

31 “The Three Age of Life” The Wrong Title Painting of Giorgione.

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“The Three Age of Life”

Giorgione, Garellia Palatina, Palace Pitti, Florence 1510

Outline

This painting is not an allegory painting like Dosso Dossi’s “Allegory of the Three Age of Life”(1520-25), but a pure religious portrait.

And also this painting is a portrait of a prelate belonging to the home of Medici. The red clothed man is probably Pope Leo X (=Giovanni de Medici). (1475-1521) on his last days of life.

The red clothed old man and the other men, young man on hat and the green clothed man, is not exist on the same time and place.

The two scenes are combined into one painting. (fig.1)



fig.1

The most suitable title I think is, “I also lead the public like Jesus.”

The two young men of the main scene in this painting was painted by Giorgione, but the red clothed man may be painted by another painter who may be Titian after Giorgione death on 1510.

I discovered that the composition of “The Calling of Saint Matthew” and “The Three Age of Life” is extremely similar to each other.

The new discovery shows this painting has the strong position to Caravaggio’s painting “The Calling of Saint Matthew”.

I believe that Caravaggio did homage to “The Three Age of Life” of Giorgione and “The Last Supper” and “The Virgin of the Rocks” (London version) of Leonardo, but not to Adam in the ceiling painting of Sistine that painted by Michelangelo.

[On this point of view, please read also my study report on web-“St. Matthew—a man with glasses on.” (2013)]

1) What is painted in ?

This painting is usually called “the Three Age of Life”. And this painting is seemed allegory expressing one.

But I can’t agree on it, because the left red clothed man is looking

outside of the frame of the painting.

Usually the person who has the line of sight to the outside of the painting is always a person out of the main story in Renaissance and Baroque painting.

In other words, the left red clothed man and the other two man is a separated scene. One is the main subject and another is the secondary subject in the painting.

Of course this painting is a religious painting, so the content is more variable on the main subject.

The green clothed man who is leading a young man is Jesus, in my opinion.

The main subject is showing “the guidance scene of Jesus”.

- 2) The difference of the two painting, Dosso Dossi’s “The Allegory of The Three Age of Life” and Giorgione’s “The Three Age of Life”.



fig.1

“The Allegory of The Three Age of Life”

Dosso Dozzi

Metropolitan Museum of Art



fig.2

“The Three Age of Life”

Giorgione and anonymous painter

Galleria Palatina

Dosso Dossi(1490?-1542) was a famous Renaissance painter on the 16th century. And he was a painter belonging to the school of Ferrara.

His painting “The Allegory of The Three Age of Life”(fig.1) is famous for

its philosophical expression of the allegory of life.

I can agree on the present explanation to this painting.

But I think Giorgione's "The Three Age of Life"(fig.2) is not an allegory painting.

Because, in this painting the red clothed man is not concerned directly to the other two persons, the young man on hat and the green clothed man, on the composition of the painting.

This painting does not have the consistency with the brush-work and the painting was consist of number of painters.

It was ordered on Renaissance period (before 1510), and was finished on Mannerism period. (after the age Raphael dead on 1520).

So, the titled name based on the allegory expression is much doubtful. The first title must not be "The Three Age of Life".

3) The line of the sight to the outside from the man in the painting.

In the beginning, we study the samples of the line of sight to the outside of the painting which was created during Renaissance and Baroque period.

We can easily check three types of the line of sight to the outside of the painting.

At first, we find it in the portrait of the Renaissance painter.

(See the fig3 and fig4)



fig.3

“Adoration of the Magi” Botticelli (a part)



fig.4

“The School of Athens” Raphael (a part)

In these paintings, the portrait of the painter is a substitute of the sign. Many painters also did the same way on a sign expression. A point common on these paintings, they are painted as secondary subject in it, and they are not concerned to the main story in the painting.

The second point that we find is the expression of the angel in the painting of Leonardo da Vinci. (See the fig.5)



fig.5

“The Virgin of The Rocks” Leonardo da Vinci 1483-1508

The angel’s line of sight is ambiguous and her line of sight goes out to the out of picture frame.

