



Fig. 1 Reduced from 74.9 × 60.7 cm

Giovanni Battista Salvi, Il Sassoferrato

Sassoferrato 1609 – 1685 Rome

The Madonna with the sleeping Christ Child

Oil on canvas, relined, 74.9 × 60.7 cm

PROVENANCE

Anonymous consignor, Christie's, 'Old Master and English Pictures',
London, 18 March 1988, lot 97 — the present owner

Minor retouching in two areas of the Virgin's blue mantle and left sleeve, otherwise
the paint surface is intact (restored by Herbert Lank, Hamilton Kerr Institute, 1988).
In a reproduction frame (by Paul Levi, 1988)

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Giovan Battista Salvi "Il Sassoferrato", edited by François Macé De Lépinay (Milan 1990), p.47
Il Sassoferrato: un preraffaellita tra i puristi del Seicento, catalogue of an exhibition, Galleria
comunale d'arte, Cesena, 15 May–25 October 2009, edited by Massimo Pulini (Milan 2009), p.23

THIS 'Madonna with the sleeping Christ Child' was one of Sassoferrato's most popular compositions and was replicated by him many times, with consistently high quality, also in horizontal and oval formats, reversed, and with the Madonna depicted in Glory and attended by angels.¹ As the artist rarely signed or dated his works, the chronology of these variants (and their multiple versions) is problematic. Almost none of Sassoferrato's small devotional pictures can be traced to their original owners.

In our variant, the Virgin has chestnut hair, wears a white chemisette and head-dress, a red dress and a blue mantle, and leans her head against her left shoulder.² The light and chrom-

¹ Well-known examples of these variants include • London, Wallace Collection, Inv. P126 (46 × 43.2 cm oval) and P565 (85.4 × 72.6 cm); *The Wallace Collection: Catalogue of Pictures, I: British, German, Italian, Spanish*, compiled by John Ingamells (London 1985), pp.338–341 • Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures, Inv. 599 (77 × 61 cm); François Macé de Lépinay, 'Sassoferrato (1609–1685) au Louvre: une réhabilitation' in *La revue des musées de France* 54 (2004), pp.62–73.

² In the closest variant, the composition is simply reversed: • Cesena, Pinacoteca Comunale, Inv. 39 (73 × 60 cm); *Il Sassoferrato* (2009, *op. cit.*), pp.76–77 no. 2 • Chambéry, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Inv. M 802 (72 × 60.1 cm) • (48.9 × 38.7 cm), Christie's, 'Old Master & 19th Century Paintings, Drawings



Fig. 1 Our version (74.9 × 60.7 cm)

atic harmonies of our version are those associated with the autograph works of Sassoferrato. We are grateful to Professor François Macé de Lépinay for his endorsement of the attribution to Sassoferrato on the basis of photographs. He will include this painting in his forthcoming catalogue raisonné on the works of the artist.

& Watercolours', London, 7 July 2010, lot 213 (hammer price including buyer's premium: £ 34,850) • 'Dans une collection privée française depuis deux siècles' (48.2 × 38.8 cm), Christie's, 'Tableaux Anciens et du 19ème Siècle', Paris, 26 June 2008, lot 31 (hammer price including buyer's premium € 144,500) • (49 × 39 cm), Adam Williams Fine Art Ltd., New York, at Tefaf Maastricht 2009 (*The European Fine Art Fair Maastricht 09*, catalogue of the exhibition, 13–22 March 2009, Maastricht Exhibition and Congress Centre, Helvoirt: European Fine Art Foundation, 2009, p.180).



Fig. 2 Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (75 × 60 cm)

In its quality and size, our painting is directly comparable to one in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (Fig. 2).³ Professor Macé de Lépinay compares it favourably with the version formerly in the collections of Cardinal Joseph Fesch (1763–1839) and Jean-Jacques-Joseph Leroy d' Etiolles (1798–1860),⁴ which was sold by Sotheby's in 2007

³ • Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Gemäldegalerie, Inv.-Nr. GG 129: 'Provenienz: Aus einer Kapelle in Mauerbach; 1772 in der Galerie nachweisbar' (75 × 60 cm). Image from KHM Bilddatenbank (<http://bilddatenbank.khm.at/viewArtefact?id=1682>).

