This volume of the *Technical Bulletin* has been funded by the American Friends of the National Gallery, London with a generous donation from Mrs Charles Wrightsman.

Series editor  *Ashok Roy*

© National Gallery Company Limited 2008

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior permission in writing of the publisher.

First published in Great Britain in 2008 by National Gallery Company Limited
StVincent House, 30 Orange Street
London wc2h 7hh

www.nationalgallery.co.uk

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this journal is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 85709 419 0
ISSN 0140 7430
525050

Project manager  Jan Green
Editor  Diana Davies
Designer  Heather Bowen
Picture research  Karolina Majewska
Production  Jane Hyne and Penny Le Tissier
Repro by Alta Image, London

Printed in Italy by Conti Tipocolor

**Photographic credits**

All photographs reproduced in this *Bulletin* are
© The National Gallery, London, unless credited otherwise below.

FLORENCE. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence ©
Soprintendenza Speciale per il Polo Museale Fiorentino,
Gabinetto Fotografico, Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali: p. 50, pl. 5

LONDON. The British Museum, London © The Trustees of
The British Museum: p. 55, pl. 12

LOS ANGELES. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles,
California © The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles,
California: p. 42, pl. 18

MADRID. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid © Museo
Nacional del Prado, Madrid: p. 52, pl. 8

NEW YORK. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
© The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: p. 79, pl. 8; p. 79, pl. 11

OTTAWA. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario
© National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario: p. 50, pl. 6

PADUA. Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua © akg images/
Cameraphoto p. 80, pl. 12

PARIS. Musée du Louvre, Paris © RMN / Photo: René-
Gabriel Ojéda: p. 51, pl. 7 Musée d’Orsay, Paris, Volland
Archives © RMN / Photo: René-Gabriel Ojéda © ADAGP,
Paris and DACS, London 2008: p. 8, fig. 1

PHILADELPHIA. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania
© Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania. Photo by
Graydon Wood, 2004: p. 21, pl. 33

ROME. Church of Santa Caterina dei Funari, Rome
© Roma, ICCD, Fototeca Nazionale, E112636: p. 51, fig. 1

**FRONT COVER**

Paul Cézanne, *Bathers*, (NG 6359), detail of plate 5, page 5

**TITLE PAGE**

Quinten Massys, *The Virgin and Child Enthroned, with Four
Angels* (NG 6282), detail of plate 26, page 73
Annibale Carracci’s Montalto Madonna

Larry Keith

Annibale Carracci’s Montalto Madonna (NG 6597; plate 2) achieved great fame in the seventeenth century, and was specifically praised for its beauty by the famous seventeenth-century critic Giovan Pietro Bellori in his Le vite. Further evidence of its popularity can be found in the numerous surviving contemporary painted copies, as well as in Cornelius Bloemaert’s reproductive engraving made in the late 1630s. Annibale’s original painting, however, had been thought lost — until a version of high quality, painted on copper, appeared on the art market in 2003 and was eventually acquired by the National Gallery. Investigation of the painting’s materials and technique undertaken during the course of the painting’s recent restoration, together with a careful reconstruction of its provenance, provided crucial evidence to support the belief that this was the autograph version painted around 1598–1600 in Rome by Annibale. This belief, supported as it is by relatively objective evidence, nonetheless has at its core an aesthetic estimation of the picture’s quality, and it is through the combination of these different ways of considering the picture that its prime status has been convincingly re-established.

While the attribution of the composition to Annibale is placed beyond doubt by the early written descriptions, the painted copies and the inscription on Bloemaert’s engraving, there is no documentary evidence of its exact date apart from what can be surmised by looking at other more securely dated works. Annibale first came to Rome in 1594 under the patronage of Cardinal Odoardo Farnese, and although his first Roman works are the large-scale decorative works made for the Palazzo Farnese — the Camerino Farnese and the fresco cycle for the ceiling of the Galleria — from 1596 to 1601, there are other works datable to this period, including several other small-scale pictures, many also executed on copper, which allow closer comparison of his handling of specific painterly details. Seen as a group they show something of the range of stylistic influences being considered by Annibale as he gradually absorbed the examples of Roman painting around him — a development that can also be traced in the works within the collection of the National Gallery. The Christ appearing to Saint Anthony Abbot (NG 198; plate 1), dating from around 1598, shows the influence of Roman-based northern artists such as Adam Elsheimer in its meticulously finished surface and realistic details. The Montalto Madonna, however, includes something of the monumentality of Roman art in its sense of composition, as well as a naturalism in the interaction of the figures that owes a debt to Correggio. Its synthesis of northern and central Italian painting is a key moment in Annibale’s career, pointing the way to the more austere, purer classicism of later works such as the Domine quo Vadis (NG 9; plate 3) or The Dead Christ Mourned (NG 2923; plate 4) of a few years later.