The angel in the painting has also a little concerned to the main story in it.

Her only role is to support the waist of Child not to fall.

The third point that we find is the expression of a fairy in the painting of the “Hunting of Diana”.



fig.6

fig.4 “Hunting of Diana” Domenichino 1616-17

In this case, the line of sight of the bathing fairy goes outside of the frame of the painting.

Try to compare the three cases above and the standing person on the left, in red cloth man who is painted in “The three Age of Life” (fig 7)



fig.7

“The Three Age of Life” Giorgione

This expression is the same to the other three cases.

The usage of the line of sight on this painting is same with the other three samples. The line of sight extending to the outside the frame is exactly same.

He looks like playing the secondary part just like in the other three cases.

But, the difference is the red clothed man is standing out the most in the painting compared to the other three cases.

4) Who is the red clothed man?

In conclusion, I think the red clothed man is the figure who is concerned to the order of this painting.

And in this painting, this figure is not the symbol of the painter like Botticelli or Raphael did in their paintings.

The interpretation I think is “Jesus who is leading the public”.

The green clothed man must be Jesus without the halo on.

The red cloth's color of the left man may be the symbol of a prelate.

So, the theme I think is like this- “ I also lead the public like Jesus did”.

I suppose that the red clothed man may be some cardinal or pope from

the home Medici on those days.

From the Medici family tree, I guess the red clothed man is Giovanni de Medici who is known as Leo X. (1475-1521)

Because, he is also known as a patron of the many artists on Renaissance and the Mannerism period.



fig.8

The Three Age of Life (1510-47)
by Giorgione and unknown painter



fig.9

Pope Leo X and the Cardinals (1517-19)
by Raphael Santi

I believe that “ I also lead the public like Jesus” would be the better title than the title of “The Three Age of Life”.

Because, this painting simply means, “the portrait included the religious contents.

And it’s not an allegory like in the works of Mannerism period.

The title that is known usually must be wrong, because the work was first finished on the Renaissance period, but add-painted and finished on Mannerism period.

The Mannerism preferred the allegory. So that the naming may be converted to “The Three Age of Life” , leaving the original title by the relations on the Mannerism period...

The color of red cloth is disharmonic-chrome in the painting, in my opinion

This way have been done to wake him stand-out with his appearance. The order may desired to the painter to stand out his appearance.

And since he stands out the red clothed man could not be regarded as secondary subject in this paintings.

He may be a man who seized power in those days.

So, he seems like Leo X. (the period of the time 1513-1521)

Maybe, this painting was ordered to Giorgione from Giovanni de Medici before Giorgione die on 1510.

But due to the accident, Giorgione died suddenly in Venetia 1510, and the painting could not be finished for a long time after Leo X's period at that time.(1513-1521)

So, we can know easily the figure of the red clothed man not wedded.

Please compare " Pope Leo X and the Cardinals" of Raphael Santi to "The Three Age of Life" of Giorgione. (See the fig.8, fig.9)

Raphael died on 1520. The figure of Leo X on the painting of Raphael is younger than the figure of the red clothed man in "The Three Age of Life"

So the red clothed man have been completed on Leo X's last days of life.

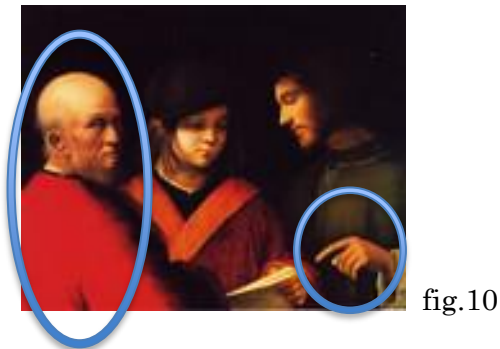
At least, the new add-brushed painter couldn't harmonize the total tone of what Giorgione had painted when he was alive.

