

I Gianfrancesco Penni's Two Versions of *The Holy Family with Saint John and Saint Catherine*¹

I

When Raphael died, unexpectedly and prematurely, on 6 April 1520, he bequeathed his unfinished projects and his “business” to the Florentine Gianfrancesco Penni and the Roman Giulio Pippi, called Giulio Romano. Both had collaborated extensively with the master, but we are largely ignorant of details and Vasari is little help. No documentation concerning Penni survives from before Raphael’s death; for Giulio there is no more than a contract of 1519 concerning a building with which Raphael was not involved.²

It is only after April 1520 that Raphael’s heirs come into historical focus. Within two months Giulio was quarrelling with Giovanni da Udine over their respective shares of the decoration of Villa Madama, as we learn from a letter of Cardinal Giulio de’ Medici of 4 June 1520. In this matter Giulio’s co-heir Penni is not mentioned.³ Gianfrancesco’s name first appears, together with Giulio’s, in an art-dealing rather than an artistic context, the purchase of antique marbles from the estate of the dealer Ciampolini on 5 September 1520; Gianfrancesco is cited alone in the sale of “sete teste antiche” to Mantua on 5 April 1525.⁴ In addition, Gianfrancesco witnessed both the marriage of Giulio’s sister to the sculptor Lorenzetto on 23 February 1523 and Giulio’s property settlement with his widowed stepmother on 13 December 1525.⁵ Although they are not at first individually distinguished, the *giovane di Raffaello*, derided as the *semidei* by Sebastiano del Piombo, are referred to frequently in artistic documents of the early 1520s and clearly formed

¹ My warm thanks are due to the authors of the complementary articles on Gianfrancesco Penni’s two paintings in the *Journal*: Grażyna Bastek, Barbara Łydzba-Kopczyńska, Elżbieta Pilecka-Pietrusińska, Iwona Maria Stefańska and David Love as well as to Agnieszka Morawińska, Ewa and Zuzanna Ilnicka, and Paul Taylor for assistance of various kinds.

² Tommaso Vincidor – by whom no paintings have yet been identified – witnessed a legal document concerning Raphael on 10 January 1517 and no doubt was a close collaborator; although not one of Raphael’s heirs, he seems to have seen himself as their equal, referring to “li mei conpagi, cuè Zulio lo Jan Franciecho” in a letter sent to Leo X from Flanders on 20 July 1521; see John Shearman, *Raphael in Early Modern Sources*, vol. 1 (New Haven and London, 2003), pp. 700–01.

³ Daniela Ferrari, *Giulio Romano. Repertorio di fonti documentarie*, vol. 1 (Rome, 1992), pp. 6–7; Shearman, *Raphael in Early...*, op. cit., pp. 599–601.

⁴ Ferrari, op. cit., p. 83.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 31, 113.

a team.⁶ Equal payments were made to both – now named – after 1523 for completing two of Raphael's outstanding commissions – the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican Palace and the *Coronation of the Virgin* (*The Monteluce Coronation*) for the convent of Monteluce in Perugia.

Gianfrancesco and Giulio seem to have defended their inheritance, material and ideological, fiercely: according to Cellini, Rosso Fiorentino, shortly after arriving in Rome, so offended Raphael's followers by his critiques of their master that they threatened to kill him.⁷ But they could also be welcoming. When Cellini arrived in Rome shortly after the election of Clement VII, Penni, his fellow-Florentine, whom he describes as a good painter, introduced him to the Bishop of Salamanca, from whom he received his first Roman commissions: two candlesticks, and then a silver ewer whose design Penni provided; which confirms that Penni, like Raphael and Giulio, was involved in the applied arts.⁸