Plate 1: Annibale Carracci, Christ appearing to Saint Anthony Abbot during his Temptation (NG 198), c. 1598. Oil on copper, 49.5 × 34.4 cm.
Annibale Carracci’s Montalto Madonna

PLATE 2 Annibale Carracci, The Holy Family with the Infant Saint John the Baptist (The Montalto Madonna) (NG 6597), c.1598–1600. Oil on copper, 35 × 27.5 cm.
Annibale Carracci, *Christ appearing to Saint Peter on the Appian Way (Domine Quo Vadis)* (NG 9), 1601-2. Oil (identified) on wood, 77.4 × 56.3 cm.
Annibale Carracci’s *Montalto Madonna*

**Plate 4** Annibale Carracci, *The Dead Christ Mourned (‘The Three Maries’) (NG 2923)*, c.1604. Oil (identified) on canvas, 92.8 × 103.2 cm.
The distinctive amalgam of Roman design with north Italian colour and naturalism seen in the Montalto Madonna is also present in other works of the period. The Uffizi’s Madonna and Child with Saint John (plate 5), generally thought to be among Annibale’s first Roman works, is of a similar figure scale to the Montalto Madonna, and with its smaller cast of characters packs the composition even more forcefully than the London picture. The arrangement of the three central figures is also broadly similar, as are many of the finer aspects of the rendition of drapery, hair and flesh. The Vision of Saint Francis (plate 6), now in the National Gallery of Canada, also depicts a Virgin and Child that is recognisably of the type seen in the Montalto Madonna, with the same colour schemes, and details of dress (including the Virgin’s blue sandals) painted in very similar ways – for example the heavier fall of the Virgin’s robes compared to the more animated folds of Christ’s tunic. The picture also combines monumental figures with classical architectural elements and distant landscape views, albeit within a composition that was opened up by the addition of vertical strips to its sides.

Useful comparisons can also be made with contemporary larger-scale works, such as the Saint Margaret (fig. 1) from the church of Santa Caterina dei Funari, which is firmly dated to 1599. The painting is probably mainly the work of assistants, and its principal figure is recycled from an earlier, pre-Roman larger altarpiece now in the Louvre – the Madonna of Saint Luke (plate 7) from around 1592, a picture which is itself heavily influenced by Correggio. Yet Annibale’s revisiting of that Correggesque work, even if only for purposes of pilfering his own composition for the use of his assistants, seems to have resonated with him, as the figure type and physiognomy of the Saint Margaret seem close to those of the Virgin in the Montalto Madonna – as does the device of her gazing out directly to the viewer, now given even greater animation by the way that she leans forward and could even be said to be caught in the act of rising to meet the viewer. The general spatial organisation is also similar, with a monumental figure set off by a deeply receding classical landscape vista at the left, rising from a riverbank running across the middle distance with trees and buildings nestling near the horizon. However, while it is useful to compare the composition and figural types of the two pictures, it is also important to bear in mind their differing scales: the Saint Margaret is over two metres tall, the Montalto Madonna just over thirty centimeters.

The Montalto Madonna sits easily among these works
Annibale Carracci’s Montalto Madonna

from a stylistic point of view and is therefore generally dated to around 1598–1600. It shares many of the same preoccupations, namely an interest in creating a monumental, somewhat packed composition even within the small format imposed by the copper support, and it also somewhat surprisingly takes its place comfortably enough among the vast figural compositions of the roughly contemporary Farnese ceiling frescoes. The surviving drawings relating to the ceiling project show that this was an extraordinarily productive time for Annibale. The act of drawing may have facilitated the kind of experimentation necessary for the development of his large decorative schemes, even if they did not always provide definitive compositional solutions. While no drawing exists showing the Montalto composition in its final form, at least one sketch has been suggested as an initial essay containing similar compositional elements which may represent Annibale’s earliest, relatively undeveloped ideas for the subject.

