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Rubens Reworks Leonardo: 'The Fight for the Standard'*

FRANK ZÖLLNER

I *The problem of the copies*

LEONARDO DA VINCI'S most important commission as a painter was the *Battle of Anghiari*, an over-life-size mural painting for the 'Sala del Gran Consiglio' in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, depicting the battle between Florence and Milan (1440).¹ Leonardo never finished this commission for the Florentine Republic but he seems at least to have executed a cartoon and a wall painting of a central group, the so-called 'Fight for the Standard', which included four horsemen fighting for the Milanese standard and three more soldiers fighting or crouching on the ground. The mural itself must have been destroyed between 1540, when the Medici moved into the palace, and the early sixties of the sixteenth century, when Vasari finally covered the walls of the former Sala del Consiglio with his own paintings. Roughly within the same period the cartoon also perished.² After the loss of both the cartoon and the wall painting, our knowledge of Leonardo's original creation is based on his preliminary sketches, on a number of copies of the 'Fight for the Standard' by contemporary artists and on some early descriptions.

The major problem for a modern reconstruction of Leonardo's *Battle of Anghiari* derives from the artistic quality and reliability of the early sixteenth-century copies. An aesthetically acceptable copy, such as the sketch by Raphael, lacks most details,³ while the more detailed

* I wish to thank Jack Wassermann (my most ferocious critic), Martin Warnke, Matthias Winner and W. J. Wegener for the advice and help they gave me during the writing of this article.

¹ Cf. H. Bodmer, 'Leonardos zeichnerische Vorarbeiten zur Anghiari-Schlacht', in *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, III, 1919-1932, pp. 463-91; M. Lessing, *Die Anghiari-Schlacht des Leonardo da Vinci*, Quakenbrück 1935; K. F. Suter, *Das Rätsel von Leonardos Schlachtenbild*, Strasbourg, 1937; J. Wilde, 'The Hall of the Great Council of Florence', in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, VII, 1944, pp. 65-81; G. Neufeld, 'Leonardo da Vinci's Battle of Anghiari: A Genetic Reconstruction', in *Art Bulletin*, XXXI, 1949, pp. 170-83; C. Gould, 'Leonardo's Great Battle Piece. A Conjectural Reconstruction', in *Art Bulletin*, XXXVI, 1954, pp. 117-29; O. Cederlöf, 'Leonardo's Kampen om standard', in *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift*, XXVIII, 1959, pp. 73-98, and *ibid.*, XXX, 1961, pp. 61-94; C. A. Isermeyer, 'Die Arbeiten Leonardos und Michelangelos für den großen Ratssaal in Florenz', in *Studien zur Toskanischen Kunst. Festschrift für L. H. Heydenreich*, Munich, 1964, pp. 83-130; H. T. Newton and J. R. Spencer, 'On the Location of Leonardo's Battle of Anghiari', in *Art Bulletin*, LXIV, 1983, pp. 46-63; B. Hochstetler Meyer, 'Leonardo's Battle of Anghiari: Proposals for some Sources and a Reflection', in *Art Bulletin*, LXVI, 1984, pp. 367-82; P. Meller, 'La Battaglia d'Anghiari', in *Leonardo La Pittura*, Florence, 1985, pp. 130-6 (first ed., Florence, 1977, pp. 187-94); J. S. Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, 2nd edition, Oxford, 1986, pp. 85-88; P. Joannides, 'Leonardo da Vinci, Peter Paul Rubens, Pierre-Nolasque Bergeret and the Fight for the Standard', in *ALV Journal*, I, 76-86; F. Piel, 'Die Tavola Doria — Modello Leonardos zur Anghiarischlacht', in *Pantheon*, XLVII, 1989, pp. 83-97; P. C. Marani, *Leonardo*, Florence, pp. 132-8. On political and historical aspects, see N. Rubinstein, 'Machiavelli and the Decoration of the Hall of the Great Council in the Palazzo Vecchio', in *Festschrift für Wolfgang Prinz*, to be published later this year.

² Cf. Benvenuto Cellini, *Vita*, XII (*Opere*, ed. Maier, p. 71); Suter, *Das Rätsel*, pp. 62-64. For a different view, see also C. Pedretti, *Leonardo da Vinci inedito*, Florence, 1968, pp. 76-77.

³ Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, silverpoint, 211 x 274 mm. Cf. K. T. Parker, *Catalogue of the Collection of Drawings in the Ashmolean Museum*, 2 vols, Oxford, 1956, II, no. 535; E. Knab, E. Mitsch, and K. Oberhuber, *Raphael. Die Zeichnungen*, Stuttgart, 1983, no. 112.

interpretations often are of questionable reliability or inferior artistic quality. Both superior artistic quality and a satisfactory amount of detail are found only in a large drawing in the Louvre, traditionally attributed to Rubens, who, however, having been born in 1577, could have seen neither the cartoon nor the wall painting. But the Leonardesque quality of the Louvre drawing, and of two of its early copies, has often been acknowledged,⁴ and consequently some scholars have credited this quality to the artistic empathy of Rubens, who is thought to have understood Leonardo by a kind of intuition.⁵ Others have tried to explain the Leonardesque quality of the Louvre drawing or its early copies by assuming that Rubens had known either Leonardo's original cartoon,⁶ a very exact copy of the original composition⁷ or Leonardo's so-called 'trial panel' (which I shall discuss below).⁸ However, Rubens could not have seen the cartoon, no exact copy has ever been identified, and the importance of the 'trial panel' can hardly be assessed, since we lack precise information about its appearance. Hence, today most scholars consider the Louvre drawing to be the synthesis of a combination of early copies and descriptions, and according to a general consensus the drawing traditionally attributed to Rubens and its early copies can hardly have any value for our knowledge of Leonardo's original composition.⁹