II

Although we have few hard facts about the early years of Giulio, by far the more important of the two in the eyes both of his contemporaries and of posterity, we do possess a little information about his family and social class, even if his birth date remains famously disputed – unfortunately Pietro Bembo's poetic reference to “Julio puero” as the author of a dazzling self-portrait cannot precisely be dated but the appellation suggests a *wunderkind*.⁹ Gianfrancesco is absent from contemporary verse and his birth date too is disputed, as is his parentage. In the documents of 5 September 1520 and 13 December 1525, Gianfrancesco was described –presumably he so described himself – as “Iohanni Francisci quondam Baptiste physici [...]”¹⁰ To contest such testimony might seem presumptuous (one would expect Gianfrancesco to know his own father) but Milanese threw doubt both on Penni's parentage and the birth date of 1488 by publishing an entry in a Florentine tax register of 1504 in which one Michele, a weaver, records his wife Caterina and sons Bartolommeo (aged 13), Gianfrancesco (8), Raffaello (6) and Piero (1), names that coincide in part with the family of our Gianfrancesco who had a brother named Bartolommeo and a sister named Caterina.¹¹ If this was Gianfrancesco's real family – and not a considerable coincidence – then he was born in 1496 as the son of an artisan.

Both possibilities have something to be said for them. A physician-father could explain Gianfrancesco's quite high educational level, inferred from the obscure subject-matter of

⁶ Within a month of Raphael's death they had offered to provide the mythological canvas commissioned by Alfonso d'Este. See Ferrari, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁷ Shearman, *Raphael in Early...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 616–17. Rosso lacked tact; he also offended Michelangelo to whom he apologized grovellingly.

⁸ The drawings in Chatsworth (169) and Haarlem (D9) of angels framing candelabras might be connected with the candlesticks. Cellini's seal of the *Assumption*, made after May 1527 for the newly created Cardinal Girolamo Gonzaga, was inspired by Penni's section of *The Monteluce Coronation*, as Sir John Pope-Hennessy pointed out. See John Pope-Hennessy, *Benvenuto Cellini* (London, 1985), pp. 44–45.

⁹ John Shearman, “Giulio Romano and Baldassare Castiglione,” in *Giulio Romano. Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Mantova, 1–5 October, 1989* (Mantua, 1991), pp. 293–94.

¹⁰ Ferrari, *op. cit.*, p. 11. On 13 December 1525 this is amplified to “magistro Iohanne Francisco quondam magistri Baptiste de Pennis phisici de Florentia” (*ibid.*, p. 113).

¹¹ *Le opere di Giorgio Vasari*, Gaetano Milanesi, ed., vol. 4 (Florence, 1906), p. 643; reference to a “Gianfrancesco di Michele, pittore” in a document drawn up Rome in 1521, also cited by Milanesi, might, conceivably, support the hypothesis of homonymity.

some of his drawings; a weaver-father what seems to have been Gianfrancesco's particular affinity for tapestry. In the first case we would have to acknowledge that there is no other record of a Battista Penni; in the second that, for some irrecoverable reason, Gianfrancesco misrepresented his parentage in the Roman documents. Since he first appears as a recognisable entity in Raphael's studio around 1510, we also need to decide whether he was then about 14 or about 22. Since nothing in Penni's output suggests precocity, and since numerous echoes of Raphael's Florentine manner are found in his later work (but rarely in Giulio's), birth c. 1488 rather than 1496 and training in Florence rather than Rome seem more plausible. But unless and until further evidence comes to light, these issues can only be left open.

It is reasonable to accept that both Giulio and Penni contributed physically to the completion of Raphael's moveable paintings and in some cases it seems possible to distinguish their hands, even if – because the completed works were surely intended to appear unified, not patchwork – such efforts, which have been legion, are inherently fraught with difficulty.¹² For Giulio, however, we have one vital piece of evidence. Early in 1519 Raphael informed the Duke of Ferrara that *The Portrait of Doña Isabel de Requesens* – which Alfonso d'Este had admired in Paris – was painted not by him but by a *garzone*, whom Vasari identifies as Giulio.¹³ To allocate to an assistant the portrait of an important and beautiful sitter destined for the French King confirms Raphael's confidence in him and demonstrates that between Giulio and Penni, Raphael regarded the former as the more accomplished. And given that the *Isabel* differs markedly both in design and execution from any painting by Raphael, this implies that Giulio had developed an individual style within Raphael's lifetime and must have executed at least some work on his own account. While we have no other documented paintings by him, Giulio's early independent production is gradually coming into focus and, by internal correspondences, allows us to draw some conclusions about his innate – and innately powerful – artistic personality and its development. This, in turn, returns us to the kinds of contribution he might have made to paintings that went out in Raphael's name.