The finished copper also demonstrates another key element of Annibale’s work at this time: his deep interest in the classicising monumentality of Roman art as epitomised by Michelangelo and Raphael. The arc of Annibale’s stylistic evolution can be rather broadly seen as developing under a succession of stylistic influences in which his early Bolognese realism yields to the sensual and painterly influences of Lombard and Venetian painting before finally achieving a more austere classicism informed by Roman example. But it is important to note that his artistic growth was founded on more than a kind of magpie eclecticism. It is certainly true that the fundamental critical question relating to the art of all of the Carracci concerns the manner in which they engaged with the art of other painters, both living and dead, and from a much wider range of stylistic traditions (and geographic loca-
The specific nature of Annibale’s engagement with other painters was openly acknowledged and discussed by his contemporaries, and was seen in a positive light as something going well beyond a mere succession of borrowings. His intention was rather to leave behind the old polemics of the relative merits of individual artists or schools in order to learn as much as possible from what each had to offer, and from them to create something that was not derivative, but fundamentally new. The concept is described by Bellori and Malvasia, among others, but it is perhaps most telling to refer to the writings of Giovanni Battista Agucchi, as he alone was friendly with Annibale himself. In his unpublished Trattato Agucchi writes of Annibale’s wish to ‘costituire una maniera d’una sovranna perfettione; disegno finissimo di Roma and bellezza di colorito Lombardo’. Writing a generation later, Malvasia elaborates on the basic concept: ‘Ed accopiando insieme ed unendo con la giustezza di Raffaello la intelligenza di Michelangelo, ed a questi anch aggiungendo con colorito di Tiziano l’angelica purità del Correggio, venne li tutte queste maniere a formare una sola, che alla Romana, alla Fiorentina, alla Veneziana, e alla Lombarda che invidiar non avesse.’ However the sources of Annibale’s development are specified, it was generally agreed that his experience of Roman art was absolutely indispensable to his growth. Coming to Rome and immersing himself in its artistic riches provided the final key to allow him to develop his own vision, as was widely recognised in the seventeenth century by such writers as André Félibien, the perceptive biographer of Poussin, who wrote: ‘Le jugement le plus universel qu’on a fait de ce Peintre, est qu’il acquit dans Rome une manière beaucoup plus correcte, et un dessein plus excellent qu’il n’avoit auparavant…c’est cette dernière manière qui lui a donné un rang parmi les plus grandes Peintres qu’il n’auroit peut-être jamais eu, s’il n’eût suivi l’école de Rome et quitté celle de Lombardie.’

Works like the Montalto Madonna therefore illustrate a fascinating moment in which the new stimuli of Roman art – especially that of Raphael – are being absorbed by Annibale, and incorporated into what had been a way of working more obviously influenced by northern Italian artists such as Correggio. The Montalto picture is probably specifically indebted to Raphael’s Sagrada Familia (Plate 8), now in the Prado, for the general disposition of the principal figures and motifs such as the crib, the evocation of the classical world within its landscape, and the general sense of balance between its rather lyrical landscape setting and its classicising, ordered composition. Research at the time of the picture’s recent sale has...
Annibale Carracci’s Montalto Madonna

allowed the reconstruction of a credible provenance for most of its history. Bellori saw the picture sometime before 1672, when it had already passed from the Montalto family into the collection of Lorenzo Salviati, but he confirms Cardinal Alessandro Peretti Montalto as its first owner. Montalto was a notable patron of work from important artists such as Bernini, who made his portrait bust and the Neptune and Triton fountain of 1622–3, first installed in the grounds of the Villa Montalto and now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. He also commissioned the important (and famously contentious) fresco works carried out at San Andrea delle Valle by Domenichino and Lanfranco.