In the following paper, I reconsider the importance of the Louvre drawing and of its early copies for our understanding of Leonardo's ideas for the 'Fight for the Standard', because the attribution to Rubens has recently been questioned. According to a new opinion — shared only by few Rubens scholars and so far totally ignored in the Leonardo literature — the drawing in the Louvre is not by Rubens but by an unknown draftsman of the sixteenth century. Rubens seems only to have enlarged, retouched and, in some places, altered the work of the sixteenth-century artist.¹⁰ In view of this new opinion I shall demonstrate why the Louvre drawing cannot be attributed to Rubens, why it should be dated in the first half of the sixteenth century and why it was not copied after other copies of the 'Fight for the Standard'. Furthermore, I shall argue that the Louvre drawing and two of its early copies, which were executed before Rubens or some other draftsman made the alterations and enlargements, should be regarded as authentic reproductions after Leonardo's incomplete original version of the 'Fight for the Standard'. Finally, I will discuss the main compositional features of the Louvre drawing and its early copies and demonstrate their close relationship to Leonardo's art theory and to his surviving drawings of the period between 1503 and 1506, that is, of the period when he worked on the *Battle of Anghiari*.

FROM SOURCES and documents which pertain to the 'Fight for the Standard', we know that Leonardo received his commission for the painting in autumn 1503 and that he was given access to the 'Sala del Papa' in the Ospedale di S. Maria Novella.¹¹ There he started to work

⁴ Cf. L. Larguier, 'Collectionneurs et collections. M. E. Reynauld', in *L'art vivant*, V, 1929, pp. 519-20 (on the copy now in Los Angeles); J. van Regteren Altena, 'Rubens as a Draughtsman I. Relations with Italian Art', in *The Burlington Magazine*, LXXVI, 1940, pp. 194-200, 199; J. Wilde, 'Michelangelo and Leonardo', in *The Burlington Magazine*, XCV, 1953, pp. 65-77, p. 69 (both on the copy now in The Hague); M. Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*, Oxford, 1977, pp. 29-31.

⁵ Cf. Suter, *Das Rätsel*, pp. 81-89; M. Kemp, *Leonardo da Vinci. The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man*, London-Melbourne-Toronto, 1981, p. 239.

⁶ Van Regteren Altena, 'Rubens as a Draughtsman', p. 199; Wilde, 'Michelangelo and Leonardo', p. 69.

⁷ L. H. Heydenreich, *Leonardo da Vinci*, 2 vols, Basel, 1954, II, pp. 107-10.

⁸ Isermeyer, 'Die Arbeiten Leonardos', pp. 91 and 108.

⁹ Cf. Suter, *Das Rätsel*, pp. 82-84; C. Luporini, *La mente di Leonardo*, Florence, 1953, p. 121; Kemp, *Leonardo*, p. 239; Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*, pp. 29-30; *Rubens, ses maîtres, ses élèves. Dessins du musée du Louvre*, Cat., ed. M. Sérullaz, Paris, 1979, p. 84; Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, 1986, p. 87; Joannides, 'Leonardo da Vinci', pp. 79-80.

¹⁰ Cf. A.-M. Logan and E. Haverkamp-Begeman, 'Dessins de Rubens', in *Revue de l'art*, XLII, 1978, pp. 89-99, p. 96; A.-M. Logan, 'Rubens Exhibitions', in *Master Drawings*, XV, 1977, pp. 403-17, pp. 408-9; id., [Rev. Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*], in *Master Drawings*, XXV, 1987, pp. 63-82, pp. 70-71; J. M. Muller, 'Measures of Authenticity: The Detection of Copies in the Early Literature on Connoisseurship', in *Studies in the History of Art (Retaining the Original. Multiple Originals, Copies, and Reproductions)*, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts. Symposium Papers VII, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., vol. XX, 1989, pp. 141-9, p. 147.

¹¹ Cf. Beltrami, *Documenti*, no. 130; G. Poggi, *Leonardo da Vinci. La vita di Giorgio Vasari nuovamente commentata*, Florence, 1919, pp. 35-39. For a discussion of the documents see W. v. Seidlitz, *Leonardo da Vinci*, 2 vols, Berlin, 1909, II, pp. 58-73; E. Solmi, *Leonardo*, Florence, 1900, pp. 143-7; Isermeyer, 'Die Arbeiten Leonardos'; Pedretti, *Leonardo inedito*, pp. 53-78.