Our understanding of Gianfrancesco Penni's work and style(s) is much more restricted. We have no documented independent paintings made by him within Raphael's lifetime and only a few, none of which is securely datable, whose attribution to him has found some level of consensus. His artistic personality and its development are correspondingly difficult to establish. It seems likely that he served primarily as an assistant on paintings that Raphael was too busy to execute by himself – or which were insufficiently remunerative – and that, while he issued some work on his own account, was less active than Giulio, although, of course, future discoveries may modify this conclusion. However, those paintings that might reasonably be attributed to him – such as the *Nativities* in Cava dei Tirreni and Galleria Borghese, and the Kingston Lacy *The Holy Family with Saint John* – suggest that Penni had a limited capacity for invention and aspired to provide soft interpretation of his master's work, making use of Raphael's designs in more or less varied combinations. None of his paintings or drawing exhibits the critical intelligence apparent in Giulio's manipulations of Raphael's visual ideas. Penni seems to have shadowed his master at a year or two's distance and although, after Raphael's death, he also absorbed ideas from Giulio, he did not become a Giuliesque artist. So far as we

¹² For discussion of this matter and various suggestions see *Late Raphael*, Tom Henry and Paul Joannides, eds, exh. cat., Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid; Musée du Louvre, Paris, 2012–2013 (Madrid, 2012) *passim* (versions also in Spanish and French).

¹³ *Ibid.*, cat. no. 76, pp. 275–78.

know, he was never active as an architect – unlike Raphael and Giulio – although he often liked to include details of antique architecture and decorative arts, sometimes rather capriciously, in his drawings and paintings.

The reconstruction of Penni's drawn oeuvre, for which Philip Pouncey and John A. Gere were largely responsible, although subsequently contested and confused by Konrad Oberhuber and others, established a large group – over 100 – of multimedia *modelli* made for Raphael's Roman projects. The personality evinced by these *modelli* – and some associated drawings – dovetails with that revealed by the paintings; those that derive from existing drawings by Raphael show minor modifications but no independent inventiveness: their maker seems to have performed the secretarial function of working-up Raphael's ideas, preparing them for enlargement and execution.¹⁴ Such a role fits with the nickname *il Fattore* employed in the legal documents as well as by Cellini and by Vasari, which implies that Gianfrancesco was more active as an administrator and project-manager than as an artist.¹⁵ He no doubt served as an intermediary between Raphael and subordinates employed in such schemes as the Vatican *loggia* – which may explain why one of them saw fit to paint of him the portrait now in Dublin, in which Penni is identified by an inscribed epistle; although it evokes nothing of art or inspirational fire, the sitter projects some amiability.¹⁶

III

The most important task that Giulio and Penni inherited from Raphael in the Vatican was the Sala di Costantino; accounts show they received equal payment for the work but actual collaboration between them is hard to identify.¹⁷ Giulio certainly dominated the invention and execution of the two narratives left undeveloped at Raphael's death and the radical re-interpretation of Raphael's scheme for the *The Vision of Constantine* (*The Allocutio*): Penni seems to have been active mostly in peripheral areas – in subsidiary parts of the narrative fields, and in the the simulated architectural structures that frame the narratives, the niched Popes that they contain, and the accompanying allegories. It may be that they worked separately, each with his own *équipe*, especially after the resumption of the project in 1523–24. Within Pope Leo's lifetime, Giulio and Penni probably collaborated on at least two series of tapestries. One, illustrating the deeds of Scipio, seems to have been designed jointly and some surviving project drawings are by Penni.¹⁸ The same may be true of the "Scuola Nuova" tapestries but no preparatory drawings have yet been found for these. However, collaboration did not endure – indeed, it is hard to see how it could – and Vasari says that the two men grew apart; separation, perhaps initially more functional and aesthetic than personal, may have finally have led to a *froideur*. Following Giulio's departure for Mantua, the completion of the Sala di Costantino, the delivery of *The Monteluze Coronation* to Perugia in June 1525 and Penni's

¹⁴ This topic has been discussed *ad nauseum* and it would be redundant to rehearse the arguments yet again.

