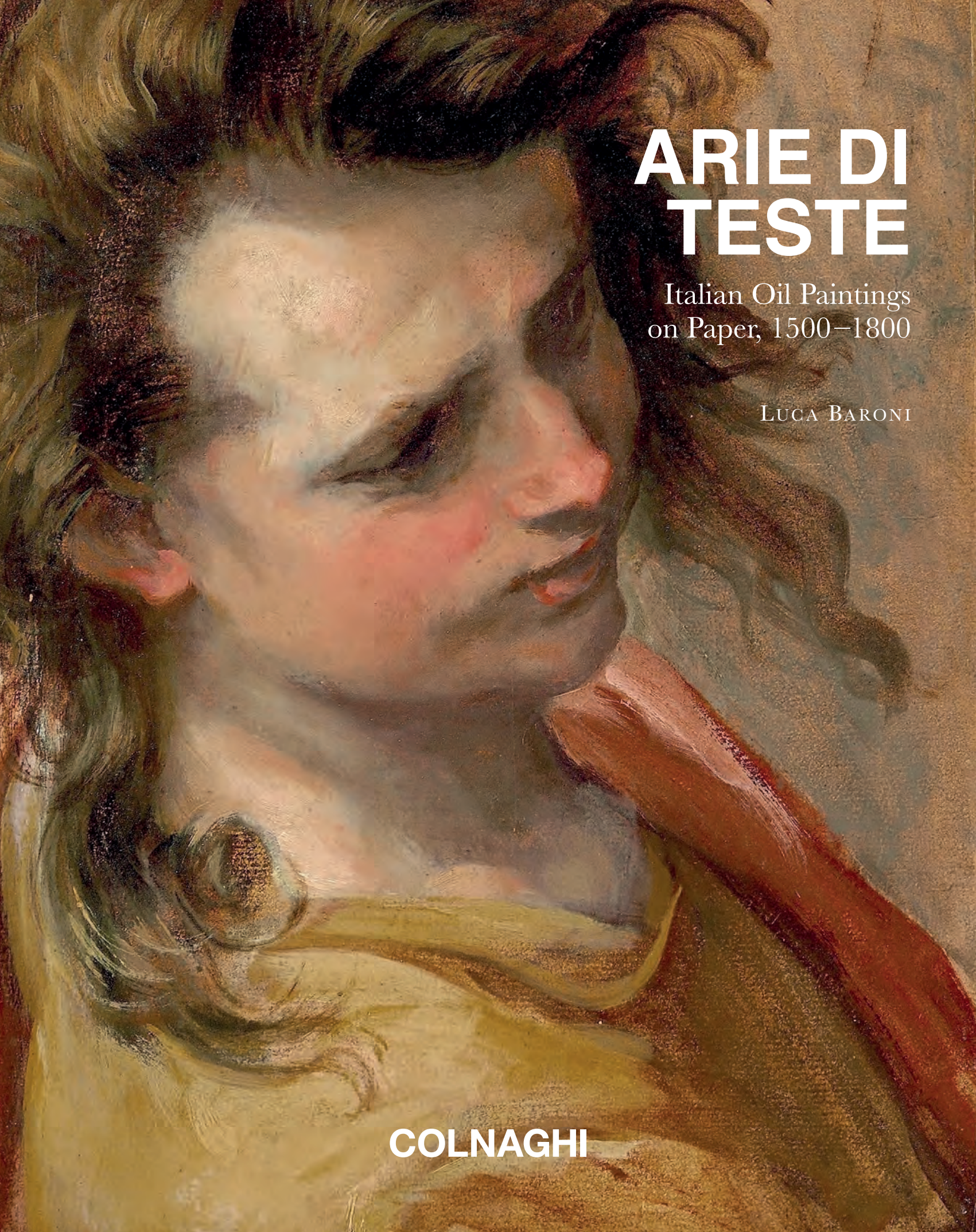

ARIE DI TESTE

Italian Oil Paintings on Paper, 1500–1800

Luca Baroni

COLNAGHI

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Arie di Teste

Italian Oil Paintings on Paper
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With entries by Luca Baroni, Marco Simone Bolzoni, Federico Bonezzi,
Carlo Falciani, Antonio Pepe, Sonja Vilsmeier

COLNAGHI



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Foreword

It was a little over a year ago that Luca Baroni first discussed with me and with the Colnaghi team the idea of an exhibition devoted to Italian oil painting on paper. Our enthusiasm was immediate. Here was a remarkably rich field of artistic practice whose history, despite the beauty and importance of the surviving works, had seldom received comprehensive scholarly assessment in its entirety. With the involvement of an international network of scholars and colleagues, that conversation evolved into a sustained search for works that might convey the range and significance of this medium.

The paintings assembled here offer an opportunity to reconsider a practice that developed across artistic centres and generations, from the experiments of the early Renaissance to the more systematic investigations of the seventeenth century. Whether employed to explore the effects of light and colour, to study a figure from life, to serve as a *modello* or independent *ricordo*, oil on paper afforded artists a remarkable freedom. The refined studies of Federico Barocci, the expressive experiments of the Carracci and their circle, and the subsequent developments in Northern Europe reveal the diversity of its applications. Its material and functional versatility also explains why these objects have so often eluded conventional classifications.

Such uncertainties have inevitably influenced their reception in the art market, where remarkable results have alternated with a persistent hesitation towards works occupying the territory between drawings and paintings. Questions of attribution and artistic intention can be especially consequential for objects whose apparent informality has sometimes obscured their significance. Yet the historical evidence reminds us that many such works were appreciated, collected and traded in their own right from an early date.

In this respect, I find it particularly appropriate that a commercial gallery should undertake their reassessment. Dealers have always had a pivotal role in shaping collecting interests and bringing overlooked fields to the attention of institutions and private collectors. Colnaghi has a meaningful connection with this tradition: several works presented here have previously passed through the gallery and some were handled by Jean-Luc Baroni, a discerning and passionate admirer of the genre. The precedent of *Masters of the Loaded Brush*, held at Knoedler New York in 1967, is equally instructive. Building upon Rudolf Wittkower's pioneering contribution, the present catalogue aspires to establish a substantial scholarly foundation for the future study of oil painting on paper, bringing together historical documentation, technical enquiry and close examination of the objects themselves.

I am sincerely grateful to Jorge Coll for his confidence in this project, to our colleagues at Colnaghi for their invaluable assistance, and to Laura Eguiluz de la Rica for overseeing the production of this publication. My warmest thanks also go to our generous lenders and consignors, and to the many scholars, specialists, friends and colleagues whose advice and expertise have enriched our research. Finally, I owe particular thanks to Luca, whose exceptional scholarship and dedication have guided this undertaking, and alongside whom it has been a genuine privilege to work and learn.

Federico Bonezzi
Specialist & Sales Associate – Colnaghi London

Introduction

An old joke among art historians has it that, in the Old Master field at least, painting specialists have no time for drawings, drawing specialists regard paintings with suspicion, and neither has much use for prints. This is a rather sweeping division of loyalties, as I should perhaps acknowledge, given that my own first allegiance is to prints. Yet the way university teaching and museum collections are organised does not make it easy for scholars and enthusiasts alike to move freely between different techniques and supports.

There are practical reasons for organising museum departments and university courses around the separate study of paintings, drawings and prints. This does little, however, to encourage the joint study and display of objects that were often made, collected and appreciated together. In London, the historical separation of the British Museum and the National Gallery gives this division a particularly tangible form: paintings and works on paper inhabit different buildings, quite apart from the further separation of sculpture and the decorative arts. Even when paintings and works on paper belong to the same museum or museum complex, as at the Louvre or the Uffizi, drawings and prints generally occupy galleries of their own, partly for conservation reasons. They are usually brought together with paintings only in thematic exhibitions that invite close comparison. Even then, displaying works that differ widely in size, material and lighting requirements in the same room demands considerable care: their relationships must be made clear while each work receives its due.

This persistent and regrettably growing difficulty of communication between specialists in painting and drawing is reflected in the increasingly specialised training and careers of curators and art historians. Works that cross disciplinary boundaries can easily fall outside the main concerns of either field. This has been the case with works in oil on paper, a class of objects that belongs wholly to neither and has, perhaps for that very reason, seldom been systematically studied.

In 2024, I had the opportunity to curate the drawings section of the major Federico Barocci exhibition at the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche in Urbino. The museum generously allowed me to select the finest sheets, making it possible to bring together on a single wall four exceptional head paintings in oil on paper, all discussed in this volume (fig. 1). Together with other compositional studies and portraits, the group comprised some ten works, allowing drawings, paintings on paper and paintings on canvas to enter into a dialogue on equal terms. The public's response was encouraging, owing in large part, of course, to the extraordinary quality of these works by one of the greatest draughtsmen of any age. It strengthened my sense that oils on paper deserved more attention than they had received. Their beauty and immediate appeal could offer specialists and the wider public alike a fresh point of entry into both drawing and Old Master painting.

When, in the autumn of 2025, Federico Bonezzi of Colnaghi asked me what scholarly exhibition I would most like to see or organise, the answer came readily: an exhibition of oils on paper. The enthusiasm with which the Colnaghi team embraced the idea initially took me by surprise. As the project developed, however, it began to seem especially fitting that a major art dealership should take the initiative, ahead of the museum exhibition I hope may follow in the coming years. Although oils on paper are held by many of the world's leading museums – a selection of these holdings is listed in the Appendix (Section VI) – they have, in my experience, found particularly appreciative audiences among private collectors and on the art market. Private collectors have provided more than half the works included in this catalogue. The medium offers a remarkably versatile combination of colour, liveliness, lightness and pictorial quality. Even alongside pastels, few works on paper have such immediate visual appeal. During the 1980s and 1990s, thanks in part to Colnaghi's initiative and to the interest shown by the distinguished dealer and connoisseur Jean-Luc Baroni,



Fig. 1. The drawings gallery and the display of head studies in oil on paper in the exhibition *Federico Barocci. L'emozione della pittura moderna* (Urbino, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, June – October 2024).

among others, oils on paper became a regular presence in the catalogues of leading drawings dealers. This helped renew appreciation of the medium and brought many examples into major museum collections.

For the reasons outlined above, a systematic account of these works has nevertheless remained elusive. This volume and the exhibitions accompanying it in London and New York grew out of the desire to address this gap. They represent a stage in an ongoing enquiry, offering initial observations and directions for future research rather than attempting to settle so extensive a subject. Practical considerations have necessarily limited the scope of the project, with a few significant exceptions, to the still considerable territory of Italian art from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. One must begin somewhere.

Particular attention is given to Federico Barocci, whose work provided the starting point for this enquiry. His beautiful *Head of Saint John Evangelist*, chosen for the cover, featured prominently in the major Barocci exhibition held in London and Saint Louis in 2012-2013.

Its attribution as a work entirely by the artist, occasionally questioned, is reassessed here in light of targeted technical investigation. Barocci is considered alongside the more complex and still open case of the Carracci, whose heads in oil form one of the largest and most admired groups of such works, as well as one of the most debated in terms of attribution. Thanks to the support of collectors and galleries, the exhibition and catalogue range widely, bringing together examples from the principal Italian schools and centres of production: from Venice and Emilia to Rome, Tuscany and Naples, with particular concentrations in Bologna and Urbino and a chronological span extending from the sixteenth into the eighteenth century. Further examples will, I hope, emerge in the coming years to fill out a map that, even in this first outline, already embraces much of Italy and many of its most compelling artists.

One particularly welcome aspect of the project is the inclusion of detailed technical investigations of six of the twenty-eight works catalogued here. These offer a first step towards a more systematic understanding of techniques, materials and working methods. Many of the works are published here for the first time, and their attributions have, wherever possible, been discussed with the leading specialists in the field. I am especially grateful to the distinguished international scholars who agreed to contribute or proofread entries, sharing their expertise and turning an enquiry that began as a personal curiosity into a shared endeavour.

My warmest thanks go to Jorge Coll, Federico Bonezzi and the entire Colnaghi team for welcoming the proposal and making it possible; to the collectors and dealers whose generosity allowed us to bring these works together and study them; and to the many colleagues and friends, such as Francesca Baldassari, Daniele Benati, Marco Simone Bolzoni, John Brown, Stefano Causa, David Ekserdjian, Carlo Falciani and Francesco Petrucci, to mention but a few, who have offered advice and observations along the way.

A final and personal debt is to Julien Stock. Some years ago, when I was beginning my research on Federico Barocci, he encouraged me to look closely at the artist's oils on paper and to use them as a means of reconsidering the relationship between drawing and painting in the work of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century artists. For his fundamental contribution to the study of art and drawings, and for the unfailing support he has given to younger generations of scholars, including myself, this volume is offered as a first expression of gratitude.

Bishopstone, Salisbury, 20 October 2026



BOZZETTI

DELLE

GALLERIE DI FIRENZE

CATALOGO

CON 95 ILLUSTRAZIONI

STUDIO ITALIANO DI STORIA DELL'ARTE
FIRENZE - PALAZZO STROZZI - 1952

I.

Evolving Taste: the *Bozzetto* and the Oil Sketch Across the Twentieth Century

If the history of art is, in the first instance, a history of objects made by artists, the material study of those objects cannot be separated from the history of their interpretation. Certain categories of works – especially small and functionally ambiguous ones such as those considered here – have acquired very different meanings at different moments. In the modern period, the critical, collecting, and market fortunes of oil paintings on paper were closely bound to the broader category of the *bozzetto*, whether painted or sculpted.

The emergence of modern art history in the nineteenth century provided an essential framework for this shift. Photography made systematic comparison possible on an unprecedented scale, while the catalogue raisonné offered a new instrument for reconstructing an artist's oeuvre and distinguishing between finished works, variants, copies, and preparatory material. The tradition had important precedents in the study of prints, from Edme-François Gersaint's 1751 catalogue of Rembrandt's prints to Adam von Bartsch's *Le Peintre-Graveur* (1803-1821), and was progressively extended to painting and drawing through the monographic studies of scholars such as Gustav Waagen (1822, the paintings of the Van Eyck brothers), Johann David Passavant (1839, Raphael's paintings), John Charles Robinson (1870, drawings by Raphael and Michelangelo), Charles Ephrussi (1882, drawings by Dürer), and Max Rooses (1886-1892, paintings and drawings by Rubens). This development reached a particularly influential culmination in Bernard Berenson's *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters* (1903), which treated drawings and preparatory studies as primary evidence for reconstructing artistic personality and creative process.

Fig. 1. The catalogue of the exhibition *Bozzetti delle Gallerie di Firenze*, Florence 1952.

This renewed attention to invention changed the status of preliminary material. Drawings, sculptural models, painted studies, and unfinished works could now be considered not merely as subordinate residues of a finished object, but as evidence of the stages through which that object had been conceived. The historiography of the twentieth century nevertheless established two assumptions that remain influential: first, a tendency to read the *bozzetto* primarily as preparation for a larger finished work; and second, to associate abbreviated execution with the spontaneous expression of the artist. Both assumptions were productive, but neither accounts for the full range of functions that such objects could perform.

During the final decades of the nineteenth century, *abbozzo* and *bozzetto* still belonged largely to the vocabulary of contemporary practice and were used especially in relation to sculpture. Around 1900 the terms began to acquire a more explicitly historical meaning. A sequence of studies on small models and painted sketches – Pèleo Bacci on Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Piero Misciattelli on Giacomo Cozzarelli, Antonio Sorrentino on Giacomo Serpotta, Giovanni Spadoni on Federico Barocci, and Giulio Cantalamessa on Titian – shows the category gradually entering the language of art-historical enquiry.[1]

As often happens with materials long regarded as secondary, collecting preceded systematic scholarship. When the collection of the Austrian painter Friedrich von Amerling was dispersed in Vienna in 1916, two terracotta fountain models – catalogued generically as eighteenth-century works – were recognized as Bernini sketches. They were acquired by the Viennese collector Rudolf Berl, who, encouraged by Leo Planiscig, began to collect clay sketches and models systematically. These and related collections helped provide the material basis for Albert E. Brinckmann's multi-volume *Barock-Bozzetti*, published during the 1920s and conceived as a broad survey of the sculptural sketch across the European Baroque.[2] Within little more than a decade, this scholarly interest entered museum practice. Between December 1936 and January 1937, Planiscig organized *Bozzetti und Modelletti der Spätrenaissance und des Barock* at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, drawing partly on the material studied by Brinckmann. The exhibition marked an important stage in the recognition of the *bozzetto* and *modelletto* as historical objects rather than merely as workshop residues.[3]

The impulse provided by German-language scholarship was quickly absorbed in Italy. Valerio Mariani discussed Bernini's *bozzetti* in 1929-1930, while Giulio Lorenzetti reconstructed a group of models by Giovanni Maria Morlaiter in 1931. Pasquale Rotondi's *Sculture e bozzetti lauretani* of 1941 pushed the chronology of the sculptural *bozzetto* back towards the sixteenth century, while the exhibition *I Bibiena scenografi* of 1940, organized in conjunction with the sixth Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, extended the term to graphic material by explicitly grouping drawings, sketches, and *bozzetti*.[4]

The Second World War gave this material a new urgency. The destruction or inaccessibility of churches, palaces, fresco cycles, and altarpieces inevitably increased the documentary value of smaller works that had survived. Portable, often stored away, and frequently preserved in private collections, *bozzetti* could outlive the monumental projects to which they were connected. In the immediate post-war period, they therefore became evidence not only of artistic invention, but also of compositions that had been damaged, dispersed, or lost. This shift also encouraged a more tightly teleological reading of the sketch. Whereas earlier collectors and scholars had often treated models and studies as a relatively autonomous class of objects – records of invention, repertories for reuse, workshop tools, or works retained and collected in their own right – post-war scholarship increasingly reconstructed them through a direct relationship with a specific altarpiece, fresco cycle, or decorative commission. That approach greatly enriched the study of

artistic process, but it also tended to reduce the *bozzetto* to one stage in a progression towards a finished work, leaving less room for *ricordi*, repetitions, copies after other masters, autonomous studies, or works produced for collectors.

Two post-war Italian exhibitions were particularly important. The *Mostra di bozzetti napoletani del '600 e '700*, held at the Museo Nazionale di San Martino in Naples in 1947, and *Bozzetti delle Gallerie di Firenze*, organized at Palazzo Strozzi in 1952 (fig. 1), both used the small scale and relative portability of sketches to construct broad historical narratives at a moment when museums, churches, and exhibition infrastructures were still recovering from the war.[5] The Naples exhibition assembled sixty-two works from the Pinacoteca, the Museo di San Martino, the Pio Monte della Misericordia, and private collections. Its catalogue distinguished between rapid studies that fixed an initial invention and more developed models made for patrons, contractual approval, workshop execution, or assistants. The *bozzetto* was thus presented as evidence of successive stages of the "figurative process": first conception, the organization of colour and light, revision, and the practical transfer of an idea into a larger work. This approach acquired force in relation to lost or damaged decorations, among them Luca Giordano's project for Montecassino, Mattia Preti's models for the votive frescoes over the gates of Naples, and Francesco Solimena's model for the ceiling of the Sala del Consiglietto in the Palazzo Ducale in Genoa.

The Florentine exhibition was broader, bringing together around 150 preparatory studies, models, unfinished paintings, and related works, many of them drawn from museum storerooms. Its richness was explicitly connected with the collecting history of Florence and with Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici, whose interests had extended beyond drawings to miniatures, painted studies, and other materially or functionally unusual objects. The exhibition, and the discussion it generated, greatly helped to establish the *bozzetto* as a normal object of museum and scholarly attention.[6]

From the beginning of the 1950s, the enlarged category of the *bozzetto* entered ordinary art-historical usage. Federico Hermanin discussed painted sketches by Polidoro da Caravaggio; Hans Tietze's studies of Tintoretto helped establish the Venetian painter as a central figure in the history of the painted sketch; Andreina Griseri examined Luca Giordano's studies for the Escorial staircase; Luigi Grassi and Robert Enggass reconstructed preparatory sequences by Pietro da Cortona and Baciccio; Giuseppe Maria Pilo studied Antonio Bellucci's sketches and models in Düsseldorf; and Peter Anselm Riedl opened a new line of enquiry into Tuscan *bozzetti*.[7] In 1960, Paul Wescher's seminal book *La prima idea: Die Entwicklung der Ölskizze von Tintoretto bis Picasso* gave renewed critical prominence to the oil sketch and offered the first systematic treatment of the subject.[8]

By the early 1960s, the term *bozzetto* could encompass clay models, oil paintings on canvas, drawings, and, more exceptionally, works on paper: increasingly, it described a function or stage of invention rather than a single material category. The same years also brought a more precise interest in terminology and working procedure: Irving Lavin's 1967 study of sculptural *bozzetti* and *modelli*, for example, treated the distinction between stages of preparation as a historical problem rather than as a simple opposition between rough and finished objects, while the following year Edward Maser established an important early critical framework for the appreciation of the eighteenth-century oil sketch.[9]

The most important synthesis of these developments was *Masters of the Loaded Brush: Oil Sketches from Rubens to Tiepolo*, organized in New York in 1967 by Columbia University's Department of Art History and Archaeology and shown at M. Knoedler & Company

from 4 to 29 April (fig. 2). The exhibition was conceived as a benefit for the department's scholarship fund and brought together seventy-nine paintings, more than half of them lent from outside the United States. Its organization was itself significant: a university department, graduate students, museum professionals, private collectors, and a major commercial gallery collaborated on a project whose selection was explicitly based on quality and whose catalogue was produced through a seminar directed by Milton J. Lewine. Rudolf Wittkower, then chairman of the department, played a central role in the loan negotiations.[10]

The range and quality of the loans gave the exhibition unusual authority. Works came from the Royal Collections at Windsor Castle (Annibale Carracci's *Head of a Man*) and Hampton Court, the Ashmolean Museum, the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, the Galleria Nazionale in Rome, the Pinacoteca di Brera, several French provincial museums, fifteen American museums, and important private collections. Among the more revealing institutional loans were Anthony van Dyck's two studies of bearded magistrates from the Ashmolean, connected with the lost *Magistrates of Brussels*, and Jacob Jordaens's *Head of Abraham Grapheus* from the Detroit Institute of Arts. The conjunction of such museum loans with works from private collections made comparison across schools possible on a scale rarely attempted before.[11]

Wittkower's introductory essay was more than a preface to the exhibition. It offered one of the first concise attempts to describe the 'anatomy' of the oil sketch as a functional category. He distinguished five principal types, whose relevance to the present discussion is such that they deserve to be quoted in full:

(i) the spontaneous sketch, fixing an initial idea of composition and colour;
(ii) the clarifying sketch, in which a more deliberate formal and chromatic conception was established for the artist's own use;
(iii) the *modello*, a comparatively developed version intended to communicate the projected work to a patron;
(iv) the *post festum* sketch, a reduced version made after the finished composition, either as a *ricordo* or for sale;
(v) the autonomous oil sketch, conceived as an independent work, study from nature, or copy without a necessary sequel.

Equally important was Wittkower's insistence that these categories could overlap. A *modello* might resemble a spontaneous sketch; a *ricordo* could be difficult to distinguish from a *modello* without documentary evidence; and an apparently autonomous work might in fact occupy an unknown place within a preparatory sequence. His taxonomy was therefore less a rigid classification than a warning against identifying function from appearance alone. Size, finish, and rapidity of handling were not, by themselves, sufficient evidence for purpose.

This point is especially important for oil paintings on paper. Paper defines a support, not a function. A work painted rapidly on paper may record a first invention, clarify colour and light, preserve a successful solution, serve as a model for later use, function as a *ricordo*, or exist as an independent study. To treat all such works as preparatory simply because they are small, abbreviated, or executed on paper is to confuse material appearance with historical purpose. Wittkower's categories remain valuable precisely because they separate these two questions. Seen from this perspective, the twentieth-century history of the *bozzetto* is not simply the story of a neglected object gradually being recognized. It is the history of a category being constructed: first through collecting, then through museum display, and finally through a vocabulary of artistic process. That construction made possible the modern study of oil paintings, but it also encouraged a persistent preference for spontaneity, preparation, and the artist's first idea.

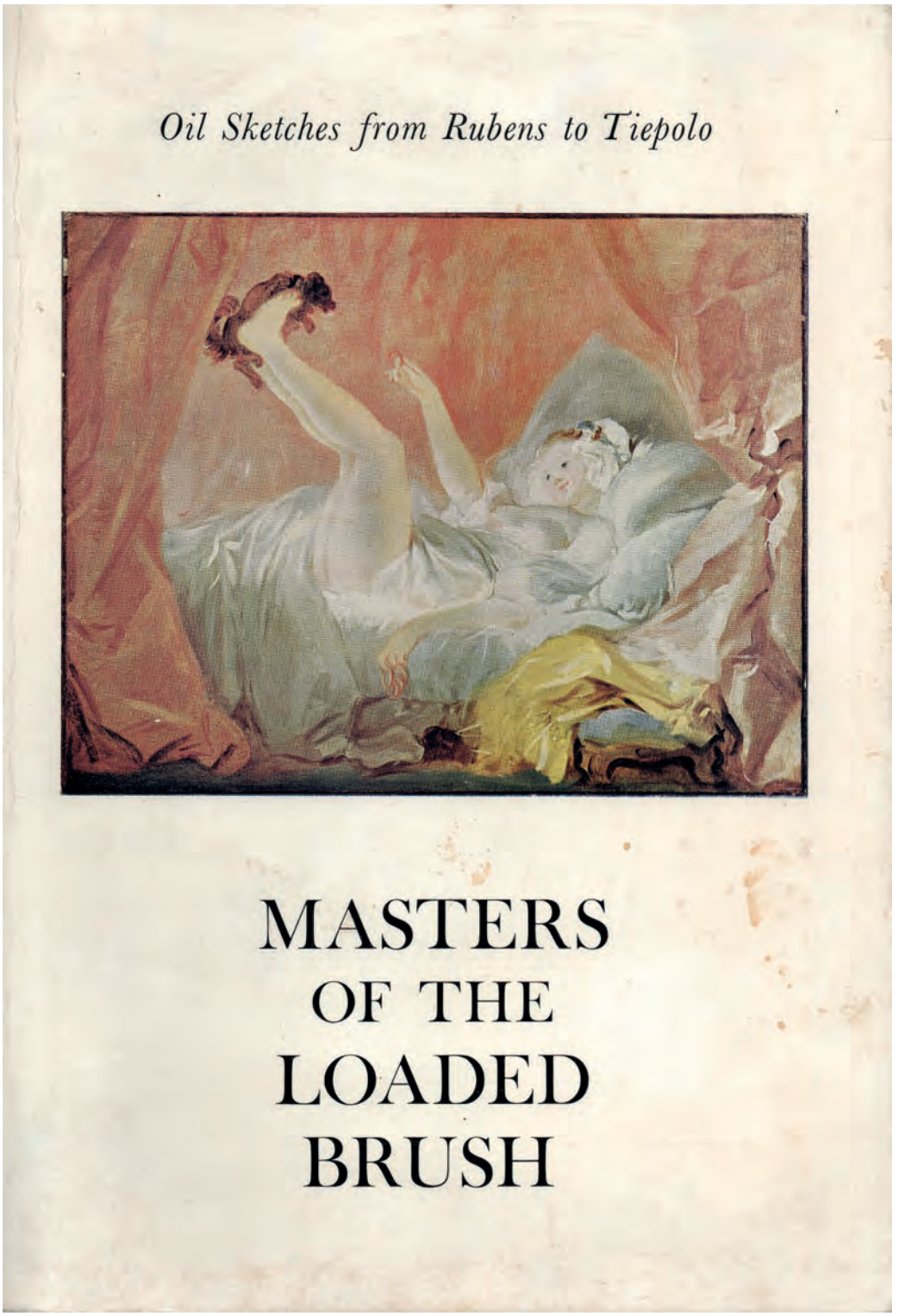


Fig. 2. The catalogue of the exhibition *Masters of the Loaded Brush*, New York 1967.

Wittkower's achievement was to make these assumptions explicit and to replace a single developmental model with a range of possible functions, thereby laying the foundations for the scholarship on the oil sketch that developed from the 1970s onwards. An important stimulus was provided by the 1968 exhibition of Baroque oil sketches from the Kurt Rossacher Collection and its accompanying catalogue, which fostered both the appreciation and the scholarly investigation of such material in the decades that followed.[12] Other landmarks included Linda Freeman Bauer's studies of the origins, terminology and historical uses of the oil sketch; the exhibition held in Rotterdam and Braunschweig in 1983-1984, together with the symposium it prompted, which brought into dialogue material from different European schools and periods; Albert Boime's examination of the nineteenth-century French oil sketch; Peter Walch's study of the French academic tradition; and Oreste Ferrari's fundamental survey of Italian *bozzetti*.[13] Taken together, these contributions, supplemented by more focused studies of the practices of individual artists, such as Lorenzo Lotto and Federico Barocci, now make it possible to reconsider the technique of oil painting on paper within a coherent and productive historical framework.[14]

Within the more specific field of oil painting on paper, Wittkower's general observations remain the essential methodological point of departure. The support may be modest and the execution abbreviated, but neither condition determines the purpose the object was intended to serve. The task, therefore, is not to force these works into a single category of 'preparatory sketch', but to reconstruct, case by case, the relationships between material, handling, function, circulation and collecting. In this sense, the most useful legacy of the twentieth-century debate is not a definition of the *bozzetto*, but a question: what role did this object perform in the life of an image?

NOTES

1. Bacci 1906, pp. 142-147; Misciattelli 1910, pp. 3-5; Sorrentino 1913, pp. 379-387; Spadoni 1913, pp. 86-92; Cantalamessa 1916, pp. 552-560.
2. Viligiardi 1920, pp. 49-51; Brinckmann 1922-1923, pp. 491-494; Brinckmann 1923; Brinckmann 1924a; Brinckmann 1924b; Brinckmann 1925.
3. Planiscig 1936; Fröhlich-Bume 1937, pp. 132-135.
4. Mariani 1929-1930, pp. 59-65; Lorenzetti 1931, pp. 988-1012; Mariani 1940; Rotondi 1941.
5. Mostra di bozzetti napoletani 1947; Francini Ciaranfi 1952.
6. Francini Ciaranfi 1952; Sricchia Santoro 1953, pp. 59-62; Collobi Ragghianti 1954, pp. 477-484. On the fortunes of the *bozzetto* in Florence see, more recently, Berti 2014, pp. 28-41.
7. Hermanin 1950, pp. 132-134; Tietze 1951, pp. 55-64; Tietze 1952, p. 189; Griseri 1956, pp. 33-39; Grassi 1957, pp. 28-43; Enggass 1957, pp. 51-53; Pilo 1959-1960, pp. 127-137; Riedl 1963, pp. 14-19; Rizzi 1963.
8. Wescher 1960.
9. Lavin 1967, pp. 93-104; Maser 1968, unnumbered pages.
10. Wittkower 1967, pp. xi-xiii.
11. Wittkower 1967, pp. xi-xiii, 70-71, 75-76.
12. *Image and Imagination* 1968; see also Lipinsky 1970, pp. 68-69.
13. Freeman Bauer 1975; Freeman Bauer 1984; Klessmann 1983; Klessmann and Wex 1984; Boime 1986; Ferrari 1990; Walch, Barnes and Marandel 1994.
14. Pillsbury 1978; Wivel 2019.





II.

Scope and Functions of the Oil Painting on Paper

Oil on paper occupies a position between drawing and painting that has shaped both its historical uses and its modern classification. The following pages consider its materials, techniques and functions, proposing a typology that extends beyond the preparatory oil sketch to encompass finished paintings, copies and works combining graphic and painterly procedures. Conceived as a working account, this discussion draws principally on museum collections and on the more detailed research devoted to individual artists, notably Domenico Beccafumi, Federico Barocci and the Carracci and their circle. Its chronological scope extends from the late fifteenth to the late eighteenth century, with an emphasis on Italian artists and those whose practice was substantially informed by contact with Italy, as in the case of Peter Paul Rubens. It offers a provisional framework for a practice whose diversity across schools and periods still awaits comprehensive study.

Preliminary considerations

Any enquiry into oil on paper must begin with the difficulty of identifying the support. Works in public and private collections may still be concealed behind traditional descriptions as oils on canvas or panel, since a thin sheet can become almost indistinguishable beneath preparation, paint and a secondary support. Mounting may belong to the artist's original procedure or result from a later intervention; in either case, paper can conform so closely to the material beneath it that even the weave of a backing canvas becomes perceptible at the surface. Laid lines, exposed edges, or areas of damage and lifting may reveal its presence, but such clues are not always available. A conservation

Fig. 1. Robert Rauschenberg, *Rebus*, 1955, oil, alkyd paint, pencil, crayon, pastel, collaged printed and painted papers, and fabric on canvas mounted and stapled to fabric, three panels, 243.8 × 333.1 cm, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, inv. 243.2005.a–c. © Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.

report or technical examination is therefore often essential to establishing the work's material structure with confidence.[1]

The painting medium can be equally difficult to identify by appearance alone. Distinguishing oil from tempera or mixed media may require analysis, since preparation, absorbency, varnishing and subsequent treatment all affect the surface. Traditional catalogue descriptions deserve particular scrutiny where they have not been reassessed in this light. The vulnerability of painted paper, comparable in some respects to that of pastel, also makes its conservation history especially relevant: retouching and later additions may modify both its appearance and the evidence available for technical interpretation. Oil can contribute to discolouration and a loss of strength in the sheet, although durability depends on the entire material structure and its history of treatment. Pigment and binder analyses must consequently be read alongside an assessment of restoration, with care to distinguish original passages from subsequent interventions.[2]

A further distinction is needed between paper and parchment. Paper is formed from a suspension of plant fibres, predominantly cellulose; the European papers considered here were generally made from processed linen and hemp rags. Parchment, by contrast, is prepared animal skin, while vellum traditionally denotes calfskin or particularly fine parchment, although historical usage varies. Manuscript illumination provided an important precedent for painting on parchment in a variety of binding media. The increasing availability of paper in late medieval and Renaissance Europe expanded the possibilities of painting on flexible supports without displacing the older practice of painting on parchment, which is examined in greater detail in the following chapter.[3]

Although oil on parchment falls outside the principal scope of this essay, it offers a valuable comparison, particularly for the sixteenth century (cat. 2). Both supports could receive fine preparations and accommodate fluid colour and smooth, luminous effects, despite their differences in texture, absorbency and strength. As considered in chapter III, affinities with painting on tin, copper or stone likewise arise from the interaction of support, preparation and paint, rather than from an optical quality intrinsic to the support alone. The active contribution of the material is especially apparent in paintings on coloured stone, whose natural veining could suggest skies, clouds or terrain. Such works offer a useful parallel for painted sheets in which exposed areas of paper, especially if not blank, participate in the image.[4]

The recurrence of oil on paper across Italian schools suggests a field of practice considerably broader than the examples associated with a few major masters, yet one whose coherence has often been obscured by museum classifications. Works in this medium may be assigned either to paintings collections or to cabinets of drawings, sometimes within the same institution; where these responsibilities are divided between museums, as in London between the National Gallery and the British Museum, closely related objects are consequently studied within different curatorial traditions. A fuller understanding therefore calls for surveys that bring these dispersed holdings into a common field of enquiry, supported by technical investigations into how the works were made and subsequently altered. Considered alongside their original uses and changing status as works of art, such evidence would help to establish the place of oil on paper within the broader history of Italian artistic practice.

Technique and support

For the purposes of this study, oil on paper denotes a work in which pigments bound in a drying oil are applied, throughout the composition or selectively, to a paper support. The term thus encompasses a range of procedures whose differences are fundamental to understanding the medium's varied creative possibilities.

Oil might constitute the principal medium or form part of a more complex combination. Tempera paintings on paper belong to a related, though technically distinct, practice. Domenico Beccafumi's head studies are instructive in this respect: several long regarded as oils were identified as tempera on coarse paper, a distinction obscured by subsequent varnishing. Their restricted brownish palette and fluent modelling of light nevertheless produce effects close to those of studies painted in oil, suggesting that a difference of binder need not entail a corresponding difference of function or appearance.[5] Oil could also be applied over a drawing, combined with aqueous washes or reserved for accents of colour and light, as Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione's practice demonstrates (cat. 24). Lead white, or *biacca*, should be understood in this context as a pigment rather than a medium: its technical character depends on the binder in which it is applied.

Preparing the sheet might involve sizing to regulate absorbency, a ground to establish the painting surface and an *imprimitura* to supply an overall tone. These were distinct operations, which artists could combine, simplify or omit according to the paper available and the effect they wished to achieve.

Sizing reduced the penetration of liquid media into the sheet. Gelatin and other collagen-derived glues could be prepared from skins or parchment scraps; rabbit-skin glue belongs to this family, although its identification in an individual work requires specific evidence. Paper might be sized during manufacture or receive a further application in the workshop. This treatment should therefore be distinguished from the addition of a separate painting ground.[6]

The sized sheet could receive a thin ground containing a mineral filler or pigment. Historical drawing preparations included glue-bound mixtures containing bone or lead white, often tinted, while a simple coloured wash could also modify the appearance of the paper. The technical investigations undertaken for this catalogue illustrate the variety of materials present, while also showing the need to distinguish their respective functions. In the painting discussed in cat. 8, elemental mapping revealed a calcium-rich ground consistent with chalk or gypsum; lead white was identified principally in the lighter passages and, mixed with vermilion, in the flesh tones. In cat. 10, FTIR results were consistent with linseed oil, while lead white and lead carboxylates were detected alongside quartz, kaolinite, calcium carbonate and gypsum.

The presence of these minerals does not, in itself, establish whether they belong to a preparation or to the paint layers, nor does it demonstrate the use of a glue-bound ground. Such distinctions matter because sizing, a mineral ground and a further coloured layer, or *imprimitura*, performed different, though related, roles in regulating absorbency, opacity, resistance to the brush and the visibility of the support. Impregnation with oil likewise altered the paper's optical properties without performing the same function as a glue size. Recorded drawing preparations therefore provide a technical context for oil on paper, rather than a single recipe applicable to every painted sheet.[7]

The works assembled in this volume already suggest considerable variety. Examination with the naked eye of those in which the preparation remains partly visible in the background reveals lighter grounds ranging from a neutral, almost white tone to a pale brown (cats. 5, 10), whereas reddish-brown grounds recur frequently, especially in the Carracci milieu (cats. 11, 12, 13, 19, 21, 23, 26, 28). Grey, grey-green and grey-brown preparations appear to have enjoyed particular favour in Tuscany and Naples (cats. 1, 7, 12, 17, 18, 20). These choices also interact with the colour of the paper itself, which may range from white or off-white, as in sheets by Castiglione (cat. 24), to brown or blue.

The Venetian study attributed to Jacopo Tintoretto, or alternatively to Jacopo Palma il Giovane (cat. 6), exploits a dark surface against which touches of oil colour and lead white articulate the musculature of the male nude. Here, as elsewhere, coloured paper must be distinguished from a coloured preparation applied to the sheet. Where the artist has covered the surface completely (cats. 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 27), the nature of the underlying paper and ground may remain uncertain without targeted technical investigation, potentially including the examination of samples.

Aqueous sizing, preparation and mounting could cause the paper to expand or cockle. Temporary restraint on a board helped maintain a workable surface, but differed from permanent mounting on panel or canvas. The latter could mark a significant stage in the passage from a working study to an object intended for preservation and display, although mounting could equally form part of the original process. A secondary support may therefore record a change in reception rather than the artist's working procedure. Further investigation into the circumstances of these transformations may shed light on how such works were preserved and appreciated.[8]

Reused documents, letters and account sheets form a particularly suggestive group, with earlier inscriptions remaining visible in uncovered areas or beneath thin paint. Examples associated with the Carracci and their followers make Bologna an important context for investigation, although the origins and geographical distribution of the practice remain to be established. Economy and availability offer plausible explanations without exhausting its significance. Reused written sheets belong within a broader economy of workshop materials, in which drawings made from casual observation were retained, adapted for other compositions and assembled as resources for teaching. Their use can thus be situated within the Carracci's sustained cultivation of study, without assuming that every instance of reuse served the same purpose.[9]

As far as is currently known, none of Barocci's more than twenty-five surviving oils on paper was executed on a reused document. This apparent distinction invites comparison between his pursuit of formal refinement, even in images that retain the character of a sketch, and the greater visibility of the working process in studies associated with the Carracci. It is an appealing distinction, but remains provisional: the surviving material has not yet been surveyed sufficiently widely to sustain a firm division between these approaches.

The coexistence of writing and painting could also acquire an aesthetic value, reinforcing the impression of an informal exercise or an immediate encounter with the model. This possibility is particularly relevant to the culture of study fostered around the Carracci. Yet inscriptions may become more prominent through oil penetration or changes in the transparency of paint, so any assessment of their intended visibility must take the object's condition into account.

A suggestive, if historically distant, comparison is offered by Robert Rauschenberg's Combines of the 1950s. In *Rebus* (1955), now at The Museum of Modern Art, New York (fig. 1), painted passages, paper fragments, printed images and writing overlap, inviting the viewer to move between different kinds of visual information. His early experiments with collage illuminate the expressive possibilities of such layered surfaces, although even here, despite the shorter interval, scholarship suggests caution in interpreting the visibility of the paper and lettering.[10] Ageing and oxidation have already substantially altered the interplay of layering and transparency conceived little more than seventy years ago, particularly where artists used inexpensive materials such as newsprint, which is generally less durable than the rag papers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Rauschenberg's work nevertheless offers a way of looking afresh at the oils painted over old letters and documents by artists

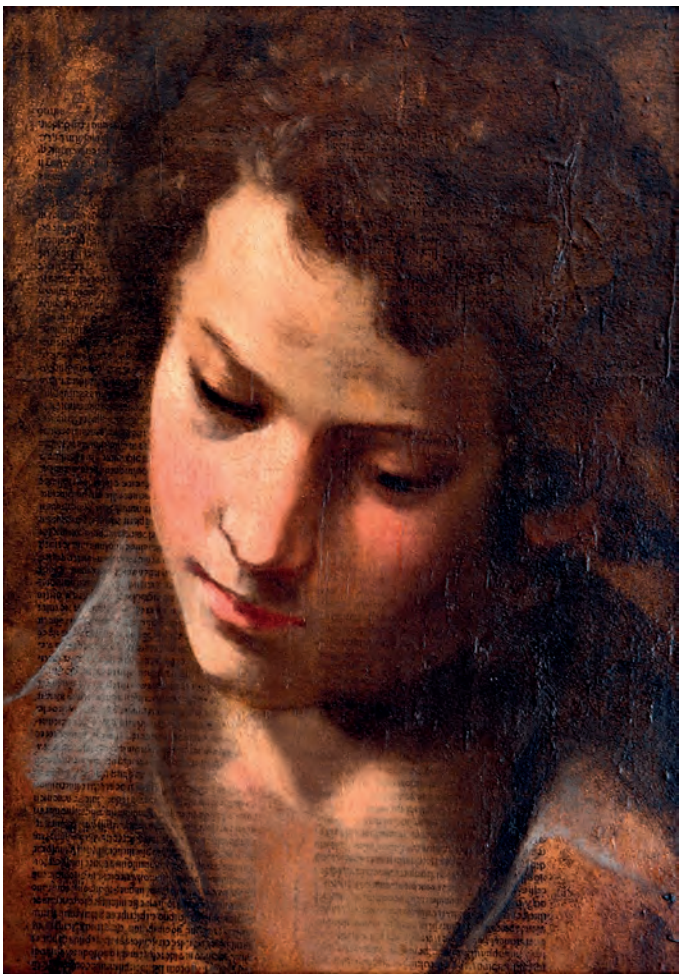


Fig. 2. Lodovico Cardi, called Cigoli, *Head of a Young Boy*, c. 1603-1605, oil on paper, 52 × 43 cm. Courtesy Maurizio Nobile Fine Art.



Fig. 3. Peter Paul Rubens, *Head Study for Balthazar*, c. 1609-1611, oil on paper laid on panel, 54 × 39.3 cm (sheet), Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. 2018.48.

around Annibale Carracci in about 1590-1600. A related interplay appears in the *Head of a Young Boy* of about 1603-1605 by Lodovico Cardi, called Cigoli (fig. 2), painted over a printed sheet whose Gothic lettering evokes German-speaking print culture. The unfamiliar letterforms may have held a particular fascination for the artist, who appears to have allowed them to remain visible beneath the ground. Here, as in *Rebus*, the visibility of an earlier layer seems to have become an additional source of aesthetic expression, although subsequent changes in the transparency of the paint may have heightened the effect.

The visual possibilities of this practice emerge with particular force in Peter Paul Rubens's *Head Study for Balthazar* at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, painted about 1609-1611 after his return from Italy (fig. 3). Executed on accounting paper, the study allows entries to remain visible through passages of the robe, face and turban. Their contribution to the work's present appearance is unmistakable, even if the precise degree of transparency intended by Rubens cannot be established. The mauve background partly conceals the document, while economical grey strokes suggest the body and clothing before giving way to the

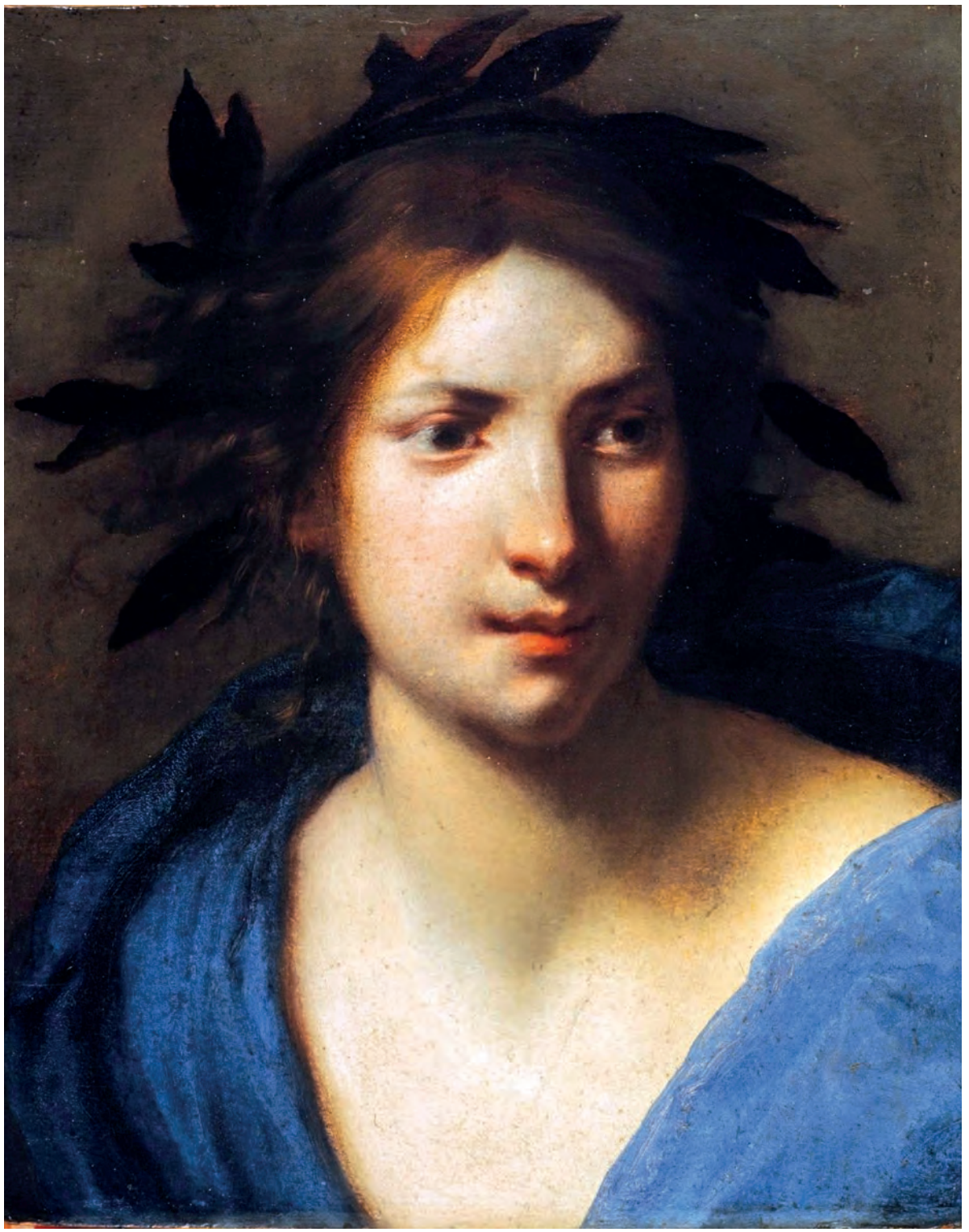


Fig. 4. Francesco Furini, *Personification of Poetry*, c. 1633, oil on paper laid on panel, 41.4 × 34.5 cm, Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland, inv. NG 31.

more fully realised face. This gradual emergence lends the image an unusual suggestiveness: the writing seems almost to yield its verbal content to a figure taking shape in paint.

Typology and function

Rudolf Wittkower's introduction to *Masters of the Loaded Brush*, published in 1967 and already mentioned above, provides an important point of departure for a preliminary classification of oil paintings on paper, drawing attention to their varied functions and the chronological and geographical breadth of their use. Although his enquiry encompassed oil paintings on a range of supports, his distinctions according to artistic intention and function offer a useful framework for considering the particular possibilities of paper.[11] His account offers a foundation for the more specific classification proposed here. These categories must remain flexible, since a single object might serve several purposes over time, while visually similar works could originate under quite different circumstances. They are intended to organise the material without assigning every work to an exclusive category.

An initial, necessarily empirical distinction concerns appearance. Oils on paper may display the sustained resolution of finished paintings or retain the exposed support, abbreviated forms and discontinuous colour associated with sketches. Such a judgement does not, in itself, establish function. A highly resolved work could be a collector's painting, a record of an existing composition or a model for a future one; abbreviated handling might equally characterise a working study or an autonomous object valued for that very quality. Particularly around Barocci and the Carracci, visible traces of invention became an aesthetic resource, while subsequent collecting and display further complicated the relationship between original purpose and eventual status.[12]

I. Finished works in oil on paper

Five types of finished work may be distinguished according to their relationship to a composition and its intended use. 'Finished' here denotes a work conceived as complete, without implying that every passage received the same degree of elaboration.

1. *Independent paintings*

The first category comprises works conceived from the outset as complete paintings, with a material presence and potential destination comparable to those of paintings on canvas or panel. In such cases, 'paintings executed in oil on paper' is perhaps a more useful description than 'oil sketches'. The choice of paper may have answered a particular pictorial intention, allowing the artist to exploit a prepared surface, the fluidity of the paint and the interplay of translucent and opaque passages.

Francesco Furini's *Personification of Poetry* in the National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh (fig. 4), offers a striking example. It presents itself as a fully resolved painting, its paper support only becoming apparent on close examination of the carefully developed surface. Paper may have been selected for its contribution to the smoothness and luminosity of the flesh, qualities central to Furini's pictorial language, and would thus have formed part of the conception of the finished image rather than an intermediate stage in its preparation. Although at first sight the work resembles a head study, apparently belonging to the most familiar category of oil on paper, the laurel leaves identify its subject as a personification of Poetry. It consequently operates on two levels: as a compelling study of character and as the embodiment of an allegorical theme. Something similar occurs in the two Bolognese heads presented in this catalogue, in which a key and a crown of vine leaves identify otherwise autonomous studies of character as Saint Peter (cat. 14) and a Satyr (cat. 15).

The same category includes a painting exceptional in its quality, early date and scale: the *Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Mary Magdalene* by Girolamo Francesco Maria Mazzola,



called Parmigianino, painted towards the end of his career, about 1535-1540, and now in the J. Paul Getty Museum (fig. 5). Its original function remains unknown, but its dimensions and unconventional treatment of a devotional subject suggest a private commission, perhaps intended for personal devotion or display in a small chapel. The support consists of several sheets of paper carefully laid down and smoothed onto a wooden panel. The painting's exceptional state of preservation allows the highly finished, almost enamel-like surface to be appreciated with unusual clarity, demonstrating the refinement that a painter of Parmigianino's ability could achieve on paper.

2. *Reduced copies and records of complete compositions*

A second category comprises copies or records of compositions by other artists, frequently on a reduced scale. Paper offered a convenient support for such undertakings: depending on its preparation, a relatively smooth surface could accommodate precise detail as well as fluid brushwork, translating a large composition into a small and readily handled object. The result might preserve information about the original, serve as a workshop reference or circulate independently as a collectible painting.

The *Janus and Saturn* in The Courtauld Gallery, London, a copy after Paolo Veronese generally dated to the middle of the eighteenth century, exemplifies the freedom with which a composition could be restated in this medium (fig. 6). Although its authorship and circumstances of production require further study, it records part of a ceiling painted for Palazzo Trevisan on Murano in the late 1550s, while retaining indications of the surrounding decoration.[13] Its abbreviated handling does not prevent it from forming a self-contained record: completeness here lies in the coherence of the compositional statement rather than in the elaboration of every detail.



Fig. 5. Girolamo Francesco Maria Mazzola, called Parmigianino, *Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Mary Magdalene*, c. 1535-1540, oil on paper laid on panel, 75.5 × 59.7 cm, Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum.

Fig. 6. Anonymous artist, after Paolo Veronese, *Janus and Saturn*, probably c. 1730-1770, oil on paper laid on canvas, 30.5 × 42.5 cm, London, The Courtauld Gallery (Samuel Courtauld Trust), inv. P.1966.GP.478.

The current poor condition of the fresco and its relatively secluded location invite the possibility that the copy was an artist's record, made on site to preserve a particularly admired invention. Oil on paper would have allowed colour to be noted rapidly and fluently, an advantage when copying a ceiling subject to the distortions imposed by an oblique viewpoint. Its function may therefore lie between study and recollection, much as in the more analytical, full-scale copy of a single head from a Veronese altarpiece discussed in this volume (cat. 5). These different approaches suggest how the support could accommodate both an overall impression and the close examination of an individual passage.[14]

The same flexibility made paper suitable for more exacting reductions. Its fine surface could support a minute rendering of a much larger original, while remaining responsive to the practical demands of transfer and reproduction. The copies associated with the Flemish artist David Teniers II and his workshop are especially instructive. His extensive work after the collection of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm generally took the form of small paintings on panel; within this production, the Courtauld's *Portrait of a Sculptor*, after Giovanni Battista Moroni, is distinguished by its paper support (fig. 7).

Executed about 1650-1656, the copy belongs to the project that culminated in the *Theatrum Pictorium* of 1660, a pioneering illustrated catalogue of a major collection. From holdings of more than 1,300 paintings, Teniers selected works, predominantly by Italian masters, for reproduction in 243 engravings, supplying painted reductions as models. The reversal of the sculptor's portrait in relation to Moroni's original, now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (fig. 8), may reflect its intended translation into print, allowing the engraved image to recover the original orientation. Paper lent itself to tracing, reversal and transfer, and the Courtauld work preserves indentations following the principal contours of the figure.



Fig. 7. Studio of David Teniers II, after Giovanni Battista Moroni, *Portrait of a Sculptor*, c. 1650-1656, oil on paper laid on panel, 16.5 × 11.5 cm, London, The Courtauld Gallery, inv. P.1978.PG.437.



Fig. 8. Giovanni Battista Moroni, *Portrait of the Sculptor Alessandro Vittoria*, c. 1552-1553, oil on canvas, 82.5 × 64.6 cm (original canvas), Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. GG 78.

Its material character thus served a practical purpose while retaining something of the softness and suppleness of Moroni's handling, lending an object conceived as a working tool qualities that could be appreciated in their own right. These qualities also allowed it to acquire a life as a collector's piece beyond its original function, a history of appreciation reflected in its present place in a museum collection.

3. *Repetitions of individual figures, heads and other details*
A third category comprises repetitions of selected passages from larger compositions, executed either by the original artist or by another hand. Heads occupy a particularly important place within this group. Detached from their narrative setting, they could become independent paintings while retaining a recognisable relationship to an established composition.

Barocci's production is especially significant in this respect. His painted heads on paper include preparatory studies as well as repetitions of successful inventions in an autonomous, finished form. The interpretation proposed here places a substantial part of this material in the latter category: autograph repetitions that gave admired heads a life beyond their original compositions.[15] Their purpose emerges most clearly from the relationship between the painted sheet, the surviving preparatory material and the completed painting, rather than from the support alone.

The retention of cartoons in the workshop facilitated such repetitions. An established contour could be transferred to a fresh sheet and developed anew in paint, preserving the essential configuration of the figure while allowing a different treatment of light, colour and expression. Paper's suitability for tracing and transfer thus helped connect the workshop's graphic resources with the production of independent painted images.[16]



Fig. 9. Federico Barocci, *Head of the Blessed Michelina*, oil on paper, Spoleto, Fondazione Marignoli di Montecorona.



Fig. 10. Federico Barocci and workshop, *The Blessed Michelina*, detail, 1606, oil on canvas, Collezione Alessandra Carini.

The *Head of the Blessed Michelina* in the Fondazione Marignoli di Montecorona, Spoleto, provides a compelling example (fig. 9). Closely corresponding to the saint's face in the altarpiece of about 1595, represented here by the later, partly autograph workshop repetition of 1606 (fig. 10), it possesses the coherence and resolution of an independent painting. Its significance lies in the renewal of an established image rather than the exploration of an unfinished invention: the head isolates the emotional and devotional focus of the larger composition, bringing it within the compass of more intimate viewing. A comparable process underlies the fine *Head of Saint John the Evangelist* discussed in the catalogue (cat. 10), interpreted here as an early seventeenth-century derivation from a detail of the altarpiece Federico Barocci painted for Senigallia between 1579 and 1582.

In the case of the Michelina, differences in the treatment of the veil and the lock of hair, present in the canvas but absent from the painted sheet, suggest that the latter may derive from a preparatory cartoon rather than directly from the finished painting. The preservation of cartoons made such repetitions possible even after an altarpiece had permanently left the studio, extending the devotional reach and commercial potential of the invention.[17]

4. *Finished portraits*

Finished portraiture probably represents one of the earliest and more impressive uses of oil on paper, with roots extending towards the end of the fifteenth century. Here the sheet supported an autonomous likeness, intended to possess the presence and completeness of a painting, regardless of the apparent modesty of its material.

Among the earliest and most accomplished examples is the *Portrait of a Man Reading*, generally attributed to Antonio Allegri, called Correggio, in the Pinacoteca del Castello Sforzesco, Milan (fig. 11). Traditionally known as the portrait with the *Petrarchino*, after the small book held by the sitter, generally identified as a volume of Petrarch's poetry, this oil on paper continues to invite investigation.[18] The sitter's dark costume and broad hat frame an absorbed expression, complemented by the small open book, while the wooded landscape introduces a quieter register of detail, including a deer. The sustained development of figure and setting gives the image the complexity of a fully conceived portrait, showing how readily paper could be integrated into ambitious portrait painting in early sixteenth-century northern Italy.

The work's earlier attribution to Parmigianino provides an occasion to consider two further portraits whose interpretation remains uncertain. The *Portrait of a Man with a Red Cap* in the Galleria Nazionale, Complesso Monumentale della Pilotta, Parma, was long regarded as a self-portrait by Parmigianino,



Fig. 11. Attributed to Antonio Allegri, called Correggio, *Portrait of a Man Reading (Petrarchino)*, early 1520s, oil on paper laid on canvas, Milan, Pinacoteca del Castello Sforzesco.



Fig. 12. Attributed to Michelangelo Anselmi , formerly attributed to Parmigianino, *Portrait of a Man with a Red Cap*, c. 1540, oil on paper, 21 × 15.5 cm, Parma, Galleria Nazionale, Complesso Monumentale della Pilotta.



Fig. 13. Anonymous Emilian artist, *Portrait of Federico Prati (?)*, first half of the sixteenth century, oil on paper laid on panel, 29 × 20 cm, Parma, Galleria Nazionale, Complesso Monumentale della Pilotta, inv. GN 797. Image digitally cleaned from old layers of varnish.

although its authorship is now less securely defined, with recent scholarship suggesting an attribution to Michelangelo Anselmi (fig. 12).[19] In the same collection, a similar anonymous portrait traditionally identified as the Parmesan man of letters Federico Prati is particularly suggestive (fig. 13). If the identification, based on an old inscription on the reverse, is correct, the sitter would be the jurist and poet who obtained his doctorate at Padua in 1534, a date broadly compatible with the proposed execution of this small but powerful portrait.[20] The expressive concentration of the face, substantial beard and briskly articulated white collar suggest a painter of considerable distinction. The background remains open, allowing the preparation to participate in the image, yet this selective finish may be understood as a deliberate feature of a completed likeness rather than a sign of incompleteness. An autonomous portrait could thus retain qualities conventionally associated with the *bozzetto*. Darkened varnish and local lifting of the paper from its wooden support also affect the work's present appearance and must be taken into account when assessing its handling.

Another exceptional example from the Emilian milieu is the *Portrait of a Woman* in the Galleria Borghese, Rome, generally attributed to Nicolò dell'Abate, although here the thin support



Fig. 14. Attributed to Nicolò dell'Abate, *Portrait of a Woman*, mid-sixteenth century, oil on parchment laid on canvas, 48 × 37 cm, Rome, Galleria Borghese, inv. 077.



Fig. 15. Lorenzo Lotto, *Portrait of a Man with a Felt Hat*, c. 1541, oil on paper, subsequently mounted on paperboard and canvas, 57.8 × 46.5 cm, Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, inv. 39708.

is parchment, subsequently laid on canvas, rather than paper (fig. 14). The Dossesque affinities recognised in the portrait offer a valuable, if provisional, comparison with the head published in this catalogue (cat. 3), which is closely related to a securely attributed work by Dosso Dossi.[21] Considered together, these works suggest the ease with which painters in the Po Valley moved between paper and parchment in creating finished images of considerable refinement.

Moving from Emilia to Venice and its connections with northern Europe, Lorenzo Lotto's *Portrait of a Man with a Felt Hat*, painted about 1541 and now in the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, stands among the most accomplished Italian examples (fig. 15). Lotto is also one of the early Italian artists whose use of paper for oil painting is documented.[22] The Ottawa portrait invites close comparison with the exceptional study by Francesco Salviati published here (cat. 1), in which a hat similarly distinguishes the sitter's attire, echoing a feature shared by the three portraits illustrated above. These works place Italian portraiture on paper within a wider dialogue with northern European traditions of fully developed likenesses on the same support, helping to situate its emergence in northern Italy during the first half of the sixteenth century.