After the Montalto Madonna left the Salviati estate, it descended through various Roman families, and was recorded in inventories of 1704, 1756 and 1783. The 1783 entry, contained within a published list of pictures owned by Filippo III Colonna, is the most significant. The inventory number given, No. 591, also appears on the wooden backboard that still accompanies the copper panel (FIG. 2), suggesting that the backboard is no later than this date; the preservation of the by then obscure inventory number thus provides physical evidence in support of the painting’s provenance. After the eventual dispersal of the Colonna collection, the painting was next recorded in the collection of Sir Archibald Campbell of Succoth, at Garscube House (Dumbartonshire), by Waagen in his 1854 Treasures of Art in Great Britain, where it is listed as ‘ANNIBALE CARRACCI.-1. The Virgin and Child, St. John the Baptist near a cradle, and Joseph. A good example of this often repeated picture’. The picture left the Campbell collection on its dispersal in 1947, and passed by descent to the eventual sellers to the Gallery.

As is common with paintings on copper, the paint layers are executed in simple applications laid directly over the beige-coloured preparation (PLATE 9). There is little by way of complex build-ups beyond the occasional use of a glaze to modify the primary body colour, as is seen in the red dress and blue mantle of the Virgin. The paint handling is direct and simple, which would imply that it was well prepared in drawings; nonetheless, the painting displays a few minor pentimenti: in the location of Joseph’s glasses (PLATE 10), the details of folds of the Virgin’s blue mantle and the arrangement of the white linen draped over the wicker crib in front of the Baptist (PLATE 11). This last change was the only one of any compositional significance, as the lowered final placement of the linen allows the viewer to see more of the Baptist’s torso, effectively giving him a slightly greater visual prominence within the larger composition. While the changes are just discernible within the texture of the paint itself, they are much more clearly visible in an electron emission radiograph, a kind of X-ray technique occasionally employed on works on copper in which only the uppermost paint layers contribute to the image, thus avoiding it being overwhelmed by the relatively enormous atomic density of the copper support (FIG. 3). Interestingly, one of the first copper paintings to be examined with this technique was Annibale’s roughly contemporary Vision of Saint Francis (PLATE 6); the radiograph revealed important changes in the painting of the background architecture which led to the enlargement of the composition with copper strips added to each side (coincidentally, by the time Bellori was writing his Vite these two paintings were both owned by Lorenzo Salviati).

It is interesting and perhaps instructive to note that even as he did much of his thinking and problem-solving in preparatory drawing – an inclination that must have been greatly strengthened by the need to create cartoons for the Farnese frescoes – his creative process was fluid enough to allow him to continue to revise his work well into the later stages of the painting. This also accords with his practice on the Farnese frescoes themselves, where examples of radical revisions made after the ‘final’ cartoon have been discovered – an unusual practice within the uncompromising dictates of fresco technique. If the manipulation of the brushwork is relatively straightforward, the tonal and chromatic ranges are more considered than at first seems apparent. As has been noticed elsewhere, Annibale uses colour to focus attention on the principal figures, giving them stronger, more saturated colours as well as the greatest
tonal contrasts. In the *Montalto Madonna* this practice can be seen in the comparison of the intensely coloured, strongly modelled red and blue draperies of the Virgin with those of Joseph, whose yellow robe is markedly more subdued in hue and tonal values. A similar control is evident in the handling of the various white draperies, where Christ’s garment is both higher in key and stronger in contrast than both the Virgin’s sleeve and the bed linen. It is also interesting to consider the handling of the Baptists’ flesh in this context. Not surprisingly, his skin tones are considerably darker than those of Christ, and are rendered with a markedly greater *sfumato* effect. The means of producing this more dusky hue are as economic as they are effective: the lighter flesh tones are thinly painted over the darker tones of the background landscape, thus giving the desired subdued effect relative to the flesh of Christ. The optical effect of the darker underlayers has been heightened, however, by the passage of time, as a result of both the naturally increased transparency of the oil paint and the painting’s particular physical history.