on the cartoon between the beginning of March 1504, after the paper had been prepared and cut to size (*quadratura*) and the end of June, after payments for 'rinpastare el cartone' (re-gluing of the cartoon?) are recorded.¹² A contract of 4 May 1504 obliged Leonardo to finish the cartoon by February 1505, but it also offered an extension of this deadline if he should decide to transfer a part of the unfinished composition from the cartoon to the wall. He began to paint between 13 March 1505, when the Opera del Duomo was asked to deliver the wood for the 'ponte' in the 'Sala del Consiglio', and 30 April 1505, when payments for materials and labor concerning the wall painting are recorded.¹³ In June 1505, work was well under way and payments for the painting are documented until 31 October 1505.¹⁴ Leonardo stopped working on the *Battle of Anghiari* at the end of May 1506, when he received permission to go to Milan for three months, and he seems not to have resumed his work on the incomplete painting after this date.¹⁵ On the contrary, according to later sources such as Paolo Giovio, the Anonimo Gaddiano and Giorgio Vasari, Leonardo left the painting unfinished because of problems with a new but totally unsatisfactory technique of painting.¹⁶ In the first half of the sixteenth century, the most important visual sources for any copyist of Leonardo's composition of the 'Fight for the Standard' were the cartoon and the wall painting. Leonardo's then-extant preliminary sketches, which showed some ideas for this composition, would not have been easily accessible between Leonardo's departure for France in 1516 and Francesco Melzi's death in 1572. Another source for a copyist of the *Battle of Anghiari* may have been the so-called 'trial panel', first mentioned by the Anonimo Gaddiano, who also describes its particular purpose.¹⁷ According to his account, Leonardo, who wanted to test a new technique, had painted in oil on a wooden panel which he had prepared with plaster. Then he dried the colours by the heat from a fire lit in front of the panel. This 'trial panel' almost certainly did not include any significant part of the composition,¹⁸ because Leonardo, who in those days showed an increasing reluctance to paint,¹⁹ would not have combined a technical test with any elaborate painted composition. It is highly dubious that the 'trial panel' could be of any importance for our knowledge of the 'Fight for the Standard'. Therefore I shall consider only the wall painting and the cartoon as significant visual sources for early copyists of Leonardo's 'Fight for the Standard'.

I turn now to consider briefly the extant copies, which differ in various details and, most significantly, in the rendering of the standard and in the representation of the fourth rider.²⁰ In fact, in most copies the object of the battle, the top of the Milanese standard with the banner, is almost completely missing. Only its shaft, which extends across the whole composition, is clearly visible in all the copies. In the so-called 'Tavola Doria'²¹ and in the

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¹² Beltrami, *Documenti*, nos 137 and 145. The first payment for the cartoon probably refers to the master cartoon, the second to an intermediate cartoon. This would be in keeping with the High Renaissance practice of the double cartoon as fully discussed by Carmen Bambach Cappel in a forthcoming paper. On the other hand, as Carlo Pedretti tells me, the second entry — June 30, 1504 — may refer to repairs to the cartoon ('rinpastare', i.e. re-gluing), which had been damaged shortly before, on June 6, as recorded by Leonardo himself in Madrid MS. II, f. 2 r ('il cartone si straccò').

¹³ Cf. Beltrami, *Documenti*, nos 140 (May 1504), 160 (March 1505), 165 (April 1505).

¹⁴ Cf. Madrid MS. II, f. 2 r (13 June 1505); C. Pedretti, *Leonardo inedito*, pp. 53-78, pp. 53-58; Beltrami, *Documenti*, no. 166 (October 1505).

¹⁵ Cf. Beltrami, *Documenti*, nos 160, 165, 166.

¹⁶ Cf. Paolo Giovio, *Leonardi Vinci vita* (c. 1523-1527), in Beltrami, *Documenti*, no. 258; C. Frey (ed.), *Il codice Magliabechiano Cl. XVII.17*, Berlin, 1892, pp. 114-15, p. 114; Poggi, *Leonardo. La vita*, p. 37; Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Idea del Tempio della pittura*, Milan, 1590, pp. 49-50 (Beltrami, *Documenti*, no. 31). Cf. also M. Herzfeld, 'Leonardo da Vinci und sein Reiterkampf', in *Kritische Berichte*, VII, 1938, pp. 33-65; Pedretti, *Leonardo inedito*, pp. 68-69 and 76.

¹⁷ Frey, *Il Codice Magliabechiano*, p. 114; Isermeyer, 'Die Arbeiten Leonardos'; C. Pedretti, *Leonardo. A Study in Chronology and Style*, London, 1973, pp. 86-87; id. 'The cut-throat finger', in *ALV Journal*, I, 87-88, p. 87, note 1. On Pedretti's view, cf. C. Gould, [review of Pedretti, *Leonardo*], in *The Burlington Magazine*, CXVI, 1974, p. 544.

¹⁸ This point has been stressed recently by Piel, 'Die Tavola Doria', p. 85.

¹⁹ See for example Isabella d'Este's unsuccessful attempts to have Leonardo paint something for her; cf. Beltrami, *Documenti*, nos 142 and 143; Heydenreich, *Leonardo*, I, pp. 60-61.

²⁰ The differences in the details are: the dress and the position of the right arm of the crouching soldier to the left; the varying armour on the legs and arms of the horsemen; the exact position of the left hand of the first Milanese rider; the missing octopus on the right shoulder of the same rider; the missing dagger of the foot-soldier fighting under the fourth horseman.

²¹ Private Collection, oil on panel, 850 x 1150 mm. Cf. Pedretti, *Leonardo inedito*, pp. 79-86; *Leonardo e il Leonardismo a Napoli e a Roma*, Cat., ed. A. Vezzosi, Florence, 1983, pp. 130-1, no. 267; Piel, 'Die Tavola Doria'.

panel now in the Palazzo Vecchio,²² the shaft of the banner is unfinished on the right side and the banner itself is missing almost entirely. Also, in these copies the rider to the far right appears in outline and only his head is executed in detail. In the Palazzo Vecchio panel the same rider at least shows more detail in his sinopia-like inner and outer lines. These lines indicate vestiges of the banner on his shoulder, a spear in his right hand, a slightly curved sabre to his left side, some footwear and parts of the horse's saddle. Thus, it seems as if the copyist of this panel had copied preparatory strokes of an incomplete figure (also the rather awkwardly cut-off legs of the horses in the Doria and the Uffizi panels suggest that these copies were both reproduced from an either unfinished or damaged work).²³ The incomplete state of the banner and of the Milanese rider at the far right is also, although less obviously, recorded in an early drawing in the Rucellai Collection²⁴ and by the drawings in the Louvre and its duplicates. The reliability of the Rucellai and the Louvre drawings, however, is slightly compromised by some alterations: the artist of the Rucellai copy equipped the Milanese rider with dress, sword and armour, and in the Louvre drawing not only this rider's martial outfit but also the missing banner have been added. In the copies after the Louvre drawing (which I shall discuss below), there are fewer alterations of this kind and these copies consequently give a more reliable rendering of the incomplete original composition.