Fig. 16. Hans Holbein the Younger, *Benedikt von Hertenstein*, 1517, oil and gold on paper laid on wood, 52.4 × 38.1 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, aided by subscribers, 1906, inv. 06.1038.

The tradition of portraiture on paper extended beyond Italy and embraced different formats. In the Low Countries, the portraits of Jan van Egmond and Magdalena van Waardenburg in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, dating from after about 1510, offer particularly early examples.[23] Their small dimensions may have favoured the choice of paper, which accommodated a concentrated rendering of features and costume. More imposing in both scale and degree of finish is Hans Holbein the Younger's *Benedikt von Hertenstein*, painted in 1517 and now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (fig. 16). Its assured execution and precious additions of gold demonstrate how fully a portrait on paper could assume the visual authority of an independent painting. A carefully prepared paper surface could also lend itself to effects of transparency and translucency closely aligned with the aesthetic interests of artists such as Hans Holbein the Younger and Lorenzo Lotto. Although rooted in different artistic and geographical traditions, the portraits in Ottawa and New York reveal how both painters exploited the smoothness of their supports to evoke the richness of hair, fabrics and ornaments, while expressive cast shadows give the half-length figures a compelling sense of presence. A comparable ambition informs the near-contemporary portrait on paper or parchment by the German painter Hans Maler discussed in this catalogue (cat. 2), whose more fluid and vibrant handling of paint distinguishes it from its counterpart on panel.

5. *Finished compositional 'modelli'*

Finished compositional *modelli* present an invention in a developed form while relating to another painting, whether surviving, lost or never executed. As Wittkower recognised, a model for a patron, an autograph variant and a later *ricordo* may share the same visual characteristics, making their precise function difficult to establish from appearance alone.[24] The criterion adopted here is authorship by the artist responsible for the principal composition, while allowing the sequence and purpose of the works to remain open to investigation.



Fig. 17. Bartolomeo Schedoni, *The Last Supper*, oil on paper laid on canvas, 23.7 × 36.8 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1961, inv. 61.27.

Bartolomeo Schedoni's *Last Supper* in The Metropolitan Museum of Art may provisionally be included in this group (fig. 17). Its developed composition makes it a plausible example of a finished *modello*, although its precise purpose and relationship to a larger undertaking remain to be established. It therefore illustrates the value of retaining a category for autograph compositional paintings on paper whose function cannot yet be defined more narrowly.

II. Works retaining the character of a sketch

Works retaining a sketch-like appearance can be grouped by their subjects and working procedures. The six categories below overlap: a study might originate in observation or copying, contribute to a painting and later become a collector's object. Abbreviation and exposed paper are therefore considered expressive and material features rather than automatic evidence of an unfinished state.

1. *Drapery studies*

The study of drapery occupied an enduring place in artistic training and workshop practice, allowing artists to investigate the relationship between the body and its covering while exploring the capacity of light and shade to describe volume.[25]

Oil on paper contributed to this tradition by allowing folds to be developed through fluid transitions between illuminated surfaces and recessed shadows. An early example is Lorenzo di Credi's study in the Musée du Louvre, Paris, associated with the figure of Saint Bartholomew in his painting for Orsanmichele, Florence (fig. 18). Its predominantly monochrome handling transforms the drapery into an investigation of weight, movement and reflected light while preserving the freedom of a working study. The combination of chalk, gouache and oil also illustrates the technical complexity of these early experiments, which resist an overly narrow distinction between drawing and painting.

Such studies naturally invite comparison with Leonardo da Vinci's celebrated draperies on fine linen. Although these fall outside the category of oil on paper, they belong to a closely related exploration of how a delicate support and brush-applied colour could unite pictorial modelling with the precision of drawing.[26]

2. *Studies of the nude and anatomical details*

Studies of the nude and anatomical details form a less numerous group closely related to drawing. Often monochrome or restricted in palette, they investigate the articulation of the body, the distribution of weight and the passage of light across muscular forms, with the brush establishing these relationships through tonal masses as well as contours.

Both the study of a male nude associated with Jacopo Tintoretto (cat. 6) and the much later study of a kneeling figure by Giovanni Maria Viani (cat. 26) belong to this broad category, illustrating its continuity across successive generations. Their concentration on the body demonstrates how oil on paper could participate in analytical practices more commonly associated with chalk, pen or wash, bringing painterly handling to the study of form. Particularly when employed in grisaille, the medium offered an expressive means of articulating musculature through the interplay of light and shadow.



Fig. 18. Lorenzo di Credi, *Drapery Study for Saint Bartholomew*, probably c. 1490–95, grey and white gouache, black and red chalk, and oil on paper prepared with a brownish-yellow ground, 38.9 × 27 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, inv. 1791 recto.

3. *Studies of heads and character*

Studies of heads constitute one of the most extensive and distinctive groups of oils on paper. Particularly associated with Federico Barocci, the Carracci and their followers, they also occur throughout Italian painting. Their purpose differs from that of the finished portrait. Even when based on an identifiable sitter, they need not seek to preserve that person's identity for posterity: the artist's interest may instead lie in an expression, a turn of the head, an effect of illumination or a particular combination of age and physiognomy.

This distinction concerns intention rather than the presence or absence of a living model. A head studied from life could become an independent exercise, a reusable workshop resource or a figure in a larger composition. Its abbreviated execution often concentrates attention on precisely those features that attracted the artist, leaving the surrounding paper exposed and secondary passages unresolved. Within the Carracci's practice, such sheets belonged to a sustained engagement with observation and artistic training; their subsequent collection and display demonstrate how readily they could acquire an autonomous value.[27]

Giacomo Cavedone's *Head of a Bearded Man*, identified as Nicodemus, in The Metropolitan Museum of Art provides a particularly compelling example (fig. 19). Its accepted attribution offers a useful point of reference within a field in which individual authorship is often difficult to establish, since the freedom of execution that gives these works their expressive force can also obscure the habitual features upon which attribution depends.[28] The head belongs to a wider surviving group: a bearded old man in profile in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, dated after 1630, closely resembles an oil study on paper in the Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna. Both recall a physiognomic type that recurs in Cavedone's paintings, including the *Adoration of the Magi* of 1614 in San Paolo Maggiore, Bologna.[29]

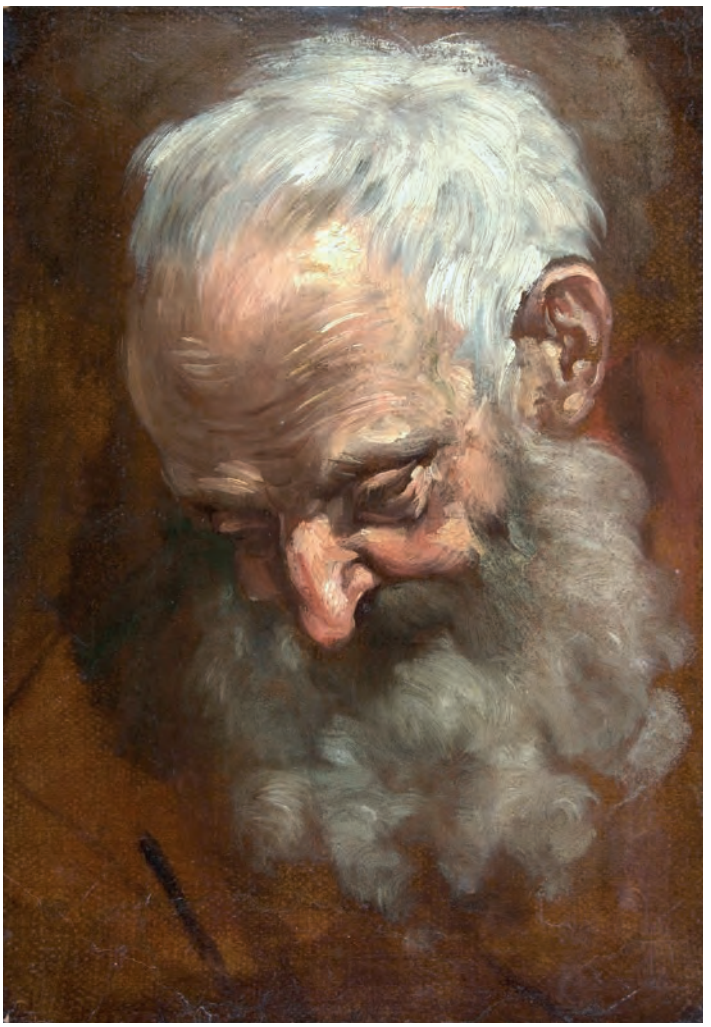


Fig. 19. Giacomo Cavedone, *Head of a Bearded Man (Nicodemus)*, oil on paper, 39.5 × 28.2 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Kate Ganz Dorment, in memory of Victor W. Ganz, 1988, inv. 1988.140.

Such repetitions complicate a straightforward division between study and finished work. The Bologna head has been interpreted as a derivation from an existing painting, whereas the related Hermitage sheet has been accepted as autograph on grounds of quality. Other examples may reflect Cavedone's later repetition of successful types or the teaching practices of his studio; oils and drawings in wash could subsequently be mounted and framed as paintings. This varied production places the independent head at the intersection of observation, workshop transmission and collecting, extending the culture of reusable studies established around the Carracci.[30]

Within this broad category, a smaller number of surviving heads can be connected directly with the preparation of a particular painting. Federico Barocci's study of Saint Jude Thaddeus, now in the Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome, is preparatory for the *Madonna di San Simone*, painted in 1566-1567 for the church of San Francesco in Urbino, now in the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche.[31] Its rapid handling and revisions support its interpretation as a working study, recording the development of the figure rather than merely repeating a completed invention.

Another securely connected example, particularly valuable for tracing the use of oil on paper in Tuscany, is Ludovico Cigoli's *Head of a Youth* in The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (fig. 20), a study for the angel in *Heraclius Carrying the Cross into Jerusalem*, painted in 1594 for San Marco in Florence. The commission also generated an initial compositional sketch, a squared design and studies of individual figures, placing the painted head within a developed sequence of preparation.[32] Its loaded brushwork and concentrated exploration of colour and illumination relate it to the studies of Federico Barocci and Annibale Carracci, while remaining unusual in contemporary Florentine practice. The sheet shows how a freely painted head could serve a precise compositional purpose without losing the immediacy of an independent study.

A direct relationship with a finished painting does not, however, establish the direction of dependence in every case. As Barocci's production demonstrates, a head might precede a composition or reproduce one of its successful details afterwards. Preparatory studies and subsequent repetitions could share both their subject and much of their technique, making the distinction dependent upon close examination of the individual object.[33]

These *arie di teste*, to adopt the Vasarian expression used in the title of this volume, also invite consideration within a wider European history, particularly in relation to the development of the northern *tronie*. The circulation of Italian head studies through artists, dealers and collectors may have contributed to the emergence of this genre in the Netherlands. In this respect, the oils on paper of Federico Barocci, the Carracci and their contemporaries offer a possible strand in the history of the independent study of character later developed so extensively by Rembrandt van Rijn, Frans Hals and other northern painters.[34]

4. *Studies of animals, natural details and landscape*

Studies of animals, natural details and landscape form a varied group defined principally by subject matter. Some reproduce passages from existing compositions; others arise from direct observation. In either case, oil enabled the artist to record form and colour together, rendering the markings of an animal, the texture of its coat or the atmospheric character of a landscape through economical applications of the brush.

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione's studies of camels' heads in The Courtauld Gallery (fig. 21) exemplify this conjunction of observation and painterly freedom. The repeated exploration of a distinctive animal subject could supply motifs for later compositions while also providing an occasion to investigate the expressive possibilities of the medium.

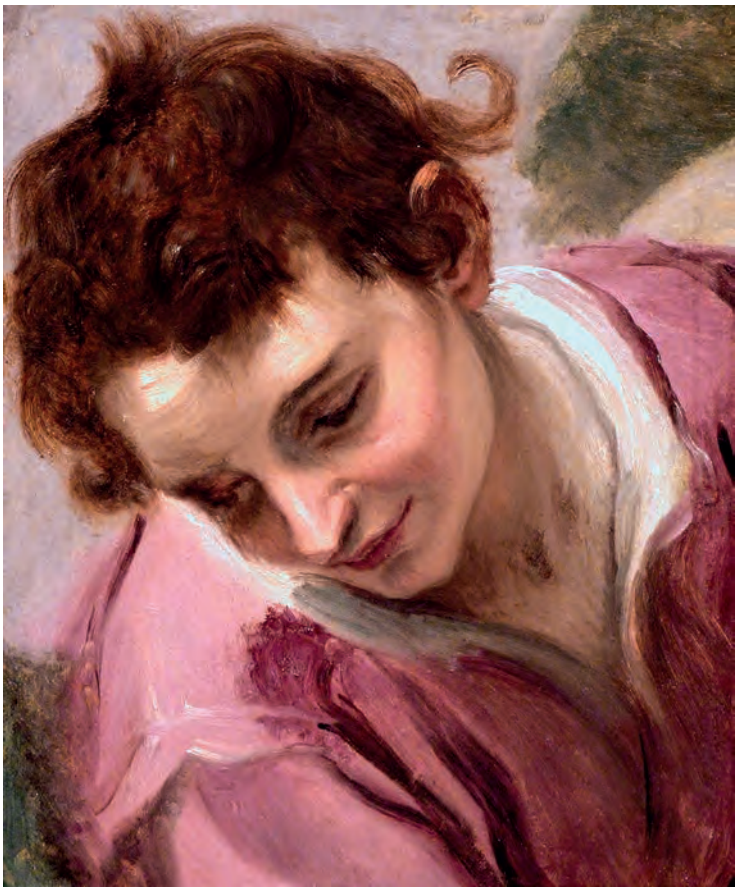


Fig. 20. Lodovico Cardi, called Cigoli, *Study of the Head and Bust of a Youth Looking to the Lower Left*, 1594, oil on paper laid on canvas, 44.3 × 36.4 cm, Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam Museum, inv. PD.10-1983.

Fig. 21. Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, *Five Studies of a Camel's Head*, oil paint on laid paper, 26.4 × 38 cm, London, The Courtauld Gallery, inv. D.1952.RW.1959.





Fig. 22. Attributed to Adriaen van de Velde, *Cat Lying with Its Head between Its Forepaws*, 1646-1672, oil on paper, varnished, 8.6 × 13.2 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. RP-T-1967-95.

Fig. 23. Anton Mauve, *The Studio of the Haarlem Painter Pieter Frederik van Os*, c. 1856-1857, oil on paper laid on canvas, 49 × 61 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. SK-A-2436.



Comparable interests extended beyond Italy. The five studies of a black-and-white cat attributed to Adriaen van de Velde in the Rijksmuseum, one of which is illustrated here (fig. 22), capture the animal in different positions, combining its changing silhouette with the disposition of its markings. Jacob van der Does the Elder's studies of sheep's heads in the same collection similarly show how repeated attention to a single subject could generate a repertory of varied and usable forms.[35]

The value of these studies lay partly in their continued availability within the studio, where an observation made on one occasion might inform a later composition. Anton Mauve's mid-nineteenth-century depiction of the studio of Pieter Frederik van Os offers a revealing glimpse of this working environment (fig. 23). Studies of the nude, a landscape and a coloured study of a goat appear on the wall among other studio objects, forming an ensemble in which exercises, observations and independent images coexist. Although the support of the animal study cannot be securely identified, its display suggests that such works remained accessible as references while also being appreciated for their execution. Mauve's representation of the interior was itself painted in oil on paper, subsequently mounted on canvas.

In landscape, a particularly early example is the recently published sheet by Federico Barocci in the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino, executed in oil and tempera on paper (fig. 24).



Fig. 24. Federico Barocci, *Landscape*, oil and tempera on paper laid on a secondary support, 25.6 × 38 cm, Urbino, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, inv. DIS 231 recto.

Its fluid, atmospheric handling brings together recognisable features of Urbino and ideal architectural forms. As has been suggested, it may have been executed partly from life, combining direct observation with imaginative elaboration and showing how the study of nature could generate material to be transformed within the artist's practice.[36] The sheet acquires further significance in the light of Barocci's posthumous studio inventory, which recorded twenty-eight papers coloured in oil depicting landscapes, fruit, animals and other subjects, alongside numerous landscape drawings. Its survival therefore points towards a broader practice now represented by very few identifiable objects.[37]

5. *Compositional sketches*
Loosely executed studies for entire compositions overlap with the finished preparatory *modelli* discussed above, but differ in their degree of resolution. They explore the interaction of the whole – the arrangement of figures, movement through the scene and distribution of light and colour – while individual passages may remain provisional. Free handling need not indicate a first idea, since a painted study could follow drawings and develop an already considered structure. Its appearance records an open pictorial enquiry without necessarily fixing its position within the preparatory sequence.

The studies of Domenico Tintoretto and Jacopo Palma il Giovane demonstrate the importance of these procedures in Venice from the later sixteenth century. Venetian practice accommodated a spectrum of painted studies, from tentative explorations to comparatively resolved models, for which oil on paper offered a flexible means of developing an arrangement through tonal masses and coloured passages.[38] Palma's *Christ Carried to the Tomb* in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, exemplifies this approach (fig. 25). Executed in oil over black chalk, it develops the composition through the relationships between the figures and the movement of their bodies while preserving the exploratory character of a work on paper. The sheet thus occupies an intermediate stage between the graphic organisation of the scene and its fuller articulation in paint.

6. *Drawings with additions in oil*
The final category comprises sheets in which oil interacts with an underlying or visibly operative graphic structure. Chalk, pen, wash or white heightening may establish the composition, while oil introduces colour, strengthens the lighting or gives greater substance to selected passages. Its contribution can range from a few local accents to a dominant role in the construction of the image.

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione's work is central to this practice. His combinations of graphic and painterly procedures preserve the economy of drawing while exploiting the chromatic and material possibilities of paint. The coexistence of these elements is integral to the resulting effect, rather than simply a sequence of stages leading towards an evenly finished surface.[39] The work by Castiglione discussed in the present volume (cat. 24) belongs within this broader enquiry into the interaction of media.

Conclusions
The examples considered here, selected from works that are comparatively well known or have received sustained study, represent only the beginning of a broader enquiry into the functions, meanings and extensive use of oil on paper across the Italian schools between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The map based on the works discussed in this essay and assembled in the accompanying list (fig. 26, see Appendix) helps to visualise the geographical reach of a practice whose significance has been obscured by the dispersal of its surviving objects and the different terms under which they have been classified. Far from being confined to preparatory sketches or to a handful of major artists, oil on paper emerges as a remarkably widespread and adaptable technique within



Italian draughtsmanship and painting. Further examination of its material structures, original purposes and subsequent histories should bring this diversity into sharper focus, allowing individual works to be understood both within the artist's practice and within the changing circumstances of their preservation and appreciation.

Fig. 25. Jacopo Palma il Giovane, *Christ Carried to the Tomb*, 1607-1620, brush and oil paint over black chalk on tan oatmeal paper, 27 × 40.9 cm, Washington, National Gallery of Art, Wolfgang Ratjen Collection, Purchased as the Gift of Helen Porter and James T. Dyke, inv. 2007.111.140.


Como
Carlo Innocenzo Carlone
(Scaria, 1686 – Scaria, 1775)
Milan
Giulio Cesare Procaccini
(Bologna, 1574 – Milan, 1625)
Carlo Francesco Nuvolone
(Milan, 1609 – Milan, 1662)
Bergamo
Lorenzo Lotto
(Venice, c. 1480 – Loreto, 1556/57)
Verona
Paolo Farinati
(Verona, 1524 – Verona, 1606)
Felice Brusasorci
(Verona, c. 1539 – Verona, 1605)
Marcantonio Bassetti
(Verona, 1586 – Verona, 1630)
Ferrara
Dosso Dossi
(Mirandola, c. 1486 – Ferrara, 1542)
Ippolito Scarsella
(Ferrara, c. 1550 – Ferrara, 1620)
San Vito al Tagliamento
Pomponio Amalteo
(Motta di Livenza, 1505 – San Vito al Tagliamento, 1588)
Genoa
Cesare Corte
(Genoa, 1550 – Genoa, 1613/14)
Bernardo Strozzi
(Genoa, 1581 – Venice, 1644)
Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione
(Genoa, 1609 – Mantua, 1664)
Francesco Narici
(Genoa, c. 1719 – Genoa, 1785)
Parma
Correggio
(Correggio, c. 1489 – Correggio, 1534)
Parmigianino
(Parma, 1503 – Casalmaggiore, 1540)
Bartolomeo Schedoni
(Modena, 1578 – Parma, 1615)
Venice
Jacopo Tintoretto
(Venice, 1518/19 – Venice, 1594)
Paolo Veronese
(Verona, 1528 – Venice, 1588)
Jacopo Palma il Giovane
(Venice, c. 1548 – Venice, 1628)
Domenico Tintoretto
(Venice, 1560 – Venice, 1635)
Tiberio Tinelli
(Venice, 1586 – Venice, 1638)
Giovanni Battista Pittoni the Younger
(Venice, 1687 – Venice, 1767)
Modena
Nicolò dell'Abate
(Modena, c. 1509 – Fontainebleau, 1571)
Urbino
Federico Barocci
(Urbino, c. 1535 – Urbino, 1612)
Claudio Ridolfi
(Verona, 1570 – Corinaldo, 1644)
Pisa
Aurelio Lomi
(Pisa, 1556 – Pisa, 1622)
Florence
Lorenzo di Credi
(Florence, c. 1459 – Florence, 1537)
Giacomo Coppi
(Peretola, 1523 – Florence, 1591)
Giovanni Battista Naldini
(Florence, 1535 – Florence, 1591)
Domenico Cresti
(Passignano, 1559 – Florence, 1638)
Lodovico Cigoli
(Cigoli, 1559 – Rome, 1613)
Francesco Curradi
(Florence, 1570 – Florence, 1661)
Cristofano Allori
(Florence, 1577 – Florence, 1621)
Matteo Rosselli
(Florence, 1578 – Florence, 1650)
Sigismondo Coccapani
(Florence, 1583 – Florence, 1642)
Giovanni Bilivert
(Florence, 1585 – Florence, 1644)
Jacopo Vignali
(Pratovecchio, 1592 – Florence, 1664)
Francesco Furini
(Florence, 1603 – Florence, 1646)
Giorgio Vasari
(Arezzo, 1511 – Florence, 1574)
Siena
Domenico Beccafumi
(Montaperti, c. 1486 – Siena, 1551)
Alessandro Casolani
(Mensano, 1552/53 – Siena, 1607)
Pietro Sorri
(San Gusmè, c. 1556 – Siena, 1622)
Francesco Vanni
(Siena, 1563 – Siena, 1610)
Ventura Salimbeni
(Siena, 1568 – Siena, 1613)
Rutilio di Lorenzo Manetti
(Siena, 1571 – Siena, 1639)
Domenico Manetti
(Siena, 1609 – Siena, 1663)
Bologna
Amico Aspertini
(Bologna, 1474/75 – Bologna, 1552)
Bartolomeo Passarotti
(Bologna, 1529 – Bologna, 1592)
Lodovico Carracci
(Bologna, 1555 – Bologna, 1619)
Agostino Carracci
(Bologna, 1557 – Parma, 1602)
Annibale Carracci
(Bologna, 1560 – Rome, 1609)
Pietro Faccini
(Bologna, c. 1562 – Bologna, 1602)
Giovanni Andrea Donducci
(Bologna, 1575 – Bologna, 1655)
Giacomo Cavedone
(Sassuolo, 1577 – Bologna, 1660)
Lorenzo Pasinelli
(Bologna, 1629 – Bologna, 1700)
Giovanni Maria Viani
(Bologna, 1636 – Bologna, 1700)
Rome
Francesco Salviati
(Florence, 1510 – Rome, 1563)
Girolamo Muziano
(Brescia, 1532 – Rome, 1592)
Cristoforo Roncalli
(Pomarance, c. 1553 – Rome, 1626)
Giovanni Baglione
(Rome, c. 1566 – Rome, 1643)
Pietro Paolo Bonzi
(Cortona, c. 1576 – Rome, 1636)
Pier Francesco Mola
(Coldrerio, 1612 – Rome, 1666)
Naples
Giovanni Battista Caracciolo
(Naples, 1578 – Naples, 1635)
Messina
Polidoro da Caravaggio
(Caravaggio, c. 1499 – Messina, c. 1543)

Fig. 26. Principal centres of activity of Italian artists known or reported to have worked in oil on paper, from the late fifteenth to the eighteenth century. Names are grouped by a principal centre of activity; places and dates of birth and death are given in parentheses.

NOTES

1. For the identification of graphic techniques and supports discussed here, see James 2010.
2. Banou et al. 2022, pp. 120-134.
3. Saywell 1998, pp. 34-35.
4. Barry 2017, pp. 33-34.
5. Sanminiatelli 1955, pp. 35-36, especially p. 35, n. 1.
6. Saywell 1998, p. 21, n. 14, and p. 34.
7. Saywell 1998, pp. 10-11, 34-36. For the broader technical framework, see James 2010.
8. Limb 2022, pp. 292-293, 297-302.
9. Robertson 1997, pp. 20-23, and p. 40, nn. 86-92.
10. On Rauschenberg's early use of collage, see Hopps 1991, pp. 31-32, 55; Allen 2018, unpaginated.
11. Wittkower 1967, pp. xx-xxiii.
12. Limb 2022, pp. 287-302.
13. Rearick 1988, pp. 54-55, cat. 18.
14. A further example, Venetian in its source but northern in execution, is the reduced *Diana and Actaeon* after Titian attributed to Frans Wouters. Paper may have helped the copyist retain something of the fluidity and softness of the original in a smaller format. Attributed to Frans Wouters, after Titian, *Diana and Actaeon*, c. 1630-1640, oil on paper laid on panel, 38.4 × 39.4 cm, Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland, inv. NG 2875.
15. Pillsbury 1978, pp. 170-173; Prytz 2011, pp. 653-656.
16. Prytz 2011, p. 656.
17. For the preservation and reuse of Barocci's cartoons, with specific connection to the repetition of heads, see Baroni 2022, pp. 303-310.
18. Ekserdjian 1997, p. 166.
19. Fornari Schianchi and Ferino-Pagden 2003, pp. 230-231, with earlier bibliography. The portrait's traditional attribution to Girolamo Mazzola Bedoli invites comparison with another work associated with the artist in the same collection: the *Nativity with the Infant Saint John and Angels*, oil on paper laid on canvas, 45 × 36 cm, Parma, Galleria Nazionale, Complesso Monumentale della Pilotta, inv. GN 38. Its relationship to Bedoli's work is supported by a corresponding composition in the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice. Both Parma paintings entered the collection with the Dalla Rosa Prati acquisition in 1851. On the *Nativity* as a copy after Bedoli, see Di Giampaolo 1998, online catalogue entry, unpaginated.
20. Giusto 1998, online catalogue entry, unpaginated. The inscription on the reverse, '55 – Federico Prati', corresponds to the numbering of the Dalla Rosa Prati inventory of 1832.
21. Iommelli 2022a, unpaginated.
22. Wivel 2019, pp. 307-323; Wivel 2022, pp. 45-55; Weston-Lewis 2005, pp. 674-675.
23. Anonymous artist, *Portrait of Jan van Egmond*, after c. 1510, oil on paper laid on panel, 19.5 × 13.5 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. SK-A-1547; anonymous artist, *Portrait of Magdalena van Waardenburg*, after c. 1510, oil on paper laid on panel, 18 × 14 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. SK-A-1548.
24. Wittkower 1967, pp. xx-xxii.
25. The exceptional continuity and variety of this enquiry were demonstrated by the exhibition *Drapé*, organised by Éric Pagliano and Sylvie Ramond at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Lyon in 2019-2020: Pagliano and Ramond 2019.
26. Viatte 1989.
27. Limb 2022, pp. 287-302; Robertson 1997, pp. 20-23, and p. 40, n. 92.
28. Phillips 2018, p. 325, and p. 333, n. 43.
29. Phillips 2018, pp. 324-325, and p. 333, nn. 40-44. Giacomo Cavedone, *Head of a Bearded Old Man in Profile*, oil on paper, 34.6 × 26.9 cm, St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, inv. OR 1808; *Head of a Bearded Old Man in Profile*, oil on paper laid on canvas, 38 × 31.5 cm, Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna, inv. 868.
30. Phillips 2018, p. 325, and p. 333, nn. 34, 43-44. For the wider Carracci context of observation, reusable studies and small paintings on paper, see Robertson 1997, pp. 20–23, and p. 40, n. 92.
31. Federico Barocci, *Head of a Young Man (Saint Jude Thaddeus)*, Rome, Galleria Doria Pamphilj, inv. FC 247; Gallo and Ambrosini Massari 2024, cat. IV.1.
32. Chappell 1989, p. 198, and p. 211, nn. 18–21, pl. 6. Lodovico Cardi, called Cigoli, *Head of a Youth*, 1594, oil on paper laid on canvas, 44.3 × 36.4 cm, Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam Museum, inv. PD.10-1983.
33. Pillsbury 1978, pp. 170-173; Prytz 2011, pp. 653-656.
34. Van Hout, Marx and Bulckens 2023.
35. Jacob van der Does the Elder, *Five Studies of the Head of a Sheep*, oil on paper, with framing lines in black chalk, 17.4 × 25.9 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. RP-T-1885-A-550(R); Stefes 2018, online catalogue entry, unpaginated.
36. Baroni 2024a, p. 186; Gallo 2024, pp. 180-181; Gallo and Ambrosini Massari 2024, p. 191.
37. Baroni 2024a, pp. 115-197.
38. Freeman Bauer 1975, pp. 173-176.
39. Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, *A Family of Shepherds*, late 1640s, brush and coloured oil paint over traces of black chalk, 35.2 × 48.7 cm, Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. 2000.38; J. Paul Getty Museum 2008, p. 3, no. 12.



III.

Material Experiments and Fifteenth Century Precedents

Although the earliest securely identified examples of oil painting on paper belong to the later fifteenth century, and the practice expanded markedly in the early sixteenth, painting on flexible or semi-flexible supports had a much longer history. Oil on paper emerged within an established culture of material experimentation, as the growing availability and refinement of European paper coincided with increasingly sophisticated uses of oil as a binding medium. Its early history is therefore best approached through the relationships between supports, pictorial effects and workshop procedures, particularly those concerned with the representation of the human face.[1]

Flexible supports and the painted likeness

Medieval illuminators were accustomed to applying pigments, binding media and metal leaf to parchment, while paper gradually entered a related sphere of artistic production. Thin metallic sheets and foils likewise served particular pictorial purposes. By the later fifteenth century, artists could thus draw upon a repertoire of flexible supports whose differences in texture, absorbency and handling offered opportunities for experiment. The adoption of paper for oil painting belongs within this broader material history.[2]

A substantial proportion of the surviving oil paintings on paper consists of studies of heads, or *arie di teste*, to borrow an expression that recurs throughout Giorgio Vasari's *Vite*: recognisable portraits in some instances, character studies in others, valued as individual images or retained for adaptation in larger compositions.[3] Their prominence may partly reflect

Fig. 1. Federico Barocci, *The Pardon of Assisi*, 1571-1576, oil on canvas with a paper insert, 427 × 236 cm, Urbino, church of San Francesco, high altar. Detail of the head of Saint Francis, painted on paper attached to the canvas.



the practical advantages of the medium. Depending on its preparation, paper could accommodate fluid brushwork and successive adjustments in oil, allowing likeness, modelling and colour to develop together. Such properties made it particularly suitable for work from life and may also have reduced the demands of a prolonged sitting.

The appearance of the painted surface offers a further consideration. The texture and, in some circumstances, translucency of prepared paper could contribute to the luminosity and animation of painted flesh. An affinity between the fine irregularities of the support and the appearance of skin may help to explain its appeal to portrait painters, although the effect necessarily depended on the preparation and thickness of the paint. This possibility invites close comparison and technical examination, rather than implying a property shared equally by every oil painting on paper.

The two versions of a male portrait by Hans Maler discussed in this volume (cat. 2), on panel and apparently parchment respectively, offer one opportunity to consider the visual consequences of a change of support.[4] Such questions extend beyond the independent likeness to the representation of the face within a larger composition. Federico Barocci's practice is particularly revealing in this respect, for his sensitivity to the possibilities of paper could inform the material construction of the finished painting itself.

In *The Pardon of Assisi*, painted in the 1570s for the church of San Francesco, Urbino, the head of Saint Francis, arguably the emotional centre of the composition, was executed on a separate piece of paper attached to the canvas (fig. 1).[5] This unusual procedure was not unique within Barocci's work: a comparable paper insert carries the female donor's portrait at the foot of the *Madonna di San Simone*, of c. 1567, now in the



Fig. 2. Rogier van der Weyden and workshop, *The Seven Sacraments Altarpiece*, c. 1440-1450, oil on panel with metallic foil inserts, Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen, inv. 393-395. Detail of the Baptism scene in the left wing, showing three male faces painted on separate metallic foils, whose edges and more pronounced surface deterioration remain visible.

Fig. 3. Hans Memling, *The Last Judgement*, c. 1467-1473, oil on oak panel, central panel 220.9 × 160.7 cm; wings 223.5 × 72.5 cm each, Gdańsk, Muzeum Narodowe w Gdańsku, inv. MNG/SD/413/M.

Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino.[6] In *The Pardon of Assisi*, the resulting difference in the structure of the painted surface may contribute to the exceptional vividness of the saint's face as the light changes.

The reasons for this choice remain open to interpretation. An explanation in terms of a last-minute correction seems less persuasive, given the scope that oil painting offered for revising or repainting a passage. It is worth considering instead whether Barocci deliberately exploited the paper to suggest translucency and movement in the saint's face. By this stage in his career, his command of drawing and his experiments with etching, pastel and oil on paper had given him an unusually intimate understanding of the medium's possibilities. Even within the altered setting of San Francesco, whose medieval interior was remodelled in the eighteenth century, the changing incidence of light lends the face a striking animation. The effect recalls, in its intention, the interplay of painted colour, raised stucco and reflective glass and metal in the early fifteenth-century frescoes by Lorenzo Salimbeni and Jacopo Salimbeni in the nearby Oratorio di San Giovanni Battista, Urbino.[7] There, too, the different ways in which materials respond to daylight or candlelight help to animate the painted surface – a legacy of medieval or early Renaissance origins that finds a surprising resonance with the demands and artistic practices of Italian painting during the Counter-Reformation.

Separately painted heads in Netherlandish altarpieces

The insertion of a separately painted head into a larger composition had significant fifteenth-century precedents in the southern Netherlands, where thin metallic foils could carry faces subsequently attached to wooden panels. These works reveal how an apparently continuous painted surface might be assembled or modified through independently produced elements.

They provide an important precedent for the separate execution and insertion of a likeness and, more broadly, for the independent oil study of a head, even where the support itself was metallic rather than paper.

One of the earliest and most instructive examples is Rogier van der Weyden's *Seven Sacraments Altarpiece*, painted with workshop participation around 1440-1450 and now in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen, Antwerp. Examination during the restoration of 2006-2009 established that several highly individualised heads were painted on small pieces of metallic foil, attached to the panels and integrated into the surrounding surface. These inserts belong to the original production of the altarpiece and can now be distinguished relatively easily with the naked eye, owing to the more pronounced deterioration of the painted faces and the visible edges of the metallic foils (fig. 2).[8]

The concentration of such interventions in faces with markedly individual features suggests a connection with the practical demands of portraiture. The architectural setting and narrative structure could advance in the workshop while particular likenesses were supplied separately, perhaps according to the availability of their sitters. Although no surviving document confirms this procedure, it offers a plausible account of how the production of a monumental religious image could accommodate portraits made under different circumstances.[9]

A more specific alteration occurs in Hans Memling's *Last Judgement*, painted in Bruges in the late 1460s or early 1470s for the Florentine banker Angelo Tani and intended for his chapel at the Badia Fiesolana in Fiesole (fig. 3). Seized during transport, the triptych eventually reached Gdańsk (Poland), where it is preserved in the Muzeum Narodowe w Gdańsku. The face of the saved soul in Saint Michael's scales, generally



Fig. 4. Hans Memling, *The Last Judgement*, c. 1467-1473, oil on oak panel with a metallic foil insert, Gdańsk, Muzeum Narodowe w Gdańsku, inv. MNG/SD/413/M. Detail of the saved soul in Saint Michael's scales, generally identified as Tommaso Portinari.



Fig. 5. Hans Memling, *The Last Judgement*, c. 1467-1473, Gdańsk, Muzeum Narodowe w Gdańsku, inv. MNG/SD/413/M. Infrared reflectogram of the head of the saved soul in Saint Michael's scales, showing the separately painted insert in relation to the underlying features.

identified as the banker Tommaso Portinari, was painted on a separate foil and attached over an existing head (fig. 4). Infrared reflectography makes the insert particularly legible in relation to the underlying drawn and painted features (fig. 5), showing how it enabled a change within a composition already under way. Portinari had succeeded Tani as manager of the Bruges branch of the Medici bank, and the addition has been discussed in relation to the two men's dealings. While its circumstances remain debated, the material evidence shows that a sitter's likeness could be treated as a discrete pictorial element.[10]

Portinari, whose long association with Bruges extended over more than forty years, also commissioned Hugo van der Goes's *Portinari Altarpiece*, which arrived in Florence in 1483 and is now in the Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence. X-radiography has been interpreted as showing that the donor's head on the left wing was painted separately on tin foil or parchment and subsequently attached to the panel. The suggestion that Hugo van der Goes made the likeness from life before his patron's departure, then incorporated it into the altarpiece, again connects a flexible support with the practical organisation of portrait sittings. Whatever the precise circumstances, the example reinforces the distinction between the execution of a likeness and its eventual place within a monumental composition.[11]

Parchment portraits and the early use of paper

Alongside these composite altarpieces, surviving portraits on parchment bring us closer to the material character of oil painting on paper. As the portrait attributed to Nicolò dell'Abate in the Galleria Borghese, Rome, discussed in the preceding chapter, demonstrates, painting on parchment was familiar in sixteenth-century Italy.[12] Its precedents, however, extend into the previous century, both within Italy and north of the Alps. Giorgio Schiavone's profile *Portrait of a Man* in the Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris, dated around 1459-1462, was painted

in tempera on parchment.[13] It is particularly relevant to an Italian history of the technique, connecting the portable painted likeness with the Veneto and its exchanges with northern Europe. The slightly later development of coloured chalk and pastel portraiture belongs to a related interest in recording the face in colour on a flexible support, while retaining a more explicitly graphic character.[14] Almost contemporaneously, an anonymous French painter produced the *Portrait of a Man*, dated 1456, now in the Liechtenstein Princely Collections, Vaduz-Vienna. Painted in oil on parchment, it is remarkable for the refinement and psychological acuity of its characterisation.[15]

Within this context, the small *Portrait of an Old Man* attributed to Hugo van der Goes in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, assumes particular importance (fig. 6). Dated around 1470-1475, it is among the earliest surviving oil portraits on paper. Its changing attribution, from a French painter active in Burgundy to Hugo van der Goes's circle and subsequently to the artist himself, also illustrates the difficulty of placing an exceptional object whose material character distinguishes it from the more familiar surviving production of its period.[16] Conservation undertaken after the work arrived at the museum for examination in 2008 brought the distinction between its paper support and the wooden panel to which it is attached into sharp focus. The paper had become brittle and had partly separated from the wood, producing raised areas that threatened the paint. Treatment addressed this instability before the discoloured varnish and overpaint were removed. The case demonstrates how the different responses of paper and wood to environmental change can affect an image whose appearance might otherwise suggest a conventional panel painting.[17]

The tight cropping, uniform brown background and absence of a shadow cast by the head have encouraged an interpretation of the picture as a detailed study for a figure in a larger composition. The lack of securely established independent portraits by Hugo van der Goes lends further interest to this possibility. It would connect the sheet with the practice of producing individualised heads separately from the monumental paintings in which they were to appear, while leaving open the precise relationship between the study and any finished work.[18]

This distinction helps to clarify the significance of the surviving sheet. Whereas the heads in the *Seven Sacraments*, Memling's *Last Judgement* and the *Portinari Altarpiece* were incorporated into finished panels, the Metropolitan portrait survives as a separate image on paper. Its relevance does not depend on establishing that it too was intended to be cut out and attached to an altarpiece: it demonstrates that, by the third quarter of the fifteenth century, oil on paper could sustain an exceptionally developed study of a human face, executed independently of a larger pictorial support.

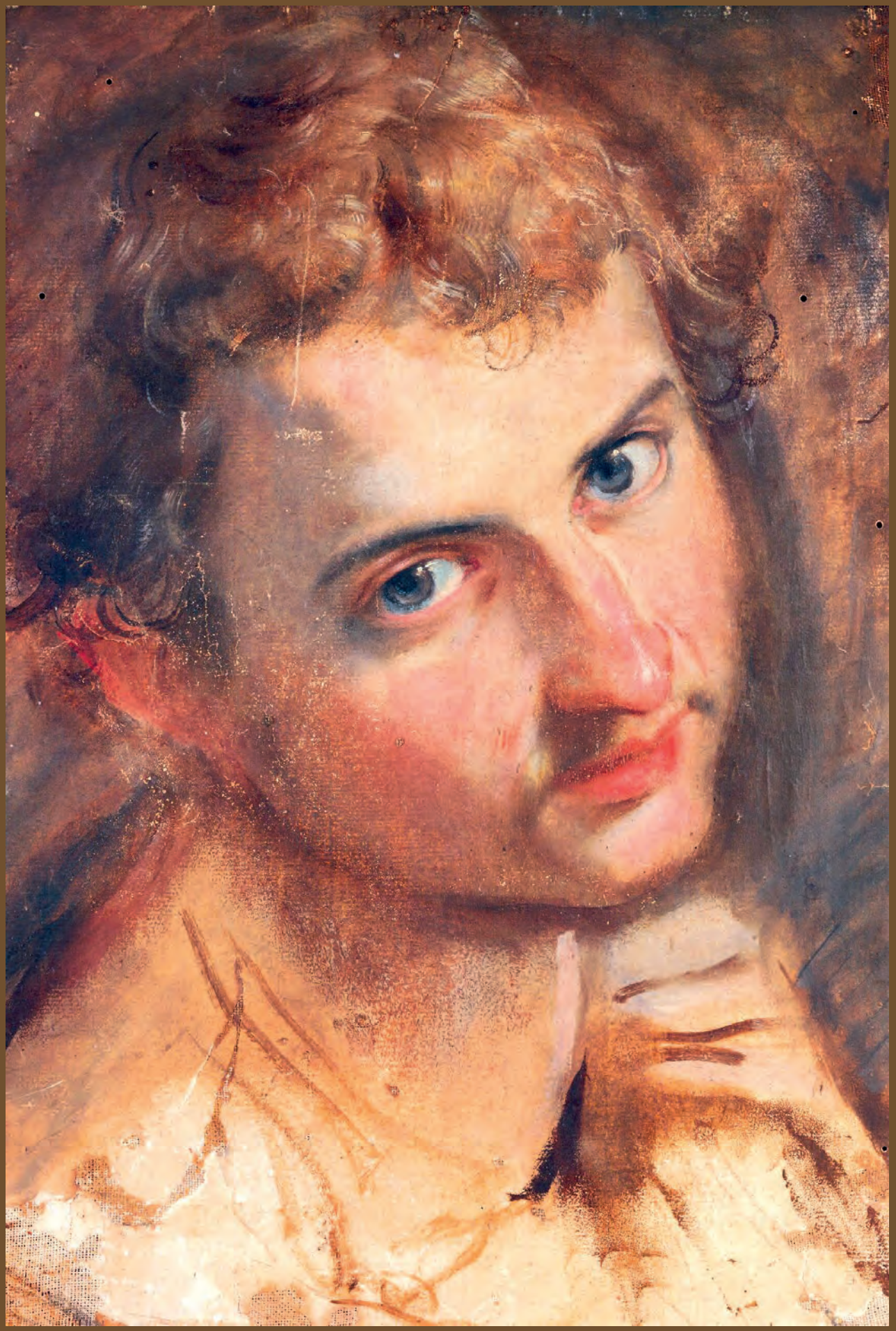
Over the following decades, practices of this kind would find fertile ground in Renaissance Italy, whether through the movement of objects and artists or through independent responses to similar pictorial needs. Although the routes of transmission remain open to further investigation, the variety of Italian artistic traditions, the availability of fine papers and the strength of portrait patronage offer promising contexts in which to explore their development. These early examples establish a range of material possibilities through which the portable likeness and the separately executed head could move between the roles of study and finished painting.



Fig. 6. Hugo van der Goes, *Portrait of an Old Man*, c. 1470-1475, oil on paper laid on wood, 22.2 × 16.5 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 2010.118.

NOTES

1. Jones 2002, unpaginated; Sauerberg 2007-2008, unpaginated; Wivel 2019, pp. 307-312.
2. Sauerberg 2007-2008, unpaginated; Wivel 2019, p. 311.
3. The expression 'arie di teste' occurs on several occasions in Vasari's *Vite* (Vasari 1966-1987): Giuntina (1568), Life of Fra' Giovanni da Fiesole, vol. III, p. 271, 'con sì varie attitudini e diverse arie di teste'; Fra' Filippo Lippi, vol. III, p. 335, 'le belle arie di teste nella mestizia del pianto'; Raffaello da Urbino, vol. IV, p. 162, 'le più belle e dolci arie di teste'; Andrea del Sarto, vol. IV, p. 354, 'con dolcezza sfumate e di bellezza d'arie di teste condotte perfettamente'; Benedetto Garofalo and Girolamo da Carpi, vol. V, p. 413, on Garofalo, 'con bell'arie di teste, non intrigate', and p. 415, on Girolamo's study of Correggio, 'con arie di teste tanto belle che paiono fatte in paradiso'; Michelagnolo Buonarroti, vol. VI, p. 48, 'come panni, arie di teste, et infinità di capricci straordinari e nuovi'; Torrentiniana (1550), Life of Fra' Filippo Lippi, vol. III, p. 335, 'le belle arie di teste nella mestizia del pianto'; Andrea dal Castagno and Domenico Viniziano, vol. III, p. 360, 'con belle arie di teste e sì bene condotte'; Andrea del Sarto, vol. IV, p. 354, 'con dolcezza sfumate e di bellezza di arie di teste condotte perfettamente'; Francesco Mazzuoli, vol. IV, p. 537, 'mirabilmente finiti d'arie di teste, di colorito, di grazia e di diligenzia'; Michelagnolo Buonarroti, vol. VI, p. 48, 'come panni, arie di teste, et infinità di capricci straordinari e nuovi'. Volume and page references follow the Bettarini-Barocchi edition.
4. Hans Maler, *Portrait of an Unknown Man, Aged Thirty-three*, 1521, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. GG 884. For the version on a flexible support, in a private collection, see cat. 2; the identification of its support as parchment remains provisional.
5. Colzani 2024, pp. 278-279, cat. VII.3, with prev. bibl.
6. Federico Barocci, *Madonna di San Simone*, c. 1567, Urbino, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, inv. 1990 D 84.
7. Lorenzo Salimbeni and Jacopo Salimbeni, fresco cycle, 1416, Urbino, Oratorio di San Giovanni Battista, in situ.
8. Steyaert 2012, pp. 119-136; Campbell 2012, pp. 137-146; Postec 2012, pp. 147-158.
9. Campbell 2012, pp. 137-146; Steyaert 2012, pp. 119-136.
10. Ridderbos and Faries 2017, p. 75 and p. 82, nn. 67-68; Szmelter 2016, pp. 84-89; Szmelter et al. 2014, pp. 230-251.
11. Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, inv. 1890 nos. 3191-3193. Bomford 1998, p. xv; Ridderbos and Faries 2017, p. 82, n. 68.
12. Attributed to Nicolò dell'Abate, *Portrait of a Woman*, mid-sixteenth century, oil on parchment laid on canvas, Rome, Galleria Borghese, inv. 077. Iommelli 2022a, unpaginated.
13. Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André, inv. MJAP-P 1817-1.
14. Wivel 2019, p. 311.
15. Anonymous French artist, *Portrait of a Man*, 1456, oil on parchment laid on fir panel, 51 × 42 cm, Vaduz – Vienna, The Liechtenstein Princely Collections, inv. GE 729.
16. For the attribution history, see Tajan 2008, pp. 16-17, lot 13; Ainsworth 2010, p. 18; Ainsworth 2017, pp. 29-36, 38; Ainsworth 2023, p. 162, cat. 14.2; Jones 2023, p. 779.
17. Metropolitan Museum of Art 2022, unpaginated.
18. Ainsworth 2017, pp. 29-36, 38; Metropolitan Museum of Art n.d., unpaginated.



A case study: Federico Barocci and the Oil Paintings on Paper

IV.

Federico Barocci occupies an unusually well-documented position in the history of sixteenth-century painting on paper. A substantial proportion of his surviving painted heads can be connected with figures in identifiable altarpieces, while inventories, correspondence, and early collecting records describe further examples, some now lost. For the Carracci and many other contemporaries, comparable objects often survive without an ascertainable relationship to a larger composition. In Barocci's case, the convergence of objects and documents offers an exceptional opportunity to investigate the medium across an artist's career. Yet this apparent clarity conceals a difficulty: identifying the finished painting to which a separate study relates does not establish when, or for what purpose, the separate sheet was painted.[1]

Since Giovan Pietro Bellori's biography of 1672, discussed below, Barocci's practice has been understood chiefly through his extraordinary commitment to preparation. His altarpieces grew through successive investigations of pose, expression, illumination, and colour, frequently culminating in drawings at the scale of the finished work. The intimacy of a painted head seems to promise privileged access to this process, and some sheets undoubtedly fulfil that promise. Others possess the coherence and pictorial resolution of independent works, even when their subjects derive from public commissions. They may preserve an invention, reformulate it after its first realization, or adapt it for private ownership. The two paintings discussed elsewhere in this catalogue, the *Head of Saint John the Evangelist* and the *Portrait of Prince Federico Ubaldo della Rovere* (cats. 10

Fig. 1. Federico Barocci, *Head of Saint Jude Thaddeus*, c. 1566-1567. Tempera with probable additions in oil on paper mounted on canvas, 40.5 × 27.4 cm. Rome, Galleria Doria Pamphilj, inv. FC 247.

and 12), exemplify different possibilities within this broader practice.[2]

The evidence of the sources

The principal documentary source for the importance of oil on paper in Barocci's practice is the *Minuta dello Studio del S.or Baroccio*, an account of works preserved from his studio traditionally associated with his death in 1612. Published by Egidio Calzini in 1898 and again in 1913, it is known through his transcription; the manuscript he consulted among the Benamati papers at Gubbio is no longer available. Its date, purpose, and authorship therefore remain open questions. The attribution to Felice Pellegrini, a pupil acquainted with Barocci's working methods, is a plausible but unverified hypothesis. Whoever compiled it, the combination of descriptions of objects with observations on artistic practice suggests someone close to the painter and familiar with his studio.[3]

The exceptional archival research recently published on Barocci's family and artistic inheritance substantially enlarges the evidence for the preservation and circulation of this material. An agreement of 26 November 1626 records a plan by Ambrogio Barocci, the painter's nephew and heir, and Ventura Mazza, his pupil and co-heir, to send drawings and paintings from the studio to Rome in two crates. The works remained jointly owned; Mazza was to arrange their sale, with the proceeds divided equally. The accompanying list specifies "Teste colorite à olio di mano del sig.r B. numero quindice 15" ["Heads painted in oil by the hand of Signor Barocci, fifteen"] and "Altre carte colorite à olio cose diverse pezzi dodici 12" ["Other sheets painted in oil, of various subjects, twelve pieces"]. Although the proposed sale appears not to have been fully realized, this securely dated record places painted heads and other painted sheets within an identifiable attempt to market the studio's inheritance.[4]

The corresponding passage in the Minuta concerning painted heads on paper and other sheets reads:

> Vi sono da quatordeci teste colorite a olio di mano del Signor Baroccio, di vecchi, di donne, di giovani, e da vintiotto altri pezzi di carte colorite a olio di cose diverse, come pezzi di paesi, alberi, animali, frutti, acque, et altre bagatelle.[5]
>
> [There are fourteen heads, colored in oil, from the hand of Signor Barocci, of old men, of women, of children, and twenty-eight other sheets of paper, colored in oil, of various things, such as bits of landscape, trees, animals, fruit, water, and other bagatelles.][6]

Read alongside the 1626 list, the *Minuta* reveals a more varied production than the modern prominence of individual heads might suggest. Beyond the approximately fourteen heads, its twenty-eight further sheets encompass a broad range of natural subjects. Another entry records a painting in oil on paper after Paolo Veronese, described in the published English translation as follows: "A painting, oil on paper, figures drawn from the life. The subject is a Mars and a Venus, who caress one another, copied from Paolo Veronese, very well done."[7]

The compiler explicitly attributes the fourteen heads to Barocci, whereas the wording of the Veronese copy leaves its authorship unspecified. Its medium is nevertheless carefully identified, placing oil on paper within the studio's wider practices of study and copying. The entry also shows that paper could carry a complete composition, beyond the small head study. Alongside the larger works by Parmigianino at the Getty and Lotto at Ottawa discussed in the preceding chapters, it cautions against taking the rarity of surviving examples as a measure of their original use. Such paintings could convey compositions between artists and artistic centres. The presence of a work

after Veronese in Barocci's studio is particularly suggestive beside the use of painted paper by Veronese and his workshop, represented here by cat. 5. It offers a possible connection with Venetian practice, although it does not establish a direct line of transmission to Barocci.[8]

Lorenzo Lotto offers an especially important precedent for this connection between Venetian practice and the Marche, a region he visited repeatedly and where he eventually settled. His *Libro di spese diverse* preserves an early documentary account of painted heads, landscape studies, and the exchange of working materials. On 4 March 1541, in Venice, he settled an account with Ottavio da Macerata, to whom he had lent drawings and small relief models for copying at home. The entry also records payment to another painter for landscapes executed in oil on paper. The complete memorandum reads:

> dì 4 marzo 1541 in Venetia
> Memoria como, adì sopra dito, feci cunto con Otavio da Macerata de denarj che lui dovea darmi per cunto de prestatilj et un quadro che jo vendeti a suo madre per scuti 8 d'oro, et alcuni disegni et cosete di rilievo, che li acomodaj da recavarseli a casa, videlicet
> scuti 7 d'oro del cunto vechio, zoè scuti 7
> scuti 5 de moneta che fu scossi de Cingoli, scuti 5
> mocenico uno al suo partir per pagar certe portature de robe a fachinj L 1 s 4
> Dopo el suo partire de comissione sua pagaj a mastro Gasparo depentor per alcuni paesi fati de color a olio in carte marcelli 15 da soldi diece l'uno L 7 s 10
> Et al Naper per certe nudete de gesso havute Otavio, et comesse a me le pagassi in sema de altro resto tra loro marcellj 3 L 1 s 10
> Suma la moneta L 10 s 4; suma scuti 7, scuti 5; Suma li scuti 12
> Item deve dare disegni zoè teste colorite ad olio in carta de naturale n° 8
> Teste disegnate n° 3
> paesi n° 8
> un schizeto de un porcho morto da putini significato per la luxuria, et un presepio d'acquarella in carta rosa cioè de librj da oro n° 2
> Dua cartoni grandi circha dua braza l'uno disegnati per colorir et comenzi a guazo, l'uno con la torre di Babilonia, l'altro con Helia in aria sul carro n° 2
> un torseto di cerra de una nudeta con una coscia levata senza testa, braze e gambe n° 1
> Et un cavalino barbaro che corre de cera n° 1
> Et un sacco lungo da soma novo n° 1[9]

[4 March 1541, in Venice. Memorandum that, on the aforesaid day, I settled accounts with Ottavio da Macerata for money he owed me for loans, a painting I sold to his mother for eight gold scudi, and some drawings and small relief models that I lent him to copy at home, namely:
Seven gold scudi from the old account: 7 scudi.
Five scudi in currency received from Cingoli: 5 scudi.
One mocenigo on his departure to pay porters for carrying certain goods: 1 lira, 4 soldi.
After his departure, on his instructions, I paid Master Gasparo, painter, for some landscapes painted in oil colours on sheets of paper, fifteen marcelli at ten soldi each: 7 lire, 10 soldi.
And to Naper for certain small plaster nudes received by Ottavio, which he instructed me to pay for together with another balance between them, three marcelli: 1 lira, 10 soldi.
Total in currency: 10 lire, 4 soldi; scudi: 7 plus 5; total: 12 scudi.

> He must also return drawings, namely eight heads painted in oil on paper from life; three drawn heads; eight landscapes; a little sketch of a pig killed by putti, signifying lust, and a Nativity in watercolour on pink paper, that is, paper from gold-leaf books: two pieces; two large cartoons, each about two braccia, drawn for painting and begun in gouache, one with the Tower of Babel and the other with Elijah in the air on his chariot; a small wax torso of a nude figure with one thigh raised, without head, arms, or legs; a little running Barbary horse in wax; and a new long pack-sack.]

The eight "teste colorite ad olio in carta de naturale" establish that painted heads from life were already treated as drawings that could be lent and copied. The "mastro Gasparo" paid for the landscapes is identified in the edition as Gaspare Fiammingo, a Flemish painter then working in Lotto's workshop; the landscapes themselves are lost. His contribution shows oil on paper serving an exchange of work between painters. These paintings should be distinguished from the eight further *paesi* among the borrowed materials, whose technique is not specified. Taken together, the heads and landscapes formed a repertoire of observations that could be studied and used again. Their conjunction anticipates the range recorded in Barocci's *Minuta*, where faces appear beside fragments of landscape, trees, animals, fruit, and water.[10]

The geographical connection became especially close towards the end of Lotto's life. He left Venice for Ancona in 1549 and settled at Loreto in 1552, as Barocci was beginning his career in the same region. The 1541 memorandum does not establish that those particular heads travelled with Lotto to the Marche, but it records a practice familiar to an artist whose presence linked the two artistic worlds. The comparison with Barocci therefore extends beyond a shared technique to the uses of painted paper: preserving observations from nature, exchanging models, and developing images outside the immediate demands of a commissioned picture.[11]

In considering the evidence from Barocci's studio, the two lists should be read as records of surviving and selected holdings rather than complete accounts of production. Their quantities differ: fourteen heads and twenty-eight other painted sheets in the *Minuta*, fifteen and twelve respectively in 1626. The discrepancy does not permit individual sales or losses to be reconstructed, particularly where the totals are approximate. The contents of the studio should therefore not be treated as an unchanging group. By 1629, the heirs were preparing a further sale in Milan, and their new agreement records additional divisions of the inherited material.[12]

The distinctions within the *Minuta* also warn against treating all coloured heads as interchangeable. Finished and unfinished pastels, broadly sketched heads, cartoons, and a small composition executed partly in oil and partly in gouache appear as separate categories. Such terminology registers medium and degree of completion without assigning every object a single function. Terms such as *disegno*, *quadro*, and *studio* do not correspond neatly to modern divisions between drawing and painting. A painted sheet could retain its association with graphic practice while acquiring the value and presentation of a picture.[13]

The wider workshop context is equally important. On 9 March 1600, Ventura Mazza made provision to leave Barocci drawings, prints, and "teste colorite a olio" ["heads painted in oil"] then kept in the master's house. The record does not specify the support or authorship of those heads, and they cannot simply be added to Barocci's autograph corpus. It nevertheless shows painted heads circulating within the studio as useful and valued possessions. The distinction between what the master owned, what his collaborators owned, and what

each had made must remain part of any interpretation of the surviving sheets.[14]

Later correspondence follows individual works from the Urbino circles in which much of Barocci's material had remained into the wider networks of Italian collecting. On 27 October 1658, Giovanni Battista Staccoli, a canon of Urbino Cathedral, reported to Filippo Baldinucci, who helped Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici assemble the outstanding collection of drawings now at the Uffizi, on materials belonging to the Oratorian Giovanni Antonio Vagnarelli at Urbino. Among drawings attributed to Barocci and other masters was "una testa di un vecchio, fatta a olio in carta" ["a head of an old man, painted in oil on paper"], slightly more than half a foot in size. The head itself was well preserved, although one edge of the paper had suffered. The same correspondence records Vagnarelli's copies after Barocci's cartoons and pastels and explains his access to the studio through his family's connection with Ambrogio Barocci. These were objects available both for ownership and for renewed artistic use; their preservation did not suspend their productive life.[15]

A further group of coloured works emerges from the negotiations of 1673 between Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici and Domenico Maria Corsi, his agent in Urbino. Their exchanges concern works belonging to the local collector Giovanni Lunani, also known as Levalas or Lavalas. The list sent from Urbino on 21 August includes an old man's coloured head, a coloured Mary Magdalen, several further heads, and a painted lamb. Their place among pastels, cartoons, and drawings makes the collection suggestive, although *colorita* alone does not securely identify oil in every case. Pillsbury drew attention to this material as evidence of the esteem in which Barocci's painted studies were held. The letters also reveal the practical limits of that esteem: high asking prices could prevent a purchase.[16] Leopoldo's reluctance may nevertheless have been strategic. With many acquisitions competing for his resources, bargaining over works of secondary interest could preserve funds for more coveted purchases; his resistance to a price need not measure his appreciation of the object.