The fame of the picture was such that it was copied repeatedly in the seventeenth century, and the cumulative effect of this process was already becoming problematic by the time Bellori saw the painting sometime before the publication of his *Vite* in 1672. He wrote: ‘Because for its beauty this little picture was copied continually while it was in the Villa Montalto, it was already then being worn away in the hands of copyists.’ There seems little doubt of Bellori’s meaning – ‘se consumava ai mani dei copisti’ – both from close textual analysis and from his description of similar injurious practice applied to other pictures, such as Barocci’s *Entombment*, where confirmation of the damage caused by copying comes in a letter from the painter himself. Several different tracing techniques were commonly used, some more damaging than others; oiled transparent paper could be placed against the picture surface to allow tracing of contours with charcoal or ink, or sometimes the contours of the picture could first be gone over with chalk or charcoal which was then rubbed or scored onto the oiled paper when it was placed onto the picture surface. Another seventeenth-century text describes a process whereby ‘those wretches outline the paintings in lake ground with oil, then afterwards oil paper and press with the hand until these outlines are impressed’, which process seems to be the one decried by Bellori in his description of the Barocci, where he says that it had been almost ruined by a tracer ‘who penetrated the contours and colours’.

The condition of the *Montalto Madonna* strongly suggests that it was also the victim of such dubious practices. There is considerable paint loss around almost the whole of its perimeter, much of which was probably caused by removing the copper panel from a wooden strainer on to which it seems to have been originally nailed, but which may have also resulted from pinning or fixing paper or fabric to the panel edges to facilitate accurate tracing. The distant landscape has also suffered disproportionately, appearing unusually sunken and indistinct with considerable abrasion and loss of fine detail.

Several different tracing techniques were commonly used, some more damaging than others; oiled transparent paper could be placed against the picture surface to allow tracing of contours with charcoal or ink, or sometimes the contours of the picture could first be gone over with chalk or charcoal which was then rubbed or scored onto the oiled paper when it was placed onto the picture surface. Another seventeenth-century text describes a process whereby ‘those wretches outline the paintings in lake ground with oil, then afterwards oil paper and press with the hand until these outlines are impressed’, which process seems to be the one decried by Bellori in his description of the Barocci, where he says that it had been almost ruined by a tracer ‘who penetrated the contours and colours’.

Ironically, one of the earliest contributors to this unfortunate process of damage has also provided one of
the more accurate records of the picture’s initial appearance: the reproductive engraving produced by Cornelius Bloemaert in Rome sometime between 1638 and 1645 (Plate 12). Bloemaert was particularly noted for his skill in translating the subtleties of paint handling into the engraving medium, as was described by Joachim von Sandrart, a contemporary critic, painter and biographer: ‘For in everything his intelligence was thorough, the reasoning uncommon, the action of his burin and its duct delicate, yet the elaboration very full-bodied, so that he quite justly could be considered a phoenix.’30 Writing in 1681, Filippo Baldinucci describes Bloemaert’s work for the Montalto family, including the mention of a picture that is surely the Montalto Madonna itself: ‘Cardinal Montalto housed him [Bloemaert] in his famous villa, where he had to engrave his portrait and other illustrious paintings, among which the very fine Madonna of Annibale Carracci.’31 The engraving itself substantiates the documentary evidence, as its contours align precisely with those of the painting in a manner which could only have been produced by some sort of direct tracing.

There is therefore a kind of justice in the fact that the Bloemaert engraving proved extremely useful during the picture’s recent restoration. Most of the areas of repaint were easily recognisable as such, occurring over losses around the perimeter or other obvious damages, as well as showing a characteristic appearance in ultraviolet or infrared illumination. Further investigation by the National Gallery Scientific Department allowed a more specific characterisation of the repaint, beginning with the sky paint across the top edge. This was found to contain Prussian blue pigment, and therefore was applied at least a century after the picture was painted; the same pigment was also used in mixtures of green paint in all sampled areas of suspect landscape within the landscape.32 The repaint also had other distinguishing features. Unlike Annibale’s paint, which was found to be executed in heat-bodied linseed oil, the repaint was done with heat-bodied walnut oil to which had been added pine and mastic resins – a mixture which experience suggests would be more typical of nineteenth- or possibly eighteenth-century practice, but which has not been encountered in seventeenth-century paintings.33 Additionally, where the repaint had been extended over original paint there was a fluorescing resinous layer between it and the original paint underneath, further confirming its status...
as material added after the painting had been varnished. The distinctive mixed media and underlying fluorescent layers were found in all other areas of repaint that were sampled, and because of their generally darkened appearance and overgenerous application they were removed for the most part during the cleaning of the picture. Unfortunately, the same features were also found in many of the fine details within the distant landscape, confirming them as retouching, including much of the foliage of the trees and most of the two tiny figures on the distant riverbank (plate 15). Close inspection with the stereo microscope suggested that while original details in the upper landscape describing the architecture, trees and undulating hill were obscured by repaint, there was comparatively little underlying original paint in the area of the trees along the riverbank. After consultation and discussion it was decided to leave much of the old retouching intact in this area, reducing it in part and incorporating it within the most recent restoration (plate 14) with the intention of bringing it as close as possible to the most accurate record we have of the original state of the picture – the Bloemaert print (plate 12). It was also decided to leave the visual evidence of Annibale’s pentimenti largely unretouched in the restored picture, as they were not thought to be visually disturbing and were an important, relatively objective feature in any consideration of the painting’s status as Annibale’s original work.