7,1-3 From these observations, I would draw the following conclusion: the Rucellai drawing, the
 1 Palazzo Vecchio panel, the 'Tavola Doria' and the Louvre drawing and its copies give
 2,3 evidence of an original composition which was unfinished at the upper right side, where parts
 7 of the fourth rider and the banner are left out. The representation of this unfinished condition
 6,5,1-3 of the original composition suggests the high reliability of this group of copies.

II *The best copy and its copies*

- 1 THE LOUVRE drawing, traditionally attributed to Rubens, measures 452 by 637 mm and is executed in black chalk and pen and ink. At some later stage, the drawing was heightened with lead white, blue, grey and white body-colour and also enlarged on all four sides (the inner sheet measures c. 420 by 577 mm).²⁵ Both the underdrawing in black chalk and the work in pen and ink are confined to the inner sheet. The retouchings and alterations in wash, lead white and body-colour, however, have been applied to the already enlarged sheet and, in particular, extensive layers of grey and blue body-colour cover the whole drawing evenly. The most obvious additions are the right arm of the third rider, who brandishes a sabre (applied with brush and colour), and the tail of the horse to the right. These additions also occur in three further copies: (1) in a drawing in Cambridge, Mass.,²⁶ (2) in a print after the
 12 Louvre drawing by Gerard Edelinck (1640-1707)²⁷ and (3) in a Rubens painting in Vienna done
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²² Florence, Palazzo Vecchio, Inv. 1890, no. 5376, oil on panel, 860 × 1440 mm. Cf. K. F. Suter, 'The Earliest Copy of Leonardo da Vinci's *Battle of Anghiari*', in *The Burlington Magazine*, LV, 1929, pp. 181-8; Heydenreich, *Leonardo*, II, text to pl. 63; *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del Cinquecento. Il primato del disegno*, Cat., Florence, 1980, p. 130, no. 252.

²³ There seems to be an agreement that both the 'Tavola Doria' and the Palazzo Vecchio panel were copied from the unfinished and probably decaying wall-painting. Cf. Suter, *Das Rätsel*, p. 24; Joannides, 'Leonardo', p. 77.

²⁴ Private Collection, pen and ink on paper, 290 × 430 mm (formerly in Florence). Cf. O. Kurz, 'An Early Copy of the *Battle of Anghiari*', in *Raccolta Vinciana*, XIX, 1962, pp. 129-35. (I wish to thank the owner for his permission to publish this drawing and Jennifer Montagu and the Warburg Institute for the photograph.) A sixteenth-century copy of this drawing is in the Uffizi, no. 14591F; cf. G. Dall'i Regoli (ed.), *I Disegni di Leonardo da Vinci e della sua cerchia nel Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe della Galleria degli Uffizi* Firenze, Florence, 1985, pp. 89-90, no. 40.

²⁵ Paris, Louvre, inv. no. 20271. Cf. M. Reiset, *Notices des dessins, cartons, pastels, miniatures et émaux exposés [...] aux Musées National du Louvre*, 2 vols, Paris, 1878, II, pp. 318-20, no. 565; M. Rooses, *L'œuvre de P. P. Rubens*, vol. V, Antwerp 1892, pp. 206-7, no. 1395; G. Glück and F. M. Haberditzl, *Die Handzeichnungen von Peter Paul Rubens*, Berlin, 1928, p. 29, no. 9. F. Lugt, *Musée du Louvre. Inventaire général des dessins des écoles du nord*, 2 vols, II, Paris, 1949, no. 1084; P. P. Rubens, *Gemälde-Ölskizzen-Zeichnungen*, ed. R.-A. D'Hulst, Antwerp, 1977, p. 273, no. 118; *Rubens, ses maîtres, ses élèves*, ed. Sérullaz, pp. 82-84, no. 79, Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, pp. 85-88, no. 49 (no. 161 in the 1959 ed.).

²⁶ Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Art Museum, brown and grey wash, heightened with lead white on buff paper, 435 × 640 mm. Cf. *Drawings in the Fogg Museum of Art*, ed. A. Mongan and P. J. Sachs, 3 vols, Cambridge, Mass., 1940, I, pp. 246-7, no. 473.