The most telling early collecting history probably belongs to the *Head of Saint Jude Thaddeus*, now in Rome, at the Galleria Doria Pamphilj (fig. 1).[17] In the Facchinetti collection in Bologna it was already described in 1662 as a "disegno di mano di federico Barozzi stimato assai" ["a highly esteemed drawing by the hand of Federico Barocci"]. The judgement of value is explicit. The inventories of 1685, associated with the transfer of the family's inheritance through Violante Facchinetti, describe it as a drawing on paper behind glass, in a carved frame; the Roman version further specifies that the frame was gilded. Its fragile support had become something to protect and display, and its abbreviated execution an object of sustained appreciation.[18]

The *Saint Jude* was not an isolated curiosity in the Facchinetti palace. The collection brought it into company with drawings associated with the Carracci, sketches by Guido Reni, pen drawings by Bartolomeo Passerotti, pastels, and painted works on paper by Cavedone. The inventory distinguishes watercolour, pastel, and oil, yet the proximity of these objects reveals an appreciation that crossed boundaries of technique. The 1662 notice establishes the presence and esteem of Barocci's head by the middle decades of the century; the fuller inventory of 1685 supplies the broader context. Mounted, framed, and sometimes glazed, such sheets could be displayed with the dignity of paintings. They offer an early setting in which Barocci's painted paper was viewed alongside Bolognese practice, long before the modern category of the oil sketch was established.[19]

Oil on paper across Barocci's career

The surviving paintings allow this documentary history to be traced back to Barocci's youth, well before the great altarpieces



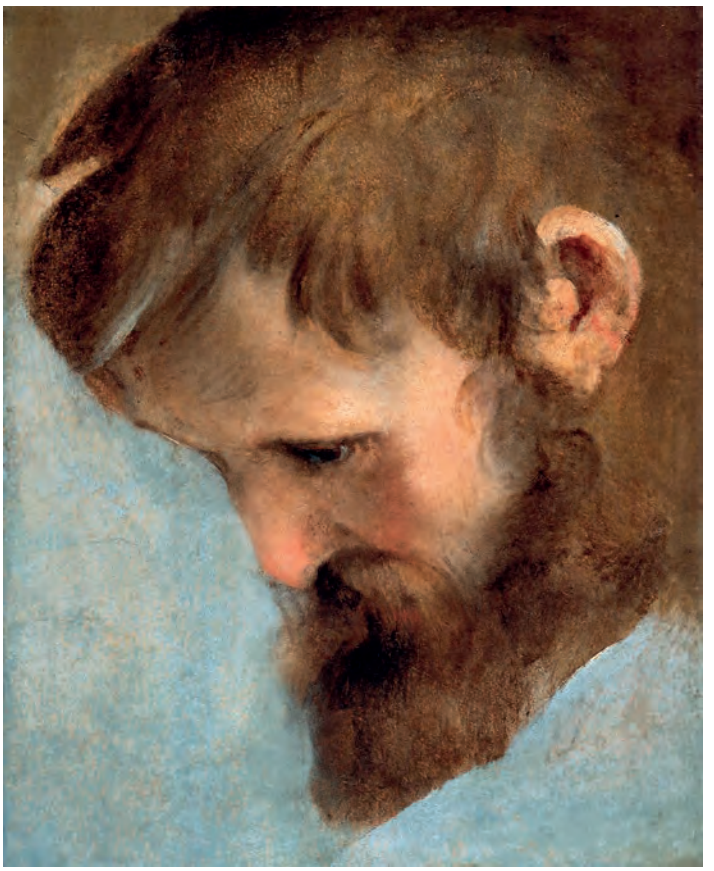


Fig. 2. Attributed to Federico Barocci, *Portrait of a Young Girl*, c. 1555-1556. Oil on paper mounted on canvas, 25 × 20 cm. Italy, private collection.

Fig. 3. Attributed to Federico Barocci, *Head of Moses*, c. 1563. Oil on prepared paper mounted on canvas, 28.3 × 23.2 cm. Private collection.

Fig. 4. Federico Barocci, *Head of a Cherub*, c. 1576-1579. Oil over red and black chalk on paper, 18.8 × 13.7 cm. Windsor, Royal Collection, RCIN 905222.

of the 1580s. Read together, the objects and the written sources define a corpus of roughly two dozen works, extending from the mid-1550s to the first decade of the seventeenth century. Despite questions concerning individual attributions, it forms one of the most coherent groups of sixteenth-century oils on paper associated with a single artist.

The small *Portrait of a Young Girl* in an Italian private collection (fig. 2), painted in oil on paper subsequently mounted on canvas, must belong near the opening of Barocci's career, around 1555-1556.[20] Although its condition is compromised, which calls for some caution regarding the attribution, it remains an important early witness to his use of the medium. The girl's direct gaze,

slightly turned head, and delicately observed expression establish an individual presence with remarkably limited means. The dress and ribbon remain summarily indicated, while accents on the lips, cheek, and collar preserve something of the original brilliance of the handling. The achievement is all the more striking in a child too young to maintain a fixed expression through a prolonged sitting. This capacity to capture an elusive likeness recurs in several works discussed in this catalogue, suggesting infant and child portraiture as a distinctive application of oil on paper (cats. 11, 12, 18, 19, and 25). Barocci's choice of blue paper is equally significant: a support familiar from his drawings already contributes to the painted image, making the colour of the sheet an active part of his early pictorial practice.[21]

The *Head of Moses* (fig. 3), connected with Barocci's Vatican fresco of 1563, offers a close comparison with the young girl, although it is more fully worked and better preserved.[22] Its blue-toned support suggests a further interest in a coloured field, although examination of the object is needed to distinguish blue paper from a blue preparation. The connection with the fresco gives the head chronological value, despite disagreement over its attribution. It also places the work in the stimulating setting of early 1560s Rome, where Barocci worked alongside Taddeo and Federico Zuccari. Their proximity provides a context for his developing interest in coloured media on paper and the possibility of exchanges between the painters.[23]

The previously mentioned *Saint Jude Thaddeus*, a work of exceptional quality, provides a more secure point of reference around 1566-1567. Corresponding to the young apostle in the *Madonna di San Simone*, it is painted with extraordinary freedom: the features emerge from thin, fluid passages of grey and brown enlivened by pink, white, and red. Its alterations and abbreviated character support a preparatory function. A technical qualification remains necessary, since it has been described both as an oil study and as tempera on paper. Pending further



analysis of its materials, it belongs within the history of Barocci's painted sheets as an early experiment, without requiring all such experiments to have employed an identical binder.[24]

The altarpiece to which the Saint Jude relates, the *Madonna di San Simone*, also demonstrates that painted paper was not confined to a preliminary stage outside the finished picture. The female donor's head was executed on a separate sheet incorporated into the canvas.[25] As already noted in chapter III, a comparable insertion occurs in the head of Saint Francis in *The Pardon of Assisi*.[26] Such passages collapse a categorical division between preparation and execution: the paper could become part of the painting rather than a disposable step towards it.



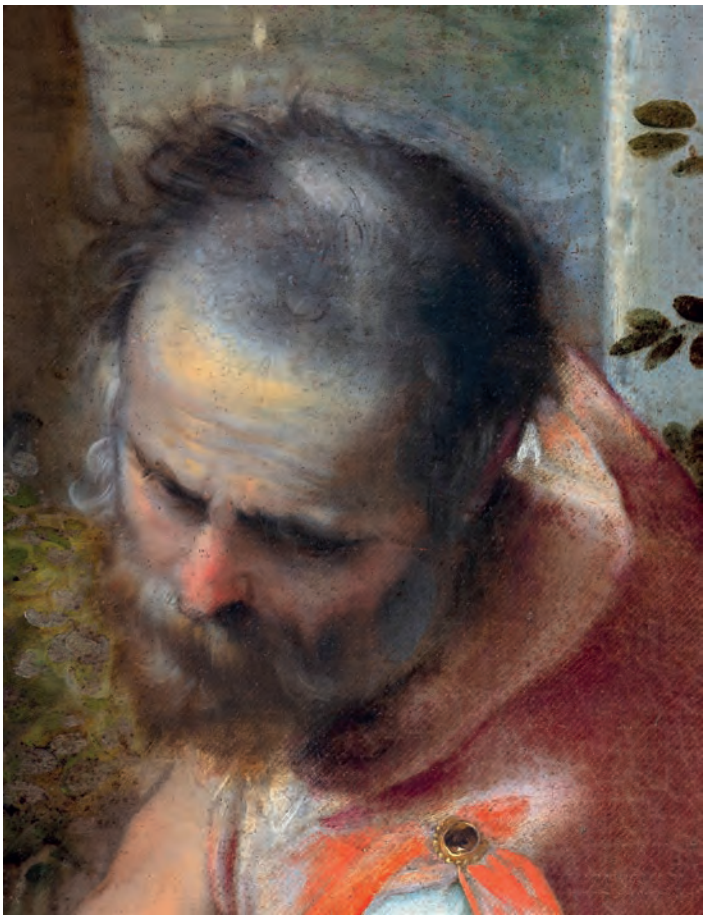
Fig. 5. Federico Barocci, *Head of a Bearded Man (Nicodemus)*, 1579-1582. Oil on paper, 38.7 × 27.3 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Harry G. Sperling Fund*, 1976, inv. 1976.87.1.

Fig. 6. Federico Barocci, *The Entombment of Christ, detail of Saint John the Evangelist,* 1579-1582; restored by the artist in 1607–1608. Oil on canvas, 295 × 187 cm (whole painting). Senigallia, Church of Santa Croce.

The precise effects of these insertions require attention to the individual surfaces, but they make clear that Barocci valued paper as a material capable of contributing directly to the appearance of flesh within a monumental altarpiece.

By the later 1570s, the small *Head of a Cherub* at Windsor, associated with the *Madonna del Popolo* of 1575-1579, shows another use of painted paper within the preparation of an altarpiece (fig. 4).[27] Executed over red and black chalk, the fragment reveals how freely paint could be laid over an articulated graphic structure. Its modest dimensions, irregular format, and differences from the corresponding painted head favour a preparatory function: a local experiment in colour for one part of a composition. Such a sheet helps distinguish the different purposes that the medium could serve. Around 1580, larger, more sustained head studies would give Barocci greater scope to explore the expressive and chromatic relationships developed for an altarpiece.

The *Entombment of Christ*, commissioned in 1579 and completed in 1582 for the Church of Santa Croce at Senigallia, marks a particularly rich phase in this development. At least four surviving sheets relate to three of its figures: Nicodemus, Saint John, and Mary Magdalen, with Saint John represented by two known versions and a further example under study. The head identified as Nicodemus in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, is built from a restrained combination of grey ground, brown indications, and selective flesh colours (fig. 5).[28] The study of Saint John in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, discussed alongside the related version in this catalogue (cat. 10), gives greater emphasis to the brilliant ochre garment and red drapery beneath the head.[29] The beautifully abbreviated head of Mary Magdalen at the Musée Bonnat-Helleu, Bayonne, provides another treatment of the same relationship between a light field and selectively worked passages of paint.[30] Together, the sheets allow the treatment of individual heads on paper to be



compared with the paint surface of the altarpiece itself (fig. 6). That comparison, however, must take account of Barocci's later return to the canvas.

The *Entombment* was sent back to Barocci in Urbino in 1607 for repair, and in April 1608 he reported that his intervention was complete. The detail of Saint John reproduced here therefore preserves both the original execution and passages identified in the catalogue entry as later corrections. Reinforcement around the nose, cheeks, and mouth, dark accents beneath the chin and



Fig. 7. Federico Barocci, *The Visitation*, 1583-1586. Oil on canvas, 285 × 187 cm. Rome, Santa Maria in Vallicella (Chiesa Nuova).

Fig. 8. Federico Barocci, *Head of an Old Woman (Saint Elizabeth)*, 1584-1586. Oil on paper, 39.1 × 27.5 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harry G. Sperling Fund, 1976, inv. 1976.87.2.

Fig. 9. Federico Barocci, *Head of Saint Joseph*, c. 1586. Oil on paper mounted on canvas, 39.5 × 30.8 cm. Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. 2017.104.

along the curls, and a conspicuous white stroke at the clavicle can be compared directly with the handling of the two heads on paper. The comparison brings two kinds of pictorial activity into view: the development or renewed treatment of a motif on a separate sheet, and the correction of an existing image in oil on canvas. The value of the comparison lies in showing how Barocci could return to the same face, altering its modelling and its relation to the drapery on different supports.[31]

These heads were central to Edmund Pillsbury's pioneering article of 1978, the first systematic treatment of Barocci's oil studies. His investigation of materials also drew on the works gathered for the Cleveland and New Haven exhibition of the same year, including the painted head of Christ at Sacramento associated with the late painting by Barocci once in the Buonvisi Collection in Lucca, the *Noli me tangere*, executed between 1601 and 1609.[32] By reconstructing the sequence of ground, dark definition, flesh tints, and local colour, Pillsbury showed how a painted head could approach the effect of a completed passage while retaining the economy of a drawing. His comparison with pastels demonstrated that the two media addressed related problems. The *Saint John* in this catalogue (cat. 10) extends the group and complicates its interpretation: another treatment of the same motif need not establish either a preparatory sequence or a hierarchy of original and copy.[33]

Alongside these individual heads, Barocci used painted paper to consider the Entombment as a complete composition, producing works that belong to the category of developed compositional *bozzetti*. The J. Paul Getty Museum's *Entombment*, in black chalk and oil on oiled paper (reproduced with cat. 10), makes an instructive comparison with the isolated heads.[34] The broad distribution of light and dark is worked out in grisaille, while pink flesh accents give particular emphasis to the faces. The sheet brings compositional organization and local colour into one object, yet it differs materially and functionally from the





separate heads. Such distinctions matter when reconstructing the working process: the different kinds of painted study need not have formed a uniform sequence repeated unchanged for every commission.

The *Visitation* (fig. 7) for Santa Maria in Vallicella, Rome, painted in 1583-1586, generated another group of oil heads on paper. The *Head of Saint Elizabeth* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 8) is distinguished by a delicate grey-blue preparation and by the interplay of opaque flesh colours with areas in which the paper remains active.[35] The brownish veil is partly achieved through the exposed support, whereas her grey hair is rendered in shades of grey and black. Two treatments of the old Saint Joseph, one now at the J. Paul Getty Museum (fig. 9) and the other formerly in the Hester Diamond collection – the latter requiring caution in the absence of direct examination – show that a related head could sustain markedly different pictorial realizations.[36] Together, these works confirm the breadth of the medium at a moment when Barocci was simultaneously engaged with several major commissions.

Two heads in the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, depict a shepherd and a priest from Barocci's *Circumcision*, completed in 1590 and now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris.[37] Both belonged to the collection assembled in Rome by Nicola Martelli (1734-1829). Painted at the same scale as the corresponding heads in the altarpiece, they have been understood as colour studies made when the figures had already been worked out in drawings. Yet their matching dimensions do not in themselves establish that they preceded the canvas. A cartoon preserved in the studio could equally have allowed Barocci to return to these figures after completing the commission, using the same outlines to produce independent paintings on paper.[38]

The paintings commissioned from Barocci during the 1590s provide the models for a further group of three separate devotional heads: the head of the blessed Michelina Metelli at the Fondazione Marignoli di Montecorona, Spoleto; Saint Francis at the Saint Louis Art Museum; and Saint Sebastian at the Kunstmuseum St. Gallen.[39] All relate to major religious paintings, yet their backgrounds, concentrated framing, and degrees of resolution invite consideration as pictures with an independent destination.[40] Their dates should consequently not be fixed solely by the completion of the corresponding altarpieces. An invention developed for a commission could remain available in the studio, and a separate painted head might follow it after an interval.

Although single heads dominate the surviving corpus, landscape and compositional paintings on paper show that Barocci used the support for a wider range of subjects. The landscape at Urbino, with a town tentatively recognizable as Urbino itself, preserves the conjunction of tempera and oil on paper within a field otherwise largely lost.[41] Its inclusion is particularly significant beside the inventory's landscapes, trees, animals, and water. The compositions of *Saint Dominic Receiving the Rosary*, represented by the Ashmolean Museum example and a second version in a private collection, likewise extend the medium beyond the isolated face, continuing the compositional possibilities exemplified by the Getty *Entombment*.[42] They place the separate head within a continuum of practices, from observations of nature to the reformulation of a complete sacred invention.

At the close of the surviving chronology, the *Portrait of Prince Federico Ubaldo della Rovere* (cat. 12), datable around 1606, formerly attributed to Claudio Ridolfi and proposed here as a late work by Barocci himself, returns to the intimate observation of a child.[43] The nearly one-year-old heir is observed before his likeness becomes the formal dynastic image disseminated by Alessandro Vitali and other collaborators. Its combination of immediacy, sensitivity, and technical economy makes it an extraordinary survival of infant portraiture on paper. Across roughly half a century, it resumes the achievement of the early *Portrait of a Young Girl* with which this account began: in both, the individuality of a living child is secured through the attentive rendering of a fleeting expression.[44]

Preparation, repetition, and the market

These varied works invite a closer question: how did painting on paper move between preparation, repetition, and independent ownership? Bellori's influential account, introduced at the outset, offers a useful starting point. His description of Barocci's working methods has encouraged the placement of individual studies within a progressive sequence leading to the altarpiece. The transition from preliminary work to the painted *cartoncino* is especially relevant:

> "Da tutte queste fatiche formava un cartoncino ad olio, overo à guazzo di chiaro scuro, e dopo usava il cartone grande quanto l'opera di carbone, e gesso, ò vero di pastelli su la carta."[45]

> "From all of these preparations Barocci would make a small cartoon in oil or gouache, in chiaroscuro, and afterwards he would make use of a full-scale cartoon in charcoal and chalk, or in pastelli on paper."[46]

Bellori describes a small compositional study in light and shade followed by a full-scale cartoon; he does not identify a separate category of heads painted in oil. Nor does the surviving material always follow this sequence. Colour could be investigated early, and substantial changes could follow the cartoon. The biography illuminates the painter's methods, but the function of each sheet must also be considered through its particular relationship to the finished work.[47]

The *Saint Jude Thaddeus* (fig. 1) offers a persuasive instance of preparation. As noted above, its fluid handling and adjustments suggest an active investigation of the apostle in the *Madonna di San Simone*. Its later prestige in the Facchinetti collection gives this initial purpose a second history: a sheet made for work became an object valued for contemplation. Preparation and collecting could thus be successive uses of the same painting.[48]

The *Head of the Blessed Michelina* at the Fondazione Marignoli di Montecorona suggests a different relationship to the altarpiece. Its coherent modelling and resolved presentation favour an autograph *d'après*: a new painting by Barocci based on an invention he had already completed. The retained preparatory cartoon offers a plausible means of returning to the figure without mechanically copying the finished canvas. Although no surviving fragment proves every step of that transfer, the proposal accords with the documented preservation and reuse of full-scale designs.[49]

The survival and reuse of full-scale cartoons can be examined more closely in the drawings and paintings associated with the *Madonna del Popolo*, perhaps Barocci's most successful creation. The fragment with a *Young Woman Facing Right* at the Castello Sforzesco, Milan, belongs to the full-scale design, alongside other surviving portions.[50] Its reuse can be followed in two pendant paintings on panel formerly on the Vienna market, reproducing selected heads at the scale of the original invention.[51] One repeats the young woman; the other transforms the angel into a smiling girl. Their support differs from that of the oils on paper, but their relevance is procedural: the cartoon could supply a partial composition for another painting, and the extracted figure could acquire a new identity once separated from the altarpiece. These examples show how a retained cartoon preserved proportions and contours while leaving colour, light, and the surrounding field open to new decisions. A later treatment could therefore contain substantial fresh pictorial work, just as a rapidly brushed surface could be the intended finish of an independent painting. Neither smoothness nor sketchiness is, by itself, a reliable guide to date or function.[52]

This freedom to revisit a design becomes especially significant when several painted versions survive. Alongside preparatory studies and workshop copies, there is room for autograph repetitions made in response to a new purpose or a prospective owner. The task is to distinguish these possibilities through the individual works, their condition, and their relationship to one another.[53]

The *Head of Saint John the Evangelist* in this catalogue (cat. 10) is a case in point. The Washington sheet and the present work are two known treatments of the figure supporting Christ's feet in the Senigallia *Entombment*; a further version remains under study. Differences of handling in the two published versions have supported opposing chronologies, exposing the limits of dating based on spontaneity or finish alone.[54]

The two versions of *Saint Dominic Receiving the Rosary*, at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and in a private collection, pose

a related question on the scale of the whole composition. The Ashmolean painting combines conspicuously abbreviated passages with an assured pictorial structure. It has consequently been interpreted as a study for lighting, yet the existence of a second version and further derivatives requires more than a straightforward label of preparation. The repetitions suggest that a resolved composition could remain a studio resource and circulate beyond its original commission while retaining a sketch's freshness.[55]

Finally, the heads of Saint Francis at Saint Louis and Saint Sebastian at St. Gallen bring the issue of finish into particularly sharp focus. Their sustained modelling and pictorial completeness distinguish them from the most abbreviated sheets. Differences of execution remain central to the attributional debate, but such differences need not indicate later copying. In the interpretation proposed here, these are autograph reformulations made for the market: separate paintings in which Barocci returned to figures already developed for the *Stigmatization of Saint Francis* and the Genoa *Crucifixion*, adjusting them to the intimate conditions of private display. The resolution of the surrounding field and the attention given to the head's independent presence become intelligible as intentional features of the finished object.[56]

The proposal that some painted heads were made for sale finds a historical basis in the arguments advanced on Barocci's behalf in the legal proceedings of 9 July 1590. The dispute concerned a design for the Senigallia *Entombment* lent for reproduction and not returned. In explaining why painters preserved cartoons, drawings, and models, the submission joins memory, artistic honour, and future earnings in a single statement:

> "Che i pittori sublimi et ecellentissimi conservano e sono soliti di conservare tali cartoni, dissegni et essemplari appresso sè et ai posteri loro si per memoria delle fatture loro, sì anche per loro soddisfazione, et honore, et per potere nell'occasioni con minor lor fattica, sudore et briga, minor spesa e tempo, formare simili pitture, con mercede et benefitio loro, et a servigio e soddisfazione d'altri che volessero figure, et pitture tali."[57]
>
> "That the most eminent and excellent painters preserve, and are accustomed to preserve, such cartoons, drawings, and models for themselves and their successors, both as a record of their works and for their own satisfaction and honour, and so that, when occasion arises, they may make similar paintings with less effort, sweat, trouble, expense, and time, for their own remuneration and benefit, and for the service and satisfaction of others who might wish for such figures and paintings."[58]

The following clause assigns these retained designs a value of half the finished work or more. Although the proceedings record no sale of a painted head, they explain the economic value of models that could serve the master's repetitions, assistants' paintings, and reproductive images. The *Portrait of Federico Ubaldo* (cat. 12) illuminates a complementary use of this system: an immediate likeness on paper could supply the prototype for more formal images undertaken by collaborators, allowing the invention to circulate through a coordinated division of labour.[59]

Painting on paper thus served both Barocci's invention and its circulation. Lotto's earlier record reveals an established exchange of painted heads and landscapes; Barocci developed the medium's possibilities with exceptional continuity. He is one of the earliest and most extensively documented sixteenth-century Italian painters to integrate its commercial potential so consistently into his practice, using it to repeat and disseminate his inventions for profit. The independent character of the finished heads, their multiple versions, and the documented value of reusable designs together support this interpretation.[60]



NOTES

1. Pillsbury 1978, 170-173; Baroni 2022-2023, 251, 299-300, 333, 340-342.
2. Marciari and Verstegen 2008, 307-311; Baroni 2025a, 758–760. See also present catalogue, cats. 10 and 12.
3. Calzini 1898, 103-108; Calzini 1913, 76-80; Ekserdjian 2018, 155–158; Baroni 2022-2023, 659-662, doc. 1612_3. For the Pellegrini hypothesis, Baroni 2022-2023, 659-662. Droghini 2025, 98-109, offers an important new reassessment: the omissions of major unfinished commissions, the language describing artistic procedures, and comparison with the securely dated 1626 list suggest a selection prepared for sale, possibly for the Benamati shortly before November 1626. He also questions the Pellegrini attribution, drawing attention to Ventura Mazza's documented role in administering the estate. These recent proposals deserve further examination; neither the date nor the compiler of the lost Minuta can yet be established with certainty.
4. Droghini 2025, 92-95, 109-112; Mosconi 2025, 244-246, doc. 347. Archivio di Stato di Pesaro, Sezione di Urbino, Archivio Notarile, not. Francesco Riccioli, vol. 1913, cc. 173r-174r. The research published by Falcioni and Droghini, incorporating Vincenzo Mosconi's extensive archival work, provides exceptional new material for the study of Barocci's drawings, heirs, and the circulation of the studio's holdings. Partial English translations of this document are supplied here.
5. Baroni 2022-2023, 659-660, doc. 1612_3; Calzini 1913, 77.
6. Calzini 2018, 175, translation by Derek Gromadzki and David Ekserdjian.
7. Calzini 1913, 77; Calzini 2018, 175, translation by Derek Gromadzki and David Ekserdjian; Ekserdjian 2018, 155.
8. Ekserdjian 2018, 155; Wivel 2019, 307-316. See also the preceding chapters and present catalogue, cat. 5.
9. Lotto 2017, 278-279, fol. 154r; De Carolis's commentary, 390; on the account's insertion into the ledger, 22-23. Lineation and the layout of totals are simplified here; wording and amounts follow the edition. The English translation is supplied here.
10. Lotto 2017, 279, 390; Wivel 2019, 307-316. The eight landscapes in the loan list are not explicitly described as oils; the separate payment to Gasparo is.
11. Lotto 2017, 14, 22-23, 278-279, 390; Baroni 2024a, 115-197; Wivel 2019, 307-323.
12. Ekserdjian 2018, 155–158; Droghini 2025, 109-123; Mosconi 2025, 244-248, docs. 347, 351. The 1629 list does not separately enumerate the oils on paper; their absence alone cannot prove that all had been sold.
13. Freeman Bauer 1984, 14-18; Freeman Bauer and Bauer 1999, 520-525; Calzini 2018, 175-176.
14. Droghini 2025, 88-89, n. 164. Archivio di Stato di Pesaro, Sezione di Urbino, Archivio Notarile, not. Guidantonio Bondini, vol. 1071, cc. 25v-26r, cited through Droghini. The document identifies neither paper support nor autograph authorship.
15. Baroni 2022-2023, 693-696; Baldinucci 1974-1975, 6:71-77; Pillsbury 1978, 173, n. 3.
16. Baroni 2022-2023, 717-720, docs. 1673_3-1673_5; Baldinucci 1974-1975, 6:174-180; Pillsbury 1978, 173, n. 3; Freeman Bauer 1984, 14. Droghini 2025, 143-145, identifies the collector as Giovanni Lunani. On the Lunani collection, see also Moretti 2022, 91-99, concerning Andrea Lunani, known as Levalasse, and the account of Lancisi's visit in 1705.
17. Rome, Galleria Doria Pamphilj, inv. FC 247, tempera with probable additions in oil on paper mounted on canvas, 40.5 × 27.4 cm. De Marchi 2016, 32; Baroni 2022-2023, 299, cat. 44. Pillsbury 1978, 170, describes oil; the medium requires further technical clarification.
18. De Marchi 2016, 32; Baroni 2022-2023, 299, 698-699, 734. Rome, Archivio Doria Pamphilj, scaff. 58/6 (1662) and 58/5 (1685), cited through these publications.
19. Morselli 1998, 221-227; Baroni 2022-2023, 698-699, 734. Bologna, Archivio di Stato, Notaio Giuseppe Magnani, Minutario 1685, cartella 34, cc. 15-31; Rome, Archivio Doria Pamphilj, scaff. 58/5, cited through the published transcriptions.
20. Baroni 2022-2023, 256, cat. 6. Oil on paper mounted on canvas, 25 × 20 cm, Italian private collection. For the earlier attribution near Sofonisba Anguissola, Minardi 2009-2010, cited in Baroni 2022-2023, 256.
21. Baroni 2024b, 64-66.
22. Haboldt 2012, 55; Baroni 2022-2023, 292, cat. 38; Mann and Bohn 2012, 40, 66, n. 61. Oil on prepared paper mounted on canvas, 28.3 × 23.2 cm; Sotheby's, New York, 13 January 1993; with Haboldt & Co.; sold to a private collector, San Francisco, in 2001. Haboldt describes prepared paper without identifying its original colour.
23. Baroni 2024c, 167-178; Baroni 2025b, 174-201.
24. Pillsbury 1978, 170; Pillsbury and Richards 1978, 65-66; De Marchi 2016, 32; Baroni 2022-2023, 299.
25. Baroni 2022-2023, 300, cat. 45; Emiliani 2008, 1:174-177. Urbino, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, inv. 1990 D 84.
26. Pillsbury 1978, 172; Pillsbury and Richards 1978, 9, n. 7. Urbino, Church of San Francesco. See also chapter III.
27. Windsor, Royal Collection, inv. RCIN 905222; oil over red and black chalk on paper, 18.8 × 13.7 cm. For the Madonna del Popolo's preparation, Baroni 2022, 303-306.
28. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 1976.87.1, 38.7 × 27.3 cm. Pillsbury and Richards 1978, 65-66, cat. 43; Pillsbury 1978, 170-172.
29. Washington, National Gallery of Art, inv. 1979.11.1, 42 × 31.7 cm. Mann and Bohn 2012, 164-167, cats. 8.10-8.11; present catalogue, cat. 10.
30. Bayonne, Musée Bonnat-Helleu, inv. RF 1997.3. Pillsbury 1978, 171; Mann and Bohn 2012, 158-181.

31. Present catalogue, cat. 10, especially nn. 13-16, for the letters of 2 June 1607 and 20 April 1608, the painting's return on 4 May 1608, and the interpretation of the retouched passages. The association of particular strokes with this intervention and the possible dating of the oil on paper to the same period remain proposals advanced in that entry.
32. Pillsbury 1978, 170-173; Pillsbury and Richards 1978, 9, 65-67, 76-77, cats. 43 (Nicodemus), 44 (Christ, associated with the Noli me tangere), and 53 (Saint Elizabeth). Sacramento, Crocker Art Museum, inv. 1872.681: oil on paper mounted on board, 30 × 23.5 cm (sight dimensions in the 1978 catalogue). For the painting's commission and dating to 1601-1609, see Baroni 2024d, 61-86; this connection would place the head among Barocci's late works.
33. Pillsbury 1978, 171-173; Marciari 2013, 523. See also present catalogue, cat. 10.
34. Mann and Bohn 2012, 158-181; Marciari 2013, 522-523. Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. 85.GG.26, 47.8 × 35.6 cm. See also cat. 10.
35. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 1976.87.2, 39.1 × 27.5 cm. Pillsbury and Richards 1978, 76-77, cat. 53; Pillsbury 1978, 172; Mann and Bohn 2012, 203-210.
36. Prytz 2011, 654, n. 10; Mann and Bohn 2012, 207-209, cats. 10.10-10.11. Getty, inv. 2017.104, 39.5 × 30.8 cm; former Hester Diamond collection, 37 × 26.3 cm. The latter has not been examined firsthand for this study.
37. Prytz 2011, 653-656; Marciari and Verstegen 2008, 307-311. Stockholm, invs. NMDrh 481 (Shepherd), 43 × 29 cm, and NMDrh 462 (Priest), 42.5 × 29.5 cm. Circumcision: Louvre, inv. M.I. 592.
38. Prytz 2011, 654-655; Marciari and Verstegen 2008, 307-311.
39. Baroni 2022-2023, 340-342, cats. 103, 105, 108; Baroni 2025a, 759–760. Michelina: oil on paper mounted on canvas, 41.5 × 31 cm; acquired from Studio Novo in 1999. Saint Francis: Saint Louis, inv. 238:2019. Saint Sebastian: Kunstmuseum St.Gallen, Annette Bühler gift, 2008.
40. Marciari 2013, 523, questions the attribution of these more finished heads to Barocci. For their interpretation here as autograph reformulations, see Baroni 2025a, 759-760.
41. Baroni 2024a, 189, cat. F.28. Urbino, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, inv. 1990 DIS 231; tempera and oil on paper, 25.6 × 38 cm.
42. Baroni 2022-2023, 333, cat. 91; Baroni 2025a, 759. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. WA1944.100; oil on paper mounted on canvas, 54.5 × 38.3 cm; second version, private collection.
43. Present catalogue, cat. 12.
44. Baroni 2022-2023, 256, cat. 6.
45. Bellori 1672, 195; quoted in Baroni 2025a, 759.
46. Pillsbury and Richards 1978, 24, translation of Bellori by Edmund P. Pillsbury.
47. Pillsbury and Richards 1978, 9-10; Marciari 2013, 521-523; Baroni 2025a, 758-759.
48. Baroni 2022-2023, 299, 698-699, 734; De Marchi 2016, 32; Morselli 1998, 221-227.
49. Baroni 2022-2023, 341, cat. 105; Baroni 2025a, 759-760; Prytz 2011, 654-655. Emiliani 2008, 2:286-287, cats. 78.2-78.3, lists the Michelina twice.
50. Baroni 2022, 303–306. Milan, Castello Sforzesco, Gabinetto dei Disegni, inv. Au D 29-1.
51. Baroni 2022, 308–309, n. 14. Dorotheum, Vienna, 21 October 2014, lots 61-62; oil on panel, 43.4 × 33.3 and 43.4 × 33.7 cm. The second reappeared on 10 November 2021, lot 12.
52. Freeman Bauer 1984, 16-17, 21, n. 24; Marciari and Verstegen 2008, 307-311; Baroni 2022, 305-307; Marciari 2013, 522-523.
53. Baroni 2025a, 758-760; Baroni 2022-2023, 187-194, 251.
54. Present catalogue, cat. 10; Mann and Bohn 2012, 164-167, cats. 8.10-8.11; Marciari 2013, 523. The third version remains under study.
55. Baroni 2022-2023, 333, cat. 91; Baroni 2025a, 759. Oxford, inv. WA1944.100; second version, private collection. Further derivatives include the Lampugnani example at the Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan.
56. Marciari 2013, 523; Baroni 2022-2023, 340-342, cats. 103, 108; Baroni 2025a, 759-760. The interpretation as autograph works for the market develops the argument in Baroni 2025a, rather than the attributional conclusions of Marciari.
57. Cleri 2001, 165-175; Baroni 2022-2023, 584-586, doc. 1590_14; Baroni 2022, 305-306, 309, n. 13. Pesaro, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Comunale, b. 514, Pretore 1590, cited through Cleri; 9 July 1590.
58. Translation supplied here from the transcription in Baroni 2022-2023, 584, clause 10; compare the partial translation in Baroni 2022, 305-306.
59. Baroni 2022-2023, 584-585, clauses 10-11; Baroni 2022, 305-306; Baroni 2025a, 758-760; present catalogue, cat. 12.
60. Lotto 2017, 278-279; Wivel 2019, 307-316; Baroni 2025a, 759-760; Mosconi 2025, 244-246, doc. 347.



A Gordian Knot: Carracci Heads in Oil on Paper

V.

Among the surviving Italian paintings in oil on paper dating from about 1580 to 1610, few groups are as rich, or as difficult to disentangle, as those associated with the Carracci. Heads and figure studies continue to emerge, often with an immediacy that seems to bring the painter's encounter with the model close to us; yet the circumstances of that encounter – the hand responsible, the purpose of the study, even its place within a working life – can be remarkably elusive.[1]

A comparison with an older contemporary such as Federico Barocci helps to define the difficulty. Many of Barocci's painted studies on paper belong to an elaborate preparatory process: a head can be followed through drawings and cartoons into a finished composition, and a substantial nucleus of works can be attributed to him and dated with some confidence. With the Carracci, such connections are far less often recoverable: we have the studies, but usually lack the sequence that would explain them. This may be due both to gaps in the surviving material, some of which may still await identification, and, probably, to a fundamentally different approach to oil on paper: whereas for Barocci the technique occupies a specific place in the preparation or replication of a painting, for the Carracci its use seems much freer, less closely tied either to collecting or to the development of a finished composition. Although Bolognese oils on paper can still be divided, at least broadly, into different types and functions, they seem to have a more independent existence than their counterparts in other Italian schools, almost becoming a genre in their own right, one that may well deserve more sustained attention in the future.

Fig. 1. Annibale Carracci, *Head of a Man in Profile*, oil on canvas, 44.8 × 32.1 cm. Windsor Castle, Royal Collection, inv. RCIN 405471.

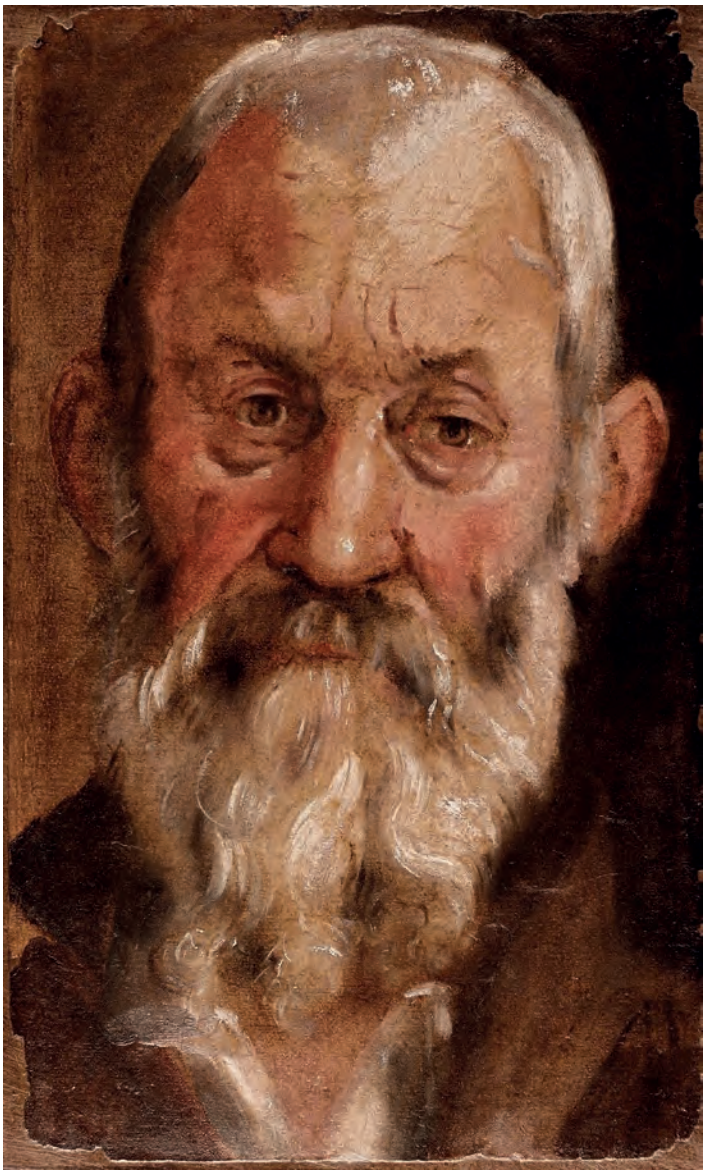


Fig. 2. Annibale Carracci, *Portrait of a Bearded Man*, oil on paper laid down on panel, 44.5 × 26.7 cm. Private collection.

At the same time, the hierarchical structure of a workshop such as Barocci's, with the master at its head and, at a considerable distance below him, a closely supervised network of pupils, associates, and copyists, none of whom developed a comparably independent artistic profile, must be set against the convergence, in the Carracci circle, of three independent artistic personalities of the highest order: Annibale Carracci, Agostino Carracci, and Ludovico Carracci. These, in turn, worked within a closely shared artistic culture, surrounded by pupils and collaborators, some of whom achieved considerable independence and distinction. The very intimacy of that exchange, coupled with the scarcity of secure points of reference, makes their hands difficult to separate.

The physical qualities that make oils on paper, and especially studies of heads, so engaging offer little help in arriving at a critical judgement. The taste for the unfinished, the habit of leaving the support exposed, the relish for bravura brushwork, a restricted palette, a barely indicated background, and the almost complete absence of drapery, clothing, or anything beyond the features of the face all mean that much of what ordinarily guides attribution has been left out. Nor does an informal appearance tell us what a picture was for, making it equally difficult to identify the purposes that might allow these objects to be grouped into categories. A head studied from life could be, at the same time, a portrait, an exercise in virtuosity, a study from the model to be developed in a painting, or an object retained in the workshop for copying exercises.[2] These original functions, not necessarily separate from one another, could change quite quickly, both within the workshop and once the oil on paper entered the art market and private collections.

The resulting difficulty of judgement suggests that a necessary first step will be to assemble as much material as possible, preferably supported by good photographs and thorough technical examination, so as to give the connoisseur a basis

for assessing quality and the historian an initial framework for understanding the phenomenon. Here, however, the subject can only be crossed at some speed – rather like a river in flood, before the current carries one away. Much work remains to be done. Oil studies of heads attributed to the Carracci are probably among the most difficult problems in the history of connoisseurship: a Gordian knot that cannot simply be cut if we are to make a first attempt to delineate the history of oil on paper in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy.

Old and new attributions

Studies of heads, whether on canvas or on paper, form a distinct chapter within the twentieth-century rediscovery of the Carracci, though one inseparable from that larger story. Interest in these works rests, of course, on the early sources, which emphasize the central place of observation in the family's artistic identity: Giovanni Pietro Bellori famously made Nature Annibale's true teacher, while Carlo Cesare Malvasia stressed drawing *dal modello*, anatomical study, and attention to everyday life.[3] These now familiar ideas passed directly into Roberto Longhi's approach to the painter, for whom the young Annibale's directness and freedom of handling became essential to understanding the renewal of painting at the end of the sixteenth century.[4] Informal heads offered a particularly vivid expression of those qualities, their spontaneous and personal character freeing them from the expectations and conventions that governed major public and religious commissions.

Among the earliest, most important, and most debated points of reference for Carracci heads is the celebrated *Head of a Man in Profile*, an oil sketch on canvas in the Royal Collection, RCIN 405471, whose attributional history shows how much could depend on the recovery of a single picture. Though painted on canvas, it became a touchstone for the heads on paper (fig. 1). Recorded without an artist's name by the end of the eighteenth century, it was listed as Titian by 1818; Longhi's attribution to

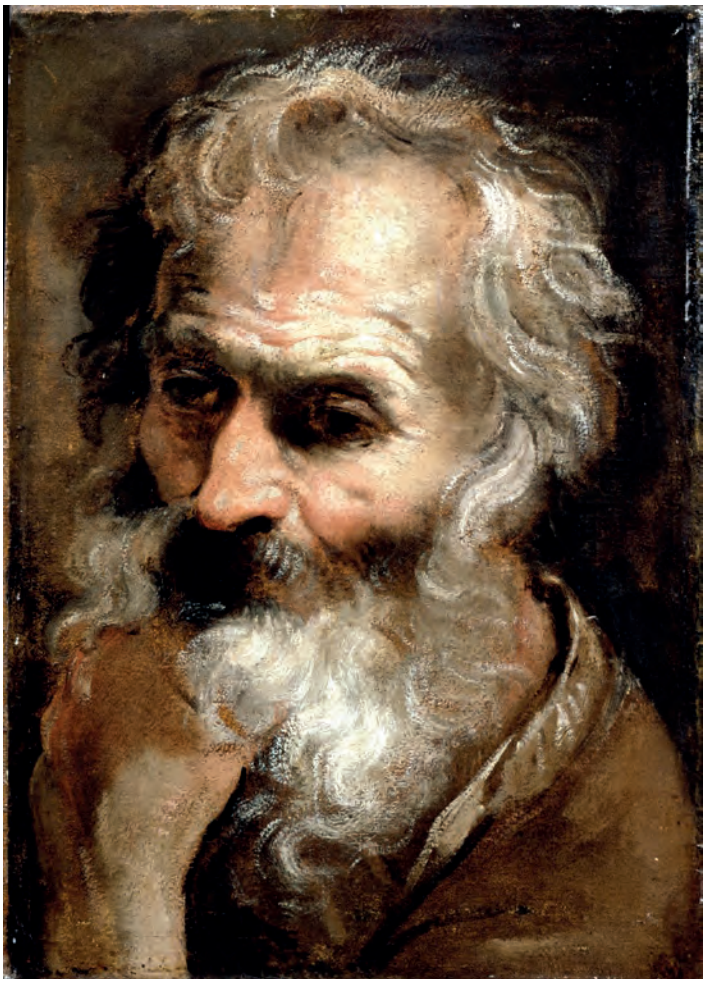


Fig. 3. Annibale Carracci, *Head of an Old Man*, oil on paper laid down on canvas, 39.4 × 27.9 cm. London, Dulwich Picture Gallery, inv. DPG286.

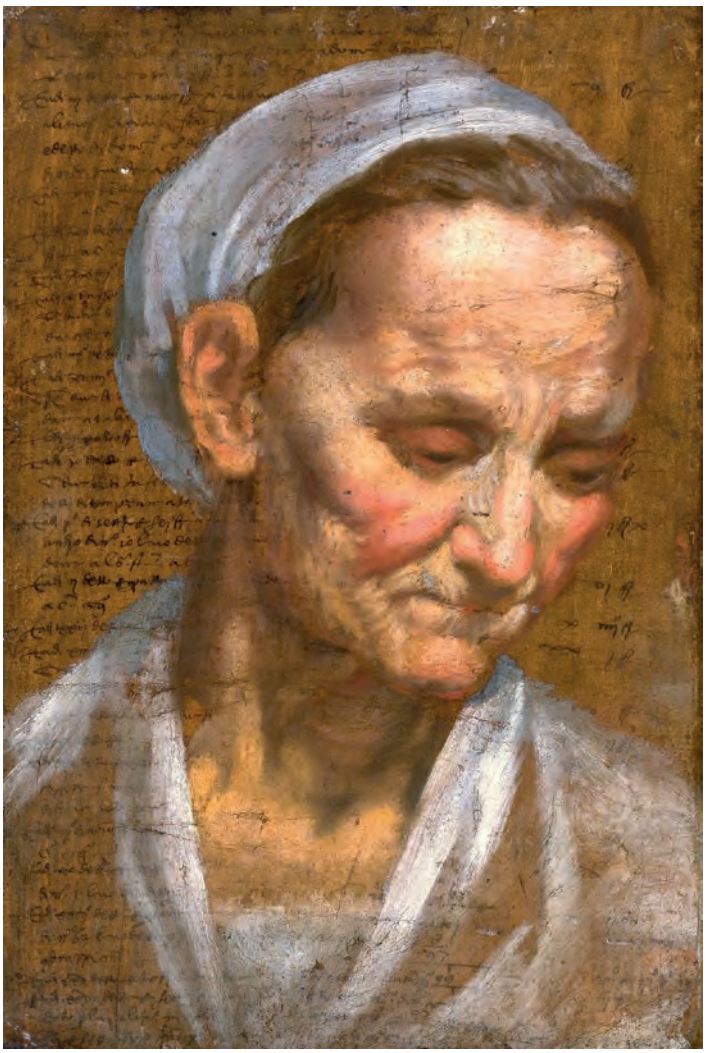


Fig. 4. Carracci family workshop, *Head of an Old Woman Looking Down to the Right*, oil on extensively inscribed paper laid down on panel, 39.7 × 27.3 cm. Formerly private collection.

Annibale, advanced by 1929, gained acceptance only gradually, and as late as 1960 the picture could still be exhibited as Sebastiano Ricci, before entering the Royal Collection catalogue under Annibale's name.[5] Its extraordinary freedom of execution has since become one of the strongest arguments in its favour.[6] It is recognizably a portrait, yet the isolated head, neutral setting, and broad handling bring it close to a *testa di carattere*, with a powerful impression of immediacy. To call it modern explains nothing about its authorship, but may help explain its appeal to the critics who recovered the young Annibale: once admitted to his early work, it became a measure for other heads, shaping the very field within which later attributions would be made.

Turning from oil on canvas to oil on paper, a central, though less settled, place is occupied by the *Head of a Man Laughing*, traditionally called the *Buffoon*, in the Galleria Borghese. Painted in oil on paper laid down on canvas, 44.5 × 29.5 cm, it has been dated to about 1585.[7] A laughing head 'supposed to be of Caracci' appears in Robert Harpur's Roman collection in 1677, while the Borghese picture itself was recorded in 1693 as a small painting of a laughing buffoon, without an attribution; it later passed under Caravaggio's name, until Longhi's intervention in 1928 helped restore it to Annibale. Although the sources and comparisons with known paintings confirm that laughing heads by Annibale were present in Baroque collections, the place of this particular head within the Carracci group remains disputed. Daniele Benati retained it in the 2006 exhibition devoted to Annibale, while acknowledging the problem; Aidan Weston-Lewis subsequently rejected it, finding the characterization and parts of the handling difficult to reconcile with the master's hand.[8]

While heads in public collections provide the principal points of reference for scholarship, being more readily accessible to scholars and therefore more likely to be included in exhibitions and publications, privately owned works also play a fundamental role.

Their appearance on the market often prompts a fresh assessment of technique and quality, making excellent photographs and newly gathered technical information available at regular intervals. Such is the case with the fine Portrait of a Bearded Man, in oil on paper laid down on panel (see fig. 2). Formerly owned by Paul and Eula Ganz and later with Jean-Luc Baroni, the painting was presented as Annibale at Colnaghi as early as 1956, the very year in which the landmark Bologna exhibition consolidated the renewed appreciation of the Carracci. Its broad handling was initially associated with Annibale's Venetian experience, and a date of 1589-1590 proposed. A later reading placed it around 1583: the knowledge of Titian apparent here need not have depended on a journey to Venice but could already have reached Annibale through paintings available to him in Bologna.

The reappearance of the *Portrait of a Bearded Man* in London in 2017 allowed both the execution and the support to be examined afresh.[9] On that occasion, the head was brought into relation with the portraits of blind sitters, the *Head of an Old Woman* at the Fitzwilliam Museum (inv. PD.17-1992, fig. 8), and the *Head of an Old Man* at Dulwich Picture Gallery, inv. DPG286 (fig. 3). The last offers a reminder of how easily the boundaries of this group can shift: long regarded as painted directly on canvas, the Dulwich head proved during conservation to be on paper, subsequently laid down. Here it was the recognition of the support, rather than a change of attribution, that gave the work a different place in the history of the technique.

The 2006-2007 exhibition devoted to Annibale Carracci in Bologna and Rome gave this dispersed material a substantial setting for comparison. In the section entitled *Il laboratorio del "vivo"* ('The Study of Life'), paintings, drawings, and informal heads were brought together around the study of the living model, with the former Ganz portrait, the Royal Collection profile, and the Borghese *Buffoon* appearing alongside works whose attributions were more openly tentative.[10] Seen together, they invited questions that an isolated picture could scarcely answer: how scale and support affected the handling, how an expression was caught, and where a study began to become a portrait. As might be expected, the exhibition did not settle the group definitively, but helped lay the foundations for further enquiry, its critical reception bringing renewed support for some works and objections to others.[11] Even after decades of scholarship, basic questions of authorship and chronology remained open.[12] Disagreement nevertheless had become more specific: the heads could now be considered in relation to one another, with each rediscovery or technical finding capable of altering the balance.

Purposes and practices

Attribution alone can take us only so far, and the uncertainty surrounding the authorship of these works has tended to impede further consideration of their function and typology, leaving considerable scope for a broader reassessment that has largely yet to be undertaken. In this respect, the six small portraits of blind sitters brought together by Anna Ottani Cavina at the 1987 Washington symposium offer another way into the problem. Three depict men and three women; two were assigned to Annibale, the others more broadly to the Carracci environment.[13] Although their definitive attribution to one or another member of the family remains problematic, their shared subject, scale, and manner of observation suggest circumstances of production that may have mattered as much as the identity of any one painter.

Through comparison with a drawing in the Uffizi, Ottani Cavina was able to suggest a possible social setting: the *Compagnia dei Ciechi*, established in Bologna under Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti in the charitable culture of Catholic Reform, whose individual members the portraits might record, perhaps during sessions from life.[14] Although the hypothesis remains tentative, it was one of the earliest proposals to reconsider these



Fig. 5. Annibale Carracci, *Head of a Woman*, oil on extensively inscribed paper laid down on canvas, 42.8 × 29.5 cm. Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. 2019.4.

oils on paper as products of a particular setting, rather than merely as a recurring type or collectors' objects, each admired in isolation for its brilliant execution. Quite apart from the questions of attribution, this approach is particularly suggestive because it opens the way to a fresh understanding of the relationship between support, technique, and the appearance of the work. The choice of a humble material such as paper may reflect the fact that these studies were intended principally for the artist rather than for sale; at the same time, one cannot help noticing how closely their economy of means and delicacy of handling accord with the sensitivity with which blindness is approached, with respect for the sitter's dignity rather than as an emblem of poverty or affliction. The 'lay' realism of this group of heads – Ottani Cavina's term – thus goes hand in hand with the immediate yet intimate technique in which they were painted, oil on paper. A significant parallel is offered by Annibale's informal drawings, made as observations from life but retaining faces and gestures, initially studied for their own interest, that could remain available for later invention.[15] Painted studies may have served a similar purpose within this working practice, which would also help explain why so much of this material was preserved.[16]

The presence and circulation of such material within the Carracci workshop can be imagined through a comparison between two heads of old women: the *Head of an Old Woman Looking Down to the Right* (see fig. 4), offered at Sotheby's in 2013 as Carracci Family Workshop, with the possibility of an attribution to the young Annibale left open, and the better-known *Head of a Woman* acquired by the J. Paul Getty Museum in 2019, inv. 2019.4 (see fig. 5). Both are painted on reused paper covered with manuscript writing, which contributes to their visual affinity. One might cautiously suggest that they represent the same sitter, given the close correspondence of the face, chemise, and even the cap; their execution, however, seems different, more attentive and controlled in the Getty example, freer and almost careless in the painting on the market, where the white of the collar is barely indicated and the background is left exposed, without the grey worked into the other version. These two approaches to the same subject suggest several possible interpretations, none conclusive. Could they be works made at the same sitting by two different artists, perhaps a master and a pupil, or do they record different moments in the practice of a single painter? Might one be the master's prototype and the other a later derivation by someone in his circle, an academic exercise in establishing a 'type' that evidently circulated widely within the Carracci workshop, as the comparable head at Cambridge, already mentioned, also suggests?

The comparison of related works as they re-emerge from the market or private collections is perhaps one of the most fascinating, if often inconclusive, ways of reconsidering this material. An exceptional case is offered by the *Portrait of a Man, Bust-Length, in a Ruff*, formerly in the Nelson Shanks Collection (fig. 6), which, after an uncertain history in the literature, was published as Annibale in 2016 in a discussion of his continuing engagement with the *vero*.[17] Its reappearance at Sotheby's in January 2022 provided an opportunity to return to the question.[18] The Shanks canvas closely resembles a work long familiar in Carracci studies, the *Head of a Man with an Angry Expression* in Palazzo Pitti, an oil on paper measuring 40 × 33 cm, included in the 2006 exhibition devoted to Annibale and regarded since then, all but unanimously, as a cornerstone of his activity in oil on paper (fig. 7).[19] Massimo Pulini has recently made a persuasive case for interpreting the paper study as an earlier idea for the portrait on canvas.[20] The correspondences of physiognomy and composition, despite differences in execution, make the proposal worth considering, while slight changes to the eyebrows and mouth transform the expression, as Benati has observed in comparing the two works.[21] That observation draws them closer without, by itself, establishing which came first.

If the proposed sequence is correct, we would have a rare glimpse of a Carracci head on paper developing into a more complete painting: the Pitti study concentrates on the face, while the canvas places the same physiognomy in a fuller setting without relinquishing much of the abbreviated handling. Something of the process so often recoverable in Barocci would become visible here too, though on a more modest scale. Unfortunately, just when one thinks the destination has been reached, the road seems to continue. In a recent study of works by the Carracci in the Uffizi, Marco Riccòmini has once again questioned the attribution of both heads, suggesting that they predate the Carracci and are not Bolognese, and identifying, in the canvas in particular, a Titianesque legacy.[22] At the same time, Carlo Falciani, in catalogue entry no. 1 of the present volume, has proposed attributing the Pitti head to Francesco Salviati, opening up new avenues for its interpretation.

Whether or not they are admitted into the problematic family of Carracci heads, the formerly Nelson Shanks/Pitti Palace pair remains exceptional, since most Carraccesque or Carraccesque-looking heads have no such identifiable destination. Yet, alongside the portraits of blind sitters, it offers a way of making sense of apparently isolated works. One group may share a social setting and repeated encounters with models, while the other may preserve successive stages in the making of a picture. Neither resolves the question of authorship, but both bring the objects a little closer to the circumstances in which they were painted.

Possible perspectives

Bringing together a series of case studies – by no means definitive, but recurrent in the critical literature and therefore sufficient to suggest an initial, if necessarily broad, pattern in the production of the Carracci of oils on paper – allows us to offer some general observations on the purpose and function of these works. These should, of course, be understood as provisional notes towards an ongoing enquiry rather than as firm conclusions.

Documentary evidence for the collecting of oils on paper is extremely scarce and must also be considered in the light of the hybrid nature of these objects, which could be described quite generally either as drawings or as paintings. Among the most revealing sources is the post-mortem inventory of the Bolognese Marchese Alessandro Facchinetti, compiled in 1685, which lists numerous framed works on paper, including oils, beside paintings on more conventional supports.[23] By the later seventeenth century, if not before, such material had evidently left the workshop and found a place on the walls of sophisticated collectors, who, as the Facchinetti inventory indicates, displayed it as painting in its own right. This makes it difficult to trace the historical passage from 'workshop study' to 'collector's picture', although the quality of the works and their occasional character as portraits suggest that at least some Carracci heads in oil may have found their way out of the studio during their makers' lifetimes. At the same time, material intended for copying and teaching within the workshop could clearly be reconsidered after an artist's death as something to be prized for the freedom of its execution, even if collectors differed in their appreciation of unfinished work. Leopoldo de' Medici's well-known disdain for sketches on paper as 'neither painting nor drawing' – perhaps also a bargaining position intended to lower the price of a category of objects he had in fact acquired in considerable numbers – nicely illustrates the difficulty of finding a place for such material within seventeenth-century collecting.[24]

Survival also needs to be distinguished from original abundance, for Giulio Mancini's report of numerous oil *disegni* by Annibale sits uneasily with the small number now recognized.[25] Loss may account for some of the difference, but remounting, transfer, altered attributions, and supports concealed beneath later linings may account for more.





Fig. 6. Annibale Carracci (alternatively attributed to the Venetian school), *Portrait of a Man, Bust-Length*, in a Ruff, oil on canvas, 43.2 × 35.9 cm. Formerly Nelson Shanks Collection.

Fig. 7. Annibale Carracci (alternatively attributed to Francesco Salviati), *Head of a Man with an Angry Expression*, oil on paper, 40 × 33 cm. Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, inv. 1912 no. 310.



Fig. 8. Annibale Carracci, *Head of an Old Woman*, oil on extensively inscribed paper laid down on panel, 42 × 29 cm. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, inv. PD.17-1992.

Among the broader questions, the origins of the Carracci's practice in oil on paper remain difficult to establish. Venetian painting offers an obvious context, above all the practice of Tintoretto and the broad handling associated with Titian, both of which have informed accounts of the Carracci's painted studies. Yet monochrome and coloured studies were sufficiently widespread in sixteenth-century Italy to make a single line of descent doubtful: a useful technique could reach a workshop by more than one route. The proposed early dates make this more than a theoretical caution: if the former Ganz head belongs around 1583, Annibale was already pursuing such experiments before the Venetian journey usually placed in 1587-1588. The Young Man Laughing on paper in the Galleria Borghese, dated around 1584-1585, suggests a related development in composition, as the oblique torso and turning head lend the sitter the beginnings of an action; Venetian experience may have encouraged this more animated encounter with the viewer, but need not have initiated it.

It is also possible that the Carracci found a precedent in Barocci's work in the same medium. The latter's sustained use of oil on paper was well established, and his painting was closely studied in Bologna, especially by Ludovico, in the early 1580s, precisely when Annibale seems to have begun his own production on paper. The presence, as early as 1662, of Barocci's Saint Jude Thaddeus – a painted study on paper now in the Doria Pamphilj collection – in the Facchinetti collection discussed above, where it was placed in direct comparison with works by the Carracci, Reni, Guercino and other Emilian painters, opens up a line of enquiry into collecting and taste that would be worth pursuing, not least in relation to possible artistic exchanges and influences. For the moment, however, there is insufficient evidence to take this investigation much further. A direct line of influence from Barocci to the Carracci remains difficult to demonstrate, but it is clear that the Carracci worked within a culture in which several precedents had already made the possibilities of oil on paper available to them. The question is not only how they used those possibilities, but also where they encountered them. Their persistent interest in painted heads is, however, among the clearest indications of what they made of those possibilities. There were precedents here too: Lorenzo Lotto's documented teste colorite ad olio belong to an earlier history of colour entering the study from life. In the Carracci material, however, faces recur with striking insistence, as old men and women, blind sitters, laughing youths, and children offer different occasions for observing how age, expression, and physical circumstance distinguish one person from another.

Paper lent itself to this attention: portable and comparatively inexpensive, it allowed colour and tonal modelling to be combined with the directness of drawing, while a background could be left unresolved once the head had yielded what the painter wanted. As with informal drawings, the observation might be sufficient in itself while remaining available for later use.[26] The study did not have to choose, at the moment of its making, between experiment and invention, which may help explain why so many heads have no known sequel: some appear to preserve an encounter with a sitter rather than a step towards an altarpiece or portrait, the exercise of looking and painting itself having perhaps been their purpose.[27] That possibility should remain one among several, but it frees us from treating the absence of a finished composition as a missing answer in every case.

The written sheets beneath some of these faces give the question a material form. Several heads were painted over manuscript pages, apparently taken from accounts or similar documents, though they need not have come from the same book, and shared supports cannot prove a shared hand (fig. 8).[28] They do, however, bring us close to an ordinary workshop resource: paper already used for something else. There may be several reasons for this choice, which at present seems characteristic of the Carracci group of heads, beginning with economy: a discarded

sheet was an inexpensive surface for an exercise whose eventual value could hardly be foreseen, allowing the artist to reserve the more costly sheets of white or blue paper for studies in pen or chalk. It is nevertheless worth observing that, in the Carracci's case, the reuse of the support sometimes appears to involve a deliberate decision to leave the underlying writing visible. This is not easily explained as an unintended effect, since oil on paper usually requires the preparation of the support, and an opaque preparation, rather than a transparent one, would conceal or at least obscure what lay beneath. Allowing the writing to remain visible could therefore have been a conscious choice, whether to assert the work's immediacy and private purpose or to create an effect of refined *sprezzatura* that seems consistent with the Carracci's approach, especially Annibale's.[29] There is, of course, no firm evidence that the Carracci deliberately selected written paper for its visual effect, nor can its appearance today tell us precisely how it looked when first painted; technical examination of the preparation and paint layers would be needed before an argument in this direction could carry much weight.