¹⁵ He is described as "alias Factore" on 5 September 1520 – see Ferrari, op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁶ Interpretation of the inscription as a signature was convincingly contested by Shearman. One wonders whether the painter might have been Leonardo da Pistoia, described by Vasari as a disciple of Penni, "who made many portraits in Rome."

¹⁷ The payments for 1524–25 are published by Ferrari, op. cit., pp. 52, 55, 57, 61–64, 70–74, 77, 80, 86, 88, 90.

¹⁸ But not for the later complementary series of "Scipio's Triumph," drawings for which are entirely by Giulio.

sojourn there in August for the Feast of the Assumption, at which he was entertained, we have to rely in Vasari and an exiguous surviving oeuvre. He no doubt continued to execute paintings for private clients, but we are ignorant of what these might have been.¹⁹ He made at least one design (*Apollo and Hyacinth*) for the series of engravings depicting the “Loves of the Gods,” probably before the sack of Rome.²⁰ He then, according to Vasari, briefly visited Mantua seeking employment, only to find himself cold-shouldered by Giulio; a single payment in the Mantuan accounts dated 3 June 1528 for work by a “Roman” artist called Gianfrancesco probably refers to Penni.²¹ After this setback, Vasari tells us, Penni moved with the train of Alfonso d’Avalos to the latter’s court on Ischia, then worked briefly in Naples before dying there late in 1528 or shortly thereafter; he had with him the copy of the *Transfiguration*, which presumably explains how Alfonso came to donate it to Ospedale Santo Spirito degli Incurabili in Naples. Overall, it would seem that Penni did not have the character necessary for a successful independent career in a major centre. He might, had he survived and transferred to a provincial town, functioned as another Raffaellino del Colle.

IV

The main exception to our very limited knowledge of Penni’s work in moveable painting is *The Monteluce Coronation*²² (fig. 1). Contemporary documentation assigns this to Giulio and Penni and Vasari too says it was painted by both. The history of the commission, which began in 1505 and concluded only in 1525, is inordinately complicated and although some light has recently been thrown on its later stages, many problems remain unresolved.²³ The upper section of the altarpiece, in which Christ crowns the Virgin, and the lower section, where the Apostles cluster around her sarcophagus, are painted on panels of different construction; thus the painting was not made on a single dedicated support which was then bisected to facilitate transport or because the painters charged with its execution found themselves compelled to work in different locations.²⁴ Whether, as Shearman at first argued, but later seemingly retracted, the altarpiece as it now exists is a composite, a bolting together of the top and bottom halves of two unrelated paintings (the upper always intended for the Monteluce commission; the lower for some other project, perhaps – Shearman’s suggestion – the altarpiece of Agostino Chigi’s chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo, or perhaps not), remains an open question.²⁵ However, the Monteluce panel is seemingly referred to as a single unit in 1516 and only from 1523 are two

¹⁹ Shearman, *Raphael in Early*..., op. cit., pp. 794–96, 800.

²⁰ Paul Joannides, “Raphael and his circle,” *Paragone. Arte*, Ann 51, 3rd series, no. 30 (601) (March 2000), pp. 17–18, and fig. 11.

²¹ Ferrari, op. cit., p. 281.

²² *The Monteluce Coronation* was well-discussed by Fabrizio Mancinelli. See *Raffaello in Vaticano*, Fabrizio Mancinelli and Carlo Pirovano, eds, exh. cat., Città del Vaticano, 1984–85 (Milano, 1984), pp. 286–99.

²³ Alberto Maria Sartore, “‘Begun by Master Raphael’: The Monteluce ‘Coronation of the Virgin,’” *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 153, no. 1299 (June 2011), pp. 387–91, in which the payments published by John Shearman (Shearman, *Raphael in Early*..., op. cit., pp. 753–54, 794–95, 800) are supplemented.