²⁷ London, British Museum, engraving, 449 × 600 mm. Cf. F. Basan, *Dictionnaire des graveurs anciens et modernes*, 3 vols, Paris, 1767, I, pp. 184-7; *Rubens. Drawings and Sketches*, Catalogue, British Museum, ed. J. Rowlands, London, 1977, no. 23; *Leonardo e l'incisione. Stampe derivate da Leonardo e Bramante dal XV al XIX secolo*, Milan, 1984, p. 167, no. 254.

after the same composition.²⁸ It follows that these three works were executed subsequent to the enlargements and alterations of the Louvre drawing. More important yet are another two very exact copies after the Louvre drawing in The Hague²⁹ and in Los Angeles,³⁰ because these copies were done prior to the enlargements and alterations of the sheet in the Louvre. They are crucial for our knowledge of the original, unaltered appearance of the Louvre drawing, i.e. for its appearance in the Cinquecento when it was produced. Prior to its acquisition by the Louvre in 1852, the drawing had passed through at least five different private collections, mainly in Sweden, and was therefore known only to a few writers in central and southern Europe.³¹ Authors in the eighteenth century seem to discuss only Edelinck's print or the copies mentioned above and they considered these copies as inferior or mannerist works after Leonardo by an unknown Dutchman.³² The earliest recorded attribution of the Louvre drawing (or of one of its copies) to Rubens seems to derive from a statement by Carlo Amoretti, who in 1804 voiced a current opinion that Rubens had executed the drawing and, in doing so, altered Leonardo's original composition.³³ Later writers such as Giuseppe Bossi in 1810³⁴ or Stendhal in 1817³⁵ and most other authors in the nineteenth century took for granted the attribution Amoretti had based on hearsay.³⁶ Thus as early as 1836, the copy after the Louvre drawing now in The Hague was also catalogued as Rubens,³⁷ and some years later, in 1854-6³⁸ and 1878,³⁹ the Louvre drawing itself was definitely ascribed to Rubens, without, however, giving any reason for the attribution. In 1892, Max Rooses expressed the belief that Rubens' authorship could be accepted on the basis of the dynamic and powerful forms of the composition.⁴⁰ Most authors followed this attribution without venturing a precise argument.⁴¹ Frits Lugt in 1949 maintained that the drawing showed Rubens at his best in the parts done in pen and ink and in the retouching with body-colour. However, Lugt also observed that no other Rubens drawing from his

²⁸ Vienna, Akademie der Bildenden Künste, oil on canvas, 827 × 1170 mm. Cf. K. F. Suter, 'A Copy in Color by Rubens of Leonardo's *Battle of Anghiari*', in *The Burlington Magazine*, LVI, 1930, pp. 257-71; *Pietro Paolo Rubens*, Cat., ed. D. Bodart, Padua-Rome-Milan, 1990, pp. 64-65, no. 15.

²⁹ The Hague, Collection of H. R. H. Princess Juliana of The Netherlands, pencil or black chalk (?) and some pen and ink on paper, 435 × 565 mm. Cf. Register Altena, 'Rubens as a Draughtsman'; J. Müller-Hofstede, 'An Early Rubens Conversion of St. Paul. The Beginning of His Preoccupation with Leonardo's *Battle of Anghiari*', in *The Burlington Magazine*, CVI, 1964, pp. 95-106, p. 101; *Peter Paul Rubens*, Cat., Cologne, 1977, no. 9; Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, 1986, p. 87. I would like to thank B. Woelderink and M. Loonstra (Koninklijk Huisarchief, The Hague) for their kind cooperation.

³⁰ Los Angeles, Armand Hammer Museum, pen and brown ink on paper, 425 × 556 mm. Cf. Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, p. 87; Logan, [review of Held, *Rubens*], pp. 70-71. This drawing was formerly in the Reynauld Collection in Paris (cf. Languier, 'Collectionneurs').

³¹ Cf. Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, pp. 85-88, no. 49; *Rubens, Gemälde-Ölskizzen-Zeichnungen*, no. 118. In the eighteenth century, the drawing came into the collection of Count C. G. Tessin (Stockholm, 1695-1770). Later it belonged to the King and Queen of Sweden, then to Count G. H. Stenbock (or Steenbock) in Stockholm (1764-1833) and to Count Nils Bark (1820-1896, Paris and Madrid) who, in 1852, sold it to the Louvre.

³² Cf. Comte de Caylus, *Recueil de charges et de têtes de différents caractères*, Paris, 1767, pp. 31-32; Giovanni Bottari, *Raccolta di lettere sulla pittura, scultura ed architettura*, II, Rome, 1757, pp. 196 and 193, note (ed. S. Ticozzi, Milan, 1822, II, pp. 238 and 242); *Leben des Benvenuto Cellini Florentinischen Goldschmieds und Bildhauers von ihm selbst geschrieben übersetzt und mit einem Anhang herausgegeben von Goethe*, Tübingen, 1803, part 2, p. 268. The disapproving judgement continued for some time, cf. E.-J. Delécluze, *Léonard de Vinci*, Paris, 1841, p. 42, note 2.

³³ Carlo Amoretti, *Memorie storiche su la vita, gli studi e le opere di Leonardo da Vinci*, Milan, 1804, p. 89. Amoretti writes that Edelinck's print was done 'su disegno però che vuolsi essere stato ridotto e contraffatto da Rubens'.

³⁴ Giuseppe Bossi, *Del Cenacolo di Leonardo da Vinci libri quattro*, Milan, 1810, p. 230.

³⁵ Stendhal [i.e. Henri Beyle], *Histoire de la peinture en Italie* (1817), in Stendhal, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 26, Geneva, 1969, chapter 57, p. 233.

³⁶ Cf. G. C. Braun, *Des Leonardo da Vinci Leben und Kunst*, Halle, 1919, p. 83; F. Kugler, *Handbuch der Geschichte der Malerei in Italien*, 2 vols, Berlin, 1837, I, p. 161.

³⁷ Cf. S. and A. Woodburn, *A Catalogue of One Hundred Original Drawings by Sir P. P. Rubens, collected by Sir Thomas Lawrence*, London, 1836, no. 23.