Another prominent characteristic of Bolognese heads in oil is the sustained attention to the face, pursued with economical means and often left at the point where observation had become convincing. These heads occupy a space between drawing, portraiture, and painting because the activity that produced them could serve all three, an open, intermediate character that remains particularly distinctive of the Carracci and their circle. Indeed, it has encouraged a tendency, readily apparent to anyone leafing through auction catalogues, to label as 'Bolognese' or 'Carraccesque' almost any freely painted, unfinished head in oil on paper, especially when it uses the white of a collar or garment to detach the face from the background, as the Carracci themselves so often did. Only through sustained study of this material, and the identification of regional groups beyond the Bolognese – including Neapolitan, Genoese and Roman examples – will more substantial and coherent bodies of work emerge. These, in turn, will enable a fuller reassessment of what was arguably the defining moment in the history of oil painting on paper in Italy, in terms of the number of surviving works, the quality of their execution and the enduring influence of the practice on subsequent generations.

NOTES

1. These pages offer a provisional framework for the material and its interpretation, rather than a definitive corpus, and owe much to the work of scholars of the Carracci and their circle. I am particularly grateful to Daniele Benati and Carlo Falciani for discussing with me the problems and possibilities involved in the study of oils on paper.
2. Benati 2026, unpaginated, for the distinction between portraiture and *testa di carattere*.
3. Bellori 1672, p. 39; Malvasia 1967, p. 277. On Annibale's relation to nature see also Benati 2006.
4. Longhi 1957, pp. 33-42; Posner 1971, I; Boschloo 1974. See also Arcangeli 1956, pp. 17-48.
5. Benati and Riccòmini 2006, p. 100, cat. II.4, entry by Daniele Benati, for the attributional history, including the cautious reception of Longhi's proposal in 1929 and its later acceptance in the Royal Collection catalogue.
6. Weston-Lewis 2007, p. 258.
7. The date is proposed in Benati and Riccòmini 2006, p. 110, cat. II.9, entry by Daniele Benati.
8. For Benati's retention of the work, see Benati and Riccòmini 2006, p. 110, cat. II.9, entry by Daniele Benati; for Weston-Lewis's objections, Weston-Lewis 2007, p. 258.
9. Sotheby's, Old Masters Evening Sale, London, 5 July 2017, lot 30, "Annibale Carracci, Portrait of a Bearded Man", also for the new recognition of the support of the Dulwich Picture Gallery head.
10. Benati and Riccòmini 2006, cats. II.3, II.4, II.9 – II.11, entries by Daniele Benati; pp. 118-119, cat. II.13, entries by Alessandro Brogi.
11. Weston-Lewis 2007, pp. 256-260, supporting the Royal Collection profile while questioning or rejecting other exhibits; Riccòmini 2023, pp. 12-13, who aptly described the Carracci character heads as a 'dark wood' and openly questioned whether the heads presented in the 2006 exhibition were all by the same hand.
12. Weston-Lewis 2007, p. 258.
13. Ottani Cavina 1987, pp. 89-99.
14. Ottani Cavina 1989, pp. 27-28, for the addition of the Uffizi drawing and the tentative connection with the Compagnia dei Ciechi.
15. Clare Robertson discusses the relation between informal observation and later invention in Robertson 1997, pp. 30-40.
16. Robertson explicitly refers to Wittkower's discussion of oil on paper: Robertson 1997, p. 40, n. 92; Wittkower 1952, p. 14.
17. Benati 2016, pp. 10-12.
18. Sotheby's, Master to Master: The Nelson Shanks Collection, New York, 27 January 2022, lot 148, "Attributed to Annibale Carracci, Portrait of a Man, Bust-Length, in a Ruff".
19. Benati and Riccòmini 2006, pp. 118-119, cat. II.13, entry by Alessandro Brogi.
20. Pulini 2025.
21. Benati 2026, unpaginated, figs. 4-5. Benati discusses the change of expression; the proposed sequence from the Pitti study to the Shanks canvas is Pulini's hypothesis (Pulini 2025).
22. Riccòmini 2023, pp. 12-13.
23. Morselli 1998, pp. 221-227.
24. Freeman Bauer 1984, pp. 13–24, on the varied uses and reception of painted sketches.
25. Freeman Bauer 1984, p. 21.
26. Robertson 1997, pp. 30-40.
27. Weston-Lewis 2007, p. 257.
28. Sotheby's, Old Master Paintings, New York, 31 January 2013, lot 51, "The Carracci Family Workshop, probably the Young Annibale Carracci, Head of an Old Woman Looking Down to the Right".
29. Pulini 2025; Limb 2022, pp. 287-302.

VI.

Appendix. List of Notable Works in Oil on Paper and related works on flexible supports in Public Collections

The research and arguments presented in this volume draw on an initial survey of works painted in oil on paper in selected public and private collections. Inevitably partial, this survey is intended as the beginning of a broader enquiry. It extends beyond Italian artists of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries to include other European schools and works dating to around the middle of the nineteenth century. The collections surveyed were chosen in part because their holdings are accessible online, whether catalogued as drawings or paintings – a distinction that reflects the ambiguous position of these objects between the two fields.

Although the selection of museums developed around the needs of the research rather than a systematic programme, certain patterns emerge. The exceptional concentration of works in oil on paper at the Uffizi, represented here by only a preliminary selection, reflects both the age and breadth of the collection and Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici's collecting interests in the seventeenth century, while the holdings of the Galleria Borghese similarly bear witness to those of Cardinal Scipione Borghese. Comparable considerations apply to the Louvre, whose holdings include works from the collections of Everhard Jabach, Pierre Crozat and Pierre-Jean Mariette. These collections took shape in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when painted heads on paper enjoyed particular favour. Their appeal may have owed something to the renewed interest, in both France and Italy, in pastel heads, which offered a comparable intimacy of scale and immediacy of colour.

As discussed in Chapter II, neither the identification of paper as a support nor that of oil as a binding medium is always straightforward. Technical descriptions may therefore change following closer examination, as may attributions. The works listed here do not exhaust the holdings of the respective museums: they constitute a body of material assembled in the course of preparing this volume. The purpose of publishing it is to provide a starting point for further examination, additions and reassessment.

Museums are arranged alphabetically by city. Within each collection, works are grouped chronologically by the birth dates of the artists to whom they are attributed; anonymous works are placed according to their stated dates, with undated examples at the end. Artists' names and biographical details follow the Getty Union List of Artist Names (ULAN), retaining qualifications where dates or places are uncertain; for Federico Barocci, the birth date c. 1533 is adopted here. Technical descriptions derive from the respective museum records and have been standardised as far as possible, with reference to Carlo James, *Visual Identification and Analysis of Old Master Drawing Techniques* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2010). Dimensions are given in centimetres, height before width. Where available, the museum inventory number is given at the end of each entry.

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

Attributed to **Pomponio Amalteo** (Motta di Livenza, 1505 – San Vito al Tagliamento, 1588). *Supper at Emmaus*. Oil colour on paper. Inv. RP-T-1956-130.

Adriaan de Weerdt (Brussels, c. 1510 – Cologne, c. 1590). *The Visitation*, c. 1573. Red and black chalk and brown oil paint on paper prepared with oil paint; incised; 23.9 × 17.7 cm. Inv. RP-T-2023-20.

– *The Adoration of the Magi*, c. 1573. Red chalk and brown oil paint on oil-prepared paper; incised; 24.5 × 19.8 cm. Inv. RP-T-2023-21.

– *The Purification of the Virgin*, c. 1573. Black chalk and brown oil paint on oil-prepared paper; incised; 24.5 × 19.5 cm. Inv. RP-T-2023-22.

– *Christ among the Doctors*, c. 1573. Black chalk and brown oil paint on oil-prepared paper; incised; 24 × 19.5 cm. Inv. RP-T-2023-23.

Anonymous, Northern Netherlands. *Portrait of Jan van Egmond (1438-1516), Count of Egmond*, after c. 1510. Oil on paper mounted on panel; 19.5 × 13.5 cm. Inv. SK-A-1547.

– *Portrait of Magdalena van Werdenborgh (1464-1538)*, after c. 1510. Oil on paper mounted on panel; 18 × 14 cm. Inv. SK-A-1548.

Jacopo Palma il Giovane (Venice, c. 1548 – Venice, 1628). *Four Saints in Adoration and the Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1608-1628. Brown and white oil paint over black chalk on buff paper; 38 × 26.5 cm. Inv. RP-T-1976-10.

Domenico Tintoretto (Venice, 1560 – Venice, 1635). *Job on the Dunghill, Surrounded by His Friends*, late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. Brown and pinkish-white oil paint on blue-green paper; 19.9 × 30 cm. Inv. RP-T-1964-81.

Cornelis van Haarlem (Haarlem, 1562 – Haarlem, 1638). *Studies of a Seated Nude Man and Two Half-Length Women*, c. 1620-1625. Oil grisaille on two sheets of paper; upper sheet 18.8 × 25.7 cm, lower sheet 20.9 × 19.1 cm. Inv. RP-T-1965-167.

Adriaen Pietersz van de Venne (Delft, 1589 – The Hague, 1662). *Portrait of Princes Maurits and Frederik Hendrik*, c. 1615-1625. Oil on paper; 12 × 10.5 cm. Inv. SK-A-1776.

– *Prince Maurits of Orange on His Deathbed*, 1625 or later. Oil on brownish paper; 7.1 × 10.3 cm. Inv. RP-T-1888-A-1529.

Dirck Hals (Haarlem, 1591 – Haarlem, 1656). *Seated Man with a Sword*, seventeenth century. Oil paint on varnished paper; 27 × 16.8 cm. Inv. RP-T-1989-99.

Anonymous, Southern Netherlands. *The Last Judgement*, first half of the seventeenth century. Pen, chalk and oil paint on paper laid on canvas; 83 × 62 cm. Inv. SK-C-1484.

Rembrandt van Rijn (Leiden, 1606 – Amsterdam, 1669). *Joseph Telling His Dreams*, 1633. Oil on paper mounted on cardboard; 51 × 39 cm. Inv. SK-A-3477.

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione (Genoa, 1609 – Mantua, 1664). *Christ on the Cross*, c. 1650-1659. Graphite with oil paint and coloured watercolour on paper; 39 × 27.7 cm. Inv. RP-T-1981-65.

Gerard Terborch (Zwolle, 1617 – Deventer, 1681). *Woman in Peasant Costume*, c. 1648-1650. Oil on paper mounted on panel; 29.5 × 24.5 cm. Inv. SK-A-4038.

Jacob van der Does the Elder (1623-1673). *Five Studies of the Head of a Sheep*, seventeenth century. Oil on paper with a black-chalk framing line; 17.4 × 25.9 cm. Inv. RP-T-1885-A-550(R).

Attributed to **Adriaen van de Velde** (Amsterdam, 1636 – Amsterdam, 1672). *Cat Lying with Its Head between Its Forepaws*, seventeenth century. Coloured oil paint on varnished paper; 8.6 × 13.2 cm. Inv. RP-T-1967-95.

– *Cat Lying on Its Back, with a Separate Study of a Paw*, seventeenth century. Coloured oil paint on varnished paper; 9.1 × 11.8 cm. Inv. RP-T-1967-96.

– *Cat Looking Down from a Raised Position*, seventeenth century. Coloured oil paint on varnished paper; 6.1 × 8.3 cm. Inv. RP-T-1967-97.

– *Cat Playing beside a Wall*, seventeenth century. Coloured oil paint on varnished paper; 5.9 × 8 cm. Inv. RP-T-1967-98.

– *Cat Lying on Its Side, Its Left Forepaw Extended*, seventeenth century. Coloured oil paint on varnished paper; 7.5 × 12 cm. Inv. RP-T-1967-99.

Moses ter Borch (Zwolle, 1645 – Harwich, 1667). *Self-Portrait, Formerly Called Portrait of Jan Fabus*, 1660-1661. Oil on paper; 8.9 × 7.9 cm. Inv. SK-A-2118.

Jan Cornelisz. Hoogsaat (1654 – after 1730). *Self-Portrait*, 1706-1730. Oil paint on paper; 34.2 × 23.2 cm. Inv. RP-T-1940-529.

Adriaen Coorte (1659/1664 – 1707 or later). *Still Life with a Bowl of Strawberries*, 1696. Oil on paper mounted on panel; 28.9 × 22.3 cm. Inv. SK-A-5098.

– *Still Life with Four Apricots*, 1698. Oil on paper mounted on panel; 28.8 × 21.1 cm. Inv. SK-A-5099.

– *Still Life with Shells*, 1698. Oil on paper mounted on panel; 29 × 22.5 cm. Inv. SK-C-1761.

– *Still Life with a Sprig of Gooseberries*, 1699. Oil on paper mounted on panel; 28.7 × 21.2 cm. Inv. SK-A-5100.

– *Still Life with Three Peaches*, 1705. Oil on paper mounted on panel; 28.7 × 21.2 cm. Inv. SK-A-5101.

Giuseppe Maria Crespi (Bologna, 1665 – Bologna, 1747), after Lodovico Carracci. *Two Caryatids*. Oil on paper; 35.7 × 19.1 cm. Inv. RP-T-1955-129.

Attributed to **Benjamin Arlaud** (c. 1670 – after 1731). *Portrait of William III*, 1689-1719. Oil on cardboard; 9.5 × 7.3 cm. Inv. SK-A-4296.

Nicolaas Verkolje (Delft, 1673 – Amsterdam, 1746). *Portrait of the Painter Carel Borchaert Voet*, c. 1720. Black, grey and white oil paint on paper; oval, 16.9 × 14.8 cm. Inv. RP-T-1940-462.

Cornelis Troost (1696 – 1750). *Portrait of Gerrit Sichterman*, c. 1725. Oil on paper mounted on panel; 39.5 × 31 cm. Inv. SK-A-3933.

Wouter Johannes van Troostwijk (Amsterdam, 1782 – Amsterdam, 1810). *Self-Portrait*, c. 1809. Oil on paper, mounted on cardboard and panel; 51.3 × 40 cm. Inv. SK-A-4857.

Anton Mauve (1838-1888). *The Studio of the Haarlem Painter Pieter Frederik van Os*, c. 1856-1857. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; 49 × 61 cm. Inv. SK-A-2436.

Anonymous. *Hunters Resting with Dogs*. Oil colour on prepared paper. Inv. KOG-ZG-1-4-138.

Cambridge,
The Fitzwilliam Museum

Federico Barocci (Urbino, c. 1533 – Urbino, 1612). *The Institution of the Eucharist*, c. 1603. Pen and brown ink and brown wash over black chalk, heightened with white, with selected passages in grisaille oil paint, squared in black chalk, on paper laid on a second sheet; 51.5 × 35.5 cm. Inv. PD.1-2002.

Otto van Veen (1556-1629). *On the Disposal of Wealth: Illustration to Horace, Carmina III, 40-45*. Grisaille oil paint over graphite on paper marouflé on oak panel; 18.5 × 14.7 cm. Inv. PD.12-1980.

Lodovico Cigoli (1559 – Rome, 1613). *Study of the Head and Bust of a Youth Looking to the Lower Left*, 1594. Oil on paper laid on canvas; 44.3 × 36.4 cm. Inv. PD.10-1983.

Annibale Carracci (Bologna, 1560 – Rome, 1609). *Head of an Old Woman*, c. 1590. Oil on paper laid on panel; 42 × 29 cm. Inv. PD.17-1992.

William Hogarth (London, 1697 – London, 1764). *A Prisoner of the Fleet Being Examined before a Committee of the House of Commons*, 1728-1729. Oil on paper, two sheets joined; graphite sketches of fetters on the verso. Inv. 675.

Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland

After **Titian** (Pieve di Cadore, c. 1488 – Venice, 1576). *The Descent of the Holy Spirit*. Oil colours on paper; 34.5 × 43.5 cm. Inv. D 3103.

Attributed to **Bartolomeo Passarotti** (Bologna, 1529 – Bologna, 1592), after Veronese. *A Spaniel*, late 1580s. Brown and white oil paint on brown-prepared paper, laid down; 25.4 × 32.1 cm. Inv. D 1674.

After **Federico Barocci** (Urbino, c. 1533 – Urbino, 1612). *The Visitation*. Oil study on paper. Inv. RSA 767.

Jacopo Palma il Giovane (Venice, c. 1548 – Venice, 1628). *Saint Martin and the Beggar, with Studies of Other Figures*, c. 1609. Oil paint over black chalk on buff paper, squared for transfer; 39.1 × 25.9 cm. Inv. D 697.

Pietro Faccini (Bologna, c. 1562 – Bologna, 1602). *Madonna and Child*. Pen and ink and oil paint on paper washed deep brown; 38.3 × 27.8 cm. Inv. RSA 966.

Giulio Cesare Procaccini (Bologna, 1574 – Milan, 1625). *The Dead Christ with Mary Magdalen and Mourning Angels*, c. 1616–1618. Oil on paper laid down on panel; 28 × 43 cm. Inv. NGL 004.09.

Francesco Furini (Florence, 1603 – Florence, 1646). *Personification of Poetry*, c. 1633. Oil on paper laid on panel; 41.4 × 34.5 cm. Inv. NG 31.

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione (Genoa, 1609 – Mantua, 1664). *Rachel Hiding the Idols*, c. 1650-1655. Oil colour on paper; 27.1 × 40.6 cm. Inv. D 700.

Studio of **Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione** (Genoa, 1609 – Mantua, 1664). *Music-Making Goatherds*, c. 1650-1660. Oil on canvas or paper support. Inv. D 1665.

Attributed to **Frans Wouters** (Lier, 1612/1614 – Antwerp, 1659), after Titian. *Diana and Actaeon*, c. 1630-1640. Oil on paper mounted on panel; 38.4 × 39.4 cm. Inv. NG 2875.

Unknown artist, formerly associated with the circle of Giacomo Cavedone. *Christ at the Pool of Bethesda*, c. 1620-1650. Oil colour on paper, laid down; 38.4 × 29.1 cm. Inv. D NG 637.

Carlo Innocenzo Carlone (Scaria, 1686 – Como, 1775). *Study of Two Figures in Adoration, Possibly Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary, or Saints Joachim and Anna*, possibly 1750s. Oil on paper; 32 × 32.5 cm. Inv. D 4689.

– *Floating Putti*, possibly 1750s. Oil on paper, arched top; 24.2 × 33 cm. Inv. D 4690.

Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi

Technical problems affecting the Uffizi drawings database during the past year prevented a timely review of current attributions. The following selection therefore retains the attributions and technical descriptions published in the valuable and carefully documented 1952 exhibition catalogue *Bozzetti delle Gallerie di Firenze*. These have not been updated to reflect subsequent reattributions. Historical inventory numbers are retained, and the titles are translated from the 1952 catalogue.

Amico Aspertini (Bologna, 1474/1475 – Bologna, 1552). *Kneeling Virgin in Prayer*. Pen and oil on paper mounted on panel; 23.5 × 18.4 cm. Inv. GDSU 19100.

Domenico Beccafumi (1486 – Siena, 1551). *Madonna and Child*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 27 × 16.5 cm. Gallery stores. Inv. GDSU 19196.

– *Madonna and Child*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 25.5 × 18.2 cm. Inv. GDSU 19110.

– *David with a Psaltery*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 22.5 × 16.5 cm. Inv. GDSU 19109.

– *Two Children's Heads*. Monochrome oil on paper; 17.5 × 25 cm. Inv. GDSU 19108.

– *The Transfiguration*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 43 × 26.5 cm. Exhibited in the nineteenth century as no. 596. Inv. GDSU 19111.

Polidoro da Caravaggio (Caravaggio, c. 1499 – Messina, c. 1543). *Lycurgus Presenting the Laws to the People*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on cardboard; 27.8 × 36.5 cm. Inv. GDSU 19137.

Giorgio Vasari (Arezzo, 1511 – Florence, 1574). *The Studio of Apelles*. Oil in chiaroscuro with passages of colour on paper; 15 × 31 cm. Inv. GDSU 19166.

Jacopo Tintoretto (Venice, 1519 – Venice, 1594). *Unidentified Scene (Mucius Scaevola before Porsenna?)*. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; 20.5 × 31.2 cm; squared for transfer. Inv. GDSU 19159.

Giacomo Coppi (Tuscany, 1523 – Florence, 1591). *The Baptism of an Emperor*. Drawing in oil on paper; 34 × 24 cm. Inv. GDSU 19124.

Federico Barocci (Urbino, c. 1533 – Urbino, 1612). *Study for the Virgin Annunciate (or a Female Saint?)*. Oil in reddish brown, ochre, greyish and straw tones on paper mounted on canvas; 47 × 23 cm. Inv. 1881, category 1, 29; formerly exhibited as no. 613. Inv. GDSU 19104.

– *Self-Portrait,* c. 1560-1565. Oil on paper mounted on canvas, 33 × 25 cm. Inv. 1890 n. 1745.

Giovanni Battista Naldini (Fiesole, c. 1537 – Florence, c. 1591). *The Deposition*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 26 × 20 cm. Inv. GDSU 19131.

– *The Holy Family*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 27 × 21 cm. Inv. GDSU 19133.

– *The Madonna and Child with Saints and Angels in Adoration*. Oil on paper; 21 × 27 cm. Inv. GDSU 19132.

Attributed to **Jacopo Palma il Giovane** (Venice, c. 1548 – Venice, 1628). *Saint John the Evangelist*. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; 36.4 × 34 cm. Inv. GDSU 19160.

– *Saint John the Evangelist*. Oil on paper; 37.2 × 34 cm. Inv. GDSU 19162.

– *The Deposition*. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; 42.7 × 24 cm. Inv. GDSU 19161.

Possibly **Cesare Corte** (1550 – 1613/1614), in the manner of Luca Cambiaso. *Composition of Nudes*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 38.5 × 56 cm. Inv. G. 591.

Alessandro Casolani (Mensano, c. 1552 – Siena, 1607). *Study for an Assumption of the Virgin*. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; brown background and silvery tones in the figure of the Virgin; 32 × 22 cm; paint losses at the bottom. Inv. GDSU 19199.

Cristoforo Roncalli (Pomarance, c. 1553 – Rome, 1626). *The Birth of the Virgin*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 32.3 × 25 cm. Inv. GDSU 19148.

– *The Marriage of the Virgin*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 25.5 × 32.2 cm. Inv. GDSU 19147.

– *Christ among the Doctors*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 25 × 32.5 cm. Inv. GDSU 19146.

– *The Visitation*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 25 × 32.2 cm. Inv. GDSU 19145.

– *Four Flying Figures*. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; support 27.5 × 18.5 cm; each compartment 14 × 9.5 cm. Inv. GDSU 19143.

– *Allegorical Female Figure on Clouds with an Angel*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 20 × 13.5 cm. Inv. GDSU 19139.

– *Allegorical Female Figure with a Quiver (?) and an Angel*. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; 20 × 13.5 cm. Inv. 1881, category 2, 28. Inv. GDSU 19141.

– *Justice*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 14.7 × 14.5 cm. Inv. GDSU 19201.

– *Painting*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 15 × 11 cm. Inv. 1881, category 2, 42. Inv. GDSU 19144.

– *Opportunity*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 19.2 × 13.5 cm. Inv. GDSU 19140.

– *An Angel on Clouds Pointing Upwards*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 20.8 × 20 cm. Inv. GDSU 19142.

– *Allegorical Female Figure*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 19 × 13.5 cm. Inv. 1881, category 2, 32. Inv. GDSU 19142 [as recorded in the 1952 catalogue].

Lodovico Carracci (Bologna, 1555 – Bologna, 1619). *The Virgin Placing the Child in Saint Anthony's Arms*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on cardboard; 29 × 23.5 cm. Inv. 1881, category 3, 52; Inv. GDSU 19165.

Pietro Sorri (c. 1556 – 1621/1622). *The Virgin Distributing Girdles to a Female Saint and a Bishop, Who Hand Them to Prelates, Members of Religious Orders and the People*. Oil on cardboard mounted on canvas; sepia monochrome; 46 × 33 cm. Inv. 1881, category 2, 422; Inv. GDSU 19205.

– *The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes*. Monochrome oil on cardboard mounted on canvas; 24 × 42.5 cm. Inv. 1881, category 2, 61. Inv. GDSU 19154.

– *The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*. Monochrome oil on card mounted on canvas; 42 × 28 cm. Inv. 1881, category 2, 69. Inv. GDSU 19156.

Attributed to **Pietro Sorri** (c. 1556 – 1621/1622). *An Apostle*. Monochrome oil on paper, heightened with lights, mounted on canvas; 40 × 24.5 cm. Inv. GDSU 19155.

Agostino Carracci (Bologna, 1557 – Parma, 1602). *Pan and a Sleeping Nymph*. Pencil and sepia on paper mounted on cardboard, worked over in oil; 10.5 × 13 cm. Inv. GDSU 19102.

Domenico Cresti, called Passignano (Passignano, 1559 – Florence, 1638). *The Martyrdom of Saint Stephen*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 29 × 22 cm. Inv. G. 610.

– *An Angel with Saint Joseph*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 33 × 14 cm. Inv. GDSU 19136.

– *The Adoration of the Shepherds*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 26 × 20 cm. Inv. GDSU 19200.

Lodovico Cigoli (1559 – Rome, 1613). *The Martyrdom of Saint Stephen*. Oil on paper; 27 × 22 cm. Inv. G. 2196.

– *The Martyrdom of Saint Stephen*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 78 × 63 cm. Inv. G. 8020.

– *Figure*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 43 × 25 cm. Inv. GDSU 19115.

– *Figure*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 35 × 32 cm. Inv. GDSU 19116.

– *Figure Study*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 41 × 24 cm. Inv. GDSU 19113.

Pietro Faccini (Bologna, c. 1562 – Bologna, 1602). *The Assumption of the Virgin*. Drawing in oil on paper; 33 × 29 cm. Inv. GDSU 20566.

– *Madonna and Child with Saints*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 48 × 36 cm. Inv. GDSU 19123.

– *The Lamentation over Christ*. Oil drawing in chiaroscuro on paper; 25 × 16 cm. Inv. GDSU 19120.

– *The Nativity*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 39 × 28 cm. Inv. GDSU 20567.

– *The Circumcision*. Oil on paper; 37 × 24 cm. Inv. GDSU 19121.

– *The Virgin and the Redeemer Appearing to Saints Antoninus and Francis*. Oil in chiaroscuro on cardboard; 53 × 55 cm. Inv. GDSU 19122.

Attributed to **Pietro Faccini** (Bologna, c. 1562 – Bologna, 1602). *The Arrest of Christ*. Oil on paper; 51 × 36 cm. Inv. GDSU 19169.

Francesco Vanni (Siena, 1563 or 1564 – Siena, 1610). *Study for the Head of a Young Woman*. Oil on paper mounted on panel; 27.8 × 25.7 cm. Inv. G. 1527.

Ventura Salimbeni (Siena, 1568 – Siena, before 1613). *A Saint Raising a Boy from the Dead*. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; 43.4 × 60 cm. Inv. 1881, category 2, 152; Inv. GDSU 19153.

Francesco Curradi (Florence, 1570 – Florence, 1661). *Allegorical Figure*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 26 × 17 cm. Inv. GDSU 19193.

Attributed to **Francesco Curradi** (Florence, 1570 – Florence, 1661). *The Crucified Christ Appearing to Saint Dominic*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 34 × 22 cm. Inv. GDSU 19117.

Rutilio Manetti (Siena, 1571 – Siena, 1639). *Saint Anthony of Vienne Delivering a Possessed Woman*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on cardboard; 40 × 24 cm; traces of architectural drawings on the sheet. Inv. 1881, category 2, 57; Inv. GDSU 19130.

– *Design for a Tondo with Saint Joseph, the Virgin Teaching the Child to Read, and an Angel*. Monochrome oil on paper; round, diameter 20.2 cm; sheet 23 × 23 cm; on a leaf from a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century book printed in Latin. Inv. GDSU 19204.

– *The Miracle of Blessed Salvador of Horta*. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; 32.5 × 23 cm; several repaired tears. Inv. 1881, category 2, 56; Inv. GDSU 19129.

– *Two Allegorical Figures*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; brown and greenish tones; 27 × 18.2 cm. Inv. 1881, category 2, 35; Inv. GDSU 19127.

– *Coat of Arms for a Cardinal of the Tolomei Family (?), with Figures of Faith and Science*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on cardboard; 23 × 30.2 cm. Inv. 1881, category 2, 54; Inv. GDSU 19128.

Nicodemo di Michelangelo Ferrucci (Fiesole, 1574 – Florence, 1650). *Supper at Emmaus with Saints and Church Fathers*. Oil in chiaroscuro on cardboard; 33 × 27 cm. Inv. GDSU 19195.

Attributed to **Giovanni Andrea Donducci, called Mastelletta** (1575 – 1655). *The Virgin and Child with Saint Margaret and Other Saints*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on canvas; 31 × 26 cm. Inv. GDSU 19135.

Attributed to **Cristofano Allori** (Florence, 1577 – Florence, 1621). *The Resurrection*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 36 × 23 cm. Inv. GDSU 19114.

Attributed to **Matteo Rosselli** (1578 – 1650). *The Sale of Joseph*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 26 × 36 cm. Inv. GDSU 19198.

Sigismondo Coccapani (Florence, 1583 – Florence, 1642). *A Lady with Three Children*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 22 × 15.4 cm. Inv. GDSU 19119.

– *A Youth*. Oil in chiaroscuro on paper; 19.5 × 12 cm. Inv. GDSU 19118.

Tiberio Tinelli (Venice, 1586 – Venice, 1638). *Foreshortened Flying Figures*. Oil on paper; 28 × 21 cm. Inv. GDSU 19158.

– *A Flying Female Figure and a Cupid Standing on the Right*. Oil on paper; 13 × 17 cm. Inv. GDSU 19157.

Domenico Manetti (Siena, 1609 – Siena, 1663). *The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on cardboard; 12.5 × 14.2 cm; on a leaf from a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century book printed in Latin. Inv. GDSU 19172.

– *The Martyrdom of a Group of Friars*. Monochrome oil on paper mounted on cardboard; 22.7 × 28.7 cm; sixteenth-century cursive writing on the paper. Inv. 1881, category 2, 31. Inv. GDSU 19126.

Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum

Jacopo Palma il Giovane (Venice, c. 1548 – Venice, 1628). *The Dead Christ Supported by Angels (Angel Pietà)*, c. 1595-1600. Oil on rough light-brown laid paper, with remains of black framing lines; 19.5 × 26.2 cm. Inv. 3678 Z.

Gaspar de Crayer (1584 – 1669). *Bust of an Older Man (an Apostle?), Facing Right*, seventeenth century. Oil on paper laid on cardboard; 44 × 31.5 cm. Inv. 13334 Z.

Anthonis Sallaert (Brussels, c. 1590 – Brussels, 1657/1658). *Aeneas Leaving Dido*, seventeenth century. Oil on paper, mounted; 22.4 × 31.5 cm. Inv. 3012 Z.

– *Jason Repudiating Medea*, seventeenth century. Oil on paper, mounted; 22.6 × 29.7 cm. Inv. 3011 Z.

Attributed to **Anthony van Dyck** (Antwerp, 1599 – London, 1641). *The Dead Christ Surrounded by the Virgin and Angels*, seventeenth century. Pen and brown oil paint on paper, with a black framing line; 21.9 × 32.7 cm. Inv. 787 Z.

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione (Genoa, 1609 – Mantua, 1664). *Shepherds and Shepherdesses with a Flock at a Watering Trough*, c. 1635. Brush in brown and grey, probably oil paint, with touches of reddish brown, blue, white and violet-red, on brown paper, with a glossy transparent intermediate layer; 26.5 × 39 cm. Inv. 4095 Z.

– *Satyrs and Maenads around a Herm of Pan*, seventeenth century. Brown chalk and brown brushwork, worked over in oil on paper, mounted; 22.7 × 33.9 cm. Inv. 4089 Z.

Attributed to **Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione** (Genoa, 1609 – Mantua, 1664). *God Appearing to Abraham (or Jacob?) and His Family*, seventeenth century. Brush in brown and blue, heightened with white, possibly in oil and bodycolour, on light-brown paper, mounted; 28.2 × 41.4 cm. Inv. 14350 Z.

Allaert van Everdingen (Alkmaar, 1621 – Amsterdam, 1675). *Rocky Landscape with Fir Trees, a Castle and a Stone Bridge*, seventeenth century. Oil on paper; 20 × 30.7 cm. Inv. 3650 Z.

Adriaen van de Velde (Amsterdam, 1636 – Amsterdam, 1672). *Head of a Calf*, seventeenth century. Oil on paper; 13 × 11.7 cm. Inv. 913 Z.

Philipp Ferdinand de Hamilton (1664 – 1750). *Five Dead Birds*, eighteenth century. Oil on paper, mounted; 22 × 33.6 cm (maximum dimensions). Inv. 6348 Z.

Georg Philipp Rugendas the Elder (Augsburg, 1666 – Augsburg, 1742). *A Grey Horse and a Laden Bay Horse beside a Basket, with a Third Horse in the Background*. Oil on laid paper, with black framing lines; 15.3 × 24.1 cm. Inv. 1640 Z.

London, The British Museum

Paolo Veronese (Verona, 1528 – Venice, 1588). *Allegory of the Victory of Lepanto*, c. 1577. Grey and white oil paint on several conjoined sheets of paper with red preparation; 29.9 × 47 cm. Inv. 1861,0810.4.

Jacopo Palma il Giovane (Venice, c. 1548 – Venice, 1628). *Fall of the Rebel Angels*, c. 1600-1628. Diluted brown oil paint, heightened with white, over black chalk on light brown paper; 41 × 26.3 cm. Inv. 1941,1108.15.

Domenico Tintoretto (Venice, 1560 – Venice, 1635). *Saint Mark and Saint John the Evangelist (or a Donor?) Enthroned, with Christ Above and Various Saints*. Oil over charcoal on buff paper; 41.8 × 23.5 cm. Inv. 1907,0717.39.

– *The Temptation of Saint Antony*. Oil on paper; 25.3 × 29.5 cm. Inv. 1907,0717.52.

– *A Nude Woman Seated on the Edge of a Cradle, Surrounded by Allegorical Figures*. Oil (?) on paper; verso: charcoal, heightened with white, on brown prepared paper; 25.4 × 31.5 cm. Inv. 1907,0717.30.

Giovanni Baglione (Rome, c. 1566 – 1643). *Leo, Emperor of the Armenians, Killed in the Presence of His Mother*, 1600-1630. Oil on paper (grisaille), with a strip of paper added at the upper right; 27.2 × 29.3 cm. Inv. 1993,0403.8.

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione (Genoa, 1609 – Mantua, 1664). *A Group of Shepherds with Their Animals*, c. 1650. Brush and red-brown oil paint on paper; 42.5 × 57 cm. Inv. 1997,0607.10.

Attributed to **Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione** (Genoa, 1609 – Mantua, 1664). *The Crucifixion*. Oil paint on paper; 40.2 × 27.2 cm. Inv. 1878,0713.6.

Studio of **Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione** (Genoa, 1609 – Mantua, 1664). *Circe*. Oil paint on paper; 39.9 × 50 cm. Inv. Ff,3.203.

– *An Allegory of Time*. Oil paint on light brown paper; 37.7 × 54.7 cm. Inv. 1887,0613.76.

London,
The Courtauld Gallery

Anthony van Dyck (Antwerp, 1599 – London, 1641). *The Mocking of Christ; verso: Studies for The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, 1622-1625. Oil on paper on the recto; black and red chalk on the verso; sheet 71 × 54 cm. Inv. P.1978.PG.104.

Anonymous Dutch artist. *Flower Piece*, seventeenth century. Varnished oil paint on laid paper; 19.9 × 16.1 cm. Inv. D.1952.RW.3215.

Anonymous Italian artist. *Fragment of a Soaring Female Figure*, seventeenth century. Oil paint on paper; 13.5 × 10 cm. Inv. D.1931.XX.2.1.

– *Fragment of an Angel Weeping*, seventeenth century. Oil paint on paper; 15.5 × 15.5 cm. Inv. D.1931.XX.2.2.

– *Fragment of an Angel Soaring*, seventeenth century. Oil paint on paper; 17 × 13.5 cm. Inv. D.1931.XX.2.3.

– *Fragment with Three Putti*, seventeenth century. Oil paint on paper; 14 × 13.5 cm. Inv. D.1931.XX.2.4.

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione (Genoa, 1609 – Mantua, 1664). *Five Studies of a Camel's Head*. Oil paint on laid paper; 26.4 × 38 cm. Inv. D.1952.RW.1959.

Studio of **David Teniers II** (Antwerp, 1610 – Brussels, 1690), after Giovanni Battista Moroni. *Portrait of a Sculptor*, c. 1650–1656. Oil on paper laid on panel; 16.5 × 11.5 cm. Inv. P.1978.PG.437.

Lorenzo Pasinelli (Bologna, 1629 – Bologna, 1700). *Allegory with Jupiter or Ganymede and Two Figures in the Air: Design for a Ceiling Panel*, c. 1670-1679. Oil paint on laid paper, irregularly cut and laid down; 38.7 × 26.7 cm. Inv. D.1952.RW.4503.

After **Lorenzo Pasinelli** (Bologna, 1629 – Bologna, 1700). *Woman Seated Holding a Mirror: Allegory of Prudence*, c. 1661-1669. Black chalk and oil paint on laid paper, framed in an oval and laid on a multilayered backing; 40.9 × 28.4 cm. Inv. D.1952.RW.4200.

Giovanni Battista Pittoni the Younger (Venice, 1687 – Venice, 1767). *Saint Anthony of Padua Adoring the Christ Child*, c. 1730. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; 23 × 14.3 cm. Inv. P.1970.XX.325.

Francesco Narici (Genoa, c. 1719 – Genoa, 1785). *The Last Supper*. Bodycolour and oil paint on grey-prepared laid paper, cut to the form of an architectural niche; 14.1 × 41.8 cm. Inv. D.1952.RW.3049.

Anonymous artist (eighteenth century), after Veronese. *Janus and Saturn*, probably c. 1730-1770. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; 30.5 × 42.5 cm. Inv. P.1966.GP.478.

London,
Dulwich Picture Gallery

Annibale Carracci, *Head of an Old Man*, oil on paper laid down on canvas, 39.4 × 27.9 cm. Inv. DPG286.

Attributed to **Anthony van Dyck** (Antwerp, 1599 – London, 1641). *A Grey Horse*, c. 1621. Oil on paper laid on oak panel; 47.6 × 43.6 cm. Inv. DPG073.

Flemish or British School. *A Jester*, seventeenth century. Oil on paper laid on canvas; 48.6 × 34.9 cm. Inv. DPG512.

London,
The National Gallery

After **Martin Schongauer** (Colmar, c. 1430 – Breisach am Rhein, 1491). *The Entombment*, probably after 1546. Oil on paper mounted on oak panel; 17.5 × 12.1 cm. Inv. NG1151.

Jan Gossaert (Maubeuge, c. 1472 – Antwerp, 1532). *An Elderly Couple*, c. 1520. Oil on parchment mounted on canvas; 48.1 × 69.2 cm. Inv. NG1689.

Albrecht Altdorfer (Regensburg, c. 1480 – Regensburg, 1538). *Landscape with a Footbridge*, c. 1518-1520. Oil on parchment mounted on panel; 41.2 × 35.5 cm. Inv. NG6320.

Follower of **Anthonis Mor** (Utrecht, 1512–1516 – Antwerp, c. 1576). *Portrait of a Bearded Man*, c. 1560-1580. Oil on paper mounted on walnut panel; 39.5 × 27.2 cm. Inv. NG2295.

Northern Italian artist. *Portrait of a Lady in a Plumed Hat*, probably 1565-1575. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; 44.8 × 34 cm. Inv. NG4033.

French artist. *Profile Portrait of a Young Man*, possibly c. 1580. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; 38.5 × 28.5 cm. Inv. NG1190.

Rembrandt van Rijn (Leiden, 1606 – Amsterdam, 1669). *The Lamentation over the Dead Christ*, c. 1635. Oil on paper and pieces of canvas mounted on oak panel; 31.9 × 26.7 cm. Inv. NG43.

Flemish artist. *Portrait of a Man*, 1630–70. Oil on paper mounted on panel; 17.8 × 12.7 cm. Inv. NG2104.

Los Angeles,
J. Paul Getty Museum

Lucas Cranach the Elder (Kronach, 1472 – Weimar, 1553). *Portrait of a Man*, c. 1530. Oil on paper; 26.2 × 20 cm. Inv. 92.GG.91.

Domenico Beccafumi (1486 – Siena, 1551). *Head of a Youth*, c. 1530. Oil on paper; 27.6 × 21.1 cm. Inv. 2020.54.

Nicolò dell'Abate (Modena, 1509/1512 – Fontainebleau, 1571). *Marriage of a Patrician Couple*, c. 1540-1545. Oil on paper, with some foreground figures pricked for transfer; 40.6 × 47.8 cm. Inv. 87.GG.41.

Federico Barocci (Urbino, c. 1533 – Urbino, 1612). *Head of Saint Joseph*, c. 1586. Oil on paper laid down on canvas; 39.5 × 30.8 cm. Inv. 2017.104.

Annibale Carracci (Bologna, 1560 – Rome, 1609). *Head of a Woman*, c. 1582. Oil on paper laid down on canvas; 42.8 × 29.5 cm. Inv. 2019.4.

Peter Paul Rubens (Siegen, 1577 – Antwerp, 1640). *Study for Balthazar*, c. 1609-1611. Oil on paper laid down on panel; sheet 54 × 39.3 cm. Inv. 2018.48.

Adriaen Pietersz van de Venne (Delft, 1589 – The Hague, 1662). *Moralizing Scene with an Old Woman and a Man*, 1631. Oil over black chalk on paper; 16.7 × 11.4 cm. Inv. 2001.39.

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione (Genoa, 1609 – Mantua, 1664). *The Expulsion of Hagar*, late 1640s. Oil paint on paper, now discoloured; 28.9 × 41.6 cm. Inv. 83.GG.376.

– *A Family in a Desert Landscape*, late 1640s. Coloured oil paint over traces of black chalk; 35.2 × 48.7 cm. Inv. 2000.38.

– *Pastoral Journey*, c. 1650. Brown oil paint with touches of white, blue and rose gouache; 28.1 × 41.3 cm. Inv. 86.GG.573.

Milan,
Pinacoteca del Castello Sforzesco

Attributed to **Antonio da Correggio** (Correggio, c. 1489 – Correggio, 1534). *Portrait of a Man Reading (Petrarchino)*, early 1520s. Oil on paper laid on canvas; 60.2 × 42.5 cm. Inv. 1075.

New York,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Federico Barocci (Urbino, c. 1533 – Urbino, 1612). *Head of a Bearded Man Looking to Lower Left (Nicodemus)*, 1579-1582. Brush and oil paint on paper; 38.7 × 27.3 cm. Inv. 1976.87.1.

– *Head of an Old Woman Looking to Lower Right (Saint Elizabeth)*, 1584-1586. Brush and oil paint on paper; 39.1 × 27.5 cm. Inv. 1976.87.2.

Lodovico Carracci (Bologna, 1555 – Bologna, 1619). *The Conversion of Saint Paul*, c. 1587-1589. Pen and brown ink, brush and brown wash, heightened with white gouache and cream-coloured oil paint, over black chalk on paper toned with light brown wash; 56.8 × 34.6 cm. Inv. 2002.33.

Lodovico Cigoli (1559 – Rome, 1613). *Head of Christ*. Oil paint on paper previously inscribed by the artist in pen and brown ink, varnished; 43 × 29 cm. Inv. 1987.198.

Attributed to **Ventura Salimbeni** (Siena, 1568 – Siena, before 1613). *The Ascension of Christ*. Brush with brown, grey and cream oil paint on paper; 31 × 22.1 cm. Inv. 62.93.2.

Marcantonio Bassetti (Verona, 1586 – Verona, 1630). *Nymphs Bathing*. Brush and brown wash, heightened with white oil paint, on brown-washed paper; 14.5 × 19.2 cm. Inv. 68.39.

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione (Genoa, 1609 – Mantua, 1664). *God the Father Appearing to Jacob*, c. 1635-1645. Brush with coloured oil paint and touches of brown ink on paper partly saturated with oil; 38.6 × 52.3 cm. Inv. 65.176.

– *Youth Playing a Pipe for a Satyr*, 1645-1650. Brush with coloured oil paint on paper partly saturated with oil, lined; 40.6 × 53.5 cm. Inv. 62.126.

– *Pastoral Journey with Flocks and Herds at a Stream*, 1660-1664. Brush with red and brown oil paint on paper; 40.6 × 57.8 cm. Inv. 1972.118.246.

— *Noah Entering the Ark*, 1609-1664. Brush with red and brown oil paint on paper, with a small passage of grey-blue oil paint in the centre; 40.3 × 55.3 cm. Inv. 62.121.1.

Circle of **Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione** (Genoa, 1609 – Mantua, 1664). *Animals and Figures before the Ark*, 1660-1664. Brush with red-brown, brown and blue oil paint on paper; 24.4 × 36.9 cm. Inv. 1975.131.18.

New York,
The Morgan Library & Museum

Lucas Cranach the Elder (Kronach, 1472 – Weimar, 1553). *Portrait of a Man, Possibly Justus Jonas*, 1530-1535. Oil on paper; 25 × 19.5 cm. Inv. 2006.50.

Domenico Beccafumi (1486 – Siena, 1551). *Head of a Bearded Man in Profile to the Right*, c. 1530-1535. Oil on paper over black chalk or charcoal, incised with a stylus and varnished; 25.4 × 20.6 cm. Inv. I, 19a.

– *Head of an Old Man with Open Mouth*, c. 1529-1535. Paint on brown paper, with indented outlines, varnished; described as egg tempera in the museum's 2007 exhibition checklist, and discussed among its oil studies; 28.5 × 20.3 cm. Inv. I, 19b.

Ottawa,
National Gallery of Canada

Lorenzo Lotto (Venice, c. 1480 – Loreto, 1556). *Portrait of a Man with a Felt Hat*, 1541 (?). Oil on paper mounted on paperboard and lined with canvas; 57.8 × 46.5 cm. Inv. 39708.

Paris,
Musée du Louvre

Lorenzo di Credi (Florence, c. 1456 – Florence, 1536). *Drapery Study for the Figure of Saint Bartholomew*, probably c. 1490-1495, before 1510. Grey and white gouache, black and red chalk, pigments and oil on yellow-brown prepared paper; 38.9 × 27 cm. Inv. INV 1791, recto.

Lucas Cranach the Elder (Kronach, 1472 – Weimar, 1553). *Portrait of a Man Wearing a Cap*. Oil colour on paper. Inv. INV 18870, recto.

— *Portrait of a German Prince*. Oil colour on paper. Inv. RF 4652, recto.

Simon Bening (Ghent, c. 1483 – Bruges, 1561). *Saint Jerome Penitent in a Landscape, with the Episode of the Lion He Heals*, first half of the sixteenth century. Oil on parchment or paper mounted on a secondary support. Inv. RF 1987 28.

Domenico Beccafumi (1486 – Siena, 1551). *Head of a Young Man in Profile*. Oil colour on paper. Inv. RF 53005, recto.

Hans Holbein the Younger (Augsburg, 1497/1498 – London, 1543). *Portrait of a Young Man Wearing a Flat Cap*. Oil on paper; 18.2 × 14.8 cm. Inv. INV 20739, recto.

Copy after **Polidoro da Caravaggio** (Caravaggio, c. 1499 – Messina, c. 1543). *Bust of Juno; the Defeat of Spargabises; Trophies and Vases*. Monochrome oil on three joined sheets of paper, fully laid down; 22.5 × 62.1 cm. Inv. INV 6245, recto.

Anonymous Italian artist. *Study of Drapery for a Kneeling Figure*, sixteenth century. Oil colour on paper. Inv. INV 11011.

Peter Gertner (active early sixteenth century). *Portrait of Jacoba of Baden*, 1530s. Oil on paper; 51.8 × 35.5 cm. Inv. RF 11685.

– *Portrait of Duke Wilhelm IV of Bavaria*, 1530s. Oil on paper; 51.8 × 35.8 cm. Inv. RF 11686.

Jacopo Tintoretto (Venice, 1519 – Venice, 1594). *Studies of Drapery and a Seated Nude Man*. Oil paint with white highlights on grey-brown paper; 26.5 × 31.8 cm. Formerly attributed to Palma il Giovane. Inv. RF 38939, recto.

Paolo Farinati (Verona, 1524 – Verona, 1606). *Saint Maurus, Benedictine Abbot*, second half of the sixteenth century. Oil on paper mounted on a secondary support. Inv. RF 1276.

Paolo Veronese (Verona, 1528 – Venice, 1588). *The Raising of Jairus's Daughter*, second half of the sixteenth century. Oil on paper mounted on canvas. Inv. INV 141; MR 394.

Federico Barocci (Urbino, c. 1533 – Urbino, 1612). *Head of Saint Mary Magdalene*, c. 1580-1582. Oil on paper mounted on a secondary support. Inv. RF 1997 3.

Copy after **Federico Barocci** (Urbino, c. 1533 – Urbino, 1612). *The Holy Family with Saint Elizabeth and the Infant Saint John the Baptist*. Oil on paper mounted on a secondary support. Inv. RF 3797.

Attributed to **Felice Brusasorci** (Verona, c. 1539 – Verona, 1605). *The Flagellation of Christ*, probably late sixteenth century. Oil on paper, fully laid down; 34.2 × 26 cm. Inv. INV 13592.

Hubert Gerhard ('s-Hertogenbosch, c. 1540–1550 – Munich, before 1621). *Naiad Holding a Cornucopia (Design for a Fountain)*. Brown-violet oil monochrome, heightened with white, on reddish-violet ochre-prepared paper, with a pen and black-ink framing line, fully laid down; 23 × 22.1 cm. Inv. INV 8770, recto.

Hans Hoffmann (c. 1545–1550 – Prague, 1591/1592). *Bust-Length Portrait of the Sculptor Baccio Bandinelli*. Oil colour on paper. Inv. INV 18896, recto.

Hendrick Goltzius (1558 – Haarlem, 1617). *Hope*, late sixteenth century. Oil and opaque colour on paper. Inv. INV 21005, recto.

Attributed to **Annibale Carracci** (Bologna, 1560 – Rome, 1609). *Head of an Old Man*. Oil colour on paper. Inv. INV 34302.

– *Two Shepherds and a Nymph Pursuing a Satyr*. Oil colour on paper. Inv. INV 7116.

Pietro Faccini (Bologna, c. 1562 – Bologna, 1602). *Saint in Ecstasy Seen from Behind, His Arms Raised towards Heaven*, late sixteenth century. Oil colour on paper. Inv. INV 8240.

Francesco Vanni (Siena, 1563 or 1564 – Siena, 1610). *Head of a Bearded Man in Profile to the Left*. Oil on lined paper; 26.3 × 21.2 cm. Inv. INV 2058.

Claudio Ridolfi (1570 – 1644). *The Martyrdom of a Saint*. Oil grisaille on paper; 40.6 × 27.9 cm. Inv. RF 42265, recto.

Anonymous Italian artist. *Head of a Long-Haired, Bearded Man, Possibly Christ*, late sixteenth century. Oil on paper; 30.2 × 20.2 cm. Inv. INV 11981, recto.

– *Portrait of a Young Boy*, late sixteenth century. Oil or mixed pigments on paper; 29.6 × 21.3 cm. Inv. INV 11983.

– *Portrait of an Adolescent*, late sixteenth century. Painted work on paper; 25.5 × 18.5 cm. Inv. INV 11984.

Copy after **Guido Reni** (Bologna, 1575 – Bologna, 1642). *The Holy Family with the Infant Saint John the Baptist*, seventeenth century. Oil colour on paper. Inv. INV 8960.

School of the Carracci. *Christ and the Virgin Appearing to Saint Francis and Saint Antoninus*, late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. Oil colour on paper. Inv. INV 7957.

Copy after **Francesco Albani** (Bologna, 1578 – Bologna, 1660). *Mary Magdalene Seated in a Landscape*, seventeenth century. Oil colour on paper. Inv. INV 6836.

Marcantonio Bassetti (Verona, 1586 – Verona, 1630). *Saint Vitus Martyred between Saint Wolfgang and Saint George*. Oil grisaille on paper; 37.1 × 25.9 cm. Inv. INV 5790, recto.

Anthonis Sallaert (Brussels, c. 1590 – Brussels, 1657/1658). *The Christ Child in Glory Surrounded by Four Saints*, first half of the seventeenth century. Oil grisaille on paper mounted on a secondary support. Inv. RF 1990 11.

Jacob Jordaens (Antwerp, 1593 – Antwerp, 1678). *Nymphs and Satyrs*, seventeenth century. Oil on paper mounted on a secondary support. Inv. MNR 58.

Anthony van Dyck (Antwerp, 1599 – London, 1641). *Study for the Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, c. 1620-1625. Oil on paper mounted on a secondary support. Inv. RF 1983 88.

– *Old Man: Study Head*, seventeenth century. Oil on paper mounted on a secondary support. Inv. MI 916.

Copy after **Anthony van Dyck** (Antwerp, 1599 – London, 1641). *Head of a Young Man*, seventeenth century. Oil on paper mounted on a secondary support. Inv. RF 1961 83.

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione (Genoa, 1609 – Mantua, 1664). *The Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, seventeenth century. Oil colour on paper. Inv. INV 9453.

– *Pastoral Scene with Shepherds and Animals*, seventeenth century. Oil colour on paper. Inv. INV 9466.

Parma,
Complesso monumentale della Pilotta, Galleria Nazionale

After **Andrea Mantegna** (province of Padua, c. 1431 – Mantua, 1506). *The Martyrdom of Saint Christopher*, fifteenth century. Oil on paper laid on canvas; 40 × 81 cm. Inv. 437.

Unknown Emilian artist. *Portrait of Federico Prati*, first half of the sixteenth century. Oil on paper laid on panel; 29 × 20 cm. Inv. GN 797.

Attributed to **Michelangelo Anselmi** (Lucca, 1491/1492 – Parma, 1556), formerly attributed to Parmigianino. *Self-Portrait with a Red Cap*, sixteenth century. Oil on paper, 21 × 15.5 cm.

After **Girolamo Mazzola Bedoli** (Viadana, c. 1505 – Parma, 1569/1570). *Nativity with the Infant Saint John and Angels*, sixteenth century. Oil on paper laid on canvas; 45 × 36 cm. Inv. GN 38.

Annibale Carracci (Bologna, 1560 – Rome, 1609). *Portrait of a Child*, c. 1585. Oil on paper laid on canvas; 29 × 20 cm. Inv. GN 412.

Workshop of **Giulio Cesare Procaccini** (Bologna, 1574 – Milan, 1625). *Mother and Child*, early seventeenth century. Oil on paper laid on panel; 42.5 × 31.3 cm. Inv. GN 390.

Carlo Francesco Nuvolone (Milan, 1609 – Milan, 1662). *Saint Lawrence in Glory*, mid-seventeenth century. Oil on paper laid on panel; 23 × 18 cm. Inv. GN 484.

Rome,
Galleria Borghese

Domenico Beccafumi (1486 – Siena, 1551). *Head of a Young Man*, c. 1529-1535. Red chalk, charcoal and tempera with oil highlights on paper; 25 × 17 cm. Inv. 453.

Attributed to **Nicolò dell'Abate** (Modena, 1509/1512 – Fontainebleau, 1571). *Portrait of a Woman*, mid-sixteenth century. Oil on parchment mounted on canvas; 48 × 37 cm. Inv. 077.

Follower of **Federico Barocci** (Urbino, c. 1533 – Urbino, 1612). *Head of an Old Man*, late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; 31 × 22 cm. Inv. 162.

Manner of **Scipione Pulzone** (Gaeta, 1544 – Rome, 1598). *Head of an Old Man*, late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. Oil on paper; 36 × 28 cm. Inv. 342.

Lavinia Fontana (Bologna, 1552 – Rome, 1614). *Portrait of a Young Man*, 1606. Greasy pencil, tempera, oil (?) and lead white on buff paper; 47.5 × 35.5 cm. Inv. 081.

Attributed to **Agostino Carracci** (Bologna, 1557 – Parma, 1602), after Raphael. *Head of a Friar*, early seventeenth century. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; 31 × 22 cm. Inv. 155.

Annibale Carracci (Bologna, 1560 – Rome, 1609). *Head of a Laughing Young Man*, c. 1585. Oil on paper mounted on canvas; 44.5 × 29.5 cm. Inv. 083.

Pietro Paolo Bonzi (Cortona, c. 1576 – Rome, 1636). *Head of a Satyr Crowned with Vine Leaves*, first half of the seventeenth century. Oil on paper lined with canvas; 44.5 × 30 cm. Inv. 160.

Bolognese circle, after Jacopino del Conte. *Head of a Man Wearing a Turban*, c. 1605-1610. Oil on paper mounted on panel; 47 × 29 cm. Inv. 152.

Urbino,
Galleria Nazionale delle Marche

Federico Barocci (Urbino, c. 1533 – Urbino, 1612). *Landscape*. Oil and tempera on paper laid on a secondary support; 25.6 × 38 cm. Inv. 1990 DIS 231 recto.

Possibly **Alessandro Vitali** (Urbino, c. 1580 – Urbino, 1630), after Federico Barocci. *Study of a Cat*. Oil on paper (also described as tempera on paper); 8.2 × 12.2 cm. Inv. 1794.

Versailles,
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon

Anonymous German artist, after Bernhard Strigel (1460-1528). *Emperor Maximilian I and His Family*, late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. Oil on white paper mounted on wood; 72 × 56 cm. Inv. MV 3095; INV 2076; LP 7304.

Washington,
National Gallery of Art

Federico Barocci (Urbino, c. 1533 – Urbino, 1612). *The Head of Saint John the Evangelist*, c. 1580. Oil on paper lined with linen; 42 × 31.7 cm. Inv. 1979.11.1.

Attributed to **Federico Barocci** (Urbino, c. 1533 – Urbino, 1612). *The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*, c. 1600. Oil over graphite, heightened with white, on laid paper; laid down; 39.8 × 33.9 cm. Possibly associated with Alessandro Vitali. Inv. 2006.11.4.

Jacopo Palma il Giovane (Venice, c. 1548 – Venice, 1628). *Christ Carried to the Tomb*, c. 1607–1620. Oil paint over black chalk on tan oatmeal paper, laid on an eighteenth-century mount; 27 × 40.9 cm. Inv. 2007.111.140.

Aurelio Lomi (1556 – 1622). *The Stoning of Saint Stephen*, c. 1602. Pen and ink with oil over chalk on four sheets of paper; 94.5 × 78 cm. Inv. 2020.101.1.

– *The Visitation*, c. 1610-1615. Oil paint on laid paper, laid down; 64.5 × 37.6 cm. Inv. 2018.26.17.

Claudio Ridolfi (?) (1570 – 1644). *The Flagellation of Christ*, c. 1619. Oil paint over pen and black ink on two pieces of laid paper mounted on fabric and wood; 56.3 × 27 cm. Inv. 2016.85.1.

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione (Genoa, 1609 – Mantua, 1664). *Noah Leading the Animals into the Ark*, c. 1645. Oil paint on brown laid paper; 39.4 × 54.8 cm. Inv. 1991.221.1.

– *Alexander at the Tomb of Cyrus*, c. 1645-1650. Oil heightened with white on laid paper; 58 × 42.9 cm. Inv. 1981.10.1.

– *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, c. 1650-1655. Oil on laid paper, laid down; 41.2 × 60.9 cm. Inv. 2012.7.1.

CATALOGUE

Catalogue conventions

The works presented in this catalogue are arranged in a broadly chronological sequence, based primarily on the artists' dates of birth and, where more appropriate, on the principal period of their activity. This arrangement necessarily allows for a degree of flexibility: an artist born earlier may occasionally appear later when the principal phase of his or her career belongs to a subsequent period.

Within this chronological framework, the sequence has also been shaped by regional, stylistic, and visual considerations. Works have therefore been grouped, where appropriate, according to artistic schools or coherent regional contexts, as in the case of the Genoese and Tuscan groups, and by recurring typologies within the broader tradition of oil painting on paper. Related subjects, such as heads, figure studies, and other comparable categories, have occasionally been brought together in order to preserve both the coherence of individual artistic contexts and the visual rhythm of the catalogue.

The titles assigned to the works follow a similarly descriptive principle. Where the subject can be identified with reasonable certainty – for example, a mythological figure, a saint, or the portrait of a known sitter – the title reflects that identification rather than merely the formal appearance of the work. Where no specific subject can be established, the title instead describes what is represented, such as a head, bust, or figure study. Particular care has been taken to distinguish between studies of heads in the stricter sense, in which the composition is concentrated on the head with, at most, an indication of the shoulder or its attachment to the body, and half-length studies, in which the torso, dress, and other elements of costume are more fully articulated.

Although the catalogue is principally devoted to Italian oils on paper produced between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, a small number of carefully selected international examples, particularly German and Flemish, and of works on different supports, such as parchment, have also been included. Their presence reflects the broader networks of artistic exchange, reciprocal influence, and circulation of models that connected the Italian schools with the wider European context throughout the period.

Measurements are given in centimetres and inches, height preceding width. Descriptions of media and technique are based on direct examination of the works and, wherever possible, are supported by dedicated technical and scientific analyses, explicitly cited when available. The terminology adopted for drawing media and techniques follows, where applicable, Carlo James, *Visual Identification and Analysis of Old Master Drawing Techniques* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2010).

The preferred forms of artists' names, together with their dates and places of birth and death, follow the Getty Union List of Artist Names (ULAN), which has been used throughout the catalogue as the principal authority for biographical nomenclature and identification.



Francesco de' Rossi, called Francesco Salviati

1.

Portrait of Giovanni da Cepperello

c. 1538

Oil on paper
44 × 34 cm
(17 ¼ × 13 ⅜ in.)

Literature
Unpublished.

This remarkably vivid portrait, painted in oil on paper, can be securely attributed to Francesco Salviati, both on the evidence of its particular handling and through close comparison with a portrait included in the *Visitation* frescoed in the Oratory of San Giovanni Decollato in Rome in 1538 (see figs. 1 & 2).