In a sense it seems fitting that the recent confirmation of the panel’s authorship results from a coming together of many different strands of argument, given that the picture itself can be seen as a kind of distillation of Annibale’s wide-ranging artistic interests. His unabashed acknowledgement of his diverse influences is perhaps out of key with present-day notions of creativity and originality, not least because such practice makes considerable extra demands on the viewer to know the sources well enough to see how they have been transformed. But if writers like Malvasia were perhaps over-literal in their exhaustive cataloguing of his influences, they were certainly correct in their implicit assumption that what he created was somehow fundamentally new and greater than the sum of its parts. Visitors to the National Gallery are particularly fortunate to have the opportunity to compare Carracci’s work with Correggio’s Madonna of the Basket (plate 16).
as well as Raphael’s *Madonna of the Pinks* (Plate 15) and his more rigorously classicing *Garvagh Madonna* (Plate 17).\(^{35}\) Mindful of Annibale’s own documented impatience with over-theorising,\(^ {36}\) they can still experience something of the seventeenth-century critical response to Annibale, consider anew his desire to fuse the best of the central and northern Italian painterly traditions, and see for themselves the nature of his extraordinary achievement.

**Acknowledgements**
The author would like to thank Dr Dawson Carr, Curator of Later Italian and Spanish Painting at the National Gallery, London, for his invaluable encouragement and insight at all stages of the restoration of the picture and the production of the article; Marika Spring, Raymond White and Catherine Higgitt of the Scientific Department for their work on the analysis of the picture; Dr Aidan Weston-Lewis, Senior Curator of Italian and Spanish Art at the National Gallery of Scotland, for his many helpful comments on the initial manuscript; and Dr Janet Ambers, from the Department of Conservation and Scientific Research at the British Museum, for the making of the electron emission radiograph.
The better of the many painted copies are to be found in the Christ Church Picture Gallery, Oxford; the Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, and Convento di Sant’Antonio, Cortona. Among the seventeenth-century engravings made from the painting in addition to that of Bloemaert are those made by Ludwig von Siegen (1609–1670); Pierre Lombard (1613–1682) (with variations); Nicolas Poully (1612–1659) (as a toledo with Saint Elizabeth); Giacomo Antonio Stanzani (1707–1779); and Wallerant Vaullant (1623–1677); Abraham Blootholt (1610–1690), and Pierre Landry (1630–1701) (as an oval with only the Virgin and Child). See D. Posner, Annibale Carracci, London 1971, Vol. II, pp. 43–4, and P. Cooney, L’opera completa di Annibale Carracci, Milan 1976, p. 110 note 93, and Scotti’s Old Master Paintings, Part One, London, 12 July 2004, lot 35.


6 Bellori refers to Annibale’s extensive preparations for the Faunus palace frescoes, citing the example of the Hercules in the Camerino: ‘Costut tiochi qualche volta veniva anch’egli ritardato, non potendo giungere con l’opera alla perfettina de la mente, come si rinviora ne suoi reiterati studj. La figura di Hercole, che sostiene il globo con gli astri, a critura da un altro Hercole antico di marmo nel palazzo Faunus Annibale nel disporlo perfettamente vario disegni e schizzi, de’ quali oltre il numero de veniti habbiamo veduto, concorrendo a quell’ultime linee dela grata, che consiste in un punto.’ Bellori 1672, p. 81; Bellori trans. Wohl, p. 100 (both cited in note 1); D. De Grazie, ‘The inventive genius of Annibale Carracci’, in The Drawings of Annibale Carracci, exh. cat., Washington DC 1999, p. 19.