³⁸ By Ph. de Chennevières and A. de Montaiglon (ed.), *Abecedario de P. J. Mariette*, vol. III, Paris, 1854-1856, p. 166 (*Archives de France* VI, 1854-1856).

³⁹ Reiset, *Notices de Dessins*, pp. 318-20, no. 565.

⁴⁰ Rooses, *L'œuvre de Rubens*, V, pp. 206-7, no. 1395.

⁴¹ E.g. Glück and Haberditzl, *Die Handzeichnungen*, no. 9; L. Burchard and R.-A. d'Hulst, *Rubens Drawings*, 2 vols, Brussels 1963, I, p. 87; Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*, pp. 29-30; *Rubens, ses maîtres*, ed. Sérullaz, pp. 82-84, no. 79; C. White, *Peter Paul Rubens*, New Haven-London, 1987, pp. 19-20. Only A. Rosenberg, *Leonardo da Vinci*, Bielefeld and Leipzig, 1898, fig. 88, expressed doubts about the traditional attribution.

Italian period shows a comparably high level of diligence.⁴² Julius Held stresses the 'brilliance of Rubens' style, especially in the work in ink and in water-colour', but he also considers that the underdrawing in chalk may be the work of a pupil.⁴³

- 1 FROM THE HISTORY of the Louvre drawing and from the few judgements quoted here it becomes clear that its attribution to Rubens is based only on descriptive observations and not on a thorough and critical comparison of its technique and style with authentic Rubens drawings. The need for a more critical examination is obvious from the judgements cited above. Lugt wondered about the unusually high degree of diligence and Held even advanced the idea that the chalk underdrawing could be the work of a pupil of Rubens. Yet another point should have prompted a more cautious view of the attribution: according to the traditional understanding, Rubens executed the composition on the inner sheet of the Louvre drawing during the first years of his Italian period. This early version in black chalk, as yet lacking the alterations and enlargements, was then copied either by himself⁴⁴ or by a pupil,⁴⁵ and only later did Rubens rework the enlarged drawing with a different technique. Since the stylistic features of the reworkings are different from both the underdrawing in black chalk and from the work in pen and ink, these reworkings must pertain to a later period of Rubens' career.⁴⁶ Following this traditional understanding, the stylistic and technical contrasts in the Louvre drawing have to be explained with the rather complicated assumption that Rubens reworked his drawing not only twice (in pen and ink, and then with brush, body-colour and lead white) but also in two stylistically very different ways. Obviously, this somewhat difficult reasoning — an artist copies a copy of an unfinished composition by Leonardo, copies his own copy (or has it copied by a pupil), enlarges and alters the first copy and finally completes the unfinished parts of his original composition (i.e. the first copy) — suggests another explanation: the Louvre drawing is the creation of a sixteenth-century artist that Rubens reworked. If one accepts this explanation, a more plausible sequence for the different versions after the 'Fight for the Standard' results: first the Louvre drawing, without its enlargements and alterations, was produced by an unknown Cinquecento draftsman after Leonardo's original composition; then at some later stage two unknown artists of the sixteenth century copied this drawing, thus creating the versions now in The Hague and Los Angeles; at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Rubens acquired, repaired and altered the original Cinquecento drawing now in the Louvre; later he painted the version of the 'Fight for the Standard' (now in Vienna) after the drawing which he had altered some years earlier; finally, after Rubens' death, Edelinck produced his print after the Louvre drawing. At some point towards the end of this sequence an unknown artist of the seventeenth century created the drawing which is now in Cambridge, Mass. Furthermore, if one accepts this explanation and this sequence of copies, the recognition of the Leonardesque quality of the Louvre drawing, hitherto credited to Rubens' artistic empathy, would be understandable: the Louvre drawing owes its Leonardesque quality to the draftsmanship of the Cinquecento artist who had access to Leonardo's original composition of the 'Fight for the Standard'.
- 2,3
1 A DETAILED examination of the Louvre drawing confirms that it is the product of at least two quite distinct draftsmen. The first artist copied Leonardo's composition very carefully onto a sheet of paper that turned out to be too small for the whole composition. Later, a second draftsman enlarged the sheet on all four sides and then reworked the enlarged version

⁴² Lugt, *Inventaire*, no. 1084.

⁴³ Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, 1986, pp. 87-88.

⁴⁴ Cf. Regteren-Altena, 'Rubens as a Draughtsman', p. 194.

⁴⁵ Cf. Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, p. 86.

⁴⁶ Cf. Suter, 'A Copy in Color', pp. 265-266; id., *Das Rätsel*, 1937, pp. 81-85; Müller-Hofstede, 'An Early Conversion', pp. 101-102; Isermeyer, 'Die Arbeiten Leonardos', pp. 107-10; Joannides, 'Leonardo', p. 79.

with lead white, wash and body-colour. The first artist's technique reveals the attitude of a good copyist who worked slowly, carefully and without much inspiration. For example, he applied the black chalk very evenly and without the kind of vivid accentuation typical of Rubens.⁴⁷ In this un-Rubenesque way our draftsman did the main underdrawing in black chalk. Also some preliminary strokes in black chalk, which have been obscured by the later reworkings, are visible at the first horse's front legs and at the rear legs of the horse to the right. One could regard these traces as initial attempts to find the proper position of those legs. Both the preliminary nature of these strokes and the fact that the sheet's size was inadequate suggest that the artist did not copy from another copy but from a much larger composition such as a cartoon or wall painting. At a second stage, our copyist reinforced the very detailed chalk drawing with strong but not particularly fluent lines in pen and ink. With the same technique our draftsman established the shading in pen and ink, most noticeable on the horses' backs. Also with pen and ink the artist started, but did not always finish, redrawing details such as the fringe on the first rider's dress and the mail on his arms. The reinforcements of the outlines in pen and ink follow very accurately and almost timidly the chalk underdrawing and, more significantly, they are limited exclusively to the inner part of the sheet and do not occur on the added pieces of paper. The work in pen and ink and also the underdrawing in black chalk were without doubt executed prior to the enlargements.