The painterly characteristics that point to Salviati's hand include the rendering of the sitter's individual physiognomic features, particularly the eyes and the treatment of the beard. Allowing for the differences arising from the unusual technique of oil on paper, these may be compared with the *Portrait of a Goldsmith* in the Patrizi Collection, which scholars date precisely to 1538, at the end of the artist's first Roman sojourn.

The pose of the sitter is also similar, with the bust shown in three-quarter view and the head turned towards the beholder; it still reveals connections with Florentine portraiture of the 1520s, particularly that of Andrea del Sarto, which had provided Salviati with an important model before his move to Rome. Chiefly, the treatment of the eyes, with the eyelids articulated by angular accents that animate the sitter's gaze, is highly characteristic of Salviati's Roman draughtsmanship. The painting's dating to the 1530s is further supported by the sitter's costume, especially his headgear, which appears both in the aforementioned panel in the Patrizi Collection and in the two portraits of the patrons included in the *Visitation* fresco in the Oratory of San Giovanni Decollato.



Fig. 1. Francesco de' Rossi, called Francesco Salviati, *The Visitation*, 1538, fresco. Rome, Oratory of San Giovanni Decollato.

Fig. 2. Francesco de' Rossi, called Francesco Salviati, *The Visitation*, 1538, fresco, detail of the portrait of Giovanni da Cepperello. Rome, Oratory of San Giovanni Decollato.

In the scene depicting the meeting between the Virgin Mary and Elizabeth, Salviati introduced the two patrons through the device of a staircase in the foreground, making the two figures appear as though they were ascending from below to witness the miraculous event. Both are dressed in contemporary costume and wear a round black hat with a single brim, precisely the same type of hat that appears in the present portrait in oil on paper. Moreover, the physiognomy of one of the two men appears to be the same as that rapidly recorded by Salviati in oil on the present sheet, probably to serve as a model either for the fresco or for a painting to be executed on panel.

Giorgio Vasari, in his *Life of Salviati*, reveals the names of the two patrons of the fresco:

> 'Giovanni da Cepperello and Battista Gobbo da Sangallo, having commissioned the Florentine Iacopo del Conte, a painter then still young, to paint in the Company of Mercy of the Florentines of San Giovanni Decollato beneath the Campidoglio in Rome – that is, in the second church where they gather – a scene from the life of Saint John the Baptist, namely the Angel appearing to Zacharias in the Temple, had the same Francesco [Salviati] paint beneath it another scene from the life of the same saint, namely Our Lady visiting Saint Elizabeth. This work, completed in 1538, he executed in fresco in such a manner that it is among the most graceful and best-conceived paintings that Francesco ever made.'[1]



The two men in contemporary dress who appear at the bottom of the fresco are therefore the two patrons, whose identities can be established since Battista da Sangallo collaborated with his brother, the architect Antonio da Sangallo, while Giovanni da Cepperello, a member of a family of Florentine bankers, appears to have served as secretary to Cardinal Giovanni Salviati, the painter Salviati's patron.

Giovanni da Cepperello in fact also appears in Sebastiano del Piombo's portrait of Cardinal Salviati, now in Sarasota (Fig. 3). His sharp nose, lively and penetrating eyes, and long, wavy black beard appear to be the same both in the fresco and in the present portrait on paper. Given the rapid technique with which it was executed and the ease with which it could be transported, the function of the present work seems to have been to record the sitter's physiognomy so that it could subsequently be referred to either in the studio or on the scaffolding. Works of this kind must once have been more common than we might suppose today, since many colour studies or small preparatory cartoons executed in pencil or with the brush on paper have been lost precisely because their purpose was instrumental to the production of works on more durable supports.

In the fresco in the Oratory of San Giovanni Decollato, Giovanni da Cepperello's face is turned in the opposite direction if compared to the present study on paper, but this could easily have been achieved by taking a tracing from the model and using it in reverse. Another similar study by Salviati is known, probably conceived to preserve the sitter's physiognomy for the artist's use in the studio when the sitter himself was unable to pose. The sheet is in the Galleria Palatina at Palazzo Pitti (inv. 1912 no. 310) and was formerly attributed to Annibale Carracci, although in my view its date must be considerably earlier than the 1588 proposed in the catalogue.[2]

This work too is an oil study on paper restricted to the sitter's face, in which the physiognomy and stereometric volume of the head are defined with powerful, confident brushstrokes, and in which echoes of Sebastiano del Piombo and Giulio Romano are unmistakable. Here again, the drawing of the eyes and the manner in which the nose is delineated seem to us attributable to the hand of the young Francesco Salviati, during his first Roman period, when the pictorial models just mentioned would have been more immediately present to the artist.

Equally characteristic of Salviati, in my view, is the rapid and assured manner in which the white edge of the shirt is indicated in both portraits on paper, with a single stroke of white paint suggesting a flash of light. Similar painterly characteristics are also found in an as yet unpublished portrait of a man painted by Salviati in the early 1540s, now in the Alana Collection.

Following careful cleaning – which removed later overpainting that had darkened the background and suggested a late sixteenth-century date – this sheet can now be acknowledged as an important rediscovery from Francesco Salviati's first Roman period, before his departure for Venice in 1539. It demonstrates both his versatility and the painterly mastery that would soon make him one of the most sought-after portraitists in Italy.

Carlo Falciani



Fig. 3. Sebastiano del Piombo, *Cardinal Giovanni Salviati and Giovanni da Cepperello*, c. 1531, oil on panel, Sarasota, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, inv. SN65.

NOTES

1. Vasari 1966-1987, vol. V, p. 517.
2. Benati and Riccòmini 2006, pp. 118-119, no. II.13.


AIS MAN IS RI·ZAIT·WAS ICH·77·IAR AL

Hans Maler

c. 1475 – c. 1526/29

2.

Portrait of an Unknown Man, aged thirty-three

1521

Oil on parchment (?) laid on panel
38 × 32 cm
(15 × 12 ⅝ inches)
Inscribed along the upper edge:
· ALS MAN · 1521 · ZALT · WAS ICH ·
33 · IAR ALT ·

Provenance
Private collection.

Literature
Unpublished.

Hans Maler occupies a distinctive position within German Renaissance portraiture. Although documentary evidence concerning his life remains remarkably scarce, the small group of portraits now associated with him forms an unusually coherent body of work, produced over little more than a decade and centred on one of the most prosperous economic and political environments of early sixteenth-century Central Europe.[1] Born in Swabia, probably in or near Ulm around 1475, Maler appears initially to have worked chiefly as a painter of religious subjects.[2] Around 1515-1517 – or, according to a different hypothesis, by 1508 at the latest[3] – Maler moved to the town of Schwaz in Tyrol, which became the centre of his mature activity; virtually all the portraits presently known were produced there between about 1515 and the later 1520s.[4]

The choice of location was far from provincial. Schwaz, east of Innsbruck, was one of the principal European centres for silver and copper mining and provided Maler with two closely interconnected circles of patrons: the Habsburg court at Innsbruck and the wealthy merchants, mining entrepreneurs and officials whose fortunes depended upon the Tyrolean mining economy. His sitters included Archduke Ferdinand, later Emperor Ferdinand I; Ferdinand's wife Anna of Bohemia and Hungary and his sister Maria; members of the Fugger family and their commercial network; and leading figures of the Schwaz mining administration.[5]



Fig. 1. Hans Maler, *Portrait of a Beardless Man*, 1521, oil on pine panel, 37.5 × 31.3 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. GG 884.

Maler's surviving portraits are strikingly consistent in type. His sitters generally appear as a bust or half length, turned three-quarters to one side against an unarticulated blue, green or, more occasionally, yellow ground. The format is normally small or medium-sized, and inscriptions frequently record the sitter's name, age and the date of the portrait. Within this apparently restricted formula, however, Maler developed a remarkably flexible system of production. Individual likenesses could exist in several versions; compositions were repeated, reduced, enlarged or reversed, and the artist repeatedly returned to his own models. This was not restricted to dynastic portraiture, as it is equally evident in portraits made for members of the Fugger circle and the Schwaz elite.[6]

* * *

The present painting, hitherto unpublished, constitutes an important addition to this small but coherent corpus. It reproduces, with minor differences, one of Maler's best-known compositions, the *Portrait of an Unknown Man, aged thirty-three* of 1521, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. 884 (fig. 1).[7]

The Vienna portrait is painted in oil on Swiss stone pine (*Zirbenholz*). Across its upper edge runs an inscription closely corresponding to that preserved in the present work: "·ALS MAN·1521·ZALT·WAS ICH·33·IAR ALT·", recording that the unidentified sitter was thirty-three years old in 1521. The only significant difference lies in the word *ZALT*, which appears as *ZAIT* in the present painting, Maler employing there the alternative Schwabacher form of the letter *L* that he also uses in *ALS* in both works.

The picture is documented in the imperial collections at least from 1720, when it was included in Ferdinand Storffer's illustrated inventory of the gallery in the Stallburg, and again in



Fig. 2. Federal Republic of Germany, *500 Deutsche Mark Banknote*, series BBk I/Ia, obverse, with a portrait after Hans Maler.

the *Prodromus* of 1735.[8] It has remained within the imperial and subsequently Austrian national collections ever since.[9] In 1965, the image was chosen for the 500 Deutsche Mark banknote issued by the Deutsche Bundesbank, series BBk I/Ia (fig. 2), making it one of the most widely circulated painted faces in post-war West Germany.[10]

The Vienna painting is among the more psychologically insistent portraits in Maler's oeuvre. The sitter is shown at half length, turned slightly to the right against a blue ground. He wears a black *Schaube* trimmed with black fur over a green doublet and a white shirt with a decorated border. His hair is cut in the fashionable *Kolbe* and covered by a black cap decorated with small hat ornaments. The slightly contracted eyebrows, set mouth and concentrated gaze introduce an unusual degree of tension into an oeuvre often characterised by emotional reserve, making the portrait one of those rare instances in which Maler achieved more penetrating characterisation, the sitter's forceful gaze suggesting an energetic personality.[11]

The emergence of the present painting substantially improves our understanding of the Vienna composition. Duplication is attested in Maler's working practice. His catalogue records several instances in which a single portrait composition survives in more than one version, sometimes autograph or substantially autograph, indicating that Maler's production cannot be understood in terms of a simple opposition between an "original" and mechanically derived workshop copies.[12]

A particularly instructive early example is offered by the two portraits of Sebastian Andorfer dated 1517: the *Sebastian Andorfer with Beard*, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 32.100.33, and the closely related *Sebastian Andorfer without Beard*, now in a private collection. Technical investigation established differences in the preparation of the two panels and suggested that the more carefully prepared unbearded version may have been executed first. It was further proposed that the paintings were not necessarily conceived as a pair but could have been intended for distinct settings or functions.[13]

Still more pertinent to the present case are Maler's two portraits of Ulrich Fugger of 1525, the first in Augsburg, Kunstsammlungen und Museen Augsburg, Schaezlerpalais, on permanent loan from a private collection, and the second in New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 14.40.630. These are almost identical in dimensions and composition, yet their technical construction is not identical.[14] Recent investigation has shown that the New York version possesses a carbon-based underdrawing formed in part by discontinuous contours consistent with the transfer of a pattern, whereas infrared examination of the Augsburg painting revealed no comparable carbon-based drawing, although indications of underdrawing are visible to the naked eye. Digital superimposition demonstrates that the facial features of the two Fugger portraits correspond almost exactly, while small differences in the proportions of the face, nose and hat remain. These may result from slight movement during transfer, or alternatively from the existence of a lost intermediary model from which both paintings could ultimately derive.[15] Be that as it may, the evidence suggests that replication within Maler's workshop could be at once highly precise and materially flexible. Close correspondence between two versions does not necessarily imply mechanical identity, nor does it automatically establish a straightforward chronological hierarchy between them. The relationship between the present work and the Vienna portrait should therefore be approached in the same terms.

The most unusual feature of the newly discovered version is its support. A technical examination undertaken in 2021 initially described the painting as oil on paper attached to panel.[16] Infrared reflectography, however, raised a different possibility. The texture of the flexible intermediate support is clearly perceptible in the reflectogram, in part because the priming layer appears extremely thin or may be absent in places. The material presents what the technical report described as a "spongy" appearance, while, more significantly, no chain or laid lines of the type normally associated with handmade paper could be detected. The report therefore proposed that the support may in fact be parchment rather than paper.[17]

Painting in oils on paper or parchment was by no means exceptional in sixteenth-century German practice, and the technique was employed on occasion by Albrecht Dürer, Albrecht Altdorfer, Hans Burgkmair, Gerlach Flicke and, most extensively, Hans Holbein the Younger. A particularly significant and directly comparable example is Holbein's *Portrait of Benedikt von Hertenstein* of 1517, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, painted on paper laid onto wood, in which the artist employed simple freehand contours in a crumbly black material beneath much of the paint.

The use of parchment would not in itself be unique within Maler's oeuvre. His *Portrait of Anna of Bohemia and Hungary*, c. 1519, Madrid, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, inv. no. 275 (1937.2), is now on a transferred support, but in 1971 its original construction was recorded as parchment laid on oak. The closely related *Portrait of Archduchess Maria, later Queen of Bohemia and Hungary*, c. 1519, Coburg, Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg, inv. no. M.425, was likewise probably executed on parchment laid onto wood. Most securely of all, Maler's *Archduchess Maria, later Queen of Bohemia and Hungary* of 1520, London, Society of Antiquaries of London, inv. Scharf XXVI / LDSAL 340, is also on parchment.[18]

The technical examination of the version presented here provides unusually rich evidence for the painting's execution. Infrared reflectography reveals an extensive underdrawing in a dry, carbon-based medium, most probably black chalk. It is linear, delicate and economical, defining the principal features without systematic hatching or tonal modelling. The lines are often broken, slightly wavering and uneven in pressure. This strongly favours freehand application over a mechanical transfer by tracing or pouncing.[19]



Fig. 3. Hans Maler, *Portrait of an Unknown Man, aged Thirty-three*, infrared image with annotations showing the underdrawing. From Tager Stonor Richardson, 2021a.

This is particularly clear in the treatment of the eyes, nose, mouth, philtrum, chin and hair. The drawing around the sitter's right eye consists of fine, fragmented strokes produced with a crumbly carbonaceous material; around the nose and mouth the contours are similarly discontinuous, and at the chin a small zigzag movement has no obvious function in a mechanically transferred design. In places these lines remain visible even under normal illumination. It can thus be assumed that, while the drawing itself was executed freely, the design may already have been established in a preparatory study or portrait model.[20]

The evidence becomes still more significant when considered alongside the Hamilton Kerr Institute's recent examination of Maler's *Portrait of a Young Man* of 1523, private collection. In that painting, conservation revealed a highly sketchy, non-carbonaceous underdrawing, probably executed in sharpened red chalk, which freely establishes the principal features of the face and may reflect drawing directly from life. The comparison suggests that Maler's preparatory practice was more varied than previously assumed. Alongside this red-chalk example, nine portraits are currently known to contain carbon-based underdrawing, differing considerably in extent and degree of elaboration and pointing to a flexible range of procedures within the artist's workshop.[21]

The private *Portrait of an Unknown Man* substantially enlarges this technical picture. Its carefully articulated but unmistakably free underdrawing belongs neither to the sparse indications documented in many of Maler's panels nor to the pattern-transferred system visible in the New York *Ulrich Fugger*. Rather, it records an autonomous graphic stage in the development of the portrait, as the artist did not follow this drawing slavishly. Small but meaningful adjustments were introduced as the painting proceeded. The silhouette of the cap was revised by bringing the blue background over its earlier contour; the sitter's cheek was enlarged over an already established area of blue; the chin was altered during the painting stage; an initial line associated with the fur collar was abandoned; and the hair around the ear was originally conceived as extending further onto the cheek. A broader liquid line at the neck may record another adjustment in the position of the neckline (fig. 3).

The inscription was similarly planned as part of the original composition. Infrared examination reveals ruled guidelines used to position the lettering, while the letters themselves appear to have been underdrawn. The wording was not substantially changed, although differences in infrared absorption suggest that portions of several letters were subsequently strengthened with paint. An additional ruled line near the upper edge may indicate that the inscription was initially envisaged at a slightly different height (fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Hans Maler, *Portrait of an Unknown Man, aged Thirty-three*, details of the inscription in visible light and infrared, showing the ruled guidelines. From Tager Stonor Richardson, 2021a.

Comparison with the Vienna panel is revealing. Infrared reflectography of that work detected only faint and sporadic indications of underdrawing. Small pentimenti occur along the right-hand contour of the face, where cheek, nose and chin were broadened. X-radiography shows that the flesh was painted with considerable assurance, rapidly and in part wet-in-wet, with soft transitions through the face and fine brown lines defining the nose and eyelids.[22]

The two versions thus appear technically distinct despite their close visual correspondence. In Vienna, the preparatory graphic phase is only minimally detectable, and the painted structure is comparatively controlled and consolidated. In the private version, by contrast, the drawing remains an active component of the final image. Its fine black lines participate in the construction of eyes, brows, mouth, hair and facial contours, lending the surface a greater graphic immediacy (fig. 5). This should not be interpreted simply as a difference in quality. Rather, it may reflect the different behaviour of the supports and, perhaps, distinct circumstances or purposes of execution.

The existence of two versions inevitably raises the question of chronology, though no technical evidence presently allows priority to be established. The parchment version may have preceded the Vienna panel: its flexible support, thin preparation, prominent underdrawing, and minor revisions are compatible with a relatively immediate formulation of the likeness, later translated into the more conventional medium of oil on wood. Yet it should not be regarded as a "study": the portrait is fully resolved, independently conceived, and bears the same carefully arranged inscription as the Vienna version. Conversely, the Vienna panel may have come first, with the parchment portrait produced subsequently as an autograph repetition. Maler's established practice of multiplying likenesses makes this equally plausible, and the freehand underdrawing need not imply direct observation of the sitter but could instead reflect the recreation of an already established model.[23]



Fig. 5. Hans Maler, *Portrait of an Unknown Man, aged Thirty-three*, detail of the right eye in visible light (above) and infrared (below). From Tager Stonor Richardson, 2021a.

The practical purpose of producing two versions is likewise impossible to establish, but Maler's wider oeuvre offers a framework within which the practice can be understood. Portraits could circulate between residences, courts and family groups; one version might remain with the sitter while another was presented to a relative, associate or institution, serving purposes that ranged from dynastic exchange to personal remembrance and social representation. The survival of repeated Habsburg and Fugger likenesses confirms that such multiplication was an integral aspect of culture rather than an exceptional response to a particular commission. In Maler's world, portraiture did not consist simply in the production of unique likenesses, but in a sophisticated process through which an image might be preserved, translated, repeated and adapted according to its support and intended destination.

Luca Baroni

NOTES

1. The reconstruction of Maler's oeuvre is relatively recent. Until the final decades of the nineteenth century paintings now securely associated with him circulated under the names of more celebrated German masters, among them Albrecht Dürer, Lucas Cranach the Elder, Christoph Amberger and Hans Holbein the Younger (Friedländer 1895, pp. 411-423; Friedländer 1897, pp. 362-365; Glück 1905, pp. 245-247; Mackowitz 1960; Löcher 1967, pp. 31-84). Research was substantially renewed by Krause between 2008 and 2016; his *Bestandskatalog* assembled forty-two portraits attributed to Maler, his circle and his following, constituting the first systematic catalogue since Mackowitz (Krause 2008; Krause 2012, pp. 69-102; Krause 2016a, pp. 51-54). In the same year Anna Moraht-Fromm published the most recent monographic study of Maler's career as a whole, extending the investigation beyond portraiture to his formation and broader activity (Moraht-Fromm 2016).
2. Krause 2016a, pp. 51-52; Moraht-Fromm 2016, p. 21.
3. Moraht-Fromm 2016, p. 126.
4. Krause 2016a, pp. 51-52.
5. Krause 2012, pp. 69-102, esp. pp. 76–89; Krause 2016a, pp. 51-52; Krause 2016b, pp. 157-172.
6. Krause 2016a, pp. 52-54.
7. Krause 2008, pp. 148-149, no. 9; Krause 2012, p. 72; Krause 2016a, pp. 74-77, no. 9.
8. The Vienna painting's attribution history encapsulates that of Maler himself. Storffer's inventory assigned the picture to Albrecht Dürer; Gustav Parthey subsequently attributed it to Lucas Cranach the Elder, while Vischer placed it with a pupil of Bernhard Strigel and Eisenmann proposed Hans Schäufelein. Scheibler, in 1887, was the first to associate it with the still-anonymous group that would eventually be identified as the work of Hans Maler (Krause 2016a, p. 77).
9. Krause 2016a, p. 75.
10. Krause 2016a, p. 77; Krause 2016b, p. 168.
11. Krause 2016a, pp. 52, 77.
12. Krause 2016a, pp. 52-54.
13. Ainsworth and Waterman 2013, pp. 177-180; Krause 2016a, pp. 57-60.
14. Krause 2016a, pp. 115-118.
15. Turner-Hehlen, Slottved Kimbriel and Daly 2024, pp. 78-79.
16. Tager Stonor Richardson 2021a, p. 1.
17. This identification must remain provisional. No material sampling or direct fibre examination has yet demonstrated conclusively whether the intermediate layer is paper or animal skin, and further analysis would be desirable. Nevertheless, the absence of a discernible paper structure, together with the visible surface texture, makes parchment a plausible and at present preferable hypothesis.
18. Krause 2016a, pp. 63-72.
19. Tager Stonor Richardson 2021a, pp. 1-3.
20. Tager Stonor Richardson 2021a, pp. 2-3.
21. Turner-Hehlen, Slottved Kimbriel and Daly 2024, pp. 78 and 83-84.
22. Krause 2016a, p. 75.
23. Krause 2016a, pp. 52-54; Turner-Hehlen, Slottved Kimbriel and Daly 2024, pp. 78-79.





Dosso Dossi

Mirandola, c. 1486 – Ferrara, 1542

3.

Head of an Armoured Man (Saint William?)

Oil on paper,
laid down on panel
41.5 × 30 cm
(16 ⅜ × 11 ¾ in.)
Inscription on the reverse, an old paper label affixed to the wooden secondary support, inscribed in brown ink: "Hume Collection No. 113 / Head of Marco… / by Giorgione".

Provenance

Sir Abraham Hume, Bt (1749-1838), probably Wormleybury, Hertfordshire, by the early nineteenth century, as Giorgione (according to an old label on the reverse, "Hume Collection No. 113"); presumably by descent and subsequently dispersed from the Hume collection; Bern, Stuker, 8 December 2018, lot 197, as follower of Giorgione; Swiss art market, 2018.
Private collection.

Literature

Possibly Hume 1824.

An old paper label affixed to the reverse of the wooden support of the painting, written in brown ink, reads: "Hume Collection No. 113, Head of Marco… by Giorgione". The inscription provides an important clue to the early history of the work, associating it with the celebrated collection assembled by Sir Abraham Hume (1749-1838), and apparently identifying the subject as Saint Mark.

Hume was among the most discerning British collectors of Italian painting active around 1800. A politician, Fellow of the Royal Society, founding director of the British Institution, and close friend of Sir Joshua Reynolds, he began collecting in the 1770s and developed a particular interest in Venetian painting. A substantial proportion of his Italian pictures was acquired through the dealers Giovanni Maria Sasso in Venice and Giovanni Antonio Armano in Bologna, whose correspondence with Hume, now preserved in the National Gallery, London, documents a sustained traffic in paintings attributed to Titian, Tintoretto, Giorgione, and other Italian masters.[1] His collection was particularly rich in Venetian painting: of the 154 pictures listed in Hume's privately printed catalogue of 1824, forty-five were Venetian, while Hume himself went on to publish, in 1829, *Notices of the Life and Works of Titian*, an early and important English study devoted specifically to the painter.[2]

The number recorded on the label belongs to the numbering system used for Hume's collection. Its principal published record is the *Descriptive Catalogue of a Collection of Pictures comprehending Specimens of all the Various Schools of Painting*, privately printed





Fig. 1. Dosso Dossi, *Saint William*, c. 1530-1535, Royal Collection, RCIN 405775, shown alongside the present *Head of an Armoured Man* for comparison.

Fig. 2. Superimposition of the present painting *Head of an Armoured Man* and Dosso Dossi's *Saint William*, c. 1530-1535, Royal Collection, RCIN 405775, aligned on the pupil of the left eye.

in London in 1824; the manuscript is preserved today in the Victoria and Albert Museum, National Art Library, MSL/1940/1345.[3]

Hume's interest in Giorgione was considerable and formed part of his broader fascination with the origins of the Venetian *maniera moderna*. As early as 1791, he is recorded as having sold an unidentified historical subject then attributed to Giorgione, an episode that provides an early indication of the place occupied by the painter within his collecting and connoisseurial interests.[4] His correspondence with Sasso later records the active pursuit of works believed to be by Giorgione, while his collection developed within a connoisseurial culture in which Giorgionesque inventions, replicas, variants, and copies were still frequently classified under the master's name.[5]

The production context for the present head is, however, not Venetian but Ferrarese. It can be connected to one of the most celebrated images created by Dosso Dossi: the so-called *Saint William*, c. 1530-1535, Windsor Castle, Royal Collection, RCIN 405775 (fig. 1).[6] This version represents a half-length warrior wearing black armour and a voluminous green robe enriched with woven gold bands. His left hand rests on his helmet, while a halo identifies him unequivocally as a saint. Traditionally he has been identified as Saint William, Duke of Aquitaine, to whom the Ferrarese church of San Guglielmo was dedicated, although Saint George, Saint Victor, or Saint Liberale have also been proposed.[7]

The Windsor painting is a work of exceptional pictorial sophistication. The gleaming armour offered Dosso an



opportunity for an overt display of virtuosity: even the saint's thumb is reflected both in his helmet and in his breastplate. The conception may itself reflect the impact either of fifteenth-century Netherlandish representations of armoured saints or of a lost Giorgionesque prototype. Such a convergence of Ferrarese, Venetian, and Northern elements might explain the picture's subsequent fortune. It generated an extraordinary number of copies and derivations, many apparently Netherlandish, in which the figure was frequently transformed from an unidentified warrior saint into Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. The latter identification cannot apply to Dosso's composition, since the halo in the Windsor version is original and the physiognomy bears no convincing resemblance to secure portraits of the Burgundian duke.

The circumstances of this diffusion remain intriguing. Dosso's painting was already in the English royal collection under Charles I, having been exchanged between the second Marquess of Hamilton and the future king in 1620; at the time it was considered a work by Giorgione or Sebastiano del Piombo. Yet surviving sixteenth-century variants demonstrate that the image was circulating extensively in Northern Europe well before its documented arrival in England.[8]

The present painting is best understood in relation to Dosso's Windsor *Saint William* not as another derivative of the Windsor composition, but as an autonomous study closely connected with its genesis. Rather than reproducing the complete figure, it isolates the warrior's head and the uppermost portion of his armour, enlarging the

physiognomic element until it assumes the character of an independent character head. The relationship to the Windsor painting is nevertheless extremely close in scale. When the two images are superimposed at 1:1 and aligned on the pupil of the left eye, their connection becomes immediately apparent (fig. 2). Yet the correspondence is far from mechanical. The head in the present work is turned by approximately thirty degrees in relation to the Windsor figure, while significant adjustments affect the profile of the nose, the length and projection of the chin, the arrangement of the hair, and the configuration of the armour. Equally important, the fall of light differs subtly but coherently between the two images, corresponding in each case to the different orientation of the head. These variations are difficult to explain as the result of copying or merely reorienting an existing composition; rather, they suggest an independent study, probably made from life, which was subsequently adapted for the Windsor painting.

The absence of a halo in the present work is likewise consistent with its interpretation as a study from life rather than as a copy of a devotional figure. What interested the painter was evidently not the saintly identity of the Windsor figure but the physiognomy itself: the strongly modelled face of an armoured man, observed and treated as an autonomous pictorial subject. The sheet may originally have been larger and was subsequently cut and reoriented on its present support, but such an alteration cannot account for the perspectival differences in the nose and chin, nor for the subtle but internally coherent changes in the direction of the light. These point instead to two separate pictorial formulations of the same type.

The painting may also be related more generally to Dosso's interest in forcefully individualized male types and autonomous character heads. Technical examination demonstrates that the adjustment and reorientation of heads formed an integral part of his working procedure: infrared analysis of the Costabili Polyptych, for example, revealed substantial changes to the heads of Saint George and Saint Andrew during execution. These are more properly understood as *pentimenti* than as evidence in themselves for the reuse of independent head studies, but they nevertheless document Dosso's empirical habit of developing and modifying physiognomic forms in the course of painting.[9] A closer comparison in terms of type and function is provided by the *Saint John the Baptist* in a private collection, an independently conceived head with a similarly compact structure, strongly individualized features, and animated expression.[10]

Infrared reflectography undertaken by Tager Stonor Richardson in 2021 provides further evidence concerning the painting's execution (fig. 3).[11] No carbon-based underdrawing was detected, although this does not exclude the use of red chalk, red paint, or another infrared-transparent medium. The result is compatible with the technical evidence gathered from Dosso's paintings, in which forms were frequently established and modified directly in paint rather than through mechanical transfer or a rigidly systematic preparatory drawing. His working process was notably fluid, allowing figures and details to develop through successive pictorial adjustments.[12]

Technical investigations have also shown that Dosso habitually worked over a thin coloured *imprimitura*, generally dark grey and apparently oil-bound, composed of materials including lead white, charcoal black, and brown earths.[13] Rather than forming a dense and uniform layer, this preparation was often applied fluidly, with broad directional brushstrokes that remain legible under infrared examination.[14] A closely comparable effect appears in the present painting: the diagonal streaking visible across the face does not correspond to the modelling of the flesh and is better understood as the trace of a thin, brush-applied preparatory layer; its character accords remarkably well with Dosso's documented technique.

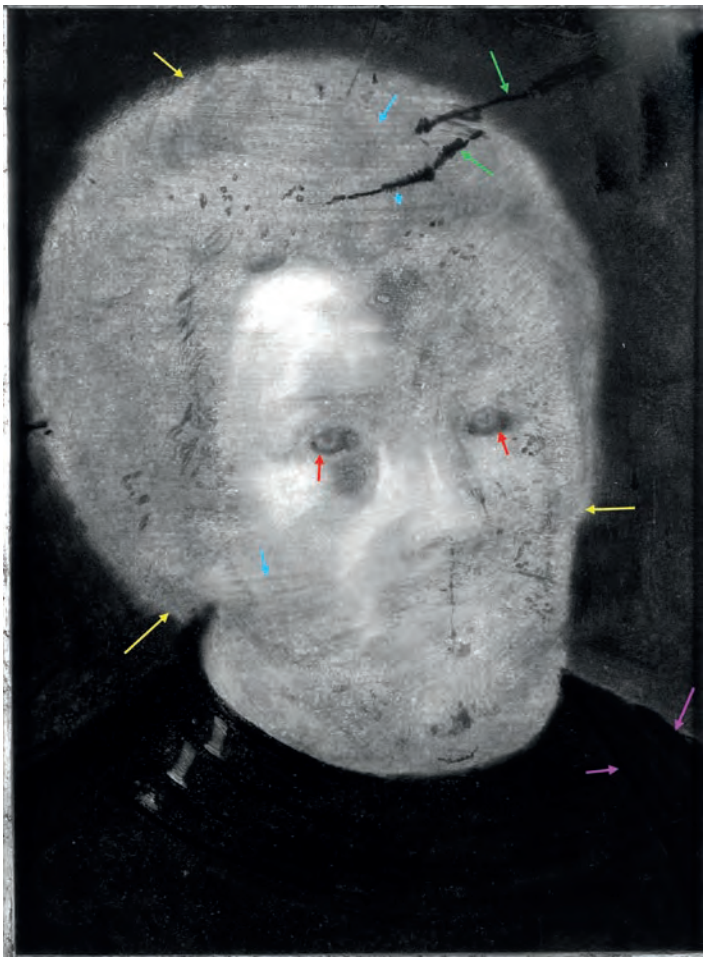


Fig. 3. Dosso Dossi, *Head of an Armoured Man (Saint William?)*, infrared image. From Tager Stonor Richardson, 2021b.

Several smaller pictorial details strengthen this correspondence. Particularly significant is the crimson-red touch at the inner corner of the eye. As noted in previous studies, this device is a distinctive characteristic of Dosso's painting; the same technical discussion describes his strongest highlights as built up with relatively full-bodied pigment, while elsewhere in the catalogue the red dots at the corners of the eyes and the careful execution of armour are explicitly identified among the stylistic features characteristic of the artist.[15] The small red accent in the present head and the emphatic white highlight applied in impasto to the armour therefore acquire particular evidential weight when considered together with the broader technical correspondences.

Infrared reflectography further clarifies the pictorial construction of the face. The forms emerge gradually from the darker preparation towards the lights, with the underlying tone remaining active in the shadows and the contours handled without rigid linear definition. The whites of the eyes appear unusually absorptive in the reflectogram, perhaps indicating the presence of an infrared-absorbing component. Although this observation requires further analysis before it can be interpreted conclusively, it is potentially significant in view of the identification of unusual black and dark-grey pigments, including coal, in works by Dosso.[16] No watermark has been detected in the paper support; assessment is necessarily complicated by the painted surface and by the paper's attachment to the wooden secondary support.

Taken together, the evidence presently available supports an attribution to Dosso or his immediate circle, with a preference for Dosso himself, most plausibly as an independent study from life related to the genesis of the Windsor *Saint William*. The close correspondence in technique, pictorial construction, and handling, combined with the deliberate differences in pose and illumination, is more readily explained within Dosso's own practice than as the work of a later follower. Some prudence is

nevertheless required by the exceptional nature of the support: oil on paper is extremely rare in Dosso's surviving oeuvre, and no securely accepted work by him on this support presently offers a direct technical comparison. This absence, however, should be understood as a limit to comparison rather than as evidence against the attribution.

Whether conceived from the outset as a study for the Windsor figure or as an autonomous character head subsequently adapted to it, the painting is an exceptionally early and accomplished example of oil on paper. It brings together Dosso's Ferrarese reinterpretation of Venetian and Giorgionesque pictorial culture, the Renaissance practice of studying and reformulating physiognomic types, the circulation of models between Italy and Northern Europe, and, not least, late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century English taste for Venetian painting, when the work was attributed to Giorgione.

LUCA BARONI

NOTES

1. Borean 2004; Borean 2013, pp. 85-97.
2. Hume 1824; Hume 1829.
3. Hume 1824.
4. Getty Provenance Index, J. Paul Getty Trust, record of a 1791 sale.
5. Borean 2004; Ferrari 2018, pp. 300-332.
6. Shearman 1972, no. 82.
7. The identification with a warrior saint is reinforced by Dosso's treatment of Saint George in the Costabili Polyptych, Ferrara, Pinacoteca Nazionale, executed in collaboration with Garofalo, where the figure likewise combines armour with sumptuous green drapery: Fiorenza 2000, pp. 252-279.
8. Shearman 1972, no. 82. Among the earliest derivations of Dosso's prototype is the *Saint George*, c. 1540, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. 995, attributed to the circle of Jan Sanders van Hemessen. Significantly, the painting was acquired in Frankfurt in 1624 for the collection of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, as a work by Giorgione, remained there until 1648, and entered the Imperial collections in 1649, attesting to the prestige enjoyed by the type within seventeenth century collecting circles. A variant of the same prototype in Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum, inv. 903, is distinguished by its unusual arched format; its Baltic-oak support has also led to its identification as the work of a Netherlandish copyist active in the sixteenth century (Sander 2004, pp. 300-303). The Vienna and Frankfurt type was repeatedly reinterpreted as a portrait of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. Particularly significant in this respect is a second painting in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, *Ideal Portrait of Charles the Bold*, attributed to Jan Sanders van Hemessen and closely related to the version in Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. CA 541 (Reinach 1905, p. 37; Mezzetti 1965, p. 91; Gibbons 1968, p. 182). In both paintings the Burgundian reinterpretation is made explicit by an inscription identifying the warrior as Charles the Bold, by the collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and by the episode of the fleece represented in the background (Quarré 1949-1951, pp. 26-30; Guillaume 1980, no. 42). The same identification appears in the version in Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, inv. KMSsp142, *Portrait of Charles the Bold*, catalogued under the name of Sebastiano del Piombo but identified as a copy after Dosso's prototype; it entered the collection in 1809. Finally, a much later *Portrait of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy*, Brussels, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, inv. 316, oil on oak, now catalogued as an anonymous nineteenth-century interpretation after Dosso Dossi, attests to the continuing reception of the model well beyond the sixteenth century.
9. Bentini 1998, pp. 68-69.
10. Dosso Dossi 1998, cat. 35, p. 197.
11. Tager Stonor Richardson 2021b, unpublished technical report.
12. Rothe and Carr 1998, pp. 57-59; Coliva 1998, pp. 72-80.
13. Rothe and Carr 1998, p. 60; Berrie and Fisher 1993, pp. 70-74; Berrie 1994, pp. 307-313.
14. Bentini 1998, pp. 65-67.
15. Coliva 1998, p. 79.
16. Spring, Grout, and White 2003, pp. 96-114.





Girolamo Muziano

Brescia 1532 – Rome 1592

4.

Head of Christ

Circa 1555-1560

Oil on paper,
laid down on panel
42.7 × 28.2 cm
(16 ⅘ × 11 1⁄10 in.)

Inscription on the reverse of the panel, in pen and brown ink, probably seventeenth century: *Mutiano.*

Provenance

Possibly Cardinal Camillo Massimo (1620-1677), Palazzo alle Quattro Fontane, Rome, recorded in his posthumous inventory of 11 October 1677 as "*Un Quadro Testa d'un Christo [...] mano di Mutiano*"; Sotheby's, Olympia, 30 October 2001, lot 428, as *Circle of Girolamo Muziano*; Private collection, United Kingdom; Christie's, London, 4 December 2024, lot 107, as Girolamo Muziano.
Private collection.

Literature

Possibly Tosini 2008, p. 519, inv. n. 58.

Girolamo Muziano occupies a distinctive position in the artistic culture of the later sixteenth century. Born probably in Brescia in 1532, at the age of twelve he moved to Padua, where he trained under the otherwise little-known Francesco Picchena and came into contact with Lambert Sustris and Domenico Campagnola. From them he absorbed lessons in drawing, colour, and, above all, landscape that would remain fundamental throughout his career. Around 1546-1547 he moved to Venice, where he was apparently able to devote himself principally to study rather than to routine workshop production. His arrival in Rome in 1549-1550 therefore brought to the city an artist already thoroughly formed within the visual culture of the Veneto.[1]

In Rome, Muziano immersed himself in the study of antiquity, Raphael, Michelangelo, and the most recent achievements of Central Italian painting, while retaining the chromatic sensibility and interest in atmospheric landscape acquired in northern Italy. This ability to reconcile apparently divergent artistic languages, together with his sustained engagement with drawing and printmaking – notably through his collaboration with the reproductive engraver Cornelis Cort – became one of the defining features of his work. Muziano thus emerged as one of the principal figures through whom Venetian pictorial culture entered and was reformulated within the Roman artistic environment of the mid-sixteenth century.[2]

Around 1554-1555, shortly after completing the frescoes in Santa Caterina della Rota, among his earliest independent



Fig. 1. Girolamo Muziano, *The Raising of Lazarus*, 1555-1556, oil on canvas, Orvieto, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Comparison with the *Head of Christ*, reproduced at a 1:1 scale.

commissions in Rome, Muziano painted the monumental *Raising of Lazarus* for the Colonna at Subiaco. Probably executed in 1555, the painting was subsequently transferred to Rome and displayed in Palazzo di San Marco, the present Palazzo Venezia, where it attracted considerable admiration and was reportedly praised by Michelangelo. According to the documentary evidence, Muziano's growing reputation soon brought him to the attention of the authorities responsible for the decoration of Orvieto Cathedral. In 1555 Raffaello da Montelupo, together with members of the Orvietan community in Rome, recommended the young painter for the project. By the end of that year Muziano was working at Orvieto, where he received the commission for two major altarpieces, the *Raising of Lazarus* and the *Way to Calvary*.[3]

The *Raising of Lazarus*, now in Orvieto, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, was commissioned on 17 November 1555 and completed by 11 June 1556.[4] Further payments of 2 October, 18 October, and 18 December 1556 indicate that Muziano had already begun additional work for the Cathedral, including the *Way to Calvary*, completed by 30 April 1557, as well as the fresco and stucco decoration of the chapel in which the *Raising of Lazarus* was eventually installed. A document of 24 January 1557 establishes the conditions governing these and further projected decorations, while Muziano's final payment for the chapel dates from 22 August 1558.[5]

* * *

The present work, which reemerged in 2001 and 2024 on the London art market, stands out for its exceptional pictorial quality and corresponds closely to the head of Christ in the Orvieto *Raising of Lazarus*.[6] Although the absence of high-resolution photographs of the corresponding detail in the altarpiece prevents a more precise assessment, the comparison between the work discussed here and the painted figure is highly suggestive (fig. 1). The two heads are virtually identical in scale and proportions, raising the possibility that the oil-on-paper version was produced either independently of the original preparatory cartoon or by direct transfer from it. Its execution may therefore be placed within the same phase of work as the altarpiece itself.

The physiognomy of Christ and the arrangement of the hair correspond very closely in the two works, with only minor variations around the neck. In the altarpiece, the locks falling along the right side of the neck are slightly longer. More substantial differences concern the setting and the costume. In the oil on paper, the background is neutral and enlivened only by rays of light emanating from Christ's head. The treatment of the garments is also entirely different: whereas in the altarpiece Christ wears a pinkish robe beneath a blue mantle, in the present work the blue drapery is differently arranged and Christ is shown in a white shirt beneath a pink bodice embroidered with red threads.

These divergences suggest that, while the head in the altarpiece and that in the oil on paper may ultimately derive from the same common matrix – most plausibly the preparatory cartoon – the artist subsequently developed the motif in two distinct directions. The present sheet would thus not appear to be a straightforward repetition of the painted figure, but rather an autonomous pictorial variant, based upon the physiognomic solution devised during the preparatory process for the altarpiece.

Although the work is not documented before its appearance on the art market in 2001, the apparently early date of the pen-and-ink inscription on the reverse of the wooden panel supporting the sheet suggests a distinguished provenance. This may perhaps be identified with the collection of Cardinal Camillo Massimo, whose posthumous inventory, drawn up on 11 October 1677 at the Palazzo alle Quattro Fontane in Rome, lists "*Un Quadro Testa d'un Christo della sud.a grandezza … mano di Mutiano*", measuring

just under two *palmi* in height and one and a half *palmi* in width. The description and dimensions appear to correspond remarkably closely to the work discussed here.[7]

The work acquires particular significance when considered against Muziano's broader use of painted studies. Two autograph *bozzetti* discussed by Patrizia Tosini document markedly different functions for oil painting within his preparatory practice, although both are executed on canvas rather than paper.[8] The first is the large *Pentecost*, now in a private collection in France, which was made in connection with the monumental canvas commissioned by Pope Gregory XIII for the Vatican Palace in 1576 and installed the following year. Executed largely in monochrome and heightened with white, it contains substantial variations and pentimenti and served above all to establish the spatial organisation, distribution of the figure groups, and chiaroscuro of the composition.

Quite different is the oil-on-canvas study for the *Baptism of the Neophytes*, formerly in the Giovanni Pratesi Collection, Florence, and now in Urbino, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, inv. D 330 (fig. 2). Preparatory for the painting formerly in the Cappella Altoviti in the Santa Casa at Loreto, now preserved in the Museo della Santa Casa, the sketch is characterized by a broader chromatic range and a freer, markedly Venetian handling. Its emphasis falls less on the composition as a whole than on the individual nude figures, apparently studied from life. The two *bozzetti* thus reveal distinct uses of painting within Muziano's preparatory process: one comparatively finished and largely monochrome, concerned principally with composition and chiaroscuro; the other looser, more chromatic, and focused on the pictorial study of the figure.

The present *Study of the Head of Christ* represents a materially and functionally different case. Executed in oil on paper, laid down on panel, it appears to derive from a composition already at an advanced, perhaps definitive, stage. Its direct correspondence with the Christ in the *Raising of Lazarus* suggests a connection with the cartoon or another full-scale preparatory stage, yet its degree of finish and chromatic completeness point to a finished pictorial object rather than to a preliminary sketch of the kind represented by the other two.

The sheet therefore extends the known range of Muziano's practice beyond the oil-on-canvas *bozzetti*. Rather than developing an unresolved composition, it isolates a finished motif from the Orvieto altarpiece and gives it independent pictorial form. In this sense, it also accords with Muziano's broader interest in the circulation and multiplication of inventions, here translated not into print but into an autonomous painting.

Luca Baroni

NOTES

1. For an overview of Muziano, see Da Como 1930; Tosini 2008; Marciari 2002, pp. 113-118.
2. Marciari 2002, pp. 114-118; Hochmann 2004, *passim*; Bolzoni 2020, pp. 170, 181.
3. Marciari 2002, pp. 117-118.
4. Procacci 1954, p. 256, n. 26; Mack 1974, p. 410.
5. Orvieto Cathedral Archives, *Riformanze*, 1554-1560, 14, fol. 145r; *Camerlenghi*, 1558, 93, fol. 119v, in Mack 1974, p. 410, n. 2.
6. Sotheby's, Olympia, 30 October 2001, lot 428, as *Circle of Girolamo Muziano*; Christie's, London, 4 December 2024, lot 107, as Girolamo Muziano.
7. Inventory of Cardinal Camillo Massimo, 11 October 1677, no. 58, in Tosini 2008, p. 519.
8. Tosini 2014, pp. 192-197.



Fig. 2. Girolamo Muziano, *Study for the Baptism of the Neophytes*, oil on canvas, Urbino, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, inv. D 330.



Attributed to Paolo Veronese or Studio

Verona, 1528 – Venice, 1588

Head of Saint Joseph

5.

Oil on paper,
laid down on canvas
41 × 30.5 cm
(16 ⅛ × 12 in.)

Provenance
Private collection

Literature
Unpublished.

Paolo Caliari, called Veronese (Verona 1528 – Venice 1588), was one of the most successful painters of sixteenth-century Venice. After settling in the city in the early 1550s, he rapidly established himself among the leading artists of the Republic, working for churches, confraternities, patrician families and the Venetian state, as well as for patrons beyond Venice. The scale and variety of these commissions required an increasingly efficient organisation of the workshop, especially during the mature and final decades of his career. His sudden death at the age of sixty in 1588 did not interrupt this activity: responsibility for the *bottega* passed to his brother Benedetto and his sons Carletto and Gabriele, who continued to work under the name of the *Haeredes Pauli Caliari Veronensis.*[1]

The organisation of Veronese's workshop is fundamental to any assessment of his paintings. Autograph invention, supervised execution, collaboration, repetition and workshop production belonged to the same closely integrated system. Recent technical research has confirmed that works involving assistants frequently share the graphic and pictorial procedures found in paintings executed by Paolo himself: comparable materials, forms of underdrawing, corrections and methods of paint application demonstrate how thoroughly his practice was transmitted within the studio.[2] The distinction between master and workshop can therefore be particularly subtle in objects whose function was itself connected with the transmission and preservation of the master's inventions.

Central to this system was Veronese's deliberate reuse of successful ideas.[3] His creative process involved a remarkably wide

range of media: rapid pen sketches, black chalk and charcoal drawings, chiaroscuro studies, *modelli*, oil sketches and paintings on paper.[4] These stages did not follow a rigid sequence. Recent scholarship has emphasised that Paolo could omit individual phases, combine them, or work directly upon the prepared canvas; equally important, drawings were not necessarily created for one composition alone. Studies of individual figures, groups, textiles and other elements could be retained and subsequently adapted to different subjects.[5]

The inventory of the Caliari household provides important documentary evidence for this practice. Drawn up in 1684, it records a substantial body of surviving graphic material, classified both by medium – pen, black chalk, charcoal or paint – and by its place within the process of preparing a painting: *schizzi, disegni, modelli*, *chiaroscuri* and *disegni pittoreschi*. Among these were also oil paintings on paper, recorded in the inventory as *dipinti in carta*, which played a crucial part in the workshop activities.[6] The functions of these materials were correspondingly varied. Rapid *schizzi* might preserve an idea or something observed; more developed drawings established poses, costumes and the relationship between figures; while studies of heads and half-length figures could remain available as practical references during the execution of paintings. Scholars have observed that black-chalk studies on coloured paper bear fingerprints and traces of oil paint at their edges, evidence that they were physically handled during the painting process. Such materials might have served to instruct assistants by fixing the intended appearance of a figure.[7] Drawing thus operated both as an instrument of invention and as a means of communication within the workshop.

The repeated appearance of comparable figures and physiognomic types throughout Veronese's career belongs to the same working method. Figures already devised could be turned, modified, re-costumed or assigned a different narrative identity. Bodies, gestures and figural groups migrated between compositions, while technical examination shows that even paintings constructed from familiar forms continued to undergo adjustments during execution, in a process characterized by continual reuse and adaptation.

This economy of invention was sustained by the organisation of the workshop. Paolo's drawings, *modelli* and oil sketches continued to provide the basis for replicas and variants both during his lifetime and after his death. When his brother Benedetto assumed control of the shop after 1588, he inherited not merely a business but an archive of working material capable of generating new paintings from Paolo's established repertory.[8]

At the same time, the exceptional fortune of Veronese's compositions continued well beyond the Caliari workshop. Individual figures were extracted, copied and reinterpreted by later painters. A revealing example is provided by Sebastiano Ricci, who at the beginning of the eighteenth century produced a series of independent head studies after figures in Veronese's *Feast in the House of Levi*, four of which are today preserved in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle.[9] Although executed on canvas and made after a finished composition, these paintings adopt the appearance of preparatory head studies; they were themselves sufficiently celebrated to generate further copies. The phenomenon illustrates the unusual vitality of Veronese's individual figures and the extent to which his pictorial vocabulary could function independently of the compositions in which it first appeared.

* * *

It is within this broad context that the present *Head of Saint Joseph*, painted in oil on paper and subsequently laid down on canvas, should be understood. The work belongs directly to the pictorial world of Veronese and is specifically connected with the figure of Saint Joseph in the so-called *Pala Bonaldo*, painted c. 1562-1564 for the Bonaldo chapel in the sacristy of San Zaccaria in Venice and now in the Gallerie dell'Accademia, inv. 37 (fig. 1).

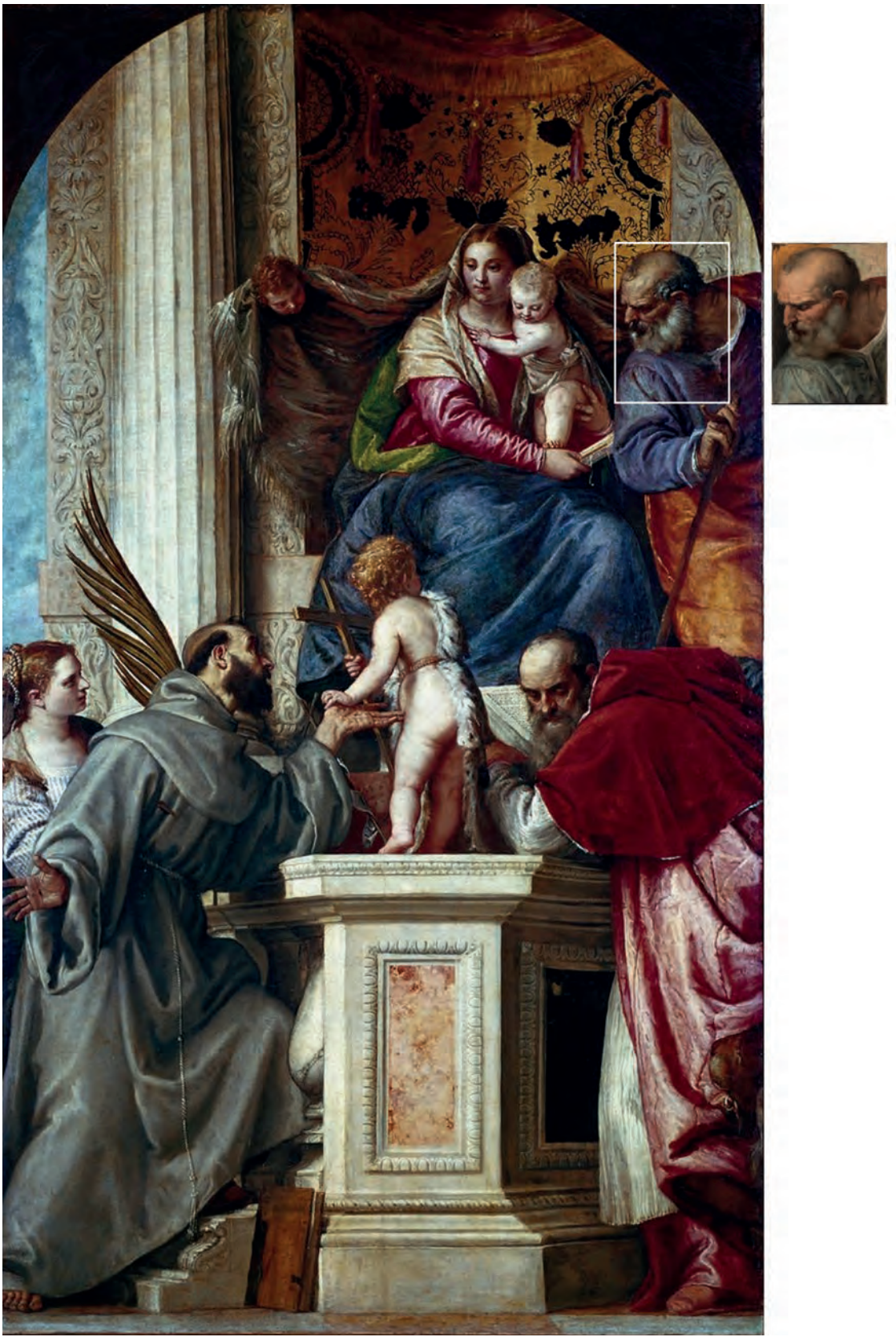


Fig. 1. Paolo Veronese, *Madonna and Child with Saints Stella (or Justina), Francis, John the Baptist, Jerome and Joseph (Pala Bonaldo)*, c. 1562, oil on canvas, 338 × 187 cm. Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia, cat. 37.



Fig. 2. Paolo Veronese, *The Adoration of the Magi,* 1573, oil on canvas, 320 × 234 cm. Vicenza, Church of Santa Corona.

The relationship is established not merely by the physiognomy and disposition of the head, but also by passages of yellow and blue decoration behind the figure, which reproduce in abbreviated form the patterned setting immediately surrounding Saint Joseph in the altarpiece. This detail links the sheet specifically to the San Zaccaria composition rather than simply to the broader repertory of elderly, bearded male types recurring throughout Veronese's oeuvre. The type itself was evidently successful and remained available to the painter over a considerable period. Closely related heads recur throughout Veronese's mature career: a particularly striking comparison is offered by the Saint Joseph on the extreme right in the *Adoration of the Magi* in the church of Santa Corona, Vicenza (fig. 2), while a comparable, though not identical, type appears in the figure of Saint Peter in the Saint Agatha Visited in Prison by Saint Peter of 1566-1567 in San Pietro Martire, Murano, among other examples.[10]

The present work is therefore best interpreted as an object produced within Veronese's creative process. It records the head conceived for the *Pala Bonaldo* while simultaneously fixing its appearance in a portable medium that could remain available within the workshop. Its function cannot be adequately described by the modern opposition between "preparatory study" and "copy", since the working practice of Veronese's studio, as we understand it today through documentary evidence and technical investigation, was based on the close interconnection of preparation, preservation and subsequent reuse. The results of diagnostic examination support this interpretation. Beneath the painted surface is an extensive underdrawing executed in a dry, carbon-based medium, most probably black chalk. It extends throughout the composition and is markedly freehand in character (fig. 3). The contours are exploratory, with doubled lines, loops and rapidly traced marks, while modelling is kept to a minimum. Only parts of the costume contain loose zigzag or hatched passages, suggesting that the drawing was not a passive tracing of a pre-existing finished image but rather an active search for form, whether executed by the master himself or by somebody close to him within the context of the workshop.[11]

Veronese's use of an underdrawing was itself highly variable and depended upon the requirements of the individual work. Technical examination of his paintings has revealed both dry carbon-based drawing and preliminary design carried out directly with the brush in dark paint, while in other cases no infrared-absorbing drawing has been detected.[12] The use of black chalk and charcoal is nevertheless well established within his practice. Preparatory studies in black chalk survive independently, while limited charcoal underdrawing has been identified beneath the later *Allegories of Love* in the National Gallery, London, subsequently reinforced and developed with dark painted lines that established much of the compositional design.[13]

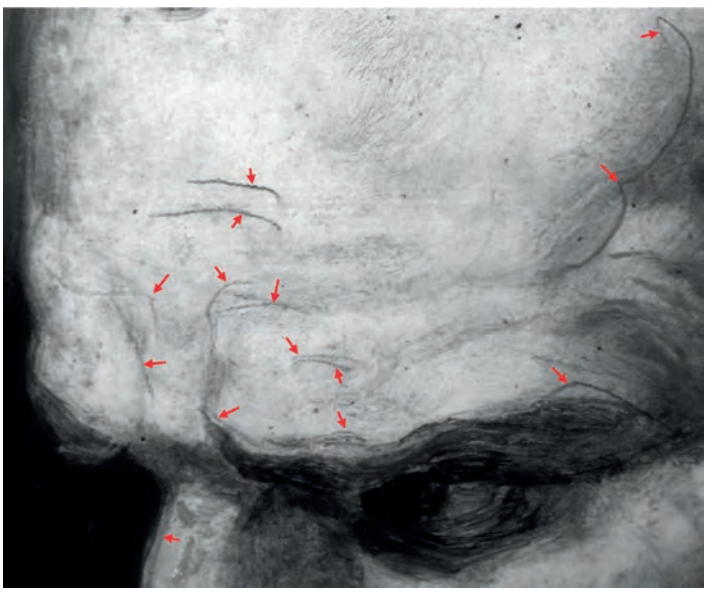


Fig. 3. Attributed to Paolo Veronese or his studio, *Head of Saint Joseph*, infrared detail of the forehead, showing the free underdrawing in black chalk. From Tager Stonor Richardson 2021a.

The surviving fragments of the monumental Petrobelli Altarpiece, painted around 1563 and today dispersed among several collections, demonstrate an equally flexible procedure: ruled lines and linear underdrawing were used to organise parts of the composition, Christ was carefully drawn in charcoal, probably from a preparatory study, while other figures were established directly and freely in black oil paint.[14] Such evidence qualifies the traditional image of Veronese as a painter who proceeded principally through direct handling of the brush. Marco Boschini, drawing upon accounts transmitted by the artist's son and grandson, famously described how Veronese, once he had taken up his brushes, sketched his subjects with extraordinary precision; yet the technical evidence shows that this apparent immediacy could rest upon a substantial and varied graphic preparation.[15] The free, carbon-based underdrawing revealed beneath the present *Head of Saint Joseph* therefore finds a clear place within Veronese's documented working practice.

The painted stage follows the principal structure established in the underdrawing. The handling is broad and open, with rapid application and wet-in-wet mixing of colours. The work was essentially executed *alla prima*, with no evidence of substantial compositional reconsideration at the painted stage. The decisive choices had therefore already been established in the underlying dry drawing before the image was translated into oil. The present sheet is not an *abbozzo* painted directly onto the support of a finished picture, but its swift transition from freehand drawing to colour belongs to the same working culture. Here, oil paint functions primarily as a means of establishing and recording pictorial information rather than of producing a highly finished autonomous object, resulting in a deliberately abbreviated effect of *non finito* that also formed part of Veronese's expressive vocabulary.[16]

The diagnostic examination also provides evidence that the present dimensions are probably not original. Curling painted forms are visible in the background and have been partly suppressed by painted reinforcement around the contour of the head. Their present meaning is no longer recoverable, but they indicate that the surviving fragment originally belonged to a somewhat broader painted field.[17] The sheet was therefore probably cut down, perhaps from a larger *bozzetto* or working study, to isolate the head in its present form.

Taken together, the sheet's technical features indicate that it was a working object directly associated with the production of the San Zaccaria composition, rather than a later copy traced from the finished altarpiece. From this perspective, the slight differences in proportion and detail between the oil sketch and the painting – including the fuller volume of the beard, the different colour of the garment, and the altered treatment of the shirt collar – suggest that the present work derives from an intermediate preparatory model, perhaps a cartoon or other large-scale graphic study, rather than directly from the finished painting itself. The sheet is particularly revealing for the function of oil sketches on paper in Veronese's workshop. Gisolfi Pechukas demonstrated that oil sketches could occupy an intermediate position between graphic preparation and the finished painting, while also stressing that Veronese's sequence of working stages was flexible. The Caliari inventory, meanwhile, confirms that paintings on paper continued to exist as a distinct category within the accumulated material of the workshop.[18]

The evidence suggests that oil studies on paper could serve a dual function in Veronese's workshop: first as preparatory tools for testing colour, light and expression, and later as records of successful inventions available for reuse. This may help explain the recurrence of closely related heads throughout his oeuvre, as physiognomic types migrate from one composition to another while retaining their pictorial identity. Closely connected with the *Pala Bonaldo*, the *Head of Saint Joseph* may thus be understood as a rare survival of this workshop practice: an invention preserved in colour and transformed into a portable studio resource.

Precisely this intermediate status – between drawing and painting, preparation and record – makes the work significant as direct evidence of the mechanisms through which Veronese's imagery was created, transmitted and reused.

