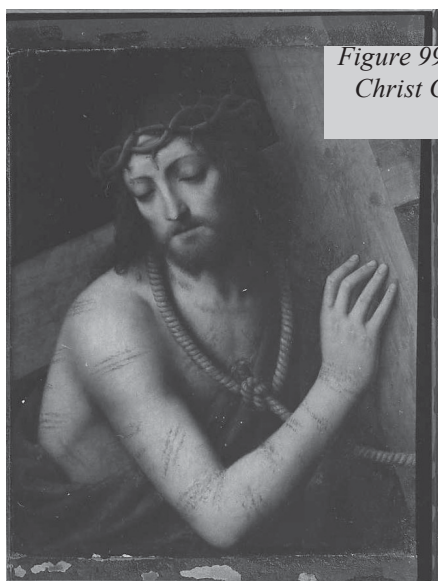


Figure 99 : Bernardino Luini Christ Carrying the Cross Bologna

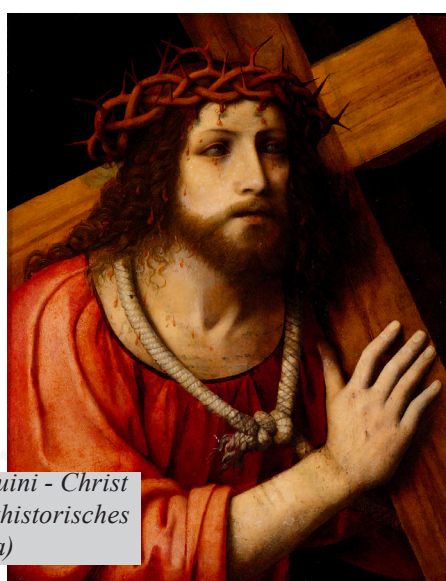


Figure 100 : Bernardino Luini - Christ Carrying the Cross - Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna)

Albrecht Dürer

Christ Carrying the Cross (1498-1499)

This scene from the Passion by Albrecht Dürer, created around 1498, recalls *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Bernardino Luini, housed in the Poldi Pezzoli Museum in Milan, dated between 1520 and 1530. In the depiction, Christ, having fallen to his knees, turns toward the Virgin. Simon of Cyrene, positioned behind the cross, between Christ and the Virgin, helps carry the cross. Above, on the left, another figure, possibly Mary Magdalene, observes the scene with her arms crossed over her chest, in a posture similar to that of the Virgin in Luini's painting.

Figure 101 : *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Albrecht Dürer, an engraving from a series of 12 plates, 1498–1499.



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