The particularly close relationship between the chalk underdrawing and the reinforcements and shadings in pen and ink becomes more evident from a further analysis. With his pen the artist gives a stronger edge to the outlines (most noticeably in the shield of the warrior at the lower left side) and in some places clarifies the details. This kind of clarification can be noticed in the first rider to the left, where the mail on his arm is almost pedantically reworked with pen and ink. In other places, as for example in the fringe of the first rider's dress or in the octopus on his shoulder, the penwork remained unfinished. Thus the artist achieved a contrast between darker areas, reworked with pen and ink, and brighter parts, done only in black chalk. This procedure is consistent with his use of pen and ink for the shading, to be found in almost every part of the drawing, but most noticeably on the left side (we know in fact from other copies that the light came from the right and that therefore the left side was darker). However, the short and thick strokes in pen and ink of the Louvre drawing are unlike Rubens, who had a very different technique for rendering shades with the pen. He often used cross-hatching for this purpose (as, for example, in his preparatory drawing for the *Duke of Lerma*,⁴⁸ and generally his strokes are lighter, longer, more fluent and much less pedantic than the heavy dots in the Louvre drawing. In addition, the timidly re-drawn outlines of the shield on the lower left side lack the quality of Rubens, who made these kinds of reinforcements more confidently and with a more subtle application of the ink.⁴⁹ From these observations, we can conclude that both the chalk underdrawing and its reworkings with pen and ink were executed by the same artist or, less likely but also possible, that the parts in pen and ink were done by another draftsman who followed his predecessor in an extremely careful and almost timid way. Neither draftsman can be identified with Rubens on the basis of technique.

THE REWORKINGS in wash, body-colour and lead white are of an altogether different nature, much more vigorous and with little respect for the work done in black chalk and in pen and ink. For example, in the drapery of the first rider's cloak, in the additional modelling

⁴⁷ On this characteristic of Rubens' technique, see e.g. Logan, [review of Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*], p. 69.

⁴⁸ Paris, Louvre, inv. no. 20.185, black chalk, pen and ink on paper, 300 × 215 mm (Lugt, *Inventaire*, no. 1018; Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, no. 26). To my knowledge, short and heavy strokes with pen and ink as in the Louvre drawing are not found in the oeuvre of Rubens. A few and somewhat similar strokes and dots can be found only on fol. 1 of the 'Costume Book' and on the drawing of an ass, both in the British Museum (cf. A. M. Hind, *Catalogue of Drawings by Dutch and Flemish Artists [...] in the British Museum*, II, 1923, nos 115 and 119) and on a drawing for the print of Caesar in the Louvre (Lugt, *Inventaire*, no. 1085).

⁴⁹ Examples with a similar technique are: Lugt, *Inventaire*, no. 1022; Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, nos 15, 59, 103.

of the two soldiers fighting on the ground, in the hand added to one of those soldiers or in the corrections to the belly and the mane of the horse to the left, the artist vigorously drew over the older composition. These additions are done energetically and they are significantly different both from the more cautious underdrawing executed in black chalk and from the almost timid reworking in pen and ink. Therefore, the author of the alterations and additions, who most likely also did the enlargements, can hardly be identical with the artist of the black chalk drawing. However, at least the reworking in wash, lead and body-colour seem to be by Rubens. In particular, the arm given to the second rider from the left shows a rendering of the muscles almost as if the arm was composed of a bundle of little flames. This kind of touch with the brush, in fact, occurs frequently in Rubens' œuvre.⁵⁰

Rubens' practice of reworking the creations of other artists often goes so far as to alter or obliterate parts of the original composition. Thus, in the Louvre drawing, he eliminated the head of the first rider's horse⁵¹ and he also changed a significant detail of the foot-soldier falling onto his shield: the copies in The Hague and Los Angeles and also Zacchia's print, show a smaller shield, and at the bottom of the sheet, below this shield, a cap that had fallen off the foot-soldier's head is still visible. Rubens eliminated the few and probably already-fading vestiges of this cap and misinterpreted a small part of its circumference as the lower perimeter of the shield. The cap thus vanishes and becomes part of the enlarged shield. This misinterpretation and obliteration of the cap suggests that Rubens was not the author of the chalk underdrawing and that he reworked the Cinquecento drawing without knowing other copies such as Zacchia's print.

Other evidence confirms that the original author of the Louvre drawing was not Rubens. The 'Fight for the Standard' fits neatly into the large group of drawings repaired and retouched by Rubens who, particularly in his early career, had acquired and then, when it seemed convenient, repaired and altered drawings of earlier masters.⁵² Rubens' practice of repairing and retouching works of earlier masters was well known to eighteenth-century connoisseurs⁵³ and it has received greater recognition in recent years.⁵⁴ The 'Fight for the Standard' in the Louvre is one of these drawings because it evidently shows all their typical features: repairs of the paper, emendations, substantial reworking and considerable stylistic discrepancies.