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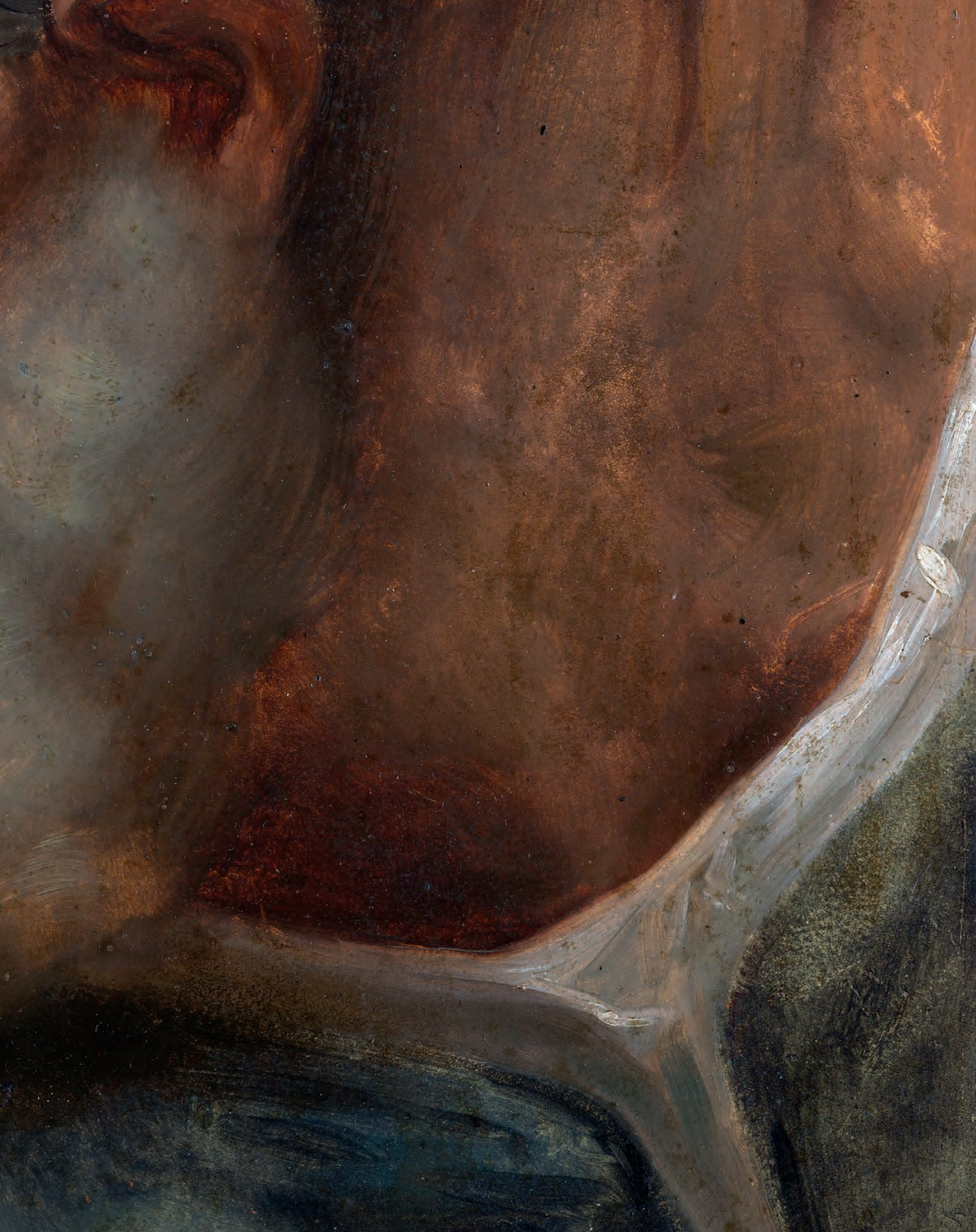
NOTES

1. Gisolfi 2007, pp. 73-75; González Mozo 2025, pp. 132-35.
2. Gisolfi 2007, pp. 73-75; Dunn and Marciari 2019, pp. 252-265; González Mozo 2025, pp. 119, 132-34.
3. Brown 1989, pp. 111-124.
4. For an introduction to the variety of media, techniques and subjects in Veronese's graphic production, see Cocke 1973, pp. 138-149, 187-201; Cocke 1977, pp. 259-268, 295-309; Gisolfi Pechukas 1982, pp. 388-413; Rearick 1992, pp. 143-173; Gallucci 2010, pp. 327-340; Rinaldi and Salomon 2020, pp. 3-14.
5. González Mozo 2025, pp. 122-24.
6. Gisolfi Pechukas 1982, pp. 391-392; González Mozo 2025, pp. 122-123, who mentions the *Resuscitation of Jairus's Daughter* and the painted model related to the Bevilacqua-Lazise Altarpiece.
7. González Mozo 2025, p. 123.
8. Gisolfi 2007, pp. 75, 80-81.
9. Levey 1962, pp. 350-351.
10. González Mozo 2025, pp. 129-131.
11. Tager Stonor Richardson 2021a, p. 1.
12. Penny and Spring 1995, p. 18; Penny, Roy and Spring 1996, pp. 37-38.
13. Penny, Roy and Spring 1996, pp. 37-38.
14. Gritt 2009, pp. 104-125.
15. Boschini 1674, in Penny and Spring 1995, p. 24.
16. González Mozo 2025, pp. 131-132.
17. Tager Stonor Richardson 2021a, pp. 2-3.
18. Gisolfi Pechukas 1982, pp. 391-394.







Jacopo Tintoretto

Venice, 1518/19 – 1594

6.

Study of a Male Nude, possibly Saint Sebastian

Black paint, with white and liquid grey passages, apparently in oil, on blue (now partially faded) paper
29.4 × 18.1 cm
(11 9/16 × 7 1/8 in.)

Inscription lower right: *Tintoret fecit*

Provenance

Benjamin West (1738-1820), his collector's mark (Lugt 419); Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), his collector's mark (Lugt 2445); Gillot sale, 1865-1866, where acquired for 30 francs, according to a label on the reverse; Bonhams Cornette de Saint Cyr, Paris, 20 March 2024, lot 35, as attributed to Jacopo Palma il Giovane; Bonhams Cornette de Saint Cyr, Paris, 30 October 2024, lot 197, as attributed to Jacopo Palma il Giovane.
Private collection.

Literature

Piai 2025, pp. 31, 33 (as Palma il Giovane).

Formerly in the collections of Benjamin West and Sir Thomas Lawrence, the present sheet bears an old pen inscription, "*Tintoret fecit*", identifying it as a work by Tintoretto. Under that name, and already recognized as a *Saint Sebastian*, it subsequently appeared in the "Gillot sale" of 1865-1866, as recorded by a contemporary label on the verso. When the drawing reappeared on the art market in 2024, however, Stefania Mason Rinaldi, working from a photograph, proposed an attribution to Jacopo Palma il Giovane. Far from being incidental, that proposal provides a useful point of departure for reconsidering the sheet, since the drawing belongs precisely to an area in which the graphic practices of Palma and Tintoretto could come unusually close.

In 2024, the figure was tentatively – and perhaps inconclusively – associated with the Saint Sebastian at the left of Palma's *Virgin and Child with Saints* in Monopoli Cathedral, executed around 1610. A more suggestive, though still partial, comparison is offered by Palma's painted *Saint Sebastian* for the Sette Chiesette at Monselice, also datable to around 1611. The iconography is substantially different: the painted saint stands and inclines his head, whereas the present figure is seated, with the torso twisted and contracted and the head thrown back in a markedly more dramatic expression of physical agony. Here, the raised arm casts a deep shadow across the face, answered by a flash of light on the forehead and by highlights that pick out the taut muscles of the neck. The result is a degree of inventiveness and dramatic tension absent from the more relaxed, vertically conceived figure at Monselice.[1] At the same time, the comparison remains pertinent,

for it belongs to Palma's sustained exploration of the male nude as a vehicle for complex, allusive, and dynamically articulated poses.[2]

That connection with Palma's milieu is made more tangible by a closely related drawing in Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, inv. KKSgb9550 (fig. 1), traditionally associated with Palma il Giovane. Its weaker, more schematic handling makes an attribution to Palma himself difficult to sustain and points instead to a copyist or to an artist working closely within his orbit. The sheet also seems less an autonomous study from life than a graphic derivation from an established model: blue paper, pen, and wash replace the more complex combination of black drawing material, liquid grey pigment, and white paint employed in our sheet, with a correspondingly more linear and less pictorial effect. Yet the Copenhagen sheet follows the present composition with remarkable fidelity. Despite differences of proportion, it preserves even the shadow cast by the raised arm across the face, while both figures are curiously truncated at the hand and lower leg. What matters for the present attribution is that the Copenhagen drawing securely places the invention within Palma's wider artistic environment without requiring Palma himself to have devised it. It may equally preserve the circulation, within that environment, of a model originating in Tintoretto's practice.

Against this background, the old inscription assigning the sheet to Tintoretto acquires renewed interest, even though it cannot by itself establish authorship. Such inscriptions on drawings connected with the Robusti workshop are not invariably reliable. The handwriting here is nevertheless closely comparable with that found on a substantial group of sheets later owned by Sir Joshua Reynolds, inscribed *G. Tintoretto* or *Giacomo Tintoretto*, although some of those drawings are now recognized as works by Domenico or other members of the studio.[3] Particularly close is the preparatory study for *Christ on the Cross* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (inv. DYCE.235), which bears a comparable inscription, "G. Tintoretto". The inscription is therefore best understood not as decisive evidence, but as an early attribution that gains significance when considered alongside the sheet's style and technique.

The technique, indeed, is more complex than the 2024 auction catalogue's description of charcoal with white heightening on blue paper would suggest. Direct examination shows that the white passages are applied as paint: at points the pigment gathers between brushstrokes, while elsewhere it is scumbled lightly across the surface. Liquid grey paint is likewise visible on the legs, reinforcing contour and shadow while giving substance to the turning forms. Close visual inspection strongly supports identifying both the white and grey passages as oil, although this has yet to be confirmed by chemical analysis. The sheet thus belongs to a broader Venetian practice in which oil on paper occupied a deliberately fluid position between drawing and painting, functioning as a *disegno ad olio* rather than as an autonomous small painting. Tintoretto was central to the development of this practice, exploiting brush and oil within the preparatory process not merely to describe a figure but to test the effects of light, movement, and three-dimensional form.[4]



Fig. 1. Circle of Jacopo Palma il Giovane, *Study of a Male Nude*, pen and wash on blue paper, Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, inv. KKSgb9550.



Fig. 2. Jacopo Palma il Giovane, *Three Studies of Saints*, black chalk, pen and brown ink, grey wash and oil, heightened with white, on brown paper, 28 × 28.8 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, inv. RF 38940, recto.

This technical context also helps to explain why an attribution to Palma could appear persuasive. After his return to Venice, Palma's draughtsmanship became progressively freer and more pictorial, and by about 1575 Tintoretto had emerged as its dominant influence. The relationship extended beyond poses and graphic shorthand to working procedures themselves, including the use of brush and brown oil paint over black chalk or charcoal.[5] Oil-based pigment in the present sheet therefore does not separate the two artists so much as locate the drawing within a field of experimentation they shared – one established with particular force by Tintoretto and subsequently absorbed and reformulated by Palma. It is precisely this proximity that gives particular importance to two sheets in the Louvre, both formerly in the Sagredo collection and acquired by the museum in 1982. The first, *Three Studies of Saints* (inv. RF 38940, recto), is convincingly attributed to Palma il Giovane and executed in black chalk, pen and brown ink, and oil on paper, heightened with white (see fig. 2); the second, *Studies of Drapery and of a Seated Male Nude* (inv. RF 38939), likewise combines oil with black chalk and is now attributed to Jacopo Tintoretto (see fig. 3), also thanks to the presence of a characteristic figure study by Tintoretto on the verso.[6] Together they define with unusual clarity the narrow terrain on which the two artists' practices could meet. Yet within that terrain the present sheet seems closer to the Tintoretto drawing: the figure is conceived through compact masses and abrupt transitions between light and shadow rather than through linear description, so that paint itself becomes the means by which the body acquires weight, torsion, and sculptural presence.[7]



Fig. 3. Jacopo Tintoretto, *Studies of Drapery and of a Seated Male Nude*, brush and oil over black chalk, heightened with white, on grey-brown paper, 26.5 × 31.8 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, inv. RF 38939, recto.

The attributional history of the second Louvre sheet is especially instructive. Long regarded as a work by Palma il Giovane, and still published under his name in 2019, it was reassigned to Jacopo Tintoretto before 2023, as suggested by the latest online record.[8] The history of the present drawing appears to retrace, in miniature, the same critical oscillation. Its association with Palma is neither accidental nor without substance: the Copenhagen copy, the broader affinities with Palma's studies of the male nude, and the technical vocabulary shared by the two artists all explain why his name has been attached to it. Seen beside RF 38939, however, the balance shifts. The compact construction of the body, the dramatic organization of illumination, and above all the use of oil to generate rather than simply heighten volume find a more persuasive counterpart in Tintoretto. On the evidence presently available, it therefore seems preferable to transfer the attribution to Jacopo Tintoretto. The earlier attribution to Palma nevertheless remains essential to understanding the sheet, since the very difficulty of separating the two hands reveals the artistic context from which it emerged: a late sixteenth-century Venetian culture in which oil on paper became an increasingly important means of thinking through the human figure, first with particular intensity in Tintoretto's practice and then, under his influence, in that of Palma il Giovane.

Luca Baroni

NOTES

1. For the same complex, Palma also painted a *Saint Lawrence* whose pose, particularly in the disposition of the legs, offers a more general parallel with the present drawing.
2. Whistler 2004, p. 380.
3. Marciari 2020, pp. 238-239.
4. Posner 1967, pp. 360-361; Freeman Bauer 1975, pp. 99-176; Freeman Bauer 1984, pp. 13-16; Mason Rinaldi 1984, pp. 25-34; Freeman Bauer and Bauer 1999, pp. 520-523.
5. Rosand 1970, pp. 153-154.
6. Nouvelles acquisitions 1984, nos. 13 and 24.
7. Rearick 2004, pp. 349-360.
8. Pagliano 2019, no. 81, pp. 168-171. The Louvre's online catalogue, updated 21 September 2023, gives the current attribution to Jacopo Tintoretto and records Palma il Giovane as the former attribution.





7.

Paolo Farinati

Verona, 1524 – Verona, 1606

The Virgin and Child with Saints Catherine of Alexandria and John the Baptist, with Two Donors below

Pen and brown ink and brown wash and oil, over traces of an underdrawing in black chalk, on paper laid down on panel and varnished.
46.6 × 34.7 cm
(18 ⅜ × 13 ⅝ in.)
Inscribed Paolo Veronese twice on the reverse.
Two red wax seals, each with the initials HA, on the reverse.

Provenance

Kurt Bauch, Freiburg im Breisgau; thence by descent until sold ('Property from the Collection of the Late Professor Kurt Bauch, Freiburg im Breisgau'), London, Sotheby's, 8 July 1998, lot 32.

Literature

Unpublished.

One of the most important artists working in Verona in the 16th century, Paolo Farinati was active as a painter, printmaker, architect and sculptor. He was the son and pupil of a painter and, according to Giorgio Vasari, also studied with Niccolò Giolfino. Although few documents survive for his life, a chronology of his long career of some fifty years is relatively simple to establish, since many of his surviving paintings are dated and also because, from 1573 until his death in 1606, Farinati recorded his commissions in an account book that survives today. The artist is documented in Verona from 1545 onwards, and one of his first known works is an altarpiece of *Saint Martin and the Beggar* of 1552, commissioned by Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga for the cathedral in Mantua. (At the same time, the Cardinal also commissioned paintings for the cathedral from a number of other leading painters from Verona, including Paolo Veronese, Domenico Brusasorci and Battista Agnolo del Moro.) Between 1556 and 1558 Farinati worked at the church of Santa Maria in Organo in Verona, for which he painted four large canvases that were singled out for praise by Vasari. This commission, along with that for the altarpiece in the Duomo in Mantua, served to establish Farinati's reputation.

Farinati was active not only as a painter but occasionally as an engraver, architect and sculptor and continued to work in and around his native city for most of the rest of his career. Frescoes in the Cappella Marogna in the church of San Paolo, painted in 1566, show the influence of Veronese, whose altarpiece in the church was flanked by Farinati's murals.

In the early 1570s Farinati painted a cycle of frescoes of mythological and allegorical subjects in the Palazzo Giuliari in Verona, and soon afterwards embarked on an important series of paintings and frescoes for the church of Santi Nazaro e Celso in the same city. His style remained fairly constant throughout his mature career, which was largely spent painting works for churches in Verona, as well as frescoes for villas and palaces in the city and the surrounding countryside. He painted at least fifteen facade decorations for palaces in Verona, although almost all of these have been destroyed by the effects of exposure and pollution. By the last quarter of the 16th century Farinati was firmly established as the leading artist in Verona, heading a large and active workshop whose members included his sons Orazio and Giambattista.

It is as a draughtsman that Paolo Farinati is best known today. He was fairly prolific, and around five hundred drawings by the artist survive, which are typically executed in pen and brown wash on coloured paper, and often enlivened with a liberal use of white heightening. Farinati kept many of his drawings in albums, and his oeuvre includes numerous studies for altarpieces, easel pictures and fresco decorations, as well as a handful of designs for prints and architectural projects. Most of his drawings are highly finished, and many have the appearance of having been executed as autonomous works of art. Many of his finished drawings were, indeed, acquired by local collectors. As Carlo Ridolfi noted of Farinati, 'his drawings are greatly admired, and are collected by connoisseurs...His drawings, executed on tinted paper with touches of watercolour and white heightening, were so numerous that it would be impossible to recount their subjects, and many more exist in prints, of which a good number have been collected by amateurs [dilettanti], and brought to various places, since Farinati in this matter [i.e. his draughtsmanship] was appreciated for his boldness and mastery.'[1] Farinati's drawings were also known to have been greatly admired by fellow artists, including Giorgio Vasari and Annibale Carracci – who once noted that 'Of this Farinato I saw a huge drawing made with wash of marvellous beauty as I have never seen before on paper'[2] – as well as Rubens, who owned several of his drawings. One of the largest extant collections of drawings by Paolo Farinati is today in the Louvre, while another significant group, numbering around fifty sheets, is in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle.

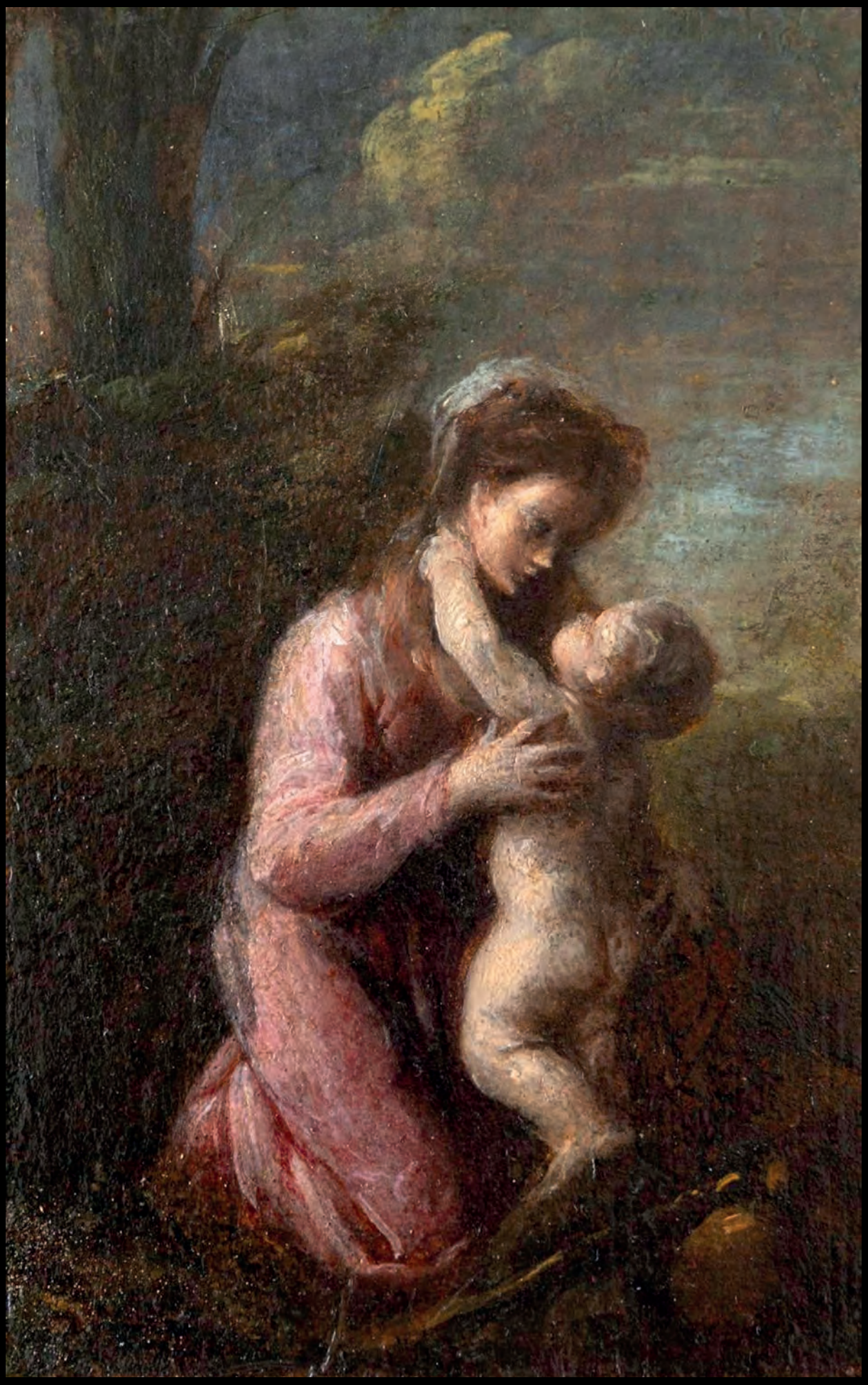
As Diana Gisolfi has noted, 'Drawings form a significant part of Farinati's oeuvre, especially his numerous chiaroscuro drawings on tinted paper, which were often used as modelli.'[3] The present sheet is likely to be a study for the type of devotional easel picture, sometimes painted on copper or slate, that Farinati produced for private patrons throughout his career. An interesting feature is the contrast between the highly finished nature of the main part of the composition and the more summary treatment of the donor figures at the bottom of the sheet. Although this large drawing cannot be related to any surviving work by Farinati, some compositional similarities may be noted with a late altarpiece of *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine*, signed and dated 1603, in the Museo del Castelvecchio in Verona.[4] Among stylistically comparable drawings by Farinati are a *Virgin and Child with Angels* formerly in

the Lever collection in Port Sunlight[5] and a large drawing of *The Annunciation* which appeared at auction in 2001.[6]

A previous owner of this oil sketch was the German art historian Kurt Bauch (1897-1975), who developed a particular specialization in the work of Rembrandt.

NOTES

1. 'si fa molto stima de suoi disegni, che vengono raccolti dagli studiosi...I disegni da lui fatti furono per così dire infiniti in carte tinte tocchi d'acquarelli e lumi di biacca, che sarebbe impossibile il raccontarne le inventioni, e molti ancora se ne veggono in istampa, de' quali n'è stato raccolto gran numero da'dilettanti, e trasportati in varie parti, essendo il Farinato in questo particolare molto piaciuto a una certa fierezza, e maestria da lui posseduta.' (Ridolfi 1924, vol. 2, p. 132).
2. Quoted in translation in Baseggio Omiccioli 2012, p. 65.
3. Gisolfi 1996, pp. 805-806.
4. Inv. 862; Puppi 1968, fig. 7; Mullaly 1974, p. 93, no. 63, fig. 182.
5. A photograph of this small drawing, which measured 9 x 11 in., is in the Witt Collection at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London.
6. Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, New York, 23 January 2001, lot 178 (unsold). The dimensions of the sheet are 547 × 407 mm.



Ippolito Scarsella, called Scarsellino

Ferrara, c. 1550 – Ferrara, 1620

Virgin and Child in a Landscape

8.

Oil on paper laid down on panel
13.5 × 8.8 cm
(5 3/10 × 3 7/16 in.).

Literature
Unpublished.

Ippolito Scarsella, called Scarsellino, was born and worked in Ferrara, where he became one of the leading painters active between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[1] According to the early sources, after training with his father, Sigismondo Scarsella, he spent three years in Venice, where he frequented the workshop of Paolo Veronese and studied the works of Titian, Tintoretto, Andrea Schiavone, and the Bassano family. This Venetian experience remained fundamental to his development, earning him the sobriquet "the Paolo of Ferrara".[2] Celebrated by his contemporaries for the fertility of his invention and the speed and delicacy of his handling, Scarsellino was equally accomplished in pagan and sacred narratives, displaying a particular gift for intimate scenes of affection and, especially, compositions of the Virgin and Child, often rooted in the Emilian and Venetian pictorial traditions of the sixteenth century.[3]

The rediscovery of this small oil on paper constitutes a new addition to Scarsellino's corpus. The unusual support establishes a further material link with Venetian artistic culture, where oil on paper was already widely employed. Its use here reinforces Scarsellino's connection with the pictorial world of Veronese, Tintoretto, and their circles, which played a decisive role in the formation of his style.



Fig. 1. Franciabigio, *Madonna and Child*, 1510-1513, oil on panel, 89 × 69 cm, Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale, inv. 547.

The attribution of the present work to Scarsellino was first proposed by David Ekserdjian, who also suggested that the composition may derive from, or at least reflect knowledge of, Franciabigio's *Madonna and Child* in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna (fig. 1). The comparison is particularly suggestive in the unusual standing pose of the Christ Child, which recurs in the present work.[4]

Scarsellino's oeuvre includes numerous small-scale compositions of the Holy Family, a genre for which he appears to have been particularly admired. A direct comparison may be made with the small *Madonna and Child with Saint Joseph and the Young Saint John the Baptist* in the Galleria Borghese, probably identifiable with a painting formerly in the collection of Lucrezia d'Este, Duchess of Urbino. Beyond their intimate dimensions, the two works share an emphasis on the tender exchange between the Virgin and Child, reflecting the artist's distinctive contribution to the contemporary *pittura degli affetti*.[5] Also comparable in scale and subject is *The Virgin and Child with the Infant Saint John* at Burghley House, a small oil on canvas measuring only 25 × 22 cm. Its concentrated arrangement of the sacred figures further demonstrates Scarsellino's ability to adapt this devotional subject to a format intended for intimate contemplation.

The material structure and palette of the painting were investigated in 2025 by Steven Saverwyns at the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA), Brussels,



Fig. 2. Scarsellino, *The Virgin and Child in a Landscape*, infrared photograph. Photograph: Stéphane Bazzo, © KIK-IRPA.

through non-invasive macro-X-ray fluorescence (MA-XRF) scanning, complemented by visible-light, raking-light, ultraviolet, and infrared photography. The infrared image makes the dark linear handling of the surrounding vegetation and foreground more legible (see fig. 2). Elemental mapping indicates a calcium-rich ground beneath the paint, consistent with chalk or gypsum, which MA-XRF cannot distinguish. Lead white predominates in the lighter passages and is mixed with vermilion in the flesh tones; ultraviolet fluorescence suggests an organic red lake in the Virgin's purple dress, alongside vermilion. Iron-rich earth pigments contribute to the hair and shadows, while the dark background probably combines ochre with bone black. The detection of lead and antimony identifies Naples yellow in the yellowish passage above the Virgin's head and suggests its admixture with blue in the green beside the Child.[6]

While the compositional model is more generally typical of Renaissance practice, the execution of the present work is unmistakably Venetian in inspiration. The richly worked, almost impasted handling of colour and form, together with the luminous opening onto the landscape, recalls the Venetian tradition of the Virgin and Child. At the same time, the softened forms and intimate character of the figures preserve a connection with Emilian, and particularly Parmigianesque, painting of the first half of the sixteenth century.

Luca Baroni

NOTES

1. Novelli 2008; Lapierre 2018, *ad vocem*.
2. Bentini 1993, pp. 255-273.
3. Lapierre 2013, pp. 41-47.
4. Bentini et al. 2006, vol. 2, p. 93, cat. 131.
5. Scanu 2022.
6. Saverwyns 2025, pp. 4-11; annex 1, p. 14. The blue pigment itself remains unidentified; zinc is chiefly associated with the grain of the wooden support, although some may occur as an impurity in earth pigments; chromium, barium, and cobalt are attributed to later retouching along the margins, where some losses of colour have been registered.





Northern Italian Painter

9.

Perseus and Andromeda

First half of the 17th century

Oil on paper
38 × 32.5 cm
(15 ⅜ × 12 ¾ in.)

Literature
Unpublished.

Although much of her body is concealed from the viewer's prying gaze, the central figure of this work on paper is readily identifiable as Andromeda, the legendary Ethiopian princess, daughter of Cepheus and Cassiopeia. She was offered as a sacrifice to a sea monster sent by Poseidon to ravage the kingdom's shores: divine punishment for Cassiopeia's boast that her beauty surpassed that of the Nereids, the alluring sea nymphs. The innocent daughter thus pays the price of her mother's vanity. According to an oracle, she must be fed to the monster to appease its wrath.

A dramatic intervention, however, restores the moral order. Returning in triumph from his encounter with Medusa, Perseus sees the sacrificial victim and comes to her rescue. Perseus, the archetypal rescuer of the imperilled princess, is shown before Andromeda as he prepares to act. Wearing only a helmet, he leans towards the danger to which she points beyond the picture's edge. This inventive device leaves the appearance of the fearsome sea creature to the imagination of a viewer already familiar with the story's outcome. Andromeda's nudity belongs to a well-established pictorial tradition, represented by Titian, Paolo Veronese, Vasari and Rubens, and informed by successive readings of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (IV, 663-752). Her rescuer's nudity is less expected, since it is not required by the literary source. The fetter in the foreground, chaining the princess to the rock, confirms her identity, while the wing projecting from Perseus's helmet alludes to his arrival by air, whether by means of winged sandals or on Pegasus, according to the version followed. Such compelling narrative elements inspired not only

numerous painters but also the Ferrarese poet Ludovico Ariosto, whose Orlando furioso recasts the myth for a sixteenth-century audience. In canto X, another princess, Angelica, is rescued from a sea monster by Ruggiero.

The work's excellent state of preservation is matched by an unusually high degree of finish. This suggests that the artist may have intended more than a preparatory study, conceiving the painting as an independent work, complete in its own right. In the early seventeenth century, works on paper of this kind, often associated with workshop practice and preparatory study, were beginning to be valued by discerning collectors independently of that function. In some instances, their survival owes much to this emerging appreciation. This is particularly significant given the fragility of paper, which makes such works rarer today than they were when first produced.

The anonymous artist demonstrates an exceptional command of the medium and its expressive possibilities. The fluid paint is handled with a sophisticated, calligraphic touch, characterised by rapid, assured brushwork. This is evident both in the metallic reflections on the ankle fetter and the links of the chain, defined almost entirely by highlights, and in the remarkable precision of the tufts of grass in the foreground. The handling becomes progressively more complex as the eye moves from the rocks to the bark of the tree, slashed by a stroke of blood-red paint. These passages reveal a freedom of execution that coexists with the meticulous finish of the figures.

The same freedom of touch finds its fullest expression in Perseus, particularly in the striking gleam across the polished surface of his helmet. Here the scene is at its most painterly, the fluid application producing effects of light and texture that would be difficult to retain in a more fully elaborated composition. Equally telling are the warrior's fingers, drawn with a single brushstroke across his beloved's shoulders, and the slender thread of white paint that marks the edge of the seawater against the rock. Colour reinforces the dramatic tension. Andromeda's cool flesh tones, flushed in patches by the cold, are set against a sombre, storm-laden sky, deliberately darkened to heighten the drama of the composition.

The work's complex stylistic character offers clues to its date and geographical origin. Its formal language points to northern Italy, particularly to the painting of Parma. Although the work dates to the first half of the seventeenth century, the conception of the figures remains indebted to Mannerist conventions, notably in their slender, elongated and twisting anatomies. Andromeda's pose is especially revealing, as is the pronounced elegance of her raised arm, with its relaxed hand and tapering fingers. More distant echoes of secular painting north of the Alps enrich this stylistic synthesis. While the artist remains unidentified, the composition attests to the sophistication of his pictorial thinking.

The painter's departure from conventional iconography is equally revealing. The episode is commonly organised around three elements: Andromeda on the rocky shore, the monster beside her and Perseus descending from above. Here, the omission of the monster gives particular prominence to the heroine's carefully staged pose. Its ultimate source can almost certainly be identified with the celebrated *Crouching Venus*, a Hellenistic sculptural type transmitted through numerous Roman versions. Among the most admired is the second-century AD marble known as the *Lely Venus*, now in the Royal Collection and on loan to the British Museum. In the early seventeenth century, it belonged to the Gonzaga collection in Mantua, where it provided Peter Paul Rubens with a model for the figure of Ceres in his *Venus, Cupid, Bacchus and Ceres*, c. 1612-1613, now in the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Kassel, inv. GK 85 (fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Peter Paul Rubens, *Venus, Cupid, Bacchus and Ceres*, c. 1612-1613, oil on canvas, 140.5 × 200 cm. Kassel, Hessen Kassel Heritage, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, inv. GK 85.



Fig. 2. Marcantonio Raimondi, after Francesco Francia, *Crouching Venus*, c. 1510-1527, engraving, 21.7 × 14.2 cm (print, made up). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 49.97.110.

Once the probable prototype for the present work has been recognised, Perseus's role becomes clearer. His presence serves as a narrative device, identifying the female figure as Andromeda, yet he remains a subsidiary figure in the background rather than the compositional focus. The painting centres instead on the transformation of a bronze statuette, or of the classical sculptural model it transmits, into a mythological scene. This hierarchy suggests that the composition originated in the interpretation of the sculptural prototype, with Perseus introduced to give that adaptation its specific narrative identity.

The present figure belongs to this wider tradition of adaptation, although this need not imply the painter's direct knowledge of the Gonzaga marble. Marcantonio Raimondi's *Venus Crouching by a Plinth on Top of Which Stands Cupid*, after Francesco Francia, c. 1510-1527 (fig. 2), is one of the earliest known adaptations of the antique type. Related seated and bathing figures occur in the Raphaelesque repertory disseminated through prints, including Marcantonio's *Venus Drying Her Foot*, traditionally associated with Raphael, and Marco Dente's *Venus Wounded by a Rose's Thorn*, connected with the decoration of Cardinal Bibbiena's *stufetta*. Another pictorial parallel is Luca Cambiaso's *Venus and Cupid at Sea*, c. 1560-1565, in the Galleria Borghese, Rome (inv. 123), in which the goddess adopts a similarly turned pose.[1] These related inventions draw on more than one antique prototype and exemplify the Renaissance practice of adapting sculptural poses to new narratives.[2]

This learned allusion to classical antiquity supports the possibility that the painting was conceived for private collecting, perhaps for a *studiolo*, where its classical reference could have been appreciated alongside a bronze statuette adapting the same model. A pertinent example is the Florentine *Crouching Venus* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 3), now dated to the seventeenth century and catalogued as after a model by Giambologna. The composition is recorded in a Medici

inventory of 1584; the statuette listed there has been associated with the bronze in the Bargello, although the identification is not securely documented.[3] Its relationship to Giambologna's invention illustrates the continued circulation of the type during the period to which the painting belongs. In a private collection, Andromeda's pose could thus have invited comparison between painted flesh and sculpted form, adding an antiquarian dimension to the mythological narrative.

A detail in Ovid's narrative lends further resonance to this sculptural reference. On first seeing Andromeda, Perseus would have taken her for a marble statue, had a light breeze not stirred her hair and warm tears not flowed from her eyes (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, IV, 670-675: "When Perseus her beheld as marble he would deem her, but the breeze moved in her hair, and from her streaming eyes the warm tears fell"). The passage offers a suggestive literary counterpart to the painter's transformation of an antique sculptural type into a living protagonist.

Antonio Pepe



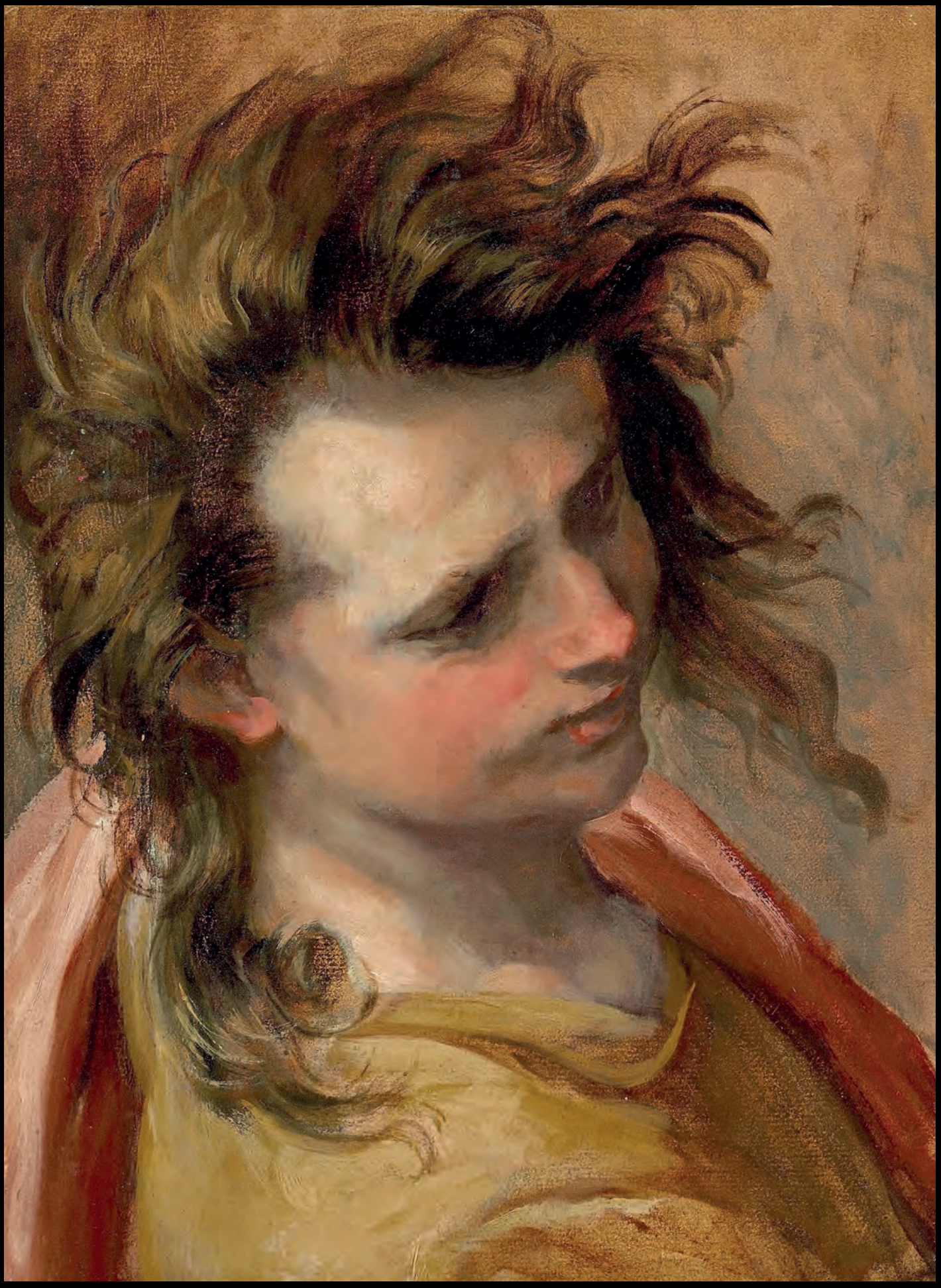
Fig. 3. After a model by Giambologna, *Crouching Venus*, Florence, seventeenth century, bronze, 26 cm high. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 68.141.25.



NOTES

1. Iommelli 2022b, inv. 123.
2. Thompson 2004, pp. 36-37. The figure in *Venus Drying Her Foot* is associated with the *nymph alla spina*, rather than exclusively with the *Crouching Venus* type.
3. Mozzati 2022, pp. 344-347, cat. 120 and 121, especially p. 344 for the inventories of 1584 and 1609 and especially p. 347 for the provenance and technical observations.





10.

Federico Barocci

Urbino c. 1533 – 1612

Head of Saint John the Evangelist

After 1582, possibly c. 1607-1608

Oil on paper,
laid down on canvas
39.4 × 29.9 cm
(15 ½ × 11 ¾ in.)

Provenance

Private Collection, Spain; Christie's, New York, 28 January 2009, lot 65, as Federico Barocci; Private collection.

Literature

Emiliani 2008, vol. 1, pp. 369-370, no. 39.34; Bohn and Mann 2012, p. 167, cat. 8.11; Marciari 2013, p. 523.

Exhibited

Saint Louis, Saint Louis Art Museum, Federico Barocci: Renaissance Master, 21 October 2012 – 20 January 2013; London, National Gallery, Barocci: Brilliance and Grace, 27 February – 19 May 2013, cat. 8.11.
Private collection.

Federico Barocci, born in Urbino around 1533, became one of the most successful painters in central Italy during the second half of the sixteenth century. Devoted chiefly to large religious compositions, he brought drawing and painting into close dialogue through his investigation of colour and light. Working principally in his native city, he shaped its artistic culture and influenced successive generations of followers. His formation brought the local inheritance of Raphael and Piero della Francesca into contact with the more recent examples of Francesco Menzocchi and Battista Franco, while his engagement with Correggio and his exchanges with Taddeo and Federico Zuccaro opened further possibilities for colour, movement, and expression. A persistent experimenter in etching and pastel, he also developed a sustained dialogue between graphic study and pictorial execution. Increasingly refined studies culminated in a full-scale cartoon, which served both to transfer the design and to preserve the invention for subsequent reuse.[1]

Oil on paper held a particular place within this practice. From his early maturity into his final decades, Barocci employed it for figure studies, portraits, and independent pictorial inventions. Earlier experiments by artists such as Lorenzo Lotto, and Domenico Beccafumi's related work in oil and tempera, offered precedents, but Barocci gave painted studies on paper unusual consistency and expressive range. Their combination of colour, modelling, and graphic immediacy anticipated concerns that would become central to the oil sketch in the following century.[2]



Fig. 1. Federico Barocci, *The Entombment of Christ*, 1579-1582, oil on canvas, 295 × 187 cm, Senigallia, Church of Santa Croce.

Fig. 2. Federico Barocci, *The Entombment*, c. 1579-1582, black chalk and oil paint on oiled paper, 47.8 × 35.6 cm, Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. 85.GG.26.

Surviving works, studio inventories, and early collecting records make his use of the medium one of the best-documented instances in Renaissance Italy. Edmund Pillsbury's pioneering study of 1978 established a basis for its modern investigation, bringing together new examples and examining their relationship to Barocci's paintings and pastels. Subsequent scholarship has expanded the corpus and sharpened the distinction between preparatory studies, repetitions, and autonomous works.[3]

The present head occupies a particularly revealing place within this production. Related to Saint John supporting Christ's feet in the *Entombment of Christ* at Senigallia, it combines a clear dependence on the altarpiece with considerable freedom of execution. Its relationship to another oil on paper of the same subject in Washington has prompted opposing interpretations: an autograph variant, perhaps intended for a collector, or a repetition by another hand. Technical examination and a renewed comparison of the related works provide grounds for reconsidering both its authorship and its purpose.

* * *

The *Entombment* (fig. 1) was commissioned in 1579 by the Confraternita del Santissimo Sacramento e della Croce and completed in 1582 for its church in Senigallia, where it remains. Following the *Deposition* for Perugia Cathedral and the *Madonna del Popolo* for Arezzo, it belongs to the period in which Barocci secured his reputation beyond his native Urbino. Some fifty surviving drawings document the development of its composition, figures, lighting, and expression. Associated oil studies include the head of Nicodemus in New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (inv. 1976.87.1), Saint John in Washington, the National Gallery of Art (inv. 1979.11.1), identical in subject to the one considered here, and Mary Magdalen in Bayonne, Musée Bonnat-Helleu (inv. RF 1997.3).

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, preserves a small compositional study in black chalk and oil on oiled paper (inv. 85.GG.26, fig. 2). Interestingly, the composition is worked out in grisaille, while the figures' faces are heightened with pink, an effect that Barocci may have reproduced at full scale by juxtaposing or attaching to the painted preparatory cartoon (now lost) pastel or oil-on-paper studies of the individual heads, each executed at the same 1:1 scale as the corresponding figure in the final painting. A more finished reduced version of the whole composition in a private collection is painted on canvas; its function as either a preparatory work or a subsequent *ricordo* remains disputed.[4]



The painting discussed here, recorded as coming from a Spanish private collection, appeared on the Paris art market in October 2007. On that occasion, its attribution to Barocci was confirmed by Andrea Emiliani in a letter based on photographs; a further positive attribution was provided by Nicholas Turner on 16 September 2008.[5] Later that same year, the previously unpublished work was included by Emiliani in the third edition of his catalogue raisonné of Barocci.[6] Interpreting the painting as preparatory for the *Entombment*, Emiliani emphasized its passionate, almost Romantic character, evident both in its chromatic range and in the inventive treatment of the dramatically dishevelled hair. He suggested that, in the final painting, Barocci deliberately tempered these features in favour of a more harmonious, Raphael-inspired conception.

On 28 January 2009, the work was offered at Christie's, New York, with a catalogue entry by Nicholas Turner, who regarded its greater spontaneity as evidence that it preceded the Washington version, the two heads representing successive refinements of the same motif.[7] The painting attracted considerable attention and established a new auction record for Barocci, selling for more than four times the low estimate, including buyer's premium. It was later included in the 2012 – 13 exhibition at the Saint Louis Art Museum and the National Gallery, London. In the accompanying volume of studies, Babette Bohn and Judith W. Mann proposed a different sequence, arguing that the more controlled handling of the present head was more likely to postdate the Washington study. They nevertheless left open whether it should be understood as a further stage in the preparatory process or as an independent replica made for a collector.[8]

John Marciari questioned the attribution in his review of the exhibition. Having compared the present work and the Washington version directly with the original altarpiece, as well as with other oils on paper by Barocci included in the exhibition, he suggested that three of the exhibited works on paper, including the present head, were "not by Barocci, and probably not even by his workshop".[9] He did not, however, propose an alternative attribution, geographical context, or more specific later date. His objection nevertheless raised a fundamental question: must differences between treatments of the same head indicate different authors, or can they reflect distinct intentions and phases within Barocci's practice?[10]

* * *

The present reassessment draws on the set of high-resolution photographs of the Senigallia altarpiece taken by Gilberto Urbinati in 2023, direct examination of the painting during the Barocci exhibition in Urbino in 2024, and the diagnostic examination of the present head by Scientific Analysis of Fine Art, LLC (SAFA), executed in April 2025. SAFA employed Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR), Raman spectroscopy, X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF), optical microscopy, and scanning electron microscopy (SEM) to investigate the binding medium, pigments, varnish, and paper fibres. Infrared imaging and X-radiography examined the composition. Two microsamples, taken from the yellow garment and the brown-black background, were also studied in cross-section under visible and ultraviolet light to investigate the layer structure.[11]

The medium was identified as a drying oil, with FTIR results consistent with linseed oil. Lead white occurs throughout the composition, together with lead carboxylates associated with oil paint containing lead. The palette includes yellow and red ochres, umber and sienna pigments, vermilion, a lead oxide yellow identified as massicot or litharge, and plant-derived carbon black. Quartz, kaolinite, calcium carbonate, and gypsum were also detected. Some results suggest natural black chalk, although the presence of similar minerals in the



Fig. 3. Federico Barocci, *Head of Saint John the Evangelist*, detail, infrared reflectography. From Scientific Analysis of Fine Art, LLC, 2025.

earth pigments prevents a definitive identification. Zinc was associated with the lining canvas rather than an anachronistic zinc white; trace titanium was attributed to mineral pigments rather than modern titanium white.[12] Microscopic examination revealed fibre morphology consistent with flax. The report therefore regards the paper, like the other materials identified, as compatible with sixteenth-century practice. A natural resin varnish, possibly dammar, was also detected, without a determination of its age or whether it was applied by the artist. Taken together, these findings are consistent with materials and practices available in Italy in the sixteenth century.

Infrared imaging and X-radiography revealed no significant changes beyond those visible at the surface (fig. 3). They nevertheless reveal areas of thinning paint around the right eye and brow, the right cheek and chin, and along the hairline, which in the present author's view may be interpreted as the result of an old loss or reduction of the superficial paint layer. Judging from the visible evidence alone, this effect could also be the consequence of an earlier, overly aggressive cleaning of the work, whose oil-on-paper support is inherently fragile. In these areas, slight subsequent restoration and retouching may have altered the present aesthetic appearance of the head to some

extent, contributing to the stronger, more "romantic" effect – Andrea Emiliani's term – that also distinguishes it visually from the Washington version. Microscopic examination of the cross-section from the yellow garment suggests a possible white preparatory layer, followed by a black layer and the final yellow paint. The discontinuous black particles were not considered characteristic of an underdrawing. No separate preliminary drawing was therefore identified.

A letter written by Barocci on 2 June 1607 introduces an essential qualification to any comparison with the Senigallia altarpiece. Having received the painting back in Urbino, he acknowledged its poor treatment and undertook to retouch it where necessary. Its deterioration had a longer history: he had already offered to intervene in 1588, while Bellori subsequently described damage caused by a copyist who applied oiled paper to its surface to trace the composition. Alongside the injuries caused by rodents, this episode explains the need for the intervention. On 20 April 1608 Barocci announced that his restoration of the work was complete; the altarpiece returned to the church on 4 May.[13]

The photographic campaign of 2023 and direct examination in 2024, when the painting was exhibited at ground level in Urbino, have made it possible to distinguish interventions around Saint John's nose, cheeks, and mouth, together with dark reinforcement beneath the chin and along the curls descending towards the shoulder (fig. 4).[14] Much of the hair appears to preserve the earlier handling. Particularly conspicuous is the white stroke at the clavicle, suggesting a shirt beneath the yellow garment: it separates the neck from the drapery and strengthens the head's projection. This accent is identified here with Barocci's restoration of 1607-1608. Its absence from both oils on paper suggests, without proving, that they preserve an earlier state of the motif.

Contour tracings prepared for the present study further clarify the relationship between the three versions (figs. 4-5). Comparison at 1:1 scale reveals differences in proportion, inclination, and the placement of the facial features, while their superimposition, aligned at the tip of the nose, confirms that neither head on paper coincides precisely with the corresponding figure in the altarpiece. Allowing for the inevitable limitations introduced by photographic scale and distortion, these discrepancies argue against straightforward mechanical tracing and suggest instead a freer reformulation of the motif, whether in relation to the painting itself or to preparatory material retained in the studio.

The two oils for the *Head of Saint John* also differ in facture. Both isolate the head against a pale field, replacing the narrative setting of the altarpiece with an independent study of expression and bearing. The garments preserve the connection with Saint John's role in the composition, while the surrounding ground gives the image something of the immediacy of a drawing. In the Washington version, the pink and red accents of the face and the carefully articulated locks remain close to the pictorial language of the altarpiece. The yellow garment and red drapery are more summarily indicated, directing attention towards the face and enhancing its movement. Pillsbury described its construction over a light tan ground, with brown indications of the features, grey shadows, and subsequent additions of flesh and drapery colours. He also recorded repaired tears, abrasion, and reinforcement in the hair and shadows. Any comparison must therefore take its condition, as well as its original handling, into account.[15]

The present work is more substantial in touch. Fuller strokes construct the hair, while the nose, chin, and shadowed side of the face acquire greater emphasis. Dark accents beneath the forelock strengthen the projection of the forehead, while rapid grey strokes beside the silhouette suggest a cast shadow and give



Fig. 4. Comparison of the three versions of the *Head of Saint John the Evangelist* at 1:1 scale. From left to right: Washington, National Gallery of Art, inv. 1979.11.1; detail of the Senigallia altarpiece; the present work. Below: corresponding contour tracings.



Fig. 5. Superimposed contour tracings of the three versions of the *Head of Saint John the Evangelist* illustrated in fig. 4, aligned at the tip of the nose.

the head a more independent spatial presence. A comparable use of the surrounding ground occurs in the oil study of Mary Magdalen at Bayonne, connected with the same altarpiece, where the light surface remains active in the construction of volume and sets thinly painted passages against more heavily worked areas.

Marciari's recognition of the differences between the two heads remains important, although the conclusion drawn from them may be reconsidered. Repetition does not necessarily establish a hierarchy in which one version represents the invention and the other a diminished reflection of it. Nor can spontaneity alone determine precedence: the same quality led Turner to place the present head before the Washington version, whereas Bohn and Mann reached the opposite conclusion on the basis of its greater control. The disagreement itself shows how difficult it is to infer sequence from handling alone. More significant are the nature and coherence of the differences. The present head does not merely intensify effects already present in the Washington version. Its broader strokes give the hair greater substance, the reinforced shadows lend the face a firmer structure, and the grey accents around the silhouette establish a space of its own. These choices alter the relationship between the head and its setting, producing an image capable of sustaining its expressive force independently of the narrative context for which the motif was devised. The pale field is particularly telling. In the altarpiece, Saint John's head is defined through its relationship with neighbouring figures and draperies; here, those relationships are replaced by a small number of carefully judged tonal contrasts. The painter leaves parts of the support active, using dark accents and variations in the density of the paint to articulate the form. This economy suggests a close command of the invention and is difficult to reconcile with a merely reproductive purpose.

Technical findings cannot, of course, identify an individual hand. Nevertheless, the high quality of execution, together with the way in which the work emphasises characteristics closely associated with Barocci's practice – the tonal harmonies, fluid handling, active use of the paper ground, and the material features revealed by diagnostic examination – makes the intervention of either a particularly accomplished copyist or a later imitator working outside Barocci's immediate context difficult to sustain. On the evidence presently available, Barocci's authorship offers the most convincing explanation. An attribution to an unnamed follower would require an artist capable not only of reproducing his pictorial vocabulary but of reworking it with comparable assurance, without any more specific alternative having emerged from the debate.

The differences from the Washington version may therefore be better understood in terms of function and chronology. The Washington head retains something of the character of a drawing made with the brush, its abbreviated draperies directing attention towards the study of flesh, light, and expression. The present work gives the same invention greater pictorial weight and autonomy. Its freedom is compatible with a higher degree of finish: the open passages and visible brushwork form part of the effect of the completed object. The possibility raised by Bohn and Mann that it was made for a collector therefore provides a persuasive, albeit hypothetical, explanation of its character.

Recent exhibitions devoted to Barocci, particularly the 2024 exhibition in Urbino, which brought together oil studies on paper from different phases of his career, have further demonstrated the extent to which he employed the technique over more than forty years, adapting its expressive range and producing works of markedly different character. A particularly instructive comparison is offered by two heads in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: the study of Nicodemus for the Senigallia *Entombment* and that of Elizabeth for the *Visitation*. Both are accepted works by Barocci and belong to the same

collection, yet they differ radically in execution, treatment of the ground, and in the balance between drawing and painting. In these respects, the Elizabeth is considerably closer to the present head, whereas the Nicodemus finds a more immediate parallel in the Washington study.

Such contrasts suggest that Barocci's handling of the oil painting on paper evolved significantly over the course of his career. They also raise the possibility that the present work belongs to a different, and perhaps later, moment than the original studies made in the early 1580s for the *Entombment*. In the present writer's view, its greater pictorial autonomy and its closer relationship to later examples of Barocci's practice make such a chronology plausible, although not demonstrable on stylistic evidence alone. More specifically, the force and handling of the brushwork appear, in the present writer's view, to recall directly the passages associated with Barocci's later restoration interventions on the *Entombment* itself, now more clearly visible thanks to the recent photographic campaign. This raises the possibility that the head was executed in the immediate context of that restoration, when Barocci had the Senigallia painting physically in his studio for approximately a year. Although necessarily hypothetical, this circumstance would provide a particularly plausible context for both the production of the head and its distinctive stylistic character.[16]

Such a return to a successful motif is consistent with Barocci's documented practice. In a deposition of 9 July 1590, given in connection with the disappearance of a drawing for the *Entombment* at Senigallia that he had lent for the purpose of having it engraved, he explained that painters preserved cartoons and drawings both as records of their achievements and as resources for producing related works with less labour, expense, and time. The surviving fragments of many of his cartoons and oil sketches, together with their reuse – including in multiple autograph versions of the same subject – demonstrate the continuing life of such inventions within and beyond his studio. They allowed the artist to return to an image long after its original commission, whether to repeat it closely or to develop it anew.[17]

In this respect, the oil painting on paper offered Barocci an ideal means of extending the life of a successful motif: it allowed him to revisit and refine an image developed for a major commission, while translating it into an object of intimate scale and high pictorial ambition. Such works could also address a private collecting audience rarely served by an artist otherwise devoted chiefly to large altarpieces and public commissions. At the same time, they brought drawing and painting into unusually close contact, preserving the freedom of graphic invention within the substance of colour.

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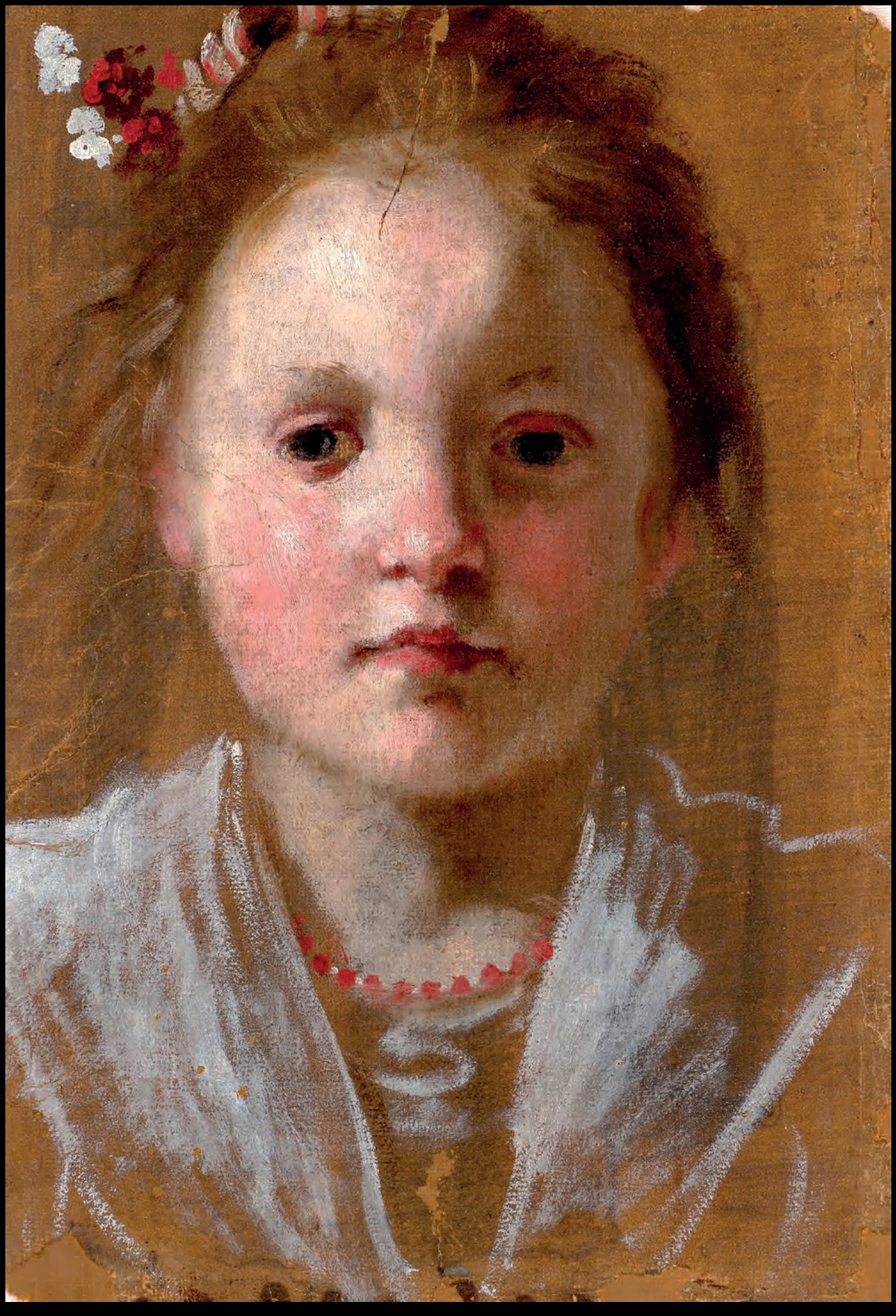
NOTES

1. Marciari and Verstegen 2008, pp. 291-321; Verstegen 2019; Baroni 2022, pp. 305-306.
2. Pillsbury 1978, pp. 170-173; Prytz 2011, pp. 653-656.
3. Pillsbury 1978, pp. 170-173; Prytz 2011, pp. 653-656; Bohn 2012, pp. 49-52; Freeman Bauer and Bauer 1999, pp. 520-530.
4. Emiliani 1992, pp. 9-46; Bohn and Mann 2012, pp. 158-181, cats. 8.9-8.15.
5. The documents relating to Emiliani's attribution are preserved in the Federico Barocci Archive of Andrea Emiliani, currently in the custody of the author of this entry.
6. Emiliani 2008, I, pp. 369-370, no. 39.34.
7. Christie's, *Important Old Master Paintings and Sculpture*, sale cat. (New York: Christie's, 28 January 2009), lot 65, "Federico Barocci, Head of Saint John the Evangelist, an Oil Study for The Entombment of Christ in the Church of Santa Croce, Senigallia."
8. Bohn and Mann 2012, p. 167.
9. Marciari 2013, p. 523. Another of the works questioned in Marciari's review, a *Study for the Head of Saint Francis*, entered the Saint Louis Art Museum in December 2019 as a work by Barocci, through the gift of Jon and Barbara Landau (inv. 238:2019; see Saint Louis Art Museum 2020).
10. A third oil-on-paper version of Saint John's head came to the author's attention in a private collection in 2021 and remains under study.
11. Scientific Analysis of Fine Art 2025.
12. Scientific Analysis of Fine Art 2025, pp. 2-6.
13. Freeman Bauer 1986, pp. 355-357; Bohn and Mann 2012, p. 158 and p. 178, nn. 7-10.
14. In the absence of dedicated diagnostic analysis, these observations are based on visual examination alone and should therefore be treated with appropriate caution.
15. Pillsbury 1978, pp. 171-172 and p. 173, n. 7.
16. On the restoration, see also Bohn and Mann 2012, p. 167.
17. Tschudi-Madsen 1959, pp. 273-277; Verstegen 2003, pp. 378-383; Verstegen 2007, pp. 101-123; Verstegen 2019; Baroni 2022, pp. 305-306, 308, and p. 309, n. 13.