²⁴ The “transport” argument is a weak one; many larger panel paintings were transported undivided.

²⁵ John Shearman, “The Chigi Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 24 (1961), pp. 129–60, 143–51.

parts clearly indicated.²⁶ Precisely what conclusion we should draw from this is uncertain, although on balance it tends to support Shearman's initial hypothesis. If indeed, the final result were cannibalized from two separate projects, this must have responded to some crisis of sufficient magnitude to justify the inevitable wastage of half of each original panel. At present we remain in the realm of conjecture.

Notwithstanding such uncertainties, the upper and lower sections are obviously by different painters as all scholars have accepted. It seems universally to be agreed that the upper is by Giulio, with some intervention by another, weaker, hand, and that the lower (**fig. 2**) is by Penni.²⁷ Giulio's part was probably painted – or mainly painted – in 1516 (when the contract was renewed) or 1517; its style corresponds to nothing in Giulio's work that can reasonably be dated after this time and rather well to that of *The Visitation* and what seem to be his parts of the *Christ Fallen under the Cross* (*The Spasimo*). It presumably antedated by several years the lower section, for that bears little relation to what can be inferred of Penni's manner around 1516–17 – witnessed in the *Madonna del Passeggio* (painted to Raphael's design) and Kingston Lacy *The Holy Family with Saint John*, painted to his own). Of course, Penni's styles at different moments are not easy to chart, but it is probable that his section – whether prepared for, or merely employed for – the Monteluce commission, was begun around the time of Raphael's death or shortly thereafter; and this is supported both by the documentary evidence – so far as it supports anything – and by its obvious dependence of mood, colour and tone from the *Transfiguration*.²⁸

V

It is the lower section of *The Monteluce Coronation*, showing the Apostles around the Virgin's sarcophagus, which establishes the attribution to Penni of the Warsaw *The Holy Family with Saint John and Saint Catherine*, among the very few paintings commonly accepted as his: the landscape and colouring of the two are inseparable, and these connections suggest for the two an approximately contemporary date (**fig. 3**).²⁹ The figural sources of the Warsaw painting lie in the later Roman work of Raphael and, to a lesser extent, Giulio Romano. The Virgin and Child, of course, and Saint Joseph, are based in the corresponding figures in Raphael's *The Holy Family of Francis I*, executed during the first four months of 1518, but the characterization of Joseph was perhaps inflected by the Joseph in the *Madonna della Quercia*, who was developed from the same painting.³⁰ Penni's Saint John, however – brought to visit his cousin by Saint Catherine, playing the part usually assigned to Saint Elizabeth – bears no resemblance to a

²⁶ Sartore, *op. cit.*, p. 391.

²⁷ It is sometimes claimed that Raphael was involved in the execution of the upper section (and Sartore takes the statement 'inceptam per dictum magistrum Raphaellem dum viveret' in the newly discovered document of 28 May 1523 as evidence for this) but in my view no part of it reveals his hand and the reference indicates no more than that it was begun in Raphael's lifetime under his supervision.

²⁸ Raphael's sketch for the three Apostles at the lower left is in the Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin (Inv. 5123).

²⁹ See the excellent discussion by Stefania Lapenta in *Gonzaga. La Celeste Galleria*, Raffaella Morselli, ed., exh. cat., Galleria Civica di Palazzo Te, Mantua, 2002 (Milano, 2002) pp. 176–77, cat. no. 11; although one respected scholar has verbally floated the idea that it might be by Giulio, such an attribution cannot be sustained by comparison with any paintings securely by Giulio either pre- or post- Raphael's death.

³⁰ While Penni's art was largely one of assemblage he made some adjustments of his own; for a less imaginative agglomeration see a probably contemporary *The Holy Family with Saint Jerome* by Raffaellino del Colle that appeared at Christie's London, 3 July 2013, lot 174.

Saint John in any other *Holy Family* either by Raphael or Giulio; nor has any model yet been identified for the Saint Catherine.