5) The painting was not finished yet when Giorgione died on 1510.

If the painting had been finished before Giorgione died on 1510, the total feel of the material must be unified like other Giorgione's work.

Giorgione had a good technique of sfumato that he learned from Leonardo.

If so, the left red clothed man and the hand of the right side man is not the usual expression of Giorgione when he paints using the sfumato technique.



The part in the blue circle is not painted by the same painter like the other part of the painting-“The Three Age of Life”.

The painter who completed it is not known.

The painting was first painted by Giorgione, but he didn't completed when he was alive.

So, I imagine the disciple of Giorgione’s studio or the other painter who had enough skill would finished it after Giorgione died on 1510.

The painter who completed it is not known. But I imagine the painter was young like Titian Vecellio(1490-1576) in Giorgione studio in those days.

6) The influence of this painting to the Caravaggio’s work.

See the each painting in detail. (fig.11, fig12)

*The beard old man

*A young man on hat

*Jesus profile

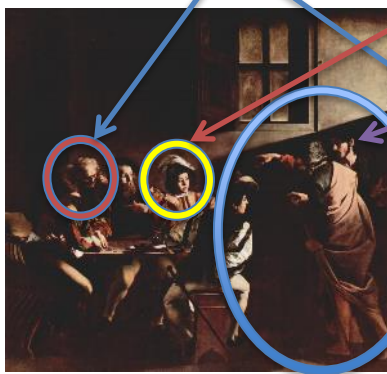


fig.11



fig.12

“The Calling of Saint Mathew” 1600

“The Three Age of Life” 1510

If Caravaggio perceived the right man in “the Three Age of life” as Jesus profile without the halo, he could use the same-imagined in his new painting as Jesus too.

There is no evidence on that, but I imagine three cases where Caravaggio might have seen this painting.

The first possibility is that Caravaggio was strongly influenced by Giorgione’s painting at the Palace Pitti at Florence, on his way to Rome.

Another possibility is that he met the replica of “The three Age of Life” on his training days at Milan. Because, his master Simone Peterziano was a painter of Venetian school, he would have a replica work of Giorgione.

The third possibility is after he was ordered “The Calling of Saint Matthew” from the San Luigi dei Francesi chapel on 1599.

But no document is in existence.

In any case, on the training day at Milan or on the way to Rome from Milan or when he ordered new painting, I assume that Caravaggio had met “The Three Age of Life” before he painted “The Calling of Saint Matthew”.

If Caravaggio hadn't seen it, he would never painted “The Calling of Saint Matthew” in Rome.

Because there are many similarities between the two paintings.

The first point is the characters’ composition. (See the fig.11 and fig.12)

We can find these characters, first the beard old man, next the young man, and last Jesus, from left to right on the each paintings. They are lined up in order.

This fact is the first strong evidence that Caravaggio was influenced by Giorgione’s “The Three Age of Life”.

7) “ The V-Line Composition”

-The theater like rounded-hollow space effect.

Moreover, the composition of the sight flow of the 3 persons is completely the same with each other. They are imaged like “V-line”. (See the fig. 13 and fig.14)

“The V-line composition” (which I named to it) produces a theater like rounded-hollow space effect.

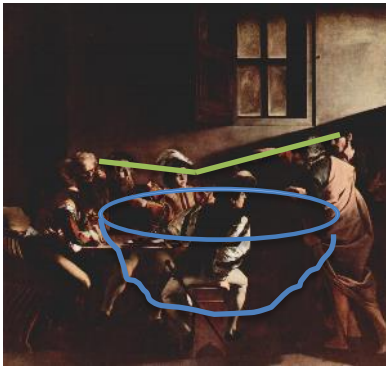


fig.13



fig.14

I can't believe that the similarity of the two paintings is only by an accident. Caravaggio must achieved the secret of a composition from Giorgione's painting.

This fact is the second evidence that Caravaggio hinted from Jesus in “The Three Age of Life”

8) The similarity of the hand's pose of each Jesus.