Annibale Carracci

Bologna 1560 – Rome 1609

11.

Portrait of a Young Girl

Oil on paper, laid down on canvas
37.5 × 27.5 cm
(14 ¾ × 10 ⅞ in.)

Provenance

Private collection, United Kingdom;
Sotheby's, New York, Old Master Drawings, 29 January 2020, lot 30.

Literature

Unpublished.

This engaging *Portrait of a Young Girl* emerged on the art market in 2020, when it was presented at Sotheby's, New York, as a newly discovered work by Annibale Carracci. The attribution had been independently supported by Erich Schleier and Keith Christiansen and it is retained here.[1]

The painting is unusual both for its subject and for its medium. The speed and responsiveness of oil on paper made it particularly well suited to recording sitters whose expressions were difficult to hold, and images of childhood – like studies of old age – form a notable strand within this kind of practice. Children are well represented in Annibale's drawings but occupy a more restricted place within his painted production. An important point of comparison is *Two Children Teasing a Cat* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. 1994.142), generally dated to about 1590, shortly after Annibale's return from Venice in 1587. Necessarily more highly finished and conceived as an autonomous composition on canvas, the Metropolitan painting differs in function from the present, rapidly executed study on paper. Even so, the young girl provides a useful comparison: the small accents of colour in the hair, the lively modelling of the face as it shifts between frontal and oblique planes, and the broken, colouristic handling of the dress all find close analogies here.

The characteristics of the present head distinguish it decisively from a generic *testa di carattere*. The subtle modulation of light across the face reinforces the impression of direct observation, while the coral necklace and the small touches of colour

suggesting flowers in the sitter's hair give the image a degree of individual specificity. They support its interpretation as a portrait, probably painted directly from life, and suggest a child presented with some care and belonging to a family of a certain social standing. At the same time, the direct gaze and concentrated description of the mouth preserve the spontaneity of a study rather than the formality of an official likeness. The work thus occupies an intermediate position between portraiture and study from the living model. This approach is closely connected with the emphasis placed on direct observation within the Carracci academy in Bologna. According to Malvasia, drawing *dal modello* formed a fundamental part of its teaching, extending from male and female models to anatomical study and the observation of everyday life.[2] Bellori similarly made Nature itself central to his account of Annibale's formation, presenting it as the painter's true teacher.[3] Oil sketches on paper can reasonably be understood within the same experimental culture.

The precise function of such rapidly painted heads is nevertheless difficult to establish. Some may have served as preparatory studies for figures subsequently developed in larger compositions; others as *ricordi* of particularly successful physiognomies, models retained for workshop use, demonstrations by a master, or exercises by pupils. The inexpensive and relatively fragile nature of paper may suggest objects conceived outside the conventional hierarchy of finished paintings on canvas or panel, yet this did not prevent them from acquiring an autonomous status as collectable works. The post-mortem inventory of the collection of Marchese Alessandro Facchinetti, drawn up in Bologna in 1685, for example, records numerous framed works on paper, including examples executed in oil, alongside paintings in more conventional formats.[4]

This variety of possible functions also helps to explain why the attribution of individual examples within the Carracci group remains particularly complex. Their abbreviated handling, rapid execution, and often uncertain original purpose reduce the usefulness of conventional stylistic criteria when distinguishing Annibale from Agostino, Lodovico, or painters active in their immediate circle. A fundamental framework for the discussion was provided by the 2006 exhibition devoted to Annibale. In the section significantly entitled *Il laboratorio del vivo*, Daniele Benati brought together a number of heads in oil on paper of solid attribution to Annibale, alongside comparable studies in oil on canvas and drawings, treating them as part of a broader investigation of the living model rather than as an isolated technical category.[5]

Seen within this context, the present *Portrait of a Young Girl* stands apart for the specificity and freshness with which the sitter is observed. The ornaments in her hair, the coral necklace, and the directness of her expression give the image the character of an individual portrait, while the rapid and economical handling preserves the immediacy of a study from life. As a rare painted image of childhood executed in oil on paper, the work gives particularly intimate form to the Carracci commitment to observation from life, preserving with unusual immediacy the encounter between painter and sitter.

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NOTES

1. Sotheby's, Old Master Drawings, New York, 29 January 2020, lot 30, "Annibale Carracci, Portrait of a Young Girl".
2. Malvasia 1967, p. 277.
3. Bellori 1672, p. 39.
4. Morselli 1998, pp. 221-227.
5. Benati and Riccòmini 2006, cats. II.3, II.6, II.9, II.10, II.11, II.13, entries by Daniele Benati; entry II.13, pp. 118-119, by Alessandro Brogi.





12.

Federico Barocci

Urbino c. 1533 – 1612

Portrait of Prince Federico Ubaldo della Rovere

Circa 1606

Oil on paper, laid onto canvas
38 × 27 cm
(14 10/3 × 10 5/8 in.)

On the former stretcher, in pen and brown ink: *Ritratto del Ultimo Principe di Urbino / opera di Claudio Veronese.*

Provenance

Possibly Rome, by the mid-twentieth century, when photographed at the Fratelli Guidotti photographic studio, Via Edoardo Jenner 122, Rome (Fondazione Federico Zeri, Bologna, Fototeca, no. 73740); Colnaghi, London and New York, 1995, as Claudio Ridolfi; Sotheby's, New York, 31 January 2018, lot 125, as Claudio Ridolfi; private collection; Freeman's, Philadelphia, 4 November 2025, lot 1, as Claudio Ridolfi.

Literature

Colnaghi 1995, no. 10 (as Claudio Ridolfi).

The earliest presently known record of this portrait dates from the middle decades of the twentieth century, when it was photographed in Rome by the Fratelli Guidotti photographic studio, then located at Via Edoardo Jenner 122.[1] The work subsequently entered the international art market and in 1995 was exhibited by Colnaghi in New York and London as by Claudio Ridolfi, with the sitter correctly identified as Prince Federico Ubaldo della Rovere, heir to the Duchy of Urbino. Both the identification and the traditional attribution derived from an inscription in pen and brown ink on the former stretcher: "*Ritratto del Ultimo Principe di Urbino / opera di Claudio Veronese*".

Born in Urbino on 16 May 1605, Federico Ubaldo was the only son of Francesco Maria II della Rovere, Duke of Urbino, and his second, much younger wife, Livia della Rovere. With him rested the dynastic survival of the duchy: after decades without a legitimate male heir, his birth removed, at least temporarily, the prospect of Urbino reverting to the Papal States. The child consequently became the subject of an unusually intensive campaign of portraiture, his image disseminated both through independent court portraits and through devotional paintings commissioned across the duchy in thanksgiving for his birth.[2]

Portraits of Federico Ubaldo began almost immediately. From the first days of his life, his image was carefully recorded, beginning with the portrait of the newborn prince by Alessandro Vitali, one of Barocci's closest collaborators, today

in Florence, Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, inv. 1912 no. 55.[3] Thereafter his likeness was multiplied in a remarkable number of official portraits, commissioned both by the duke and by communities throughout the Duchy of Urbino, where the young heir also appeared in numerous altarpieces conceived as votive expressions of gratitude for his birth.[4]

In a first phase, Vitali was repeatedly employed for this purpose. Surviving ducal accounts record, in December 1606, payment for "two portraits of Federico [Ubaldo della Rovere] by Alessandro [Vitali]", at seven *ducatoni* each, and, in June 1607, a further payment "to the painter Alessandro [Vitali] for two portraits of Federico [Ubaldo della Rovere]", at ten *ducatoni* apiece.[5] These documents have been connected with the two full-length portraits now in Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts, inv. 44.215 and 44.216, representing the prince respectively at approximately eighteen months (fig. 1) and two years of age, holding a racquet (see fig. 2).[6] A further version of the latter composition, of higher quality, is preserved in Lucca, Museo Nazionale di Palazzo Mansi, inv. Com. 100.[7]

The quality and authorship of these portraits have long been debated. Although the payments firmly establish Vitali's involvement, their invention – and, crucially, the establishment of the prince's likeness – has been connected with Barocci.[8] Vitali's independent works after Barocci's death are distinctly lower in quality than the princely portraits, while documentary evidence shows the two painters working in close collaboration during Barocci's lifetime.

A few years later Claudio Ridolfi, a Veronese painter who had settled in the Urbino area by the end of the sixteenth century, was likewise entrusted with portraits of the young prince. Around 1610, when Federico Ubaldo was approximately five years old, Ridolfi produced the full-length portrait in hunting dress, holding a falcon, Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, inv. 1890 no. 2473, as well as other related representations. The ducal accounts record at least three portraits of Federico Ubaldo by Ridolfi. The previous attribution of the present head study to him was therefore entirely understandable, as Ridolfi was demonstrably involved in the prince's official iconography. However, new evidence now available suggests a different possibility.

* * *

In January 2026 the present painting was examined using infrared reflectography.[9] The analysis revealed both the structure of the paper and aspects of its preparation and execution previously invisible. The support is laid paper, whose chain and laid lines are clearly legible in infrared. Before the portrait was painted, the sheet received a broad, irregularly brushed tonal preparation, applied predominantly in vertical strokes. Its absorption in infrared indicates the presence of black pigment and suggests that it was probably grey.

The portrait itself was executed with striking directness. IRR reveals no separate carbon-containing preparatory drawing for the child's head. Thin paint was instead worked directly over the toned paper, with areas such as the collar initially left in reserve;



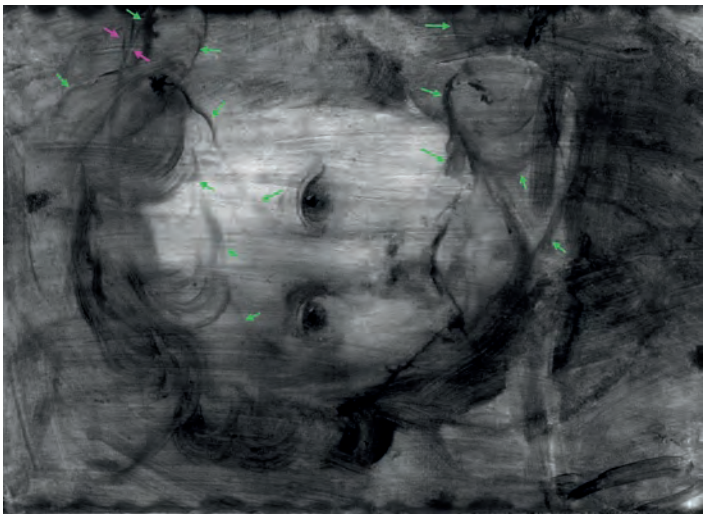
Fig. 1. Alessandro Vitali, F*ederico, Prince of Urbino, at the Age of Eighteen Months*, 1606, oil on canvas, 126.4 × 95.3 cm. Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts, inv. 44.215. Gift of Robert H. Tannahill.



Fig. 2. Alessandro Vitali, Federico, *Prince of Urbino, at the Age of Two Years*, 1607, oil on canvas, 93.8 × 63.5 cm. Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts, inv. 44.216. Gift of Robert H. Tannahill.

Fig. 3. Federico Barocci, *Portrait of Prince Federico Ubaldo della Rovere,* infrared reflectography, rotated through 90°, revealing the underlying figure studies. From Tager Stonor Richardson, 2026.

Fig. 4. Federico Barocci, *Study for Saint Sebastian,* black and white chalk on tinted paper, squared, 420 × 250 mm (42 × 25 cm). Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. no. 20267.



the modelling proceeds broadly from dark to light, while the bristles of the brush were used to soften and merge contours, strongly suggesting that the head was painted directly from life.

The most unexpected result of the infrared examination is the discovery of an earlier design beneath the portrait, deliberately suppressed by the streaky grey preparation before the new image was begun. When the reflectogram is rotated ninety degrees, these marks resolve into what appear to be two loosely indicated standing figures (fig. 3). The larger figure, on the left, seems to hold an object that may be interpreted as a martyr's palm. It is here tentatively associated with the type of Saint Sebastian developed by Barocci for the *Crucifixion with the Virgin, Saint John and Saint Sebastian* in Genoa Cathedral, completed in 1596 and here illustrated by one of the many preparatory drawings, now in Berlin (fig. 4).

A closely related variant of the same figure was painted by Barocci a few years later in an independent half-length *Saint Sebastian*, now of unknown whereabouts, which Bellori records as having been executed for Count Francesco Maria Mamiani and which may be dated around 1600 or shortly thereafter. The figure was prepared in a drawing now in Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. Kdz 15228. Although the position of



the hands differs, the pose and articulation of the upper body are substantially identical.

The close relationship between the Genoa and Mamiani versions makes it difficult to determine whether the underlying figure should be connected specifically with either or instead represents an independent development of the same prototype. Neither painted version, moreover, includes the martyr's palm apparently visible in the infrared image.

The second figure, on the right, is more difficult to identify. It appears upright, turned three-quarters, with its arms falling along the sides of the body, and may have been conceived as a companion to Saint Sebastian.

* * *

None of these observations, taken individually, disproves the former attribution to Claudio Ridolfi, who may have copied a model available in Barocci's studio before reusing the sheet for the present head; nor can the inscription on the previous stretcher simply be dismissed, given Ridolfi's documented activity as a portraitist for the della Rovere court. The painting's exceptional quality, however, is difficult to reconcile with his securely documented production. Even the signed and dated *Portrait of Felice Cioli* of 1602 (Urbino, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, inv. D 117), among his finest portraits, shows a more uniform surface and simplified modelling.[10] Even when considering Ridolfi's rare oil sketches on paper, such as the example in the Louvre (inv. 42265) and the markedly weaker work in the National Gallery of Art, Washington (inv. 2016.85.1), whose attribution should in any case be treated with a degree of caution, significant differences in quality and style emerge when compared with the restless, sensitive handling of the portrait of the prince.

The present painting is, by contrast, remarkably consistent with Barocci's practice in oil on paper. His painted studies frequently exploit the interaction between a toned support and highly selective passages of paint. Close comparisons are offered by two oils on paper in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: the *Head of a Bearded Man Looking to Lower Left (Nicodemus)*, inv. 1976.87.1, and the *Head of an Old Woman Looking to Lower Right (Saint Elizabeth)*, inv. 1976.87.2, as well as the remarkable *Self-Portrait*, c. 1600, in the Uffizi, inv. 1890, n. 1848. All three works combine a grey-toned ground with highly economical, painterly modelling, in which direct and selective strokes allow the prepared support to remain actively visible both around and within the painted form. The present portrait displays the same freedom in the relationship between support and painted passage, offering a substantially closer technical and pictorial comparison with Barocci's practice than with the flatter handling characteristic of Ridolfi.

An illuminating parallel is provided by Barocci's unfinished *Portrait of a Young Girl*, Italy, private collection, in which the artist concentrated almost exclusively on the head, leaving the rest of the composition unresolved. IRR has shown that the pupil of the left eye was corrected twice as Barocci sought a more convincing likeness and greater expressive intensity. In both works, Barocci's portraiture seems fundamentally to consist in fixing the face before anything else, not simply its proportions, but the transient expression and psychological character that distinguish an individual from a type.[11]

The circumstances surrounding Federico Ubaldo's earliest portraits make the attribution of the present work to Barocci a compelling interpretation. The documents prove that Francesco Maria II quickly commissioned multiple finished images from Alessandro Vitali. Yet Vitali's dependence on Barocci

for invention and drawing during these years was complete. It is difficult to imagine that, for portraits of such dynastic importance, Barocci – who had portrayed Francesco Maria II on several occasions, was effectively the leading artist of the Duchy of Urbino and ranked among the most celebrated portraitists in central Italy – played no role in establishing the young prince's likeness.[12] The present oil on paper may provide precisely the missing link.

Rather than a reduced version of one of the official portraits, the painting is best understood as the original *ad vivum* study from which Federico Ubaldo's likeness was subsequently developed, adapted and progressively aged by Barocci's collaborators.

Such a division of labour would have been entirely logical. By 1605-1606 Barocci was elderly, highly sought after and notoriously slow. Rather than undertaking a finished court portrait, he could have supplied a rapid study from life, leaving its translation into formal dynastic images to Vitali or other collaborators.

Oil on paper was especially suited to this purpose. Its speed and immediacy were ideal for portraying a child scarcely more than a year old, while the loosely brushed grey preparation, thin application of paint and minute corrections allowed Barocci to capture the sitter rapidly without sacrificing the chromatic subtlety of his portraiture.

A date around 1606, at the beginning of the surviving sequence of Federico Ubaldo's portraits, seems most plausible. The features correspond closely to those in the works associated with Vitali, yet the conception is far less formal and more searching. Where the Detroit and Lucca portraits transform the prince into a dynastic image, here he remains unmistakably a child: slightly sullen, meditative, alert yet unposed. The paint follows the shifting presence of a living face rather than fixing it into the formula of a princely effigy. The work thus constitutes a precious *ad vivum* likeness of Federico Ubaldo della Rovere, and one of the most intimate demonstrations of Barocci's gifts as a portraitist.

Luca Baroni

NOTES

1. The information is provided by the photograph now in the Fototeca of the Fondazione Federico Zeri, Bologna, which shows the painting still in an old gilt frame: https://catalogo.fondazionezeri.unibo.it/entry/photo/73740/.
2. Valentiner 1945, pp. 27-38.
3. Marchi 2004a, p. 360, cat. XI.1.
4. Montevecchi 2002, pp. 223-244; Morselli 2014, pp. 49-93; Cleri 2023, pp. 175-182.
5. Bissell, Derstine and Miller 2005, p. 213.
6. Verstegen 2022, pp. 111-117.
7. Marchi 2004b, pp. 360-62, cat. XI.2.
8. Verstegen 2022, pp. 111-117.
9. Tager Stonor Richardson 2026.
10. Arcangeli 1994, pp. 30-56; Ambrosini Massari 2016, pp. 51-81; Bernardini 2025, cat. I.4, pp. 86-87.
11. Baroni 2026, pp. 65-66.
12. Verstegen 2022, pp. 111-117.



13.

Annibale Carracci

Bologna 1560 – Rome 1609

Head of an Old Bearded Man, possibly a Blind Man

Oil on paper, laid down on canvas
38.5 × 25 cm
(15 ⅛ × 9 ⅞ in.)

Old inscriptions in brown ink on the stretcher, almost illegible: "Ca..".

Provenance

Cambi Casa d'Aste, Genoa, *Dipinti antichi*, 16 June 2021, lot 184, as Emilian School, seventeenth century, *Portrait of a Blind Man*.

Literature

Unpublished.

Recently rediscovered on the art market, this striking *Head of an Old Bearded Man* constitutes an important addition to the group of head studies executed in oil on paper associated with Annibale Carracci and his immediate circle. The attribution to Annibale himself is proposed here on the basis of the exceptional quality of the execution and a series of close correspondences with head studies traditionally associated with the artist. Some caution nevertheless remains necessary: no direct relationship with a figure in one of Annibale's finished compositions has yet been identified, and the intrinsically rapid and experimental character of such works can make the distinction between the master and artists working in his immediate orbit particularly difficult.

Studies of heads from life, and especially of elderly sitters whose faces offered an unusually rich field for the observation of physiognomy, formed a distinctive strand within the Carracci practice. Oil on paper was especially appropriate for such exercises. Less costly and less cumbersome than a conventional painting support, paper permitted a rapid, direct application of colour and was therefore particularly well suited to recording a living model before the pose or expression changed. The resulting works occupy an intermediate territory between drawing and painting: abbreviated in execution and apparently informal in purpose, yet capable of an extraordinary degree of pictorial and psychological concentration. This practice belongs to the broader culture of working *dal vivo* that became fundamental to the Carracci reform in Bologna.[1]

The most compelling comparison for the present work is the celebrated *Head of an Old Man* in the Dulwich Picture Gallery, London (inv. DPG286), generally dated to about 1590-1592.[2] Its relevance to the present head is heightened by a technical discovery made during the recent restoration: formerly described as an oil on canvas, the Dulwich work was found to have been painted on paper subsequently laid down on canvas.[3]

An additional and particularly important element is the probable condition of the sitter. The appearance of the eyes strongly suggests that the man may have been blind, although such an interpretation cannot be established with absolute certainty from the image alone. If correct, this reading places the work in relation to one of the most distinctive groups of studies from life associated with Annibale and his circle: the portraits of blind men and women first examined systematically by Anna Ottani Cavina in 1987.[4] Subsequent discussion has broadly preserved the distinction between a small autograph nucleus and a larger group attributed to Annibale or his workshop. The series is remarkably coherent in dimensions, technique, and approach, suggesting a common context of production rather than the accidental recurrence of a particular physiognomic type (fig. 1).

Ottani Cavina tentatively connected these portraits with the *Compagnia dei Ciechi*, a charitable confraternity established in Bologna by Cardinal Paleotti within the wider religious and philanthropic culture of the Catholic Reform. She suggested that the paintings might have been made to preserve the likenesses of individual members of the institution, perhaps during sessions in which painters associated with the Carracci studio worked directly before the models.[5] The painter deliberately avoided the exaggerated signs of disability that would later become conventional in seventeenth-century representations of blind beggars, instead recording the model with an unsentimental directness that Ottani Cavina described



Fig. 1. Annibale Carracci, *Portrait of a Blind Woman*, c. 1590, oil on paper laid down on canvas, 24 × 17.5 cm. Bologna, Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio in Bologna, inv. F32455.

in terms of "lay realism".[6] The hypothesis remains necessarily unproven, but it provides an unusually precise historical context for the recurrence of blind sitters within Bolognese naturalistic painting around 1590.

The present head seems particularly at home within this context. Nothing in the image transforms the sitter into a generic beggar, an allegory, or a conventional embodiment of infirmity. Instead, the painter concentrates upon an individual physiognomy: the narrow face, high forehead, prominent nose, sunken eyes, and long beard are observed without caricature or sentimental emphasis. If the identification of the man as blind is correct, the very restraint with which his condition is represented provides one of the strongest conceptual links with the group reconstructed by Ottani Cavina. At the same time, the absence of a direct connection with one of Annibale's documented compositions means that the attribution must ultimately rest upon comparison and quality. Within the inherently problematic field of Carracci oil studies, these criteria should not be treated as absolute; nevertheless, the assured construction of the head, the remarkably economical description of the beard, the handling of light across the flesh, and the work's close relationship with established examples all support the attribution to Annibale proposed here.

Luca Baroni

NOTES

1. Malvasia 1967, p. 277.
2. Although the Gallery currently maintains the cautious designation "Attributed to Annibale Carracci", the painting has long served in the literature as one of the principal benchmarks for Annibale's studies of heads from life and was included as such in the 2012 exhibition *Painting from Life: Carracci Freud*: Bray and Ordovas 2012, p. 68.
3. Sotheby's, *Old Masters Evening Sale*, London, 5 July 2017, lot 30, "Annibale Carracci, Portrait of a Bearded Man", catalogue note.
4. Ottani Cavina 1987, pp. 89-99.
5. Ottani Cavina 1989, p. 27.
6. Ottani Cavina 1989, p. 28.







Attributed to Annibale Carracci

Bologna 1560 – Rome 1609

14.

Saint Peter

Oil on paper, laid down
on board
38.3 × 27.5 cm
(15 ⅛ × 10 ⅞ in.)

Provenance

London, Colnaghi,
30 June – 9 July 1993, no. 13.
Private collection.

Literature

Colnaghi 1993, no. 13.

This oil painting on paper was first exhibited by Colnaghi in 1993 as *Saint Peter*, attributed to Annibale Carracci by Stephen Pepper. Pepper regarded it as a significant addition to the small group of Annibale's oil sketches on paper, dating it to c. 1590-1593 and comparing it with the *Head of an Old Man* in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Chambéry, and a *Portrait of an Old Man* formerly on the London art market.[1]

The particular interest of the painting lies in the way it occupies an ambiguous position between the traditional categories of the oil sketch, the *testa di carattere* and the independent devotional image. The strongly modelled head, with its concentrated expression and emphatic physiognomy, might at first suggest an autonomous study of character. Yet the discreet presence of the keys immediately identifies the figure as Saint Peter, while the intensity with which he appears to contemplate them suggests that the sacred subject may have formed part of the conception from the outset. Rather than a character study subsequently transformed through the addition of an attribute, the work may therefore have been conceived *ab initio* as an image of the saint. It is tempting to wonder whether such an object might have been intended as an independent work, perhaps for a patron bearing the saint's name or possessing a particular devotion to him, although such a hypothesis must remain speculative.

This possibility also bears upon the question of attribution. The fact that the work is painted on paper has naturally encouraged comparison with the celebrated group of oil

studies generally accepted as autograph works by Annibale, several of which are spontaneous exercises executed on reused sheets, sometimes with underlying writing still visible. In those works, the handling is often notably fluid and immediate. The *Saint Peter*, by contrast, is for the most part more deliberately constructed: the modelling is denser, more compact and more insistently sculptural, despite a number of rapid flourishes in passages such as the shirt, the hair and the ear.

If the painting was conceived as a finished work rather than as an informal exercise, however, this difference need not in itself argue against Annibale. The relevant comparison may lie not only with his more spontaneous oil sketches on paper, but also with the handling of his finished paintings. Works such as the *Head of an Old Man* at the Dulwich Picture Gallery, inv. DPG286, or the *Two Children Teasing a Cat* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 1994.142 (fig. 1), the former in oil on paper laid down on canvas and the latter in oil on canvas, may therefore help to establish the range of Annibale's pictorial language before 1600. The latter, in particular, has been dated to around 1588, shortly after Annibale's Venetian journey, and offers a valuable point of reference: a work on canvas deliberately handled with considerable freedom and painterly immediacy, against which to assess the more sustained degree of finish of the present oil on paper.[2] Seen from this perspective, the paper support may to some extent have been misleading: while the *Saint Peter* retains some of the freedom associated with the medium, its conception and degree of finish bring it closer to an independent painting than to an informal study.

Such an interpretation might also allow for a somewhat later date than the naturalistic head studies generally associated with Annibale's return from Venice in the 1580s. Pepper already dated the work to around 1590-1593, and a date extending into the mid-1590s should perhaps not be excluded. At the same time, the unusually emphatic materiality of the paint finds a broader context in tendencies that would become increasingly pronounced within the Carracci milieu and, in the following generation, still more conspicuous in the work of artists such as Giacomo Cavedone; compare, for example, the *Study of a Bearded Head*, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 1988.140.

While the painting undoubtedly belongs within the Carracci orbit, it does not correspond straightforwardly to the most familiar group of Annibale's oil sketches on paper; this, however, may reflect a difference of function and intention rather than of authorship. Its precise attribution should therefore remain open. Whatever its authorship, the *Saint Peter* is a work of remarkable quality and force, poised between oil sketch, character study and independent devotional image.

Luca Baroni

NOTES

1. Colnaghi 1993, no. 13.
2. Daniele Benati in Benati and Riccòmini 2006, pp. 120-121, no. II.14.

Fig. 1. Annibale Carracci, *Two Children Teasing a Cat*, detail, oil on canvas, 66 × 88.9 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 1994.142.





Early Seventeenth Century Bolognese School

15.

Head of a Satyr

Oil on paper
51 × 40.5 cm
(20 ⅛ × 16 in.)

Literature
Unpublished.

Occupying almost the entire surface of a relatively large sheet, this lively half–length portrayal of a satyr captures the figure in a fleeting moment of reverie. The satyr's slightly pointed ears, suggestive of his caprine nature, together with his disproportionately prominent aquiline nose, furrowed brow and fleshy lips, accentuate the wild, sensual and transgressive character traditionally associated with such creatures and with the pleasures of love, feasting, music, dance and, inevitably, wine – the latter evoked by the abundant bunches of grapes cascading from the wreath of vine leaves that crowns his head. Yet rather than appearing aggressive or fearsome, the satyr wears a gentle, contented expression, as though pleasantly intoxicated and slightly dazed by the effects of wine.

Such works find important precedents in the art of Bartolomeo Passerotti, among the earliest Bolognese painters to explore the genre through paintings and drawings of eccentric, grotesque and distorted figures, conceived as autonomous *divertissements* intended as unusual gifts for fellow artists, friends or patrons.[1] Increasingly fashionable in Italy, and particularly in Bologna, towards the end of the sixteenth century, these playful works were intended to amuse their viewers through light-hearted, unconventional and often comic subjects, such as the present satyr with his air of bemused detachment.

The present *Head of a Satyr*, however, stands apart from Passerotti's work in its distinctly more modern pictorial

idiom, which points to the hand of a later artist and reflects a profound debt to the innovations of the Carracci. A compelling comparison may be drawn with the *Head of a Satyr* in the Galleria Borghese (Fig. 1),[2] by Pietro Paolo Bonzi, known as Il Gobbo dei Carracci, one of the closest followers of the three Bolognese masters. Similarly painted in oil on paper, the Borghese Satyr shares with the present work not only its subject but also the striking immediacy of a figure brought close to the picture plane and arrested at a fleeting moment. It differs markedly, however, in its freer brushwork and the particular care lavished on the vine leaves and grapes, which reflects Bonzi's celebrated skill as a painter of still lifes.

While the available evidence does not permit the oil sketch to be dated with certainty, it may plausibly have been executed at around the same time as the Borghese picture, between the mid-1620s and the mid-1630s. Such a chronology accords with its vigorous pictorial manner: dense impasto and broad, sweeping brushstrokes lend the figure a striking immediacy and tactile presence. Emerging from the dark background, the satyr's jovial face is caught by a brilliant shaft of light falling from above across the vine wreath, forehead and lips, where swift yet precisely placed touches of white create flickering highlights. Longer, sinuous strokes describe the subtle torsion of the head and its graceful, almost feminine turn, tempering the figure's grotesque physiognomy and investing this familiar Bacchic type with an unexpected warmth and charm.

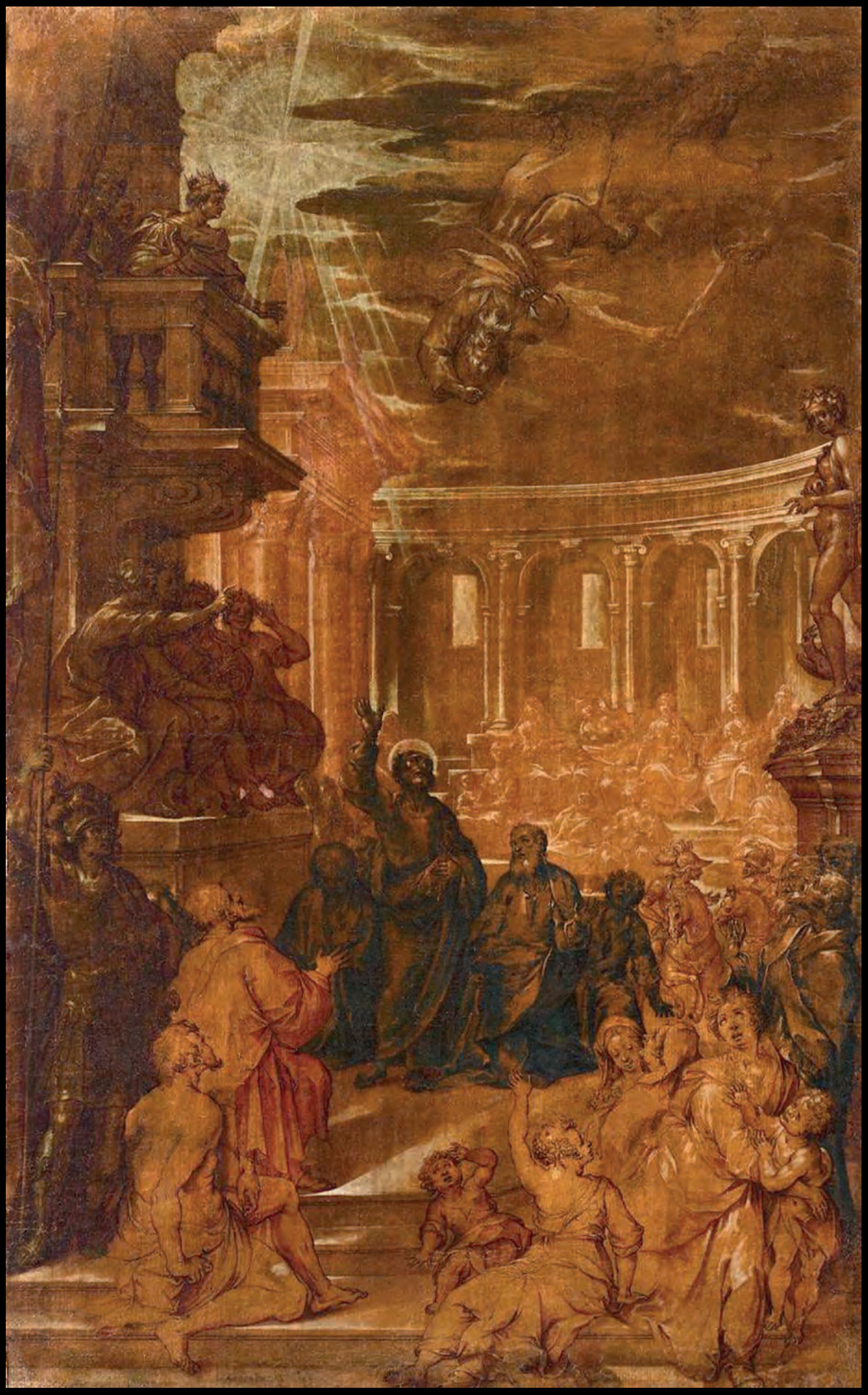
Marco Simone Bolzoni

NOTES

1. Passerotti's experiments with grotesque and caricatural physiognomy are exemplified by *An Old Man and an Old Woman Embracing* (formerly Mentana, Federico Zeri Collection; see Ghirardi 1990, pp. 229-230, no. 60) and drawings such as the *Laughing Old Woman* (two sheets depicting this subject are in the Galleria Estense, Modena, inv. nos. 948 and 977; see *Da Parmigianino a Piazzetta* 2011, pp. 62-63, no. 12), *Beast-Man* (Graphische Sammlung, Stuttgart, inv. no. 6259) and *Heads of a Nymph and a Satyr* (Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. no. 4066s; see Ghirardi 1990, p. 72).
2. *Mostra dei Carracci 1956*, pp. 116-117.



Fig. 1. Pietro Paolo Bonzi, *Satyr's Head Crowned with Vine*, first half of the seventeenth century, oil on paper laid down on canvas, 44.5 × 30 cm. Rome, Galleria Borghese, inv. 160.



Francesco Vanni

Siena, 1563 or 1564 – 1610

16.

The Fall of Simon the Magician

1603

Pen and brown ink over black chalk, brown watercolour, pink watercolour, oil paint, and white gouache highlights on ochre-prepared paper, mounted on canvas
63 × 39.2 cm
(24 4/5 × 15 7/16 in.).

Inscriptions lower left: *Lud. Carracci del.*

Provenance

Private collection.

Literature

Lewis 2022, pp. 49-58.

Francesco Vanni entered the workshop of the Roman painter Giovanni de' Vecchi in 1579, after being introduced to the arts by his stepfather, Arcangelo Salimbeni. He may also have spent time in the studio of Bartolomeo Passarotti in Bologna. His work was chiefly shaped by Federico Barocci and the Carracci. Although he worked in several major centres – Pisa, Cortona and Rome – it was in his native Siena that he achieved his greatest prominence, to the point of dominating the city's artistic scene around the turn of the century. The Church was his principal patron, commissioning him to decorate a number of chapels and churches in Siena and the surrounding area, including Sant'Agostino, San Domenico and Santa Caterina. Gifted and prolific, Vanni inspired later generations of Sienese artists in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, just as Domenico Beccafumi had fascinated earlier ones. As early as 1673, his drawings were sought after by collectors. Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici instructed his agents in Siena to assemble one hundred drawings by Vanni, with a view to publishing them as a book.

The episode of the fall of Simon the Magician was rarely depicted by painters. It is mentioned in the apocryphal *Acts of Peter*, in the writings of Cyril of Jerusalem, and by Suetonius. The story relates how, under Nero, Simon used his powers as a magician to oppose Saint Peter. One day, in a theatre packed with spectators, he attempted to rise into the air; but a prayer from the saint was enough to send him crashing down – provoking the emperor's wrath and leading him to deliver Saint Peter to martyrdom. The legend seems to have carried

little authority until Cardinal Baronio, in the time of Clement VIII Aldobrandini, selected it among the six "mysteries of Saint Peter" intended to adorn the side aisles of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome.

The commission for *The Fall of Simon the Magician* was given to Vanni in December 1602. The work was delivered in June 1603 and earned its author the title of Knight of Christ. Today it is largely forgotten: painted in oil on twenty-three large slate panels, it was dismantled in 1921, placed in storage, and replaced by a mosaic representing *The Apparition to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque*, executed after a design by Carlo Muccioli.[1] A restoration carried out in 1994 in preparation for the celebration of the fourth centenary of the death of Saint Philip Neri revealed a major masterpiece, with intact colours, colossal dimensions (7.23 × 4.27 m) and dramatic conception (fig. 1).[2] In 1748, a copy of Vanni's painting was commissioned from Pompeo Batoni to serve for the execution of the mosaic, as had been done for the other altars of Saint Peter's; another copy – painted by Trémolières – is now preserved in the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli.

To fulfil this important commission, the Sienese artist settled in Rome in November 1602, accompanied by his pupil Alessio Scala. The preparation of the work, through studies and sketches, was intense – so much so that it may have begun even before Vanni moved to Rome. In these studies, the artist examines every detail: from the stage-like architecture of the theatre to figures analysed individually or in groups, and even to direct studies of facial types. Fifty-three preparatory drawings recorded by Marco Ciampolini testify to this commitment,[3] to which six more have recently been added by Milena Pagni.[4] After the preparatory drawings, Vanni generally produced – when planning his large altarpieces – a large-scale compositional sketch in watercolour, heightened with white gouache on ochre-prepared paper.[5]

Our work is entirely characteristic of this working method. The present sketch was mentioned, though not reproduced, by Grant Lewis in 2022.[6] It must belong to the final stage of the compositional process, after the drawings in the Municipal Library of Siena (E.I.15, c. 24r), the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin (KdZ 15253), and the chiaroscuro sketch in Darmstadt (Landesmuseum, 536), identified by Hermann Voss in the museum's storage and lost during the Second World War.[7] One important difference separates those three works from our sketch: in them, the figures of Peter and Paul stand and are close to one another. In our study – as in the final painting – Peter alone remains standing at the centre, while Paul is pushed to the left, kneeling. This change was likely imposed by the patrons, in order to exalt fully the figure of Peter, to whose religious action Vanni's altarpiece and the others in the same cycle were dedicated.

Our sketch is thus the compositional study closest to the final execution, yet it differs from the painting in a number of details – evidence that the patrons asked Vanni for further alterations, though less substantial than the one involving the two apostles.



Fig. 1. Francesco Vanni, *The Fall of Simon the Magician,* 1603, oil on twenty-three slate panels, 723 × 427 cm. Vatican City, Reverenda Fabbrica di San Pietro, formerly Museo Petriano.

For example, Nero's head, which in the early studies looks upward, is now turned towards Saint Peter. Other modifications can be seen in the capitals, the arrangement of the Vestals, the pose of the idol at the right of the composition, and in the rays of the sun. The size of the work (unusual for Vanni's sketches), the extreme attention to detail, and the approximate proportional relationship (1:10) to the finished painting all suggest that our sketch was probably the model submitted for the patrons' approval, rather than a strictly practical working study for execution. The final product of an extended meditation on a rare subject, it also testifies to Vanni's extraordinary talent, already recognised by his contemporaries.[8]

NOTES

1. Incisa della Rocchetta 1932, p. 250.
2. La regola e la fama 1995; Pinelli 2000, vol. 1, no. 823, p. 823; vol. 2, ill. 1514, p. 1067.
3. Ciampolini 2010, pp. 936-939.
4. Pagni 2020, pp. 65-87.
5. The Louvre alone has four oil sketches on paper: Saint Hyacinth Resurrecting a Drowned Child, 377 × 253 mm, sketch for the painting of Santo Spirito in Siena; The Risen Christ Adored by Two Saints, 347 × 209 mm, sketch for the painting of San Benedetto in Fabriano; Death of Saint Anthony, 266 × 184 mm, sketch for the painting at the Oratory of Sant'Antonio Abbate in Siena; and Adoration of the Shepherds, 287 × 213 mm, probably a sketch for a painting now in the Poldi Pezzoli Museum in Milan (Viatte 1988, nos. 526, 529, 541, and 542, pp. 256, 261, 266, and 267). Mention should also be made of those in the Chigi Saracini collection in Siena for the altarpiece of St Benedict in Fabriano (inv. FAC 900) and for the Pardon of Assisi in the church of St Francis in Pisa (inv. FAC 940).
6. Lewis 2022, pp. 49-58.
7. Voss 1994, p. 321, note 9.
8. We thank Professor Ciampolini, who kindly confirmed the attribution of this drawing and provided valuable information for the preparation of this catalogue note.





Tuscan School

17.

Portrait of a Young Man with a Moustache

Early Seventeenth Century

Oil on paper (?)
35 × 26 cm
(13 ¾ × 10 ¼ in.)

Provenance
Private collection.

Literature
Unpublished.

This intense portrait belongs to a substantial group of heads in oil on paper whose precise historical and attributional context remains unresolved. A uniform grey preparation covers the support, over which the face has been worked with remarkable control, while the clothing and collar remain at the stage of an *abbozzo*, leaving much of the prepared surface exposed. The contrast between the highly resolved head and the abbreviated surrounding passages is central to the image's effect, directing attention almost entirely to the sitter's presence.

The work was evidently conceived either as an autonomous portrait or as a painted study for one. The sitter appears to be a young man of approximately twenty to twenty-five years of age, represented without idealization but with notable restraint. His features are modelled through a limited range of grey, pink, and ochre tones, applied in economical transitions that establish volume and expression with very few pictorial means. These characteristics suggest a Tuscan, and more specifically Florentine, context around 1600, with the closest points of comparison in the orbit of Ludovico Cardi, called Cigoli.

Portraiture occupied a significant, if today only partially recoverable, place in Cigoli's production.[1] Franco Faranda's monograph also documents Cigoli's sustained interest in the independent study of the human head, including painted studies conceived as exercises in observation and verisimilitude rather than necessarily as preparations for larger compositions.[2]

Cigoli's use of oil on paper for head studies is securely documented by the *Study of Head and Bust of a Youth, Looking to Lower Left* in the

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (inv. PD.10-1983), an oil on paper laid down on canvas measuring 44.3 × 36.4 cm and dated to 1594. An even closer comparison to the portrait considered here is offered by a *Study of the Head of a Monk* that recently appeared on the Paris art market (fig. 1).[3] Painted on paper subsequently laid down on a cradled panel, the work has been attributed to Cigoli and connected with a small group of comparable heads of Franciscan monks now or formerly in collections in Paris, London, and Florence, generally dated around 1610. The group has been interpreted as a series of studies *dal vero*, consistent with Cigoli's broader practice of treating individual heads as exercises in observation and verisimilitude without requiring a direct connection with a major religious composition.[4]

These comparisons provide a coherent basis for locating the work within the Tuscan tradition, and more specifically within the Florentine environment in which Cigoli's example was particularly important. The controlled execution, selective use of the prepared paper and of the brush, unusual psychological concentration and pictorial economy distinguish the present portrait from the more materially assertive Bolognese tradition and offer a substantial point of departure for further study.

Luca Baroni



Fig. 1. Ludovico Cardi, called Cigoli, *Head of a Monk*, c. 1610, oil on paper laid down on panel, 32 × 24 cm, formerly Château de Sourches.

NOTES

1. Matteoli 1980, pp. 381-384. The Palatina portrait discussed by Matteoli as a youthful self-portrait of Cigoli was subsequently reassigned by Miles L. Chappell to the young Cristofano Allori; see Chappell 1984, p. 48.
2. Faranda 1986, pp. 157, 170, 175.
3. AuctionArt Rémy Le Fur & Associés, Paris, 25 March 2026, "Lodovico Cardi, dit Il Cigoli, *Étude de tête de moine*", oil on paper laid down on cradled panel, 32 × 24 cm, provenance Château de Sourches; catalogue entry by Cabinet Turquin.
4. Faranda 1986, pp. 157, 170, 175; Moro 2006, pp. 43-46; Dumas and Esteves Mendes 2010; Dumas 2012.

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18.

Cristofano Allori

Florence 1577 – 1621

Portrait of a Boy Looking Down (possibly Cosimo Bonsi)

Circa 1595-1600

Oil on paper
36.5 × 26 cm
(14 ⅜ × 10 ¼ in.)

Provenance
Private collection.

Literature
Unpublished.

This remarkable portrait in oil on paper, distinguished by unusual psychological concentration and a particularly sensitive observation of youth, is proposed here as a significant addition to the portrait oeuvre of Cristofano Allori. Its economy of execution is central to its effect: the sitter's face is brought to a high degree of resolution, while the surrounding passages remain markedly abbreviated. The result retains the immediacy of close observation without assuming the fully resolved appearance of a formal portrait.

The son and pupil of Alessandro Allori, Cristofano was trained within the Florentine tradition inherited from Bronzino, but progressively moved away from his father's late Mannerist language towards a more direct engagement with natural appearance. Portraiture formed a substantial part of this development and of his activity in the Medici environment, and was given particular attention in the fundamental reconstruction of his career.[1]

Young and adolescent faces recur frequently in Allori's graphic work. Particularly relevant are the *Head of a Young Man Turned to the Left and Looking Up* in the Louvre, in black and red chalk (inv. 12302, recto);[2] the red-chalk study of a youth in the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest (inv. K.67.148); and the refined *Study of the Head of a Youth with Visor Cap* in the Städel Museum, Frankfurt (inv. 17179 Z), dated to about 1600.[3] The same interest is evident in painting. The early double *Portrait of Francesco and Caterina de' Medici*, now in the deposits at Poggio Imperiale (inv. 505), already shows the directness with which Allori could observe



Fig. 1. Cristofano Allori, *Portrait of Cosimo Bonsi*, c. 1595-1600, oil on metal, 27.5 × 21 cm, formerly English private collection, present whereabouts unknown.

young sitters within the conventions of court portraiture.[4] The *Portrait of a Boy* in the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow (inv. Zh-261), traditionally attributed to Cristofano and dated to 1590–1600, provides a further comparison, as does a related youthful head in the Hermitage (inv. GE 4083).

The closest comparison to the work considered here, however, is the small *Portrait of Cosimo Bonsi*, formerly in an English private collection and whose present whereabouts are unknown (fig. 1). Painted on metal and measuring 27.5 × 21 cm, it represents a boy in a black doublet and white ruff beside a table, holding a letter. The sitter is identified by the inscription on the letter and by the Bonsi arms; on the reverse, a near-contemporary inscription records the work as the "Ritratto del Magnifico Sig. Cosimo Bonsi di mano di Cristofano Allori". Chappell placed the painting among Cristofano's early portraits, noting in its smooth handling and stylization the still perceptible inheritance of Alessandro Allori.[5]

The physiognomic resemblance between Cosimo Bonsi and the sitter in the present oil on paper is close enough to raise the possibility that the two works represent the same individual. The identification cannot presently be demonstrated: the Bonsi portrait is known only through an archival photograph and no independent evidence links the present sheet with the family. Nevertheless, the correspondence of age, facial structure, eyes, nose, and mouth makes Cosimo Bonsi a plausible, if necessarily provisional, identification. If that hypothesis is correct, the relationship between the two works may also clarify the function of the present sheet. The small portrait on metal is a highly finished object suited to private possession, whereas the oil on paper has the immediacy of a first study from the sitter. It may therefore have preceded the finished likeness, recording physiognomy and expression before their translation into a formal portrait. It is also possible that the metal version itself depended upon a larger portrait, now lost or unidentified.



Fig. 2. Cristofano Allori, *Portrait of a Woman (Francesca Caccini?)*, 1610-1620, oil on copper, 7.1 × 5.3 cm, Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, inv. 1890 no. 8812.

No documentary evidence presently permits such a sequence to be reconstructed, but it is consistent with Allori's demonstrably flexible use of portrait formats and supports.

Oil on paper is securely documented in Allori's practice. Chappell reconstructed a group of rapidly painted *bozzetti* associated with his working process, including examples executed on paper, and recalled Baldinucci's account of the artist continuing to paint with specially adapted equipment even when confined to bed.[6] Allori's portrait practice was equally flexible in scale and support, encompassing canvas, copper and other metal supports, drawings in black and red chalk, and small-format likenesses. Particularly instructive is the miniature *Portrait of a Woman (Francesca Caccini?)* in the Uffizi (inv. 1890 no. 8812; fig. 2), which offers a close technical comparison with the present work.[7] Painted in oil on a small oval copper support, it similarly contrasts a highly finished face with deliberately unresolved clothing, where the grey preparatory layer remains exposed.

Luca Baroni

NOTES

1. Pizzorusso 1982; Chappell 1984.
2. Monbeig Goguel 2005, no. 6.
3. Thiem 1973, pp. 131-137.
4. Chappell 1984, p. 32, cat. 2.
5. Chappell 1984, p. 32.
6. Chappell 1984, p. 95, cat. 31.1.
7. Meloni Trkulja 1976, p. 32, cat. 19. Lisa Goldenberg Stoppato has proposed, explicitly as a working hypothesis, that this miniature may represent the composer and singer Francesca Caccini (Goldenberg Stoppato 2018, pp. 47-49). Allori is documented as having painted Caccini: the portrait was celebrated by Gabriello Chiabrera and, more decisively, is recorded after the painter's death in a letter of 15 December 1622, when it remained "molto simile, se bene imperfetto" in the possession of Cristina di Lorena (Florence, Archivio di Stato, Mediceo del Principato 6106, c. 642).




ANNIBAL CARATI

19.

Giovanni Bilivert

Florence, 1585 – Florence, 1644

Head of a Youth with Closed Eyes

Oil on paper laid down on canvas
35.8 × 27.9 cm
(14 1/10 × 11 in.)

Inscribed in a cartouche at lower right:
ANNIBAL CARATI

Literature
Unpublished.

This previously unpublished head offers a particularly revealing case study in the appreciation and collecting of oil studies on paper during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A young boy is shown with his eyes closed and his head inclined, the features and curling hair rendered with considerable precision, while the surrounding brown field remains largely unworked. The contrast between the carefully resolved head and its summary setting suggests a study focused on a particular motif rather than a finished portrait. Its execution suggests a preparatory function, although the painting for which it may have been intended has yet to be identified.

The boy's closed eyes, the inclination of his neck and his youthful appearance may point to a specific narrative context. A *Sacrifice of Isaac* is one possibility, but the suggestion must remain hypothetical: the motif could equally have served another composition requiring a youthful figure with closed eyes.

The handling of the paint, the modelling of the face and the type of the head provide persuasive grounds for proposing an attribution to the Florentine painter Giovanni Bilivert. Born in Florence into the family of a goldsmith from Maastricht, Bilivert trained with Cigoli and accompanied him to Rome in 1604. Back in Florence, he entered Medici service as a designer for the grand-ducal pietre dure workshop in 1609, alongside his activity as a painter. His work encompassed altarpieces and devotional subjects as well as mythological and allegorical scenes for aristocratic patrons. Biblical narratives and episodes of love and temptation offered scope for his graceful figures, rich colour

and expressive treatment of gesture. In his later paintings, the influence of Francesco Furini encouraged softer tonal transitions and effects of half-light.[1]

The present head fits naturally within Bilivert's oeuvre, retaining his characteristic manner in oil on paper, a technique sparsely documented in his surviving work but well established in seventeenth-century Florence. Comparable youthful types occur in *Saint Zenobius Revives a Dead Boy* in the National Gallery, London, probably painted in 1610–1620, and in the *Sacrifice of Isaac* in a private collection reproduced by Giuseppe Cantelli.[2] Bilivert's surviving drawings also attest to his close attention to youthful physiognomies and to the expressive possibilities of the inclined head.[3]

A related youthful type appears in the head of the Tobias in Bilivert's *Guardian Angel* of 1625, in the Oratorio di San Sebastiano dei Bini, Florence (fig. 1). Although no direct compositional or preparatory connection can be established, the child's head offers a useful comparison in its facial type and handling, particularly in the modelling of the features and the transitions between light and shade.[4] A second close comparison is offered by *Venus, Cupid and Pan*, an oil on copper offered at Sotheby's, London, on 4 July 2012 (lot 29; fig. 2). The unusually precise finish of the present oil study, the modelling of the head, the articulation of light and shade around the eyes and the shape of the nose recall the treatment of the heads in that painting. The supports are different – copper in the Sotheby's picture and paper, subsequently laid down on canvas, in the present work –



Fig. 1. Giovanni Bilivert, *Guardian Angel*, 1625, detail of the Tobia's head, oil on canvas, 291 × 207 cm, Florence, Oratorio di San Sebastiano dei Bini.



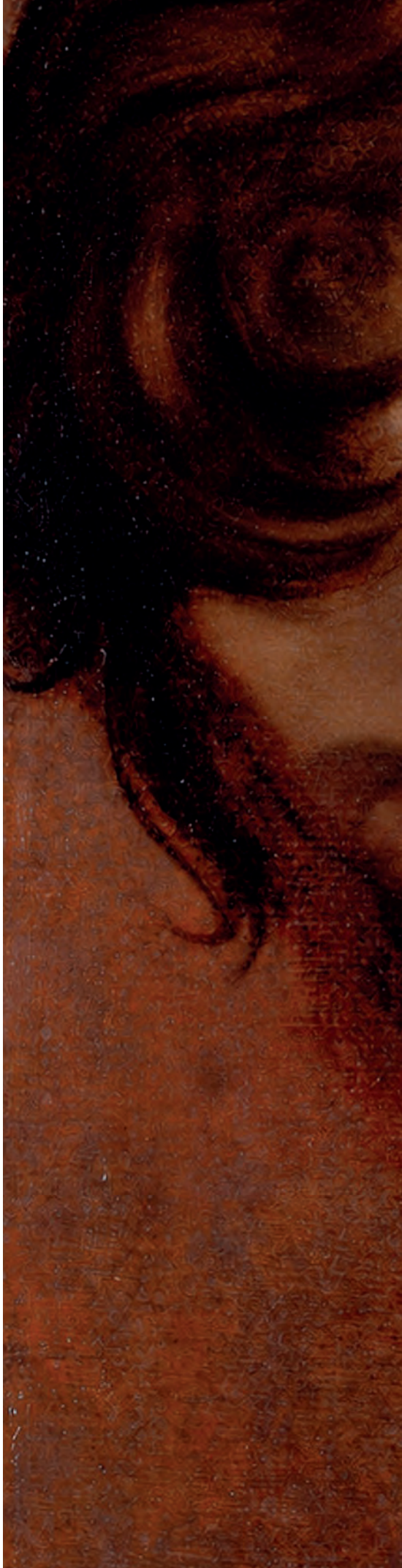
Fig. 2. Giovanni Bilivert, *Venus, Cupid and Pan*, detail, oil on copper, 45.7 × 33 cm. Sotheby's, London, 4 July 2012, lot 29.

but both depart from conventional painting directly on canvas. The comparison suggests a similar approach to constructing the head through finely controlled tonal transitions on these different surfaces, lending further support to the proposed attribution.[5]

At the lower right, a rectangular cartouche bears the name of Annibale Carracci, brushed in black. This addition, presumably made at the instigation of an early owner, belongs to a later episode in the work's history. The appearance of the lettering is compatible with a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century date, although its precise chronology remains to be established. The inscription records an attribution rather than a signature: by the time it was added, the head was being identified with Annibale, and its probable Florentine origin had been obscured.

The cartouche is thus of particular interest for the reception of oil studies. It provides material evidence of the authority of Annibale's name and of the readiness to associate an accomplished, isolated study of a head with his practice. If the proposed early dating of the inscription is correct, the work offers a striking witness to this process during the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Preserved through the recent restoration, the inscription remains an integral part of the object's collecting history. Together with the proposed recovery of its Florentine authorship, this earlier attribution makes the study a valuable witness to the esteem in which heads associated with the Carracci were held.

Luca Baroni



NOTES

1. Hoogewerff 1968, *ad vocem*.
2. London, National Gallery, inv. NG1282. For the Sacrifice of Isaac, see Cantelli 1983, fig. 42.
3. Thiem 1983, p. 276, pls. 37-38; p. 281, nn. 16–17. Particularly relevant is the Head of a Young Boy with lowered eyes, Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe (as catalogued in 1983), inv. F.C. 128233, black, white and red chalk on blue paper, 140 × 144 mm. Thiem suggests that it may have served as a study for the angel in The Guardian Angel and Tobias. It is cited here as evidence of Bilivert's practice of studying youthful heads, not as a preparatory drawing for the present oil study.
4. See also Thiem 1983, p. 276, fig. 1, where the painting is discussed under the title The Guardian Angel and Tobias and recorded at the Certosa di Galluzzo.
5. Sotheby's, *Old Master & British Paintings Evening Sale*, auction catalogue, London, 4 July 2012, lot 29, "Giovanni Bilivert: Venus, Cupid and Pan," https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2012/old-master-british-paintings-evening-sale/lot.29.html (accessed 9 October 2026). The catalogue describes the copper support as unusual in Bilivert's oeuvre and relates its polished surface to his careful brushwork.





Attributed to Giovan Battista Caracciolo, called Battistello

Naples 1578 – 1635

Study of a Male Head

Circa 1620-1625

20.

Oil on paper, laid down on canvas
33 × 30 cm
(13 × 11 ¾ in.)

Provenance:
Aste Boetto, Genoa, Asta di Antiquariato, 5 March 2024, lot 24, as "Scuola emiliana sec. XVII, Ritratto virile", with an old attribution to Morazzone.
Private collection.

Literature
Unpublished.

When the present oil study reappeared on the art market, it retained an old attribution to Morazzone, recorded on a label attached to its twentieth-century frame. At that time the work was heavily soiled, while the corners had been painted black to create the appearance of an oval around the sitter's head. This intervention emphasized the devotional character of the image but also obscured its original appearance and, to some extent, its pictorial quality. Subsequent cleaning, together with the identification of the original support as paper later laid down on canvas, considerably altered the understanding of the work. Freed from the later additions, the painting revealed a notably high level of execution and, at the same time, a less finished character more consistent with that of an *abbozzo*. The neutral ground, the economical indication of the clothing, and the concentration of the paint around the illuminated areas of the face all suggest a study conceived principally through light and chiaroscuro. The head itself is developed with considerable precision, while the remainder is reduced to what is strictly necessary to sustain its pictorial effect.

An initial localization within seventeenth-century Neapolitan painting can be tentatively narrowed more specifically towards Giovan Battista Caracciolo, called Battistello.[1] One of the leading protagonists of early Neapolitan naturalism, Battistello developed from an exceptionally close engagement with Caravaggio into a painter of increasing stylistic range, while retaining throughout his career an unusually concentrated treatment of light, physiognomy, and the isolated human figure.[2] The attribution proposed here is supported by a series of comparisons extending across different moments of his career.



Fig. 1. Giovan Battista Caracciolo, called Battistello, *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, c. 1625, oil on canvas, 202.3 × 113.9 cm, Cambridge, MA, Harvard Art Museums / Fogg Museum, inv. 1924.31.

An early point of reference is the striking *Head of Saint Januarius* in the Pinacoteca di Brera, in which a disembodied head emerges from darkness through a similarly concentrated orchestration of light and shadow. The work, which bears Battistello's monogram, belongs to the artist's early Caravaggesque production. A closer comparison, however, may be found in the *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* in the Harvard Art Museums, Fogg Museum (inv. 1924.31), generally dated around 1625. The affinities extend beyond the broadly comparable inclination of the head. Particularly close are the half-open mouth, the elongated eyes directed upwards, the abrupt passages of shadow across the upper face, and the cool, almost livid tonality of the flesh. More significant still is the character of the paint itself: in both works it is relatively lean and selectively applied, gathering density chiefly around the passages most exposed to light rather than constructing the flesh through uniformly substantial layers.

Luca Baroni

NOTES

1. The author is grateful to Professor Stefano Causa for having responded favourably to the proposed attribution to Battistello on the basis of a photograph.
2. Bologna 1991; Causa 2000; Causa 2022.





21.

Jacopo Vignali

Pratovecchio, Arezzo, 1592 – Florence, 1664

Head Studies of a Bearded Old Man Seen from Three Angles

Circa 1630

Oil on paper laid down on panel
Each of the three studies:
40.5 × 29 cm
(16 × 11⅜ in.)

Provenance
Private collection, London.

Literature
Unpublished.

Hitherto unpublished and unknown to scholars, the present *Head Studies of a Bearded Old Man seen from Three Angles*, each on a separate piece of paper executed in oil, and laid down on panel, are an important addition to the oeuvre of the Florentine artist Jacopo Vignali (1592-1664), one of the major representatives of the *Seicento Fiorentino*. Only a small group of oil sketches by Vignali are known and they not only testify to the influences Vignali absorbed during his formative years, but also provide a first-hand insight into his working method.

Highly finished and in close-up view these observant studies strike a chord, with their immediacy, emotional intensity, warmth and gravitas. The heads radiate a luminosity achieved with a dramatic use of the *chiaroscuro*, the play of light and shadow, by contrasting the reflections on the high forehead with the shimmering white beard and the accentuated grey tinges of the receding hair, all set against a dark monochrome background.

Oil sketches on paper were a quick and efficient studio material, cheaper than canvas or panel, commonly used by the Carracci Academy starting from the late sixteenth century, and also taken up by the Florentine school. According to each commission, be it a single figure or group ensemble, the artist could easily resort to his portfolio of sketches and choose a suitable *modello* for the final painting. It is easily imaginable that the artist would have chosen such a dignified old man as an ideal sitter, his face later to be used for the depiction of a saint or apostle, deep in thought and visually transmitting his devotion to his religious cause.