The Warsaw painting has an illustrious provenance; that of another version, very nearly the same size, which came to light a few years ago in Boston (fig. 4), cannot be traced before the mid-19th century. The Boston painting is on canvas and when it was exhibited in Madrid and Paris, Tom Henry and I assumed this to be the original support; however, further technical examination has established with virtual certainty that it is the result of an exceptionally skilled transfer, probably in the 19th century. This version raises questions about replication in and around the Raphael studio that should briefly be considered before the two paintings are examined more closely.

During his peripatetic years Raphael seems never to have repeated himself and probably avoided doing so; we do not know whether any of the numerous replicas of paintings made by him in Umbria and Florence – some of which must date close in time to the originals – were licensed by him or were entirely independent of his involvement. But once established in Rome, with an active studio which swelled and contracted according to project, it seems he allowed, conceivably even encouraged, the repetition of some of his paintings. Raphael himself offered to provide a copy of the *Portrait of Doña Isabel de Requesens* for Alfonso d'Este (who, as Shearman suggested, had probably already ordered one in France) and if the much-contested letter to Francesco Francia can be trusted, he at least conceived of the possibility of re-touching a portrait of himself by one of his pupils.³¹ He presumably permitted the adaptation and recycling of his invention by his followers and assistants – perhaps as a way of remunerating them, morally and financially and, more subtly, of broadcasting his own conceptual felicity and fertility. But we are at an early stage in understanding the range of possibilities available in Raphael's studio and to attempt any account of them here would be premature: all that can be said with some confidence is that any of the possibilities that a modern art-historian might envisage are likely already to have been envisaged by Raphael.

It has recently been shown that *The Munro of Novar Madonna* in the Scottish National Gallery, a compositionally expanded but physically reduced version of the *Madonna della Rosa*, carries beneath it a drawing of *The Madonna of Divine Love*, also on a smaller scale than the original and revealing awareness of that painting's underdrawing, not just its surface.³² As well as cementing the stylistic and chronological linking of the *Rosa*, the *Munro of Novar* and the *Divine Love*, this demonstrates that a modified reduction of the last was also planned. Of course, we do not know how deeply Raphael was involved in such practices but he must at least have countenanced them, and they were extended by his studio and followers. The Walters Art Museum *The Virgin, Child and Saint John*, a Giulio composition of c. 1522–24, provides another example: it was repeated, in reverse and with a few changes, in a painting in Galleria Borghese by a different hand (perhaps that of Raffaellino dal Colle, Giulio's primary assistant). And beneath the surface of the Walters' painting is a lay-in that reproduces the final version of another *The Virgin and Child with Saint John*, also in Galleria Borghese, in which the seated Virgin is holding the child who reaches out to take a dove from Saint John, a painting worked up by Giulio, with additions and changes, from a design by Raphael.³³ A child's head beneath

³¹ Shearman, *Raphael in Early...*, op. cit., pp. 392–93.

³² I am deeply grateful to Ana González Mozo for this information which she will publish in due course.

³³ See *Late Raphael*, op. cit., pp. 241–44, cat. no. 65.

the surface of Giulio's *Isabella d'Este* was no doubt part of a further *Madonna*, of which a version survives, once again reversed, once again in Galleria Borghese.³⁴ Penni too produced versions of his own work as the Cava dei Tirreni and Borghese *Nativities* demonstrate.³⁵ Recently, a variant of the *Madonna della Quercia* with various significant changes both to colours and setting was identified in an Italian private collection and whomever this is by – an attribution to Penni has been proposed – it must have been made soon after Giulio's original.³⁶ Finally, of course, Raphael's heirs were commissioned by Cardinal Giulio to provide the same-size replica of Raphael's *Transfiguration*, when the Cardinal decided to retain the original in Rome.