7 See R. Wittkower, The Drawings of the Carracci in the Collection of the Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor Castle, London 1952, p. 143, no. 343, for his suggestion of RL.2342 as a lossfully preparatory drawing (not universally accepted). The lack of scholarly agreement about the drawing highlights the very fluidity of Annibale’s generative process, and the drawing also implies something of the inherent monumentality present in his work of this time, regardless of scale or format. One indisputable example of a preparatory sketch for a contemporary copper painting exists for the Ottawa Vision of Saint Fran ces, also in the National Gallery of Canada, where a drawing (no. 263315, ink and brown wash on cream laid paper, 20.9 x 22.6 cm) gives the basic arrangement of the principal figures as they appear in the painting.

8 These contemporary cookbook recipe dissections of Annibale’s style did not help his critical reputation in the nineteenth century, when ideas about eclecticism and imitation were at their height, and certainly the critical view that Annibale’s art was a patchwork of varied stylistic components. From the mid-twentieth century there has been a more balanced appraisal of Carracci’s artistic influences. On questions of eclecticism and imitation see Denis Mahon, ‘The Classic and Eclectic Misinterpretations of the Carracci’, Studies in Seicento Art Theory, London 1947, pp. 195–220; Chardin Demepuy, Annibale Carracci and the Beginnings of Baroque Style, Florence 1977, pp. 43 and 52; and Elizabeth Cooper, The Domenichino Affair: Novelty, Imitation, and Theft in Seventeenth Century Rome, ed. Janis Bell and Thomas Willett, Cambridge 2002. For further exploration of Bellori’s ideas see L’idea del bello: un viaggio per Roma nel seicento con Giovan Pietro Bellori, exh. cat., Rome 1999.


10 ...joined together and united the judgment of Raphael, the intelligence of Michelangelo, and to these also added the colour of Titian and the angular purity of Correggio, coming from all these manners to form a single style which the Roman, Florentine, Venetian, and Lombard did not individually possess.’ Carlo Cesare Malvasia, Felina Pietrise Vita de pintori Bolognesi alla Maesta Christianissima di Luigi XIII Re di France e di Navarra il sempre vittorioso, Conseguita dal Co. Carlo Cesare Malvasia, fra Gelati L’Acceso Divina in due Tomi, con Indici in fine aggiornamenti, Bologna 1678, Vol. 1, p. 358, and Malvasia’s Life of the Carracci: Commentary and Translation, trans. and ed. Ann Sammurescale, University Park, Pennsylvania, 2000, p. 81.

11 ‘The most widely held opinion on this painter is that it was in Rome where he acquired a more proper style, and finer draughtsmanship than he had earlier displayed. ...it is the later style that placed him among the great painters, which he never would have been had he not followed the Roman school and left that of Lombardy.’ A. Felli, Enstretions on the vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellent peintres anciens et modernes (1666–79; Vol. III, p. 282). The view that the experience of Rome was essential for the perfection of Annibale’s art was also held by Bellori, perhaps surprisingly, the Bolognese writer Malvasia felt that Annibale’s best works were made before leaving Bologna. See Denyesy 1977 (cited in note 9), p. 38.

12 Posner 1971 (cited in note 2), Vol. 1, p. 86, and note 57. Raphael’s Sagada Familia is only firmly documented from its arrival in the Spanish royal collection in Rome during its lifetime has been plausibly surmised on the basis of copies made there throughout the sixteenth century. See Jürg Meyer zur Capellen, Raphael: The Paintings, Volume II: The Roman Religious Paintings ca. 1508–1520, Munster 2003, pp. 190–1, and note 306, p. 194.


15 1704, Alte Quadro rappresentante altra Madonna con Bambino, S. Giuseppe, e S. Giovanni alto palmo 1 e mezzo largo palmo uno 2/12 con Cornice near a tre ordini d’intaglio dorato di Annibale Carracci. 1754. Altro Quadro rappresentante…” quoted in the National Gallery exhibition catalogue, NG 10, which was acquired in 1834.