⁴ 'Votre Vierge à l'Enfant de Sassoferrato me semble être un très bel exemplaire d'une composition fort connue de l'artiste (J'en connais près d'une quinzaine, dispersées dans différents musées et collections particulières [...]) Il ne s'agit donc pas de l'exemplaire tout à fait comparable, passe en vente chez Sotheby's le 25/1/07, qui provenait de la collection du cardinal Fesch et de la collection Leroy d'Etiolles. Mais votre tableau me semble aussi beau que dernier et je le considererai comme



Fig. 3 Formerly Cardinal Fesch — Leroy d’Etiolles collections, sold by Sotheby’s, New York, 25 January 2007, lot 47 (74.9 × 62.3 cm)

(**Fig. 3**).⁵ Our painting also compares favourably with one sold by Sotheby’s New York in 2005 (**Fig. 4**).⁶ The studio replicas generally are smaller (*circa* 50 × 40 cm), as the painting

une “réplique originale” dans le catalogue raisonné que je prépare’ (written communication, 24 September 2007).

⁵ • formerly in the collections of Cardinal Fesch (posthumous sale, Rome 17–18 March 1845, lot 729) and Dr. Leroy d’Etiolles (sale, Hôtel Drouot, 21–22 February 1861, lot 108), 74.9 × 62.3 cm, consigned anonymously to Sotheby’s, New York, 25 January 2007, lot 47 (hammer price with buyer’s premium: \$ 168,000). Image from Sotheby’s.

⁶ • formerly in the collection of Marc and Lillian Rojtman, 75.6 × 63.5 cm, sold by Sotheby’s, New York, 28 January 2005, lot 509 (hammer price with buyer’s premium \$ 168,000). Image from



Fig. 4 Formerly Marc and Lilian Rojtman collection, sold by Sotheby’s, New York, 28 January 2005, lot 509 (75.6 × 63.5 cm)

in the Musée Calvet, Avignon, included in the tercentenary exhibition at Sassoferrato in 1990.⁷

Sotheby’s. Another version • formerly in the collection of Brigadier C.E. Tryon-Wilson, Dallam Tower, Cumbria, 73 × 61 cm, was sold by Sotheby’s, London, 10 July 2002, lot 67 (hammer price with buyer’s premium £ 111,150).

⁷ Avignon, Musée Calvet, Inv. 827.5.26 (49 × 37.8 cm); *Giovan Battista Salvi “Il Sassoferrato”*, (1990, *op. cit.*), p.47 no. 2; *Peintures et sculptures d’Italie. Collections du XVe au XIXe siècle du Musée Calvet, Avignon*, compiled by Philippe Malgouyres and Philippe Sénéchal (Avignon & Paris 1998), p.151 no. 66.

The painter Giovanni Battista Salvi, called Il Sassoferrato after the town where he was born on 29 August 1609, studied at first with his father Tarquinio, then (according to the artist's manuscript memoir) in Rome with one Domenico as his master – often presumed to be Domenichino. Although Sassoferrato executed important commissions, the most notable being for the churches of San Francesco di Paola and Santa Sabina in Rome in 1641 and 1643 respectively, and also in the 1640s a series of fifteen paintings for the Benedictine church of San Pietro, Perugia, he was occupied primarily in the production of so-called 'multiple originals', repetitions of small private devotional pictures, usually of the Madonna. Some of these were sold on commission, but many may have been held in stock for sale to pilgrims. A post-mortem inventory recording the inheritance of his son Alessio contains thirty-five such paintings of the Madonna (with and without the Child).⁸

Sassoferrato was eclectic and copied or adapted compositions dating from the fourteenth century to the contemporary; his favourite masters were Raphael, Titian, and Guido Reni, but he also borrowed from works by Joos van Cleve, Dürer, Mignard, and many others. Our composition is dependent on an etching by Guido Reni executed *circa* 1615–1625, repeated in several variants with different drapery and gesture, and subsequently popularised by numerous copies.⁹

⁸ Patrizia Cavazzini, 'L'inventario in morte del Sassoferrato e il problema delle copie' in *Sassoferrato "pictor virginum": nuovi studi e documenti per Giovan Battista Salvi*, edited by Cecilia Prete (Ancona 2010), pp.59–60, 65–66.

⁹ Francis Russell, 'Sassoferrato and his sources: A Study of Seicento allegiance' in *The Burlington Magazine* 119 (October 1977), p.699; *The Illustrated Bartsch, 40: Commentary, Pt.1, Italian masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, by Veronika Birke (New York 1987), pp.330–337 (especially p.330 no. 30 C1); Anna Cerboni Baiardi, 'La mano di Apelle: Sassoferrato e l'incisione; dalla copia alla divulgazione' in *Sassoferrato "pictor virginum"* (2010, *op. cit.*), pp.37–55 and especially figs. 18–23.