There is, therefore, nothing surprising about the existence of a second example of Penni's Warsaw painting even though some critics, on first seeing the Boston version – not then cleaned – too hastily described it as a copy, which it self-evidently is not.³⁷ Its handling is very like that of the Warsaw version, if a little simplified, and it shows a sensitivity to light equal to that and the lower section of *The Monteluce Coronation*. In both paintings the figural arrangement is the same, but each has different emphases and different qualities: thus the bright altar of the Boston version offsets the Virgin more effectively than the shadowed one of that in Warsaw and the latter, although colouristically richer, and superficially livelier in its employment of Giuliesque highlights, is less harmonious tonally. The colours of Catherine's and Joseph's draperies vary between the two paintings, within segments created by the pre-existing folds; this may have been Penni's practice, since it is seen also in the *Transfiguration* copy. There are differences of other kinds. In the Warsaw version, Catherine's coiffure corresponds loosely to types found in antique Venuses, and she is given a simple, discreet crown similar to ones found in the frescoes of the Loggia. In the Boston version the crown is absent and her coiffure is different. The landscape at the right and centre is the same in both paintings – it may represent the outskirts of Rome – but the high, wood-clad, hill that rises at the left of the Warsaw painting carries, in the Boston version, a complex of ruins. Both these distinctive features of the Boston painting can be connected directly with the Fossombrone sketchbook, admirably published by Arnold Nesselrath, which records products and interests of the Raphael school in the period c. 1517–23: the album is generally attributed to a draughtsman close to Giulio Romano but some characteristics imply awareness of Gianfrancesco's pen style.³⁸ The late antique bust type, on which Saint Catherine's coiffure is based, was studied on folios 83 and 84 recto: the head drawn on 83 recto – although its turn differs – is notably close to that in the painting (figs 5–6).³⁹ The Fossombrone sketchbook

³⁴ Paul Joannides, "The Early Easel Paintings of Giulio Romano," *Paragone. Arte*, Ann 36, no. 425 (July 1985), p. 45. I recently noticed that a version of Giulio's Uffizi *The Virgin and Child* (*Late Raphael*, op. cit., pp. 310–12, cat. no. 85) was sold at Sotheby's Milan, 11 June, 2002, lot 195, as "Bottega di Giulio Romano." In oil on panel, measuring 114 × 91 cm, a little larger than the original's 104 × 77 cm, it sets an unchanged figure group against a niche similar to that at the rear of the Santa Prassede *Flagellation* (*Late Raphael*, op. cit., pp. 178–81, cat. no. 43). The Sotheby's painting is presumably either a variant produced in the studio of Giulio Romano or a copy of such a variant.

³⁵ *Late Raphael*, op. cit., pp. 222–27, cat. nos 56 and 57.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 212. Two copies exist, one, same size, in Madrid (Museo Nacional del Prado), the other, half-size, in Naples (Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte), of the *Noli me Tangere* in the Trinità dei Monti; both appear to be early and may have been made in Penni's workshop: the latter is currently attributed to his follower Leonardo da Pistoia.

³⁷ A copy of the Warsaw painting which appeared at Fischer Lucerne on 31 May 2006, lot 01009 and again at Christie's London of 4 December 2013, lot 151; in oil on panel, measuring 115.9 × 96.9 cm, seems, from direct inspection, to be early and perhaps a product of Penni's studio. My thanks are due to Sandra Romito for her help with this work.

³⁸ Arnold Nesselrath, *Das Fossombroner Skizzenbuch* (London, 1993).

³⁹ Perhaps the sources for these coiffures were among the "teste" acquired from Ciampolini.

also enables us to identify the ruins as the Baths of Caracalla. The Baths were studied by many Renaissance draughtsmen but the view in the Boston painting is so close to that on folio 10 verso, that both doubtless derive from the same prototype (**fig. 7**). As Nesselrath showed, the Baths also inspired motifs in the background of the *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and Saint John* (*The Perla*), but Raphael manipulated them in the service of the painting's meaning rather than striving for recognisable representation. The Fossombrone sketch is picturesque rather than analytical; its interests lie not in the Baths' structures but in their status as a romantic ruin, an attraction to effect rather than substance that seems characteristic of Penni, who included a view of the round temple at Tivoli – also studied in the Fossombrone sketchbook – in his section of *The Monteluce Coronation* – and in a similar position to that of the Baths in the Boston *Holy Family*. Far from being a copy, the Boston version actually has more circumstantial design evidence in support of its originality than that in Warsaw.