16 Another work from the Colonna collection which later came into the National Gallery Collection is the Correggio Venus with Mercury and Cupid (‘The School of Love’), NG 10, which was acquired in 1834.

17 G. Waagen, Treasure of Art in Great Britain – London 1854. Vol. III, p. 292. The 1891 publication gives an inventory number, 77, which was found on the frame in which the picture was acquired by the Gallery. The painting was also included in two published versions, made in 1864 and 1891, of the Catalogue of the Pictures at Gasco Camera House, presumably produced by the Campbell family.

20 The layer is comprised of predominantly lead white with small amounts of brown and vermillion, slightly thicker in application than often encountered. FTIR found some chalk as well, perhaps an extender for the lead white. Oil as binder also confirmed by FTIR. In a cross-section there is a green zone at the bottom of the priming layer where the oil has reacted with the copper metal to form copper fatty acid salts (copper carboxylate band seen at 1585 cm-1 in FTIR); see report from Marika Spring, National Gallery Scientific Department. For a more general discussion of priming methods in painting on copper see Isabel Hurovitz, ‘The Materials and Techniques of European Paintings on Copper Supports’ in Copper as Canvas 1999 (cited in note 4), pp. 63–92.

21 For descriptions of the method of electron emission radiography see C. F.
Annibale Carracci’s Montalto Madonna


22 *Copper as Canvas* 1999 (cited in note 4), pp. 75–6. See also Bellori 1672 (cited in note 1), p. 84, on Salvati’s ownership of the two coppers.

23 See De Grazia 1999 (cited in note 7), p. 21, for the suggestion that the fresco of Hercules Resting in the Camerino Farnese was reversed and reworked after the composition had been completed, and, possibly, after he had begun the fresco. As this reworking involved excising sections of the frescoed plaster, replastering and repainting, it cannot be considered a pentimento in the usual sense: *Personal communication*, Aidan Weston-Lewis.

24 See the discussion of Annibale’s *Cristi and the Sebastianian Hôtel*, now in the Brera, in Dempsey 1977 (cited in note 9), pp. 32–3–

25 It cannot be ruled out that the light over dark build-up resulted from the late addition of the figure of the Baptist to the composition, but given the generally careful planning, the iconographic tradition of his presence, and the odd compositional void that would result, it seems most unlikely to have been an afterthought.


29 NG 9, 1601–2; the picture is painted on a wooden panel.


31 Bloemaert was employed by Abate Francesco Peretti, nephew of the original patron, Cardinal Alessandro Peretti Montalto, to whom it had passed by descent. Bloemaert also engraved the *Saint Margaret*, in the church of Santa Caterina dei Funari; see Benati ed. 2006 (cited in note 3), p. 286. Baldinucci was equally fulsome in his praise of Bloemaert’s engraving skill: ‘One of the merits of this artisan was an unparalleled sweetness and evenness of the handling; and in addition his ability to imitate marvelously and express the manner of the painter whose works and drawings he expresses.’ Filippo Baldinucci, *Notizie de’ professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua*, 1681, edn 1846, IV, P. 600: ‘Unso de pregj di questo artefice e stata una tale dolcezza ed egualita della taglia, da non trovarsi in pari: ed inoltre un sapere a maraviglia imitare, ed esprimere la maniera di quell pittore, di cui egli ha intagliate le opere e disegni, e in p. 398: ‘...lo accolse il Cardinale Montalto nella sua celebre villa, dove ebbe ad intagliare il proprio ritratto di lui, e più suoi insignissimi quadri, fra quali la bellissima Madonna di Annibale Caracci’; and Roethlisberger 1993 (cited in note 30), pp. 515–17. Bloemaert’s copper plate is now kept in the Chalcografia, Rome: see Roethlisberger, p. 515.


35 The *Madonna of the Basket* and the *Madonna of the Pinks* were hung together with the *Montalto Madonna* when it was first acquired, but have since been dispersed within the Gallery.

36 For example, this reputed statement by Annibale: ‘noi altri Dipinti abbiamo da parlare con le mani’ (we painters have to speak with our hands), quoted in Dempsey 1977 (cited in note 9), p. 40.

NATIONAL GALcay TECHNICAL BULLETIN VOLUME 29 | 59