See the hand's poses of Jesus. (fig.15.16)

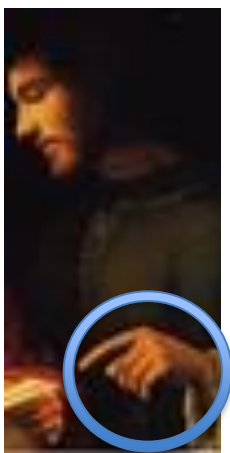


fig.15



fig.16

The Three Age of Life (a part)

The Calling of Saint Matthew(a part)

How do you imagine the two hand's pose of Jesus?

The common point is that they are both not pointing, but they are saying "there" and "over there" by hand.

Because, we find the both hand's neck is curved and the both forefinger is not straight but gently curved.

This point is the third clear evidence that Caravaggio hinted from Jesus in "The Three Age of Life"

9) Caravaggio didn't imitate "The Three Age of Life", but gave homage to Giorgione's and Leonardo's expression on his work .

The reason is evident from the 2 samples of an art history.

(See fig.17, fig. 18 and fig.19, fig.20 ,fig.21,fig22 ,fig.23 and fig.24)



"The Sleeping Venus"

1510 Giorgione

"The Venus of Urbino"

1538 Titian Vecellio

"The Venus of Urbino" is the homage to "the Sleeping Venus".



fig.19



fig.20

“The Virgin and Child with Saint Anna” “The Virgin of the Rocks” (London Ver.)

1424 Masaccio

1483~1508 Leonardo

Leonard did homage to “The Virgin and Child with Saint Anna” of Masaccio. (See the similar hands expression of Anna and Virgin.)

Maybe, Caravaggio concept of the composition of “The Calling of Saint Matthew” was influenced by the three paintings, Leonardo’s “the last supper” ,”The Virgin of the Rocks”(London version)and Giorgione’s“ The Three Age of Life”.

So many similarities indicates the relation of the three paintings.