Examination of both paintings by infrared reflectography has shown, as Grażyna Bastek has noted, that both underdrawings were laid in from the same cartoon whose contours were transferred, in both cases, by indentation not by pouncing. But there is a distinction in the line-work. In the Warsaw version, once the indentation was complete, the more significant contours were then reinforced in a free and lively manner. In the Boston version the indentation is uniform and unemphatic, creating a less varied line. The customary art-historical response to such a distinction would be to conclude that the freer version preceded the more uniform one. Yet such an order – an interpretative cliché – could readily be reversed and probably should be: a more freely handled underdrawing might as well succeed as precede a harder one – a layout firmly established would permit a more relaxed approach to a second version: the first attempt at a task is generally more circumspect than the second. But whichever came first, the gap is probably to be measured in minutes or hours rather than days – the two paintings seem to have been set side-by-side, or on adjacent easels, for at the right, behind Joseph, an identical building exists in the underdrawing of both, but can be seen on the painted surface of neither. An experimental modification of the position of the Child's ear, seen in both underdrawings, also did not make it to the surface of either picture.⁴⁰ These facts imply that the two paintings were laid-in together and corrected together: in short that they were produced in tandem (see **figs 8–9**, p. 160 of this issue of the *Journal*). Yet it is also notable that the varied coiffures and the absence or presence of ruins were planned from the start, since the underdrawings in these areas of the two paintings show no alterations. But Penni may for a moment have had second thoughts about Catherine's coiffure in the Warsaw version: a pentiment visible on the surface of that painting suggests that he considered a coiled hair-style before reverting to the Venus type. This again implies simultaneous execution.

VI

Although the Warsaw panel is first recorded in Mantua, it is improbable that either it or the Boston painting was executed during Penni's brief sojourn in that city.⁴¹ It is more likely that

⁴⁰ These features were pointed out by Grażyna Bastek in the wall-panel introducing the two paintings in the Warsaw exhibition.

⁴¹ Penni's three elaborate drawings of unidentified classical subjects in the Albertina show him employing a rather refined and fussy, miniaturized, style with surprisingly few direct reminiscences of Raphael. See, most recently, the entry on these by Achim Gnann in Achim Gnann, Michiel Plomp, *Raphael and His School*, exh. cat.,

both were painted in Rome, soon after Raphael's death; the Warsaw panel could have arrived in Mantua by any number of routes. Baldassare Castiglione, Federico Gonzaga's trusted envoy, concerned to enhance the status of Mantua, was trying to arrange a transfer of Giulio and Penni to the city as early as December 1521 and Penni's painting might in principle have been sent to Federico around this time as an example of his work.⁴² However, it seems more probable that it was acquired later in the 16th century; the Gonzaga were active collectors as well as patrons throughout the *cinquecento*, particularly so at its close.

As with most small moveable paintings of this period, executed for private homes or palaces, there is no evidence who might have commissioned the two pictures. But simultaneous production implies a simultaneous command, rather than successive ones; maybe the same man or woman wanted a version for him- or her-self, and another for a relative; or different versions for different properties... Of such choices we are – and are likely to remain – ignorant.

Teylers Museum, Haarlem, 2012–13 (Haarlem, 2012), pp. 208–11, cat. nos 78–80; I would incline to a date a year or so later than the c. 1525 proposed by Gnann; they may have been executed as paintings.

⁴² Ferrari, op. cit., pp. 22–23; Penni was named by Castiglione in letters of 12 and 19 February, and 28 March 1523 (Shearman, *Raphael in Early...*, op. cit., pp. 744–46) but by then Castiglione was much closer to Giulio, addressed on the 12 as “carissimo mio,” than Penni, whom he did not mention again. Giulio was providing models and designs for the Gonzaga villa at Marmirolo from as early as September 1522: see Ferrari, op. cit., pp. 25–30, 32–33, 38, 42–48, passim.