In fact, the central head, seen frontally, facing down, can be related to Jacopo Vignali's painting of *Saint Anthony Abbot*, formerly with Clovis Whitfield Fine Art, London, and which was later gifted by Isabel and Alfred Bader to the Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin (fig. 1).[1] On closer examination of the painting and the oil sketch the resemblance of the sitter and handling of the paint is more than reassuring and adds additional weight to the attribution.[2] Probably the same model can also be identified with the figure to the left of Vignali's *Death of Saint Anthony Abbot* in the Canonica of San Martino a Montughi, Florence.[3]

In the first decade of the seventeenth century, Vignali had joined the workshop of Matteo Rosselli (1578-1650),[4] whose "school, like that of the Carracci, produced as many different styles as he had pupils" and who subsequently defined the course of Florentine art.[5] Vignali was hugely indebted to the narrative realism and tender pictorial execution of his master and it is therefore not surprising that the head studies, in particular the ones in profile, recall the works by Matteo Rosselli.[6] See for example the head facing right in comparison with Rosselli's *Saint Jerome*, which once appeared on the Roman art market and is in a private collection today. A sitter, not unlike the present old man, appears also in another work by Rosselli, the *Holy Family with Saint Francis*, Santa Maria Maggiore, Florence.

Vignali's Rossellian influence is undeniable, as Francesca Baldassari points out "In my opinion the heads are by Jacopo Vignali. The tender rendering of the features and the subtle treatment of the curls are entirely characteristic of Vignali, who trained with Rosselli and was strongly influenced by him. The head in profile is the most Rossellian, but it is painted in the same manner as the others and is therefore also by Vignali."[7]

In addition, it is worth highlighting that Matteo Rosselli in turn could have been influenced by the Carracci Academy during his Roman sojourn while working under Domenico Passignano (1559-1638). Luigi Lanzi in his *History of Painting in Italy* explicitly notes that Rosselli "excels in dignity of character; some of the heads of his apostles so strongly resemble the works of the Carracci, that connoisseurs are sometimes deceived."[8] Consequently, these influences converge in Vignali's work, as the present head studies share the introspective realism also visible in many of the figures in the Carracci artistic circle, albeit in a softer painterly execution.[9] A compelling comparison is provided by some of the drawings by Domenichino in the Teylers Museum, Haarlem (object numbers: C 053 and I 038), but most notably the *Head of a Bearded Man in Full Face* in the Royal Collection Trust, London.

In comparison with other oil studies by Vignali, parallels can be observed with *Portrait of a Young Man*, discussed by Francesca Baldassari in the Moretti Fine Art exhibition catalogue from 2012.[10] Although the sitter in this example is directly gazing out at the viewer, the realism and tendency towards introspection are similar, as is the paint handling and format.[11] Baldassari proposes a date for the Moretti sketch at the beginning of the 1630s, a date she would also apply for the present *Three Heads of a Bearded Old Man*.[12]

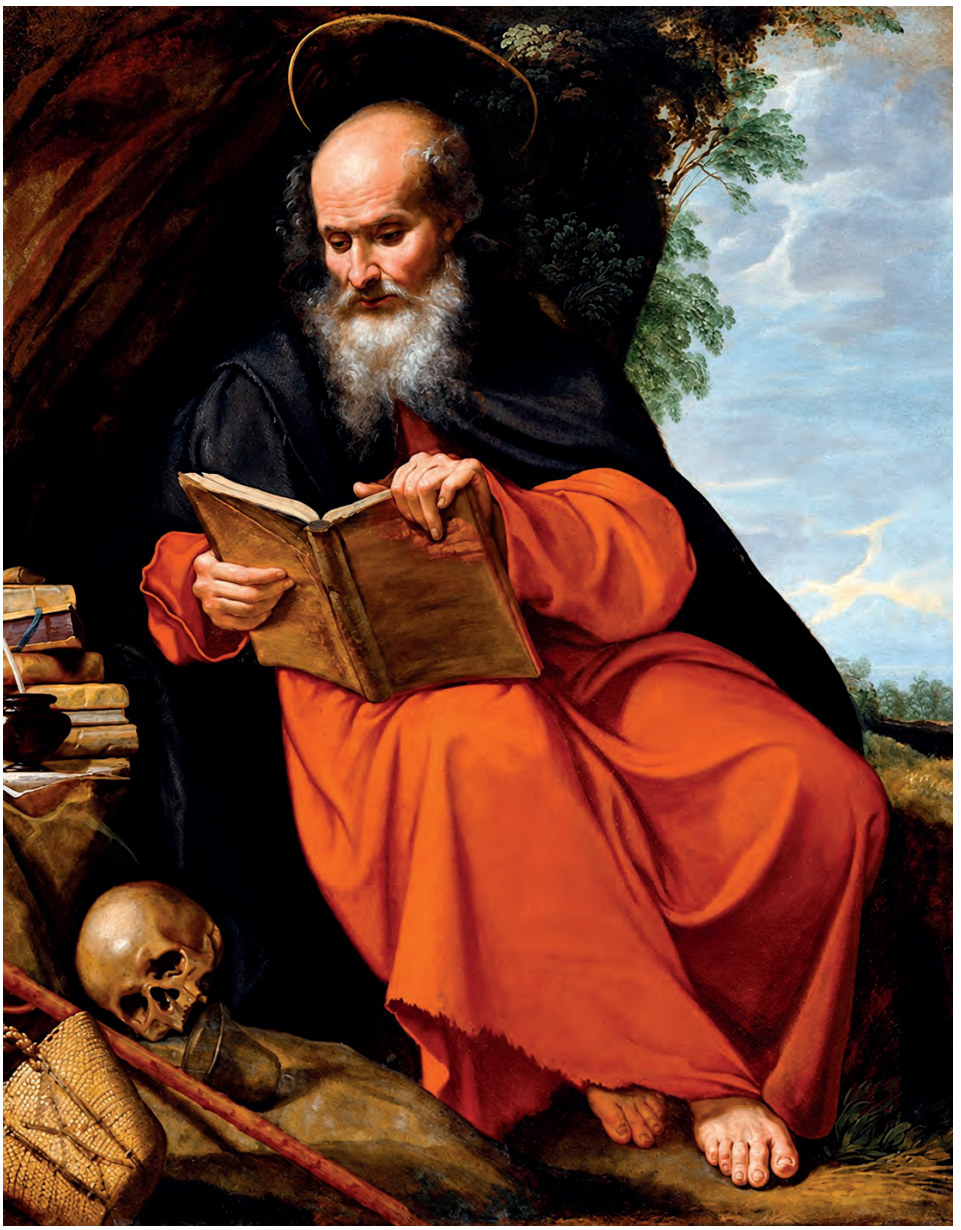


Fig. 1. Jacopo Vignali, *Saint Anthony Abbot*, c. 1625, oil on canvas, 146 × 117 cm. Milwaukee, Milwaukee Art Museum, Gift of Isabel and Alfred Bader.

Besides the rarity of Vignali's oil sketches, it is highly unusual to find a set of three head studies of the same sitter preserved, even more so given the fragile medium of oil on paper. Few triple portraits of the same person are known, often quoted in conjunction with the *paragone* discussion as to whether painting or sculpture was the superior art. Traditionally mentioned in this context is Lorenzo Lotto's (1480-1557) masterpiece of *A Goldsmith seen from Three Sides*, most likely depicting Lotto's friend Bartolomeo Carpan, a Venetian jeweller. Józef Grabski (1981), who interpreted the painting as depicting three different sitters (the Carpan brothers), offers an alternative angle of interpretation, suggesting the painting was a visual play on words on Carpan's hometown, Treviso, read as a pun on *tre visi* ("three faces").[13] Louisa Vertova (1981) on the other hand favours the more practical assumption that the triple portrait served as a preparatory model for a sculpture.[14] The latter proposal leads to another famous example, Anthony van Dyck's (1599-1641) carefully executed portrait of the British monarch, *Charles I*, a painting that the artist probably began in the second half of 1635 and which was in fact intended as a model for a marble bust to be made by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), but the sculpture was later destroyed in the fire at Whitehall Palace in 1698. Intriguingly, Van Dyck could have encountered Lotto's *Goldsmith seen from Three Sides*, when it entered the Royal Collection by the early 1630s as part of the Gonzaga collection.[15] Peter Humfrey (1998) generally favours the idea that Lotto, portraying a jeweller, playfully alludes to the *paragone* debate with a twinkle in his eyes amongst his sculptor friends and colleagues, and in addition proposes that Lotto could have seen and been inspired by Leonardo da Vinci's (1452-1519) *Three Head Studies of a Bearded Man (Cesare Borgia?)*, a drawing in red chalk (today preserved in the Biblioteca Reale, Turin) while Leonardo was residing in Venice.[16]

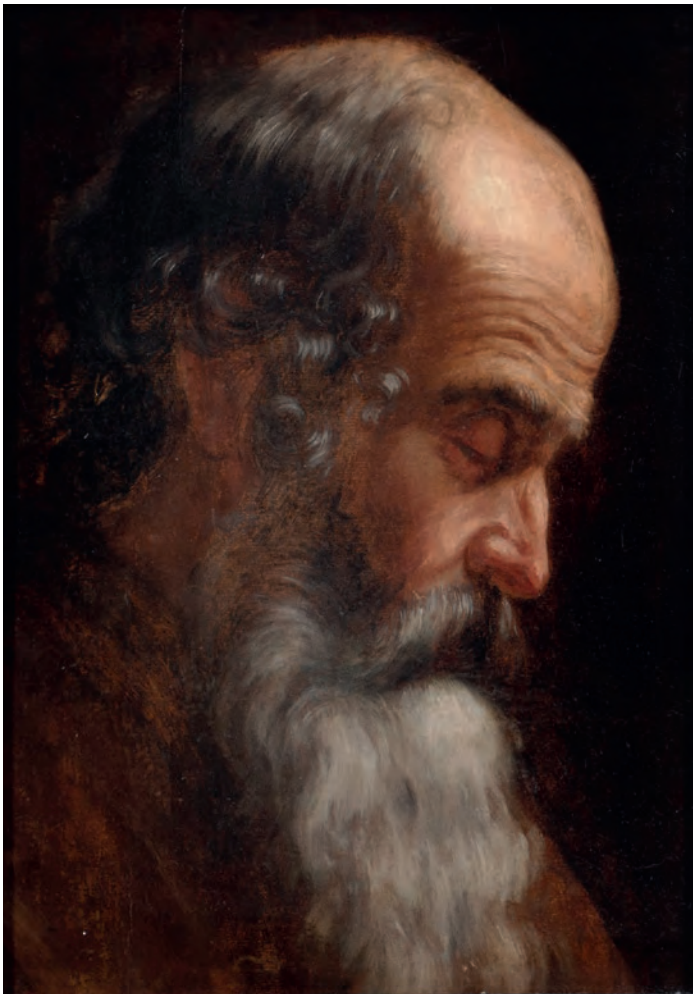
In contrast to the triple portrait paintings by Lotto and van Dyck, Vignali's *Three Head Studies* differ in two important aspects: firstly, they are painted on separate sheets of paper and secondly, the eye level and viewpoint from the viewer's perspective vary, making it therefore unlikely that they were used as a preparatory model for a sculptor.[17] It also remains highly speculative whether Vignali ever saw the Lotto painting in the Gonzaga collection in Mantua as a source of inspiration, even if he did travel in Italy.[18]

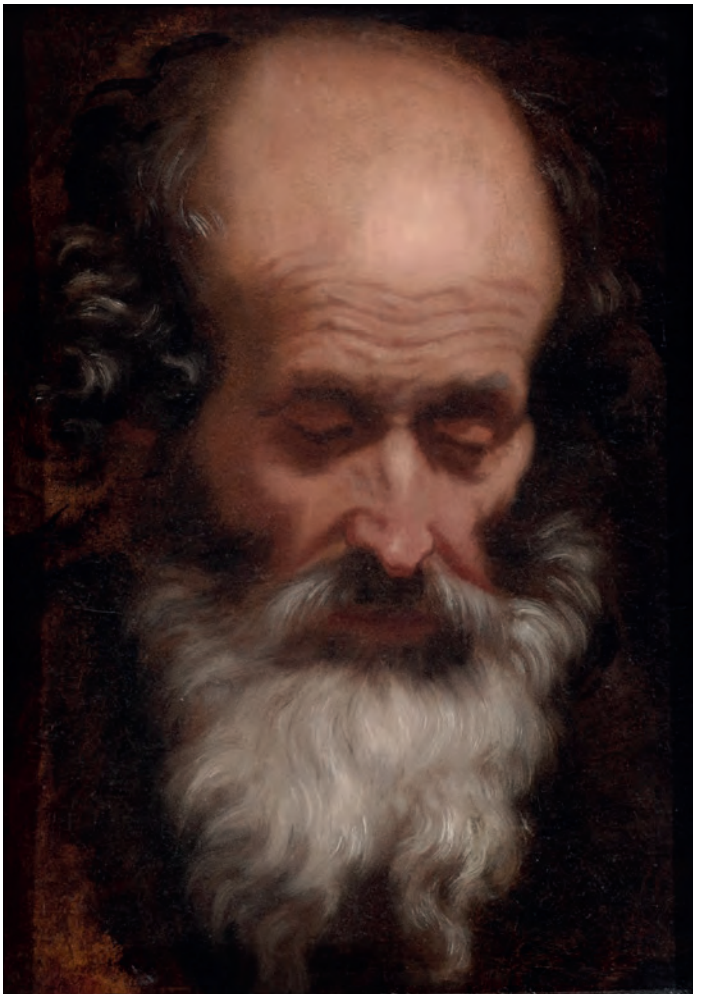
This leaves the more utilitarian function as the most plausible prime driver for the artist's motivation, i.e. to produce sketches as a preparatory means to or reference for future painterly projects. The panel support for preservation of the sheets could reinforce this argument, but it is unclear at what stage the sketches were conserved that way. Nonetheless, keeping this rather economical and practical use in mind, it is indeed extraordinary that this set of oil sketches has survived for nearly four hundred years. Moreover, it is proof that they must have been possessions valued not only in his workshop during the artist's lifetime, but also treasured by the subsequent owners.

Sonja Vilsmeier

NOTES

1. Francesca Baldassari, letter of 28 November 2010, endorsing the attribution of the Milwaukee painting to Jacopo Vignali; cited in Vilsmeier 2019, p. 3, n. 1.
2. The comparison was based on high-resolution photographs supplied to Sonja Vilsmeier by Clovis Whitfield Fine Art, London, and Tanya Paul, Milwaukee Art Museum (Vilsmeier 2019, p. 3, n. 2).
3. The proposed identification is based on a black-and-white photograph published by Atsushi Sakamoto, Kobe University, 2011, cited in Vilsmeier 2019, p. 3, n. 3: http://www.lib.kobe-u.ac.jp/repository/81010416.pdf (accessed 14 June 2019 in the original factsheet).
4. Contini et al. 1986, p. 183.
5. Lanzi 1847, vol. 1, p. 220.
6. Francesca Baldassari, letter of 28 November 2010; cited in Vilsmeier 2019, p. 4, n. 6.
7. Francesca Baldassari, email to Sonja Vilsmeier, 7 June 2019, based on photographs; quoted in Vilsmeier 2019, p. 4, n. 7. Original text: "Le teste sono a mio parere di Jacopo Vignali. Il modo intenerito di rendere i lineamenti e le sfumature dei riccioli dei capelli rientrano perfettamente nello stile di Vignali che, com'è noto, si formò alla scuola di Rosselli e ne fu fortemente influenzato. La testa più rosselliana è quella di profilo, ma è dipinta nello stesso modo delle altre e quindi anche questa è di Vignali."
8. Lanzi 1847, vol. 1, p. 220.
9. Vignali's possible travels in Italy and Rome in 1617-1619 remain unconfirmed: Contini et al. 1986, p. 184.
10. Baldassari 2012, pp. 48-51, cat. 4, ill. p. 49. Baldassari relates the tendency towards introspection to the example of Cristofano Allori.
11. The comparison is based on the illustration in Baldassari 2012, p. 49, cat. 4.
12. Francesca Baldassari, email to Sonja Vilsmeier, 7 June 2019; cited in Vilsmeier 2019, p. 4, n. 12. The factsheet accordingly suggests a possible later date for the Milwaukee painting, which the museum currently dates c. 1625.
13. Grabski 1981, pp. 385-387.
14. Vertova 1981, pp. 401-414; for an English summary, see Dal Pozzolo and Falomir 2018, pp. 292-294, cat. 32.
15. Royal Collection Trust, "Charles I (1600-1649)," online collection catalogue, RCIN 404420, https://www.rct.uk/collection/404420/charles-i-1600-1649 (accessed 12 June 2019 in the original factsheet).
16. Humfrey 1998, pp. 175-177, cat. 33.
17. The studies are on separate sheets; Vilsmeier 2019, p. 5, n. 17, also discusses their dimensions in relation to historical paper formats.
18. Contini et al. 1986, p. 184.









Pier Francesco Mola

Coldrerio 1612 – Rome 1666

22.

Head of an Old Man Looking Down

Oil on laid paper, laid down on canvas
42.5 × 31 cm
(16 ¾ × 12 ⅕ in.)

Provenance

Nagel Auctions, Stuttgart, 9 – 10 October 2013, as Italian School, seventeenth century, Portrait of a Prophet; private collection.

Literature

Unpublished.

Recently rediscovered, this remarkable *Head of an Old Man Looking Down* is attributed here to Pier Francesco Mola, one of the most distinctive painters active in seventeenth-century Rome. Born at Coldrerio in 1612, Mola worked chiefly in Rome, while periods spent in northern Italy contributed to the formation of a highly personal style in which Roman classicism, Venetian colour, Emilian naturalism, and an increasingly free handling of paint were brought into close relation.[1] He was elected to the Accademia di San Luca in 1655 and served as its *Principe* in 1662-1663.

The present work belongs naturally within Mola's production of *teste di carattere*, one of the most distinctive strands of his mature practice. Rather than pointing to a single prototype, a group of related heads helps define the context in which it should be understood. The two *Heads of Old Men* in the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, dated c. 1650-1660 and recorded as originals by Mola in the Fabio Rosa bequest of 1753, share the same broad, material handling, particularly in the broken description of beard and hair and in the way the face emerges from a dark ground. The *Portrait of a Bearded Man, Possibly the Artist's Father*, now in a private collection, offers a further comparison in the transformation of an aged physiognomy into an exercise in expressive character (fig. 1).[2] Closest in attitude, however, is *An Old Man by a Brazier* at Burghley House (fig. 2), where the head is similarly inclined downwards and the features are partly absorbed by shadow. Although the Burghley painting is larger and has been interpreted as an allegory of winter or old age, its combination of bowed pose, strongly modelled brow, and freely painted beard provides a particularly telling parallel.



Fig. 1. Pier Francesco Mola, *Portrait of a Bearded Man, Possibly the Artist's Father,* c. 1660-1665, oil on canvas, 62.2 × 47.6 cm. Private collection.



Fig. 2. Pier Francesco Mola, *An Old Man by a Brazier*, oil on canvas, 95 × 76 cm, Stamford, Burghley House, ref. PIC318.

A further, particularly compelling comparison is provided by the *Philosopher Reading* (fig. 3), which shares the present work's interest in the unusual inclination of the head, as well as closely comparable handling of the facial features and beard.[3]

These comparisons also reflect a broader aspect of Mola's practice. Physiognomic observation could become an autonomous field of invention, and he repeatedly returned to related figures and subjects, varying pose, expression, and handling rather than reproducing them mechanically. Agnes Czobor stressed precisely this capacity for continual reinvention in her discussion of the numerous variants and preparatory studies associated with Mola's late works, showing how the same theme could be reconsidered without becoming a mechanical repetition.[4]

One feature nevertheless gives the present head a particularly enigmatic character: the sitter's eyes cannot be distinguished with certainty. This may simply result from the downward inclination of the head and from Mola's decision to subordinate the eyes to the shadowed structure of the face. A more speculative possibility, which must remain hypothetical, is that the figure was intended as blind. If so, the work might move beyond the category of the *testa di carattere* towards the representation of an ancient poet or philosopher – most obviously Homer – or towards an allegorical personification. This possibility is especially suggestive in the context of Mola's repeated treatment of Homer during his later career. The celebrated *Homer* in the Galleria Corsini, Rome, dated to about

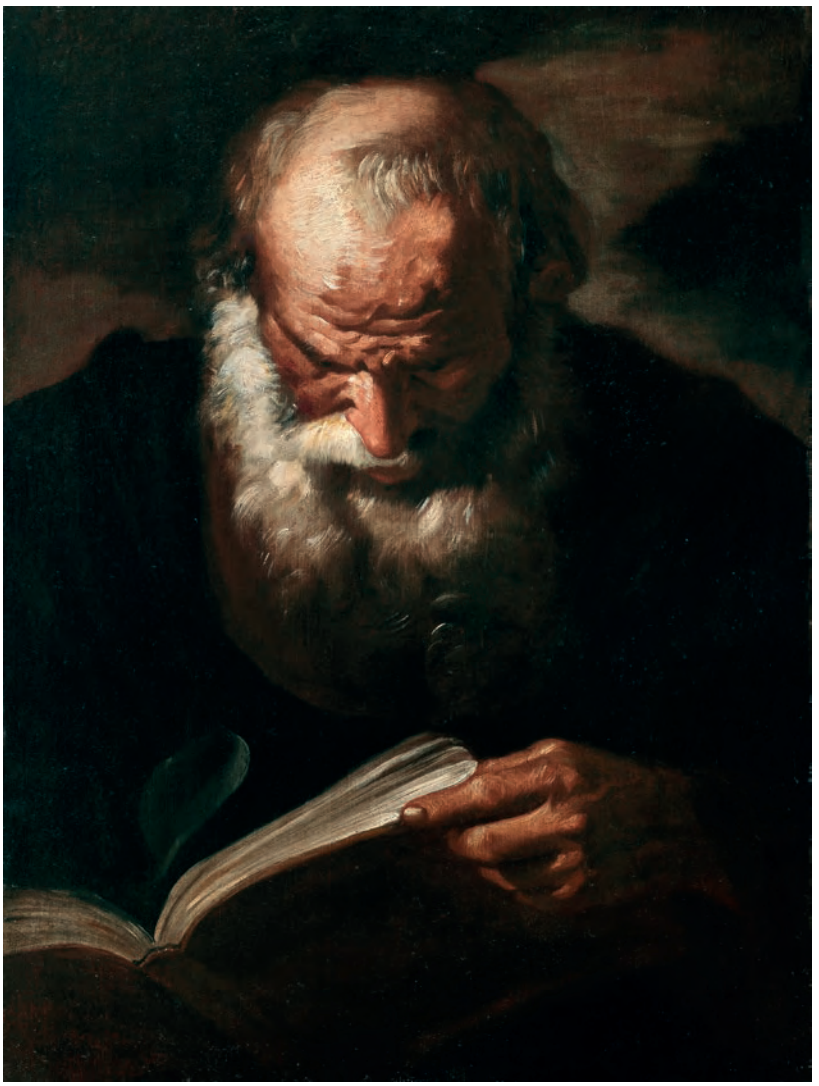


Fig. 3. Pier Francesco Mola, *Philosopher reading*, oil on canvas.

1660-1666, similarly transforms blindness and old age into vehicles of inward concentration and psychological intensity.

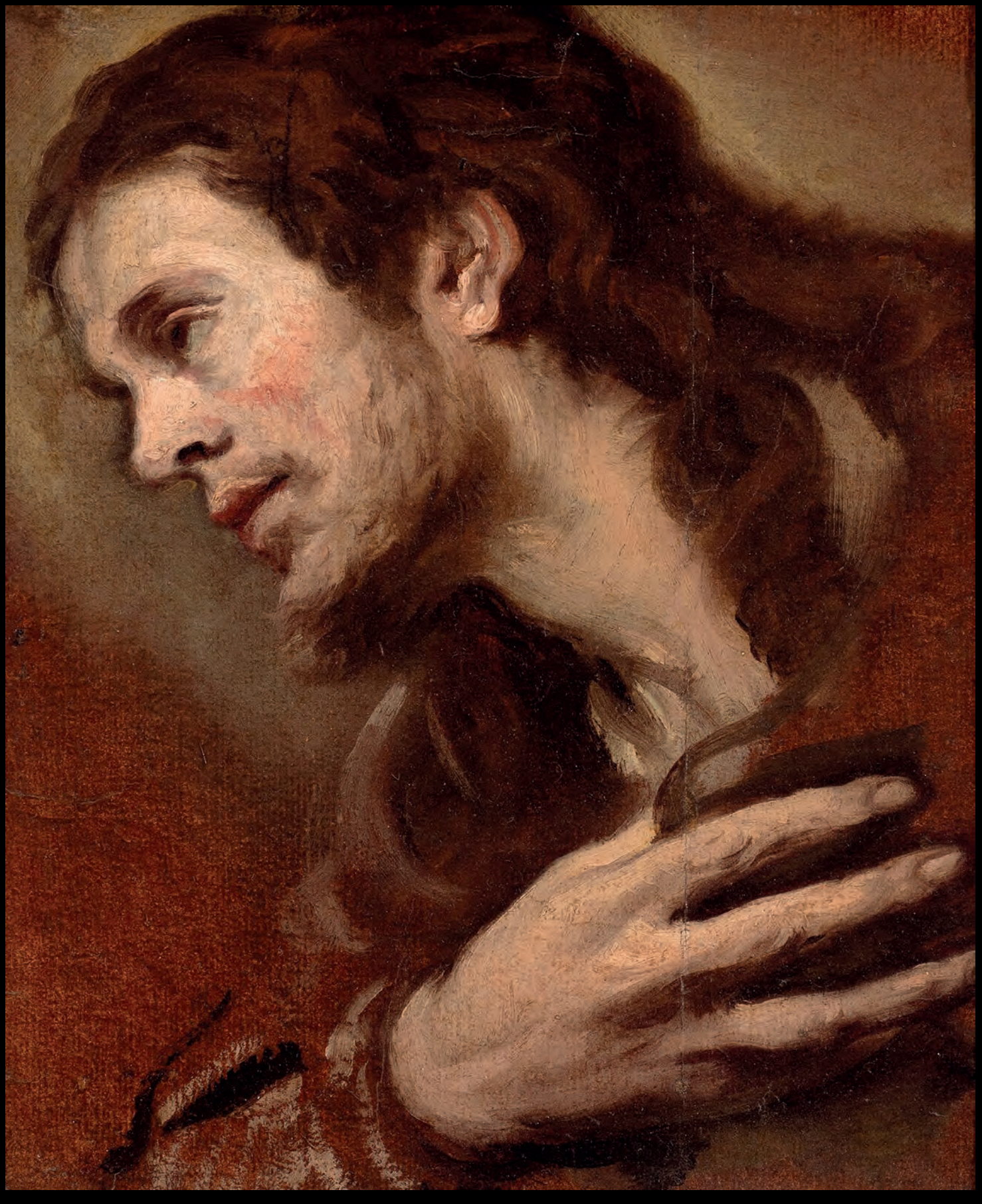
The support provides a further point of interest. Oil on paper is less common in Mola's surviving oeuvre than oil on canvas, but its use by the artist is securely documented. The *Coastal Landscape with Tower* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 2009.400.88, dated about 1651-1652, is executed in oil over red chalk on paper, demonstrating Mola's familiarity with paper as a support for highly pictorial experimentation.[5]

Luca Baroni

NOTES

1. Kahn-Rossi 1989; Petrucci 2012.
2. Petrucci 2012, p. 261, cat. A29.
3. Petrucci 2012, pp. 275-276, cat. A25. We are grateful to Arch. Francesco Petrucci for suggesting this comparison for the work discussed here.
4. Czobor 1968, pp. 565-571.
5. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 2009.400.88. See also a Head of an Old Man, sold at Christie's in 2013 as Circle of Pier Francesco Mola, likewise executed in oil on paper laid down on canvas, suggesting the presence of this combination of medium and subject within Mola's immediate artistic orbit (Christie's, Old Master Paintings Part II, New York, 31 January 2013, lot 238).





Bernardo Strozzi

(Genoa 1582 – 1644 Venice)

23.

Bust-length Study for a Saint Matthew

Oil on paper. Laid down on canvas
25 × 20.9 cm
(9 ⅞ × 8 ¼ in.)

Provenance
With Colnaghi, London, by 2001;
Private collection.

Literature
Colnaghi 2001, no. 19
(as Genoese School).

Trained in Genoa with Cesare Corte and Pietro Sorri, Strozzi entered the Capuchin community of San Barnaba towards the end of the sixteenth century, leaving the convent in 1610. His Genoese career absorbed successive lessons from Barocci and the Lombard painters, from Caravaggesque naturalism and, decisively, from the Flemish painters (Rubens and Van Dyck) whose works were readily accessible in the city. After moving to Venice around 1630-1631, his handling became increasingly responsive to the Venetian tradition of colour, while his own vigorous painterly language proved influential on the development of seventeenth-century Venetian painting.[1]

Particularly vigorous and expressive, the present oil sketch had already been attributed to the circle of Bernardo Strozzi when it was published in the catalogue accompanying Colnaghi's 2001-2002 winter exhibition, *Master Drawings*.[2] On that occasion, however, the work was presented as a study for one of the shepherds gazing upon the Christ Child in an unidentified *Adoration*. Here, it is instead considered to relate to *The Calling of Saint Matthew* (oil on canvas, 61 × 103 cm, fig. 1), now in a private collection and dated to 1616-1617 by Camillo Manzitti in his 2013 monograph on the painter.[3] The 2001 catalogue already recognised characteristics closely associated with Strozzi, particularly in the painterly treatment of the hand and the markedly vivacious handling of the brush. Nevertheless, likely owing to the absence at the time of a sufficiently persuasive parallel within Strozzi's established painted oeuvre, the possibility of an attribution to one of his contemporaries or followers was also retained. It is worth noting, however, that when the sketch was published by Colnaghi, the



Fig. 1. Bernardo Strozzi, *The Calling of Saint Matthew*, 1616-1617, oil on canvas, 61 × 103 cm. Private collection.

aforementioned *Calling of Saint Matthew* was itself erroneously attributed to Gioacchino Assereto, thereby obscuring what now appears to be a compelling point of comparison.

Although comparatively few such works survive, preparatory oil sketches formed an established part of Strozzi's working practice. Mary Newcome devoted a study specifically to his drawings and *bozzetti* in 1993, while Gabriele Finaldi and Michael Kitson subsequently observed that the painter appears to have employed preparatory oil sketches with some frequency, often in monochrome and, on occasion, on paper.[4]

A securely documented example is *Horatius Cocles on the Sublician Bridge* (oil on paper laid on canvas, 24 × 36 cm), now at the Ashmolean Museum and formerly in the Denis Mahon collection, which served as a *bozzetto* for the fresco decorating the ceiling of a room in the Villa Centurione-Carpaneto at Genoa-Sampierdarena.[5] Another portrait study by the *Genovese*, this time depicting a young woman wearing a pearl earring (oil on paper, 23 × 18.2 cm), appeared at Sotheby's, New York, on 29 January 2014.[6]

The facial type and physiognomy of the present work find close parallels in a number of Strozzi's strongly characterised male profiles, particularly his figures with long, swept-back hair and a small pointed beard. Comparable types recur in the *Sermon of Saint John the Baptist* in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, in *Christ and the Samaritan Woman* in the Bob Jones University Collection, Greenville – with its preparatory study *in trois crayons*



Fig. 2. Bernardo Strozzi, *Head of Christ*, black, red and white chalk on light brown paper, 39.6 × 26.2 cm, New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, inv. 1973.1.



Fig. 3. Bernardo Strozzi, *Saint Roch*, oil on canvas, 65 × 57 cm. Bergamo, Accademia Carrara, inv. 431 (900).

now at the Morgan Library (fig. 2) – and in the figure of *Saint Roch* at the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo (fig. 3). In each, Strozzi exploits the emphatic projection of the brow and nose, the deeply modelled eye socket and the vigorous mass of hair to create a similarly forceful profile. The warm flush of red across the cheek is likewise characteristic of Strozzi's handling of flesh. As in the present study, the raised hand serves as a counterpoint to the illuminated face, both emerging against a dark background.

Federico Bonezzi

NOTES

1. Algeri 1995, pp. 21-38; Galassi 1995, pp. 39-55; Fantelli 1995, pp. 70-83.
2. Colnaghi 2001, no. 19, as 'Genoese School'.
3. Manzitti 2013, p. 89, no. 37, reproduced in black and white.
4. Newcome 1993, pp. 14-24; Finaldi and Kitson 1997, pp. 164-165.
5. Gavazza et al. 1995, pp. 160-161, no. 32, reproduced in colour.
6. Sotheby's 2014, lot 44, *Portrait of a Young Woman with a Pearl Earring*, oil on paper laid down on canvas, 23 × 18.2 cm.





Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, called Il Grechetto

Genoa 1609 – Mantua 1664

The Raising of Lazarus

24.

Brush drawing in red and brown oil paint, heightened with blue and white, on laid paper, laid down on canvas and mounted on paper.
54.5 × 39 cm
(21 ½ × 15 ⅜ in.)
Bears on the verso the collector's mark of Baron Adalbert von Lanna (Lugt L. 2773) and the numbers *59* and *85*.

Provenance

Consul Joseph Smith (1674-1770), Venice;
Adalbert Freiherr von Lanna (1836-1909), Prague (Lugt 2773);
Sale, Rudolph Lepke, Berlin, *Collection of Baron Adalbert von Lanna, Prague* (vol. IV), 22 May 1911, lot 59 (as *Luca Giordano*);
Austrian private collection;
Sale, Dorotheum, Vienna, 19 November 2021, lot 143 (as *Follower of Castiglione*);
Private collection, France.

Literature

Unpublished.

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione is one of the most innovative and technically brilliant draughtsmen of his time, a claim that is amply demonstrated through this drawing. He often made large compositions by working spontaneously on the paper, mixing different media to create an almost rough appearance that greatly enlivens the scene.

This newly rediscovered painting on paper of *The Raising of Lazarus* is a compelling and powerful addition to Castiglione's corpus. Formerly in the collection of Consul Joseph Smith, the present work is a superb example of Castiglione's mature style. It demonstrates not only the impact of artists whose works he encountered in Rome, such as Rubens and Poussin, but also the audacious technical innovations he initiated, painting fluently with pigment and oil on paper.

The subject is the Biblical miracle in which Jesus revives Lazarus of Bethany, who has been dead and buried for four days. Castiglione's method skilfully complements his conception of the remarkable event. The dramatic orchestration of the scene, the fluid yet forcefully abbreviated construction of the figures, the expressively deformed physiognomies and the confident shorthand of the background characters are entirely characteristic of Castiglione's mature language. Above all, the extraordinary variety, rhythm and organization of the brushwork place the sheet, conceived as an autonomous work, firmly alongside his most ambitious oil drawings on paper, such as *God the Father Appearing to Jacob* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, fig. 1) and *The Pagan Sacrifice* (Art Institute of Chicago, fig. 2).



Fig. 1. Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, *God the Father Appearing to Jacob*, c. 1635-1645, brush with coloured oil paint and touches of brown ink on paper partly saturated with oil, 38.6 × 52.3 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 65.176.

Fig. 2. Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, *A Pagan Sacrifice*, c. 1645-1650, oil paint on tan laid paper, laid down on cream wove paper, 57.6 × 42.5 cm. Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago.

Fig. 3. Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, *The Raising of Lazarus*, 1645-1650, etching, 22 × 31.4 cm (sheet). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 17.50.17-52.





Castiglione returned repeatedly to the Raising of Lazarus, treating the subject in several variants; among them is the etching of 1645-1650 (fig. 3), in which Christ adopts a similar pose to that seen in the present drawing. Four drawings in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle, by Castiglione or his immediate milieu, further reiterate the theme (see RCIN 903834, 904028, 903833, 903832).

Long obscured by an early misattribution to Luca Giordano and by the complexity of Castiglione's artistic milieu, crowded with imitators, followers and later interpreters, this work now re-emerges as a fully autograph creation by Giovanni Benedetto himself. Its scale, finish and compositional ambition underscore the central role of drawing in Castiglione's creative process, not as a preparatory exercise but as a fully resolved work of art.

The present sketch was copied by Jean-Honoré Fragonard in a drawing which he executed presumably during his sojourn in Venice, when the sketch was still in the possession of Consul Joseph Smith. Fragonard's drawing is preserved in the "Norton Simon Foundation" (F.1970.03.095.D, fig. 4) and shows the composition of the present study and the sketch of another figure. The sheet is inscribed "Benedetto G. Castiglione, Col. De Smith. Venise".

Castiglione, who was born in Genoa, travelled extensively to Rome, Naples, Parma, Florence and Mantua among other cities. Early biographers record that his masters were Anthony van Dyck, Giovanni Andrea de Ferrari, Giovanni Battista Paggi and

Sinibaldo Scorza.[1] None of his paintings can be dated before the mid-1640s, but Ann Percy has argued that the artist started producing his trademark drawings, drawn with the brush and oil paint, from the 1630s.[2]

These works are greatly indebted to drawings and oil sketches by Van Dyck and Rubens; the latter visited Genoa several times between 1606-1608. By the 1650s Castiglione had fully developed the highly original drawing technique for which he is now so well-known.

We are grateful to Jonathan Bober for confirming the authorship of the present drawing. We also thank Catherine Loisel and Anna Orlando, both of whom expressed positive opinions regarding the attribution.

Federico Bonezzi



Fig. 4. Jean-Honoré Fragonard, Study after Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, *Two Studies of the Resurrection of Lazarus (from the Collection of Consul Smith)*, 1760-1761, black chalk on paper, Pasadena, The Norton Simon Foundation, inv. F.1970.03.095.D.

NOTES

1. Percy 1971, p. 21.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 24.





Jan Boeckhorst

Münster c. 1604 – 1668 Antwerp

25.

Portrait Sketch of a Young Boy

Oil on paper (?),
laid down on canvas
45 × 30 cm
(17 ¾ × 11 ¾ in.)

Literature
Unpublished.

Johann Boeckhorst occupies a distinctive place within the generation of painters shaped by the great Antwerp masters of the seventeenth century. Born in Germany, he moved to Antwerp around 1626 and developed within the artistic orbit of Jacob Jordaens, Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck.[1] Although documentary evidence for formal study under Rubens remains uncertain, Boeckhorst's close professional association with him is well established. By the early 1630s he had become a master in the Antwerp Guild of Saint Luke, and he subsequently assisted Rubens with major decorative projects, including the *Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi* of 1635 and the mythological cycle commissioned by Philip IV for the Torre de la Parada.[2]

Boeckhorst travelled in Italy during the later 1630s, returning to Rome in 1639, and the experience broadened an already versatile practice encompassing history painting, allegory, portraiture, devotional subjects and designs for tapestries and prints. Collaboration remained central to his career. He contributed figures to works by artists such as Frans Snyders, who in turn supplied still-life elements for Boeckhorst's compositions, while documentary and stylistic evidence likewise points to close engagement with Van Dyck's art. Following Rubens's death in 1640, Boeckhorst is known to have completed or retouched works left unfinished in the master's studio.[3] His early figure types and compositions remain closely indebted to Rubens's late style, while from around 1650 a more pronounced Van Dyckian elegance enters his work. In the later decades of his career, Boeckhorst produced numerous altarpieces and large-scale religious compositions for churches and monasteries

beyond Antwerp, alongside Old Testament and mythological subjects for private patrons.[4]

The present sketch is related to Boeckhorst's altarpiece *The Triumph of the Eucharist* in the Church of Saint Michael, Ghent, and more specifically appears to be a study for the boy at the lower left (fig. 1). Although in the finished altarpiece the boy's expression is less markedly pouting, his facial features, the angle of his head, his somewhat unruly hair and even the pattern of his jacket correspond closely to the present sketch. The brisk, confident handling evident in the present work may also be compared with Boeckhorst's sketch of a woman in profile in the Inchbald Collection, London; see M. Galen, *Johann Boeckhorst. Gemälde und Zeichnungen* (Hamburg, 2012), cat. no. Z13. Although the sketch has not been examined under laboratory conditions, it appears to have been extended along the left, right and upper edges, having probably been cut down at least on the right-hand side, around the boy's hair.

We are grateful to Dr Nico van Hout for first proposing the attribution of this vibrant sketch to Jan Boeckhorst, and to Prof. Hans Vlieghe and Dr Katlijne van der Stighelen for independently confirming the attribution.

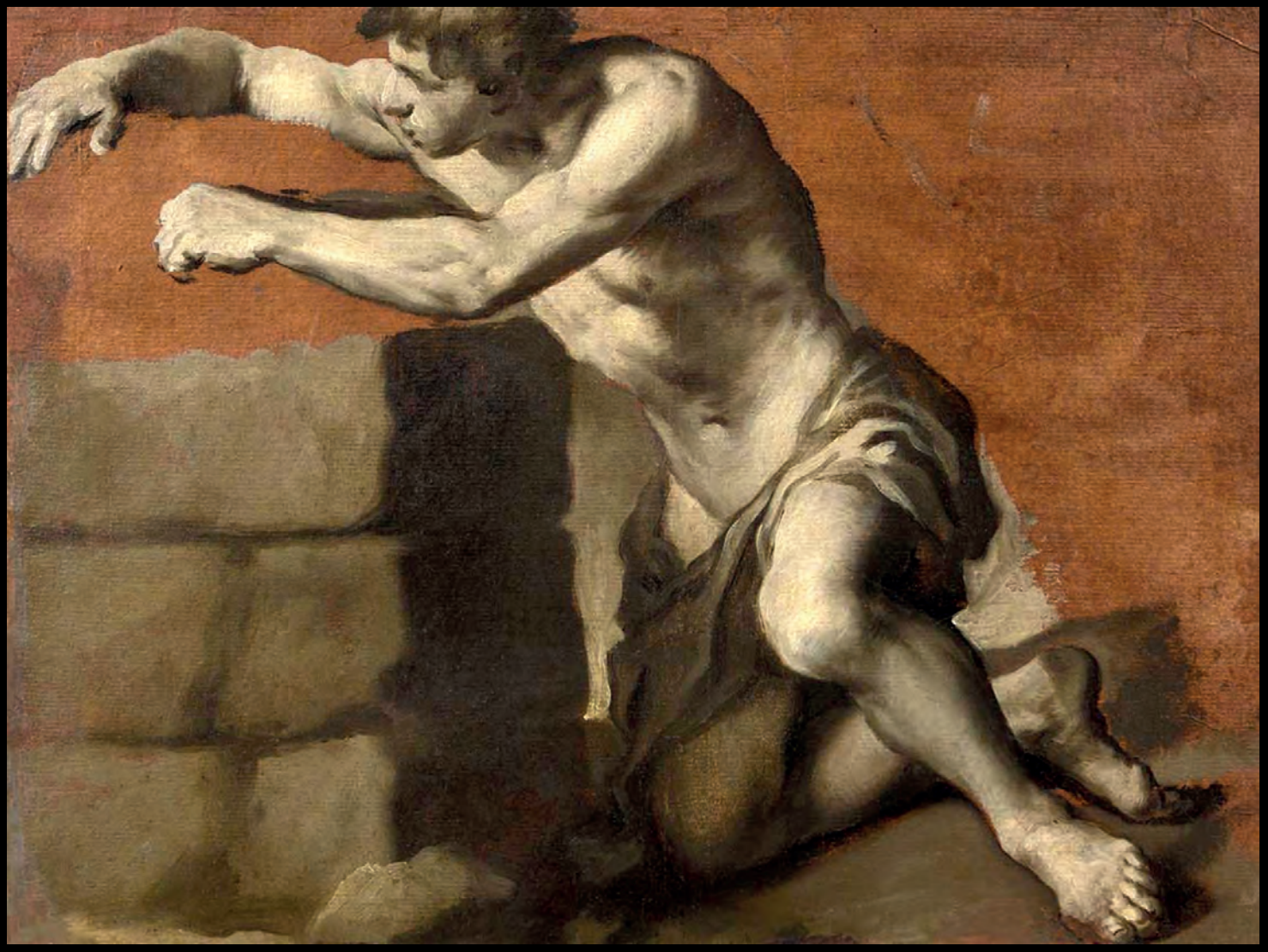


Fig. 1. Jan Boeckhorst, *The Triumph of the Eucharist*, oil on canvas, Ghent, Church of Saint Michael.

NOTES

1. Lahrkamp 1990, pp. 13-15.
2. Vlieghe 1990, pp. 81-83.
3. Vlieghe 1990, pp. 81-83.
4. Vlieghe 1998, pp. 95-97.





Giovanni Maria Viani

Bologna 1636 – Pistoia (?) 1700

26.

Study of a Kneeling Figure

Oil on paper
29.2 × 39.4 cm
(11 ½ × 15 ½ in.)

Literature
Unpublished.

A pupil of Flaminio Torre, Giovanni Maria Viani inherited from his master a classical manner deeply indebted to Guido Reni, under whom Torre himself had trained. During the 1670s, Viani's work still reveals an artist poised between the ideal classicism of Carlo Cignani and Marcantonio Franceschini (see, for example, *Diana and Endymion*, Turin, Accademia Albertina) and the expressive pathos of Flaminio Torre. At the same time, however, he developed a sense of monumentality and naturalism that finds a worthy precedent in the Carracci's engagement with observed reality, as may be seen in his *Saint Francis* in the church of San Rocco in Bologna. By this date Viani was already a painter of considerable reputation in Bologna, where he received numerous important ecclesiastical commissions, including the frescoes in the lunettes of the Portico dei Servi, executed in collaboration with Cignani. His work at San Michele in Bosco (1685-1693), together with the Ozzano altarpiece of around 1690, regarded as his masterpiece, secured his place within late seventeenth-century Bolognese painting and anticipated the style of his son, Domenico Maria Viani.

The practice of studying the male nude developed in Bologna with the Carracci and the establishment of their academy. In executing the present study of a nude in oil on paper, Viani placed himself firmly within this tradition. No painted figure in Viani's surviving oeuvre can be directly connected with the present nude study, although this is not in itself surprising, since such life studies were primarily exercises undertaken as part of the artist's regular practice.



Fig. 1. Giovanni Francesco Guidalotti, after Giovanni Maria Viani, *The Repentant Saint Peter*, c. 1688-1711, engraving on paper, 27.9 × 18.5 cm.

The present study may nevertheless have been preparatory for a painting depicting a sacrifice, such as *The Sacrifice of Noah*. Here one finds Viani's characteristic taste for powerful and somewhat extravagant anatomies, one of the distinctive features of his art. In this respect, the present study may be compared with the print of *The Repentance of Saint Peter* by Giovanni Francesco Guidalotti after Giovanni Maria Viani (fig. 1), as well as with the painting of *David with the Head of Goliath* in a private collection.

We are grateful to Professor Daniele Benati, who has kindly confirmed the attribution of the present work and provided valuable information for the preparation of this catalogue entry.





Anton Raphael Mengs

Aussig 1728 – 1779 Rome

27.

Study for the Head of Mary Magdalene

c. 1771

Oil on paper, laid down on board.
Image: 38.6 × 30.5 cm
(15 ⅕ × 12 in.)
Board: 42.2 × 33.7 cm
(16 ⅝ × 13 ¼ in.)

Provenance

The artist's son-in-law, Manuel Salvador Carmona, Madrid; Acquired from him by Tomás de Veri y Togores, Palma de Mallorca, Mallorca; The Marqués de Ariany y de la Cenia, Mallorca; Thence by descent to the Cotoner collection, Marratxí, Mallorca, by 1920.

Literature

Ponz 1788, vol. 14, p. 53, no. 11; Ariany y de la Cenia and Ayerbe 1920, pl. XVI; Honisch 1965, p. 131, no. 304, and p. 153, no. 443; Roettgen 1993, p. 108, under no. 30; Roettgen 1999, p. 110, under no. 66, and p. 111, no. 67.

Born in Bohemia, Anton Raphael Mengs was the son and pupil of the Danish painter Ismael Mengs, the court painter at Dresden. He grew up there, together with his two sisters (who were also artists), before moving with the rest of his family to Rome in 1741, when he was aged about thirteen. Although he returned occasionally to Dresden, to work at the Saxon court, he was to spend most of the rest of his life in Italy, converting to Catholicism and becoming a leading figure in the artistic community in Rome. Mengs received several important portrait commissions, including many from British travellers to Italy, and also painted a number of significant public works. Alongside Anton von Maron, he painted the ceiling fresco on the nave of the church of Sant'Eusebio between 1757 and 1758, while his best-known work is the *Parnassus* ceiling in the Villa Albani, completed in 1761.

That same year he travelled to Madrid, where he had been appointed *pintor de cámara* to the Spanish King Charles III, and he remained in Spain for most of the next decade. Mengs was back in Rome by 1771 and the following year was elected *principe* of the Accademia di San Luca. After painting an altarpiece for Saint Peter's and decorating the Stanza dei Papiri in the Vatican Library in 1772 for Pope Clement XIV, he returned to Madrid in 1774. Two years later, on the grounds of poor health, the artist left the Spanish court for good and retired to Italy. Mengs was also an important writer and theorist on art, as well as an occasional art dealer, and by the time of his death was arguably the most celebrated painter in Europe. As the eighteenth-century Italian writer and antiquarian G. L.

Bianconi wrote of the artist, a year after his death, 'There has never been a painter in all the world more sought after by rulers than Mengs; it seemed that they could not talk to him without losing their hearts to him, and conferring commissions.[1]'

* * *

This splendid oil sketch on paper is a study for the head of the Magdalene in one of Mengs's most significant late works; the large panel painting *Noli me tangere* of 1771, in the collection of All Souls College in Oxford and since 2022 on loan to Campion Hall, Oxford.[2] Intended for their chapel, the altarpiece was commissioned from Mengs in 1769 by All Souls College, for the sum of 600 Roman scudi (approximately £315), through the auspices of the British Ambassador in Madrid. As recorded in the College records, on 7 April 1769 it was decided 'that a Picture, representing the appearance of our Saviour to Mary in the Garden after his resurrection, be procured from the Hands of Mengs, a celebrated Painter now at Madrid, to be put up over the Altar in the Chapel.'[3] The artist left Spain for Italy not long afterwards, however, and the painting was only begun after he had arrived back in Rome in the spring of 1771.

Mengs worked on the large panel in a rented studio at the Villa Medici, where it was exhibited after its completion in September 1771, having earlier been shown to the Pope. As an English correspondent in Rome wrote, in a letter to the Warden of All Souls College, 'The Picture is finish'd and I really think among the very best that ever I saw of his painting. In the Christ there is a great dignity and meekness, in the Magdalena the remains of Grief with a mixture of surprize and joy, is wonderfully express'd. The disposition of the Figures is very agreeable, the colouring strong and clear, but very harmonious and true… Those who have seen it admired it much.'[4] Similarly, a modern scholar has noted that 'The painting is a very revealing example of Mengs's eclectic approach, with borrowings from classical antiquity (the figure of Christ is deeply indebted to the Apollo Belvedere), and – in the loose and luminous landscape and in the general sweetness of expression – to Titian and Correggio.'[5]

Although Mengs completed the actual painting of the altarpiece in around six weeks, he must have produced a number of preparatory studies and sketches for the picture beforehand. Preliminary chalk drawings for the figure and head of the Magdalene in the *Noli me tangere* altarpiece are today in the Prado in Madrid,[6] the Albertina in Vienna[7] and in a private collection in Malta.[8] A similar oil sketch of this type, preparatory for the head of Christ in the painting, is in the Library at All Souls College in Oxford.[9] As the Mengs scholar Steffi Roettgen has described that oil sketch, in terms equally applicable to this newly rediscovered study for the head of the Magdalene in the same painting, 'The fact that so carefully executed a head study was made to the same size as the picture throws a revealing light on the artist's method of working. Mengs must have made an incredible number of drawings and oil studies for all his larger compositions...The study of the head differs only slightly from the finished painting. However, in expression, brushwork and liveliness it is superior.'[10]

The head of the Magdalene in the All Souls *Noli me tangere* was much admired by some contemporary writers. As one young German scholar, on a visit to All Souls College in 1782, noted, 'the chapel is particularly beautiful…over the altar here [is] a fine painting of Mengs…The painting represented Mary Magdalene when she first suddenly sees Jesus standing before her, and falls at His feet. And in her countenance pain, joy, grief, in short almost all of the strongest of our passions, are expressed in so masterly a manner, that no man of true taste was ever tired of contemplating it; the longer it is looked at the more it is admired.'[11]

The first owner of this oil sketch was Mengs's son-in-law, the Spanish engraver Manuel Salvador Carmona (1734-1820), who married the painter's daughter Anna Maria in 1778.





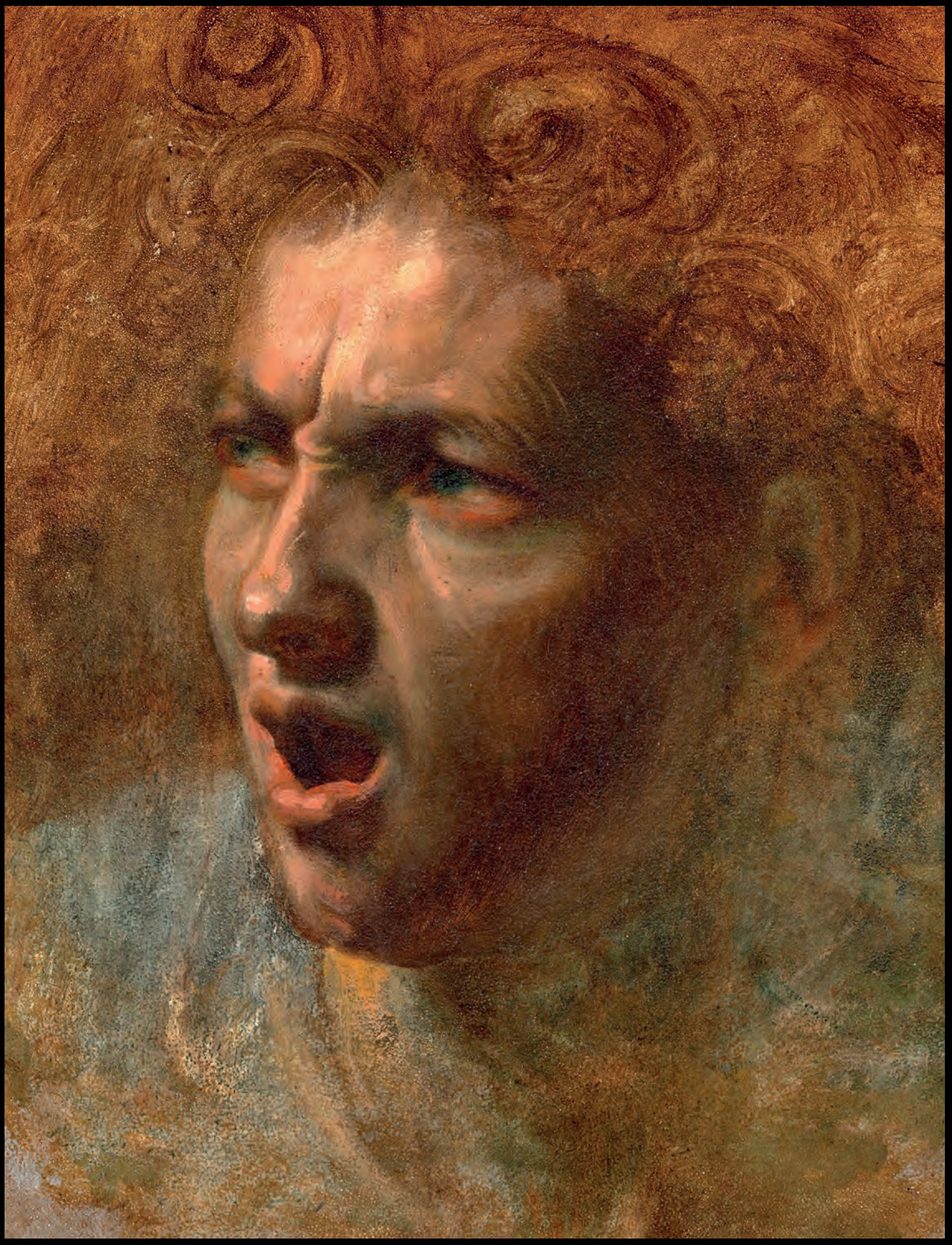
Fig. 1. Anton Raphael Mengs, *Noli me tangere*, 1771, oil on panel, 300 × 180 cm, All Souls College, Oxford (on loan to Campion Hall). Comparison with the *Head of Mary Magdalene*, reproduced at a 1:1 scale.

This sketch is noted as being in Carmona's collection in Madrid some ten years later, when it is mentioned by the eighteenth-century Spanish painter Antonio Ponz in his magisterial book *Viage de España, en que se da noticia de las cosas mas apreciables, y dignas de saberse, que hay en ella* (*Voyage Around Spain, In Which There is News of the Most Significant and Worthwhile Things in the Country*), published in eighteen volumes between 1772 and 1794. The *Viage de España* was based on a trip Ponz made throughout Spain in 1771, during which he recorded all the notable works of art he saw. The present sheet is noted in the volume devoted to the region of Catalonia: 'Don Manuel Salvador Carmona, Engraver of the Privy Chamber of His Majesty and son-in-law of Don Antonio Mengs, has different works of his. The paintings are a profile portrait of himself, a Head of the Magdalen... and some other small-scale paintings: different drawings on white and blue paper...'.[12]

NOTES

1. Bianconi 1780, p. 61; quoted in Breazeale and Fröhlich-Schauseil 2020, p. 50, under no. 4.
2. Former National Gallery loan no. L767; Sparrow 1960, p. 2, fig. 1; Roettgen 1993, p. 31, fig. 22; Roettgen 1999, pp. 105-111, no. 65, illustrated in colour pl. III. The dimensions of the painting are 300 × 180 cm.
3. Sparrow 1960, p. 4.
4. Letter from James Byres to the Rev. D. Price, 21 September 1771; quoted in Roettgen 1999, p. 106, no. 2.
5. Pelzel 1976, p. 415.
6. Roettgen 1999, pp. 108–109, no. 65 VZ 2, fig. 65 VZ 2.
7. Roettgen 1999, p. 109, no. 65 VZ 4 (not illustrated).
8. Roettgen 1999, p. 109, no. 65 VZ 3 (not illustrated).
9. Sparrow 1960, p. 8, fig. 6; Roettgen 1993, pp. 108-109, no. 30; Potts 1993, p. 576, fig. 48; Roettgen 1999, p. 110, no. 66, fig. 66.
10. Roettgen 1993, p. 108, under no. 30.
11. Moritz 1924, p. 155.
12. Don Manuel Salvador Carmona, Grabador de Cámara de S. M. y yerno de Don Antonio Mengs, tiene diferentes obras suyas. Las pintadas son un retrato de perfil del mismo, una Cabeza de la Magdalena…y algunos otros quadritos en pequeño: diferentes dibuxos en papel blanco y azul…'; Ponz 1788, vol. XIV, p. 53.





Italian or French Artist

Active in Italy, eighteenth century (?)

28.

Study of a Scowling Youth

Oil on paper
28.7 × 21.7 cm
(11 3/10 × 8 9/16 in.)

Provenance
Colnaghi, London, 1992.
Private collection.

Literature
Colnaghi 1992, no. 38, as Roman School, Late Eighteenth century.

The present oil sketch was first exhibited by Colnaghi in 1992, when it appeared in the catalogue *An Exhibition of Master Drawings* as *Study of a Scowling Youth*.[1] Its attribution was already recognised as problematic. Previously assigned to an anonymous nineteenth-century French artist, the work had subsequently been proposed as the work of an Italian painter of the seventeenth century. The catalogue itself remained cautious, observing that the white background and certain aspects of the handling suggested a later date, perhaps by an artist familiar with the work of Pompeo Batoni.

Such uncertainty is itself revealing. Works of this kind belong to one of the most intriguing areas in the history of the oil sketch, still requiring critical reassessment both as an artistic genre and as a form of autonomous pictorial experimentation. The present study resists precise attribution, despite – or perhaps partly because of – its exceptional quality. Its remarkably free handling combines stylistic features that can plausibly be read in several directions.

The breadth and immediacy of the brushwork have a distinctly French character, particularly in the vigorous modelling of the face and the abrupt transitions between light and shadow. Seen without knowledge of its earlier history, passages of this kind might recall the freedom of French painting around 1800, especially the youthful studies associated with the generation of Géricault. At the same time, however, the head is conceived in terms deeply informed by the Italian classical tradition. Particularly suggestive

are comparisons with two celebrated sixteenth-century precedents, both of which established enduring models for the study of the human face in states of extreme emotional tension. The first is Leonardo's studies for the warriors in the *Battle of Anghiari*, especially those for the screaming horseman from the celebrated central group in Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum, inv. 1775. The second, still more immediately evocative, is Michelangelo's famous *Damned Soul* in Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, inv. 601 E, which inspired Gian Lorenzo Bernini and generations of artists. These works constitute archetypal examples of the Renaissance *testa di carattere*, in which the representation of a cry, grimace, or violent contraction of the features becomes an autonomous field of artistic investigation. They may reasonably be regarded as part of the figurative culture on which the anonymous author of the present oil sketch ultimately drew.

Yet the comparison also brings into focus an important difference. Whereas the Leonardesque and Michelangelesque prototypes deliberately push physiognomy towards distortion and expressive extremity, the present painter gives his subject the features of a strikingly handsome young man. The study of an extreme facial expression is thus combined with that of an idealised *testa di carattere*: the contracted brow, open mouth, and tense musculature do not suppress the youth's beauty but instead heighten it. This conjunction of expressive violence and physical refinement is one of the most distinctive qualities of the work.

For the present, the most reasonable solution is therefore to place the work, albeit provisionally, in the eighteenth century and in an Italian context, while leaving open the possibility that its author was French or trained within a French artistic milieu. Such a dating would account for both the painting's strikingly modern handling and its evident familiarity with the language of the Old Masters. The hypothesis must remain tentative until the precise source – or perhaps the larger composition – for which this head was conceived can be identified. Until then, its unresolved status remains part of its fascination: an exceptionally accomplished study whose elusiveness demonstrates both the difficulty and the richness of this still insufficiently explored category of oil sketches. At the same time, its handling anticipates the more introspective and psychological investigations of character that would become central to Romantic art, while remaining rooted in the great sixteenth-century tradition of expressive head studies.

Luca Baroni

NOTES

1. Colnaghi 1992, no. 38.



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