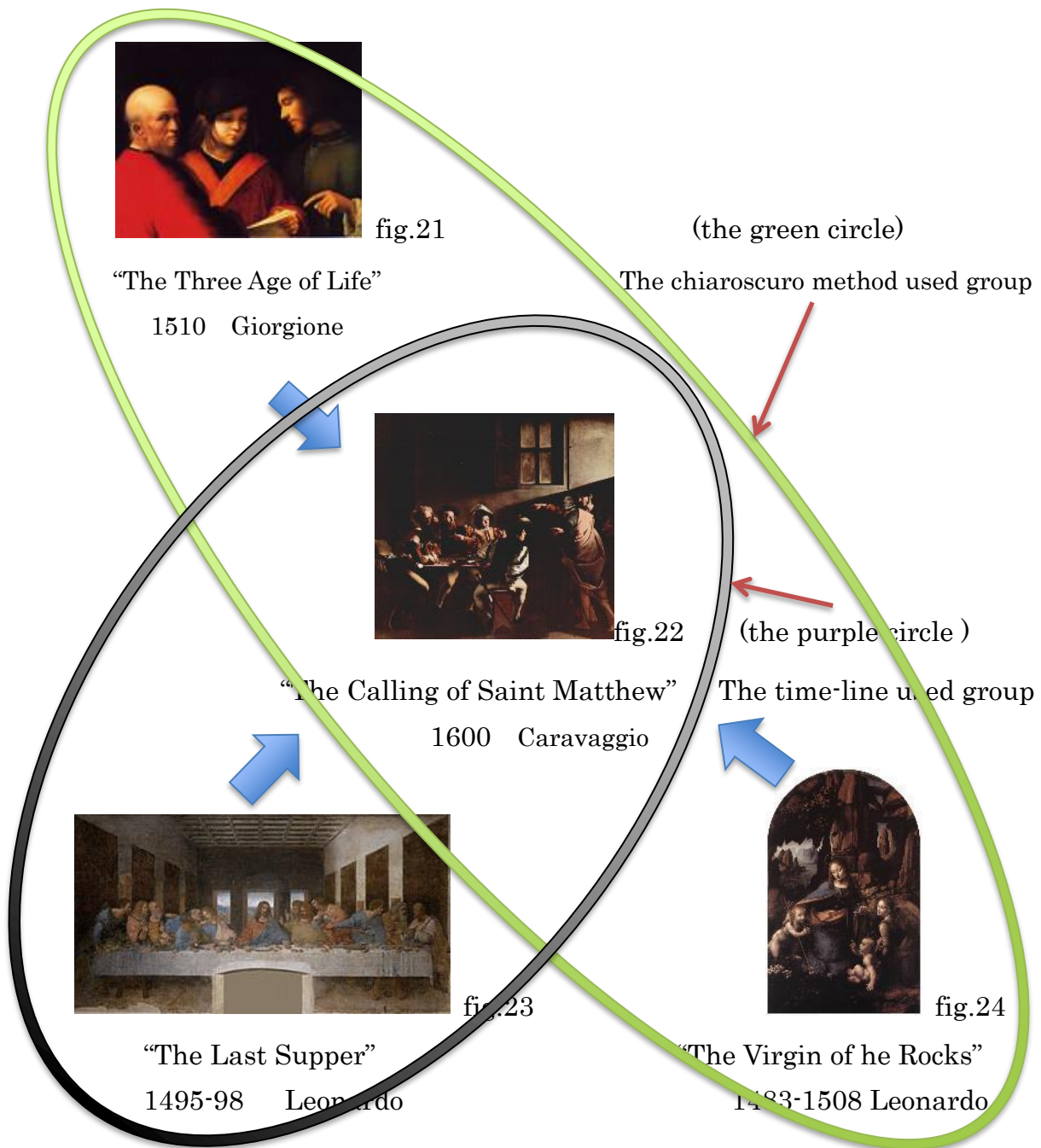
From Leonardo, Caravaggio learned the importance of the physical expression of the human, and “the time-line expression” in a story of a religious picture. (cf. ”St. Matthew - a man with glasses on” Tomonori Manabe 2013)

These two painting is formed from “the time–band expression” about a few minutes in common.

“The Virgin of the Rocks” of London version may be influenced Caravaggio to learn the method of chiaroscuro.

From Giorgione, Caravaggio did homage to Jesus’s profile and his hands pose, and the expression of other members on the painting.

Especially, the most important point is the V-line composition-the theater like rounded-hollow space effect and the light-and-shadow method.



After all, Caravaggio gave homage to Giorgione’s “The Three Age of Life” and Leonardo’s “The Last Supper” and “The Virgin of the Rocks” (London version).

Now what I can say at least is, Jesus’s right hand in his painting-“The Calling of Saint Mathew” is not a homage to Michelangelo’s painting on the ceiling in the Sistine Chapel.

10) A unique expression “a three-quarter back view figure”

See the next fig.25 and fig. 26

I think “The Three Age of Life” is the challenge expression to the figure of Leonardo da Vinci by Giorgione or another painter.



fig.25

The Mona Lisa 1503-06

Leonardo da Vinci

The three-quarter front figure



fig.26

The three Age of Life 1510

Giorgione

The three-quarter back figure

Leonardo is famous for his first three-quarter lady's front view figure.

Carefully look at fig. 25 and fig.26.

Leonardo painted “The Mona Lisa” using the new expression-“three-quarter front view figure”.

Probably, Giorgione or another painter tried the new figure expression influenced by Leonardo's. It was the red clothed man with three-quarter back view man's figure in “The Three Age of Life”.

But, “The Three Age of Life” would not be completed because of Giorgione's death on 1510.

I don't know the fact correctly, but “the three-quarter back viewing man's figure” may be completed by another painter, but not Giorgione.

Anyhow, Giorgione or another painter tried to express a new expression of figure and to get over the expression of Leonardo da Vinci.