Finally, a further stylistic observation, namely, that the style of the Louvre drawing does not fit Rubens' very individual way of copying, speaks against the traditional attribution.⁵⁵ In fact, an examination of authentic Rubens copies after older masters shows, in almost all instances, that his own personal style remains evident.⁵⁶ Particularly in his copies of complete compositions and of compositions with several figures, Rubens emerges as a creative copyist who either altered the original composition or at least left recognizable traces of his personal style. For example, in his drawing *Augustus and the Sibyl* after Pordenone (whose authenticity

⁵⁰ E.g. Lugt, *Inventaire*, nos 1013 and 1014.

⁵¹ Faint vestiges of the horse's head are still visible close to the head and to the left shoulder of the first rider. This has been already observed by Logan, [review of Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*], p. 70.

⁵² Some examples are: Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*, nos 25, 31 (for this drawing, see also *Raffaello a Firenze. Dipinti e disegni delle collezioni fiorentine*, Cat., Florence, 1984, pp. 302-3, no. 12 [S. Ferino]), 59, 60, 109, III, 123, 125, 164, 167; *Rubens. Drawings and Sketches*, ed. Rowlands, 1977, nos 45-45a; *Rubens in Oxford*, Cat., ed. C. Whistler and J. Wood, London and Florence, 1988, nos 14-18. This is a preliminary selection because the attribution of retouched drawings to Rubens is still open to discussion.

⁵³ Cf. Jonathan Richardson, *Two Discourses*, London, 1719, pp. 175-6, after Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, 1986, p. 49, note 31; *Rubens in Oxford*, p. 9.

⁵⁴ Cf. M. Jaffé, 'Rubens as a Collector of Drawings', in *Master Drawings*, II, 1964, pp. 383-97, *ibid.*, III, 1965, pp. 21-35, *ibid.*, IV, 1966, pp. 127-48; *Rubens. Drawings and Sketches*, ed. Rowlands, 1977, nos 45-45a; Logan, 'Dessins de Rubens', pp. 94-96; Logan, 'Rubens Exhibitions', pp. 408-409; D. Freedberg, 'L'année Rubens, manifestations et publications', in *Revue de l'art*, XXXIX, 1978, pp. 82-94; Logan, [review of Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*], pp. 70-71; *Rubens in Oxford*, pp. 8-18; B. Magnusson, 'Some Drawings by Rubens in the Nationalmuseum', in *Nationalmuseum Bulletin*, I, 1977, pp. 75-84; Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, pp. 47-49; C. White, *Peter Paul Rubens*, New Haven and London, 1987, pp. 21-23. For Rubens as a collector, see J. M. Muller, *Rubens. The Artist as a Collector*, Princeton, N.J., 1989.

⁵⁵ Cf. M. Jaffé, *Rubens in Italy*, passim; J. M. Muller, 'Rubens' Theory and Practice of the Imitation of Art', in *Art Bulletin*, LXIV, 1982, pp. 229-47, pp. 235-47; E. Haverkamp-Begemann and C. Logan, *Creative Copies. Interpretative Drawings from Michelangelo to Picasso*, New York, 1988, pp. 71-93. For a different opinion on the copies, see White, *Rubens*, pp. 16-20.

⁵⁶ For a similar view, see Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, p. 43.

is documented by the handwriting in the upper left),⁵⁷ the light and fluid brush work of the water-colours bears witness to Rubens, hand. In his copy after Mantegna's *Triumph of Caesar*, the soft touch around the eyes and around the chin as well as the heavy eyelids of the figures are characteristic of Rubens' faces.⁵⁸ Other examples, such as the drawings after Giulio Romano's *Battle of Constantine*⁵⁹ and after Paolo Veronese's *Feast in the House of Simon*,⁶⁰ show that Rubens did not copy slavishly.⁶¹ In particular, faces often lose some of their original character and become at least slightly Rubenesque. Thus Rubens, who was always conscious of his own style,⁶² did not strive for absolutely accurate replicas of other artists' works in his copies and particularly not in the rendering of facial expression and in the re-creation of compositions with many figures. Only in his copies of small compositions or of single figures, such as in his drawings after Hans Holbein's *Dance of Death*⁶³ or Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, are the vestiges of Rubens' personal style hard to find.⁶⁴

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TAKING INTO account these observations about Rubens as a copyist, it is hardly conceivable that he would have copied accurately an unfinished work such as an imperfect and probably rather poor copy of Leonardo's incomplete composition for the 'Fight for the Standard', that is, without leaving some vestiges of his own style. Neither would he have copied embarrassing mistakes like the unsupported spearhead under the head of the third horse, which still can be seen in the Louvre drawing, but which is eliminated in Rubens' own painting in Vienna after this drawing. The peculiar (that is, faulty) treatment of the misplaced spearhead in the Louvre drawing also strongly suggests that this drawing is not a copy after earlier copies: if the author of the Louvre drawing had used, combined and copied other, earlier copies of the original composition, he would not have copied an obvious mistake. The use of more than one source should have excluded a mistake like the unsupported spearhead because a copyist who draws on several sources strives for completeness and accuracy and hence would correct embarrassing errors. Another mistake, the missing dagger of the soldier fighting on the ground, mentioned by Vasari and known from the Rucellai, Timbal⁶⁵ and Horne copies,⁶⁶ has not been eliminated, and therefore this mistake also suggests that the

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⁵⁷ Paris, Louvre, chalk and water-colours, 399 × 334 mm; Lugt, *Inventaire*, no. 1065; Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*, colour plate iii.

⁵⁸ Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, pencil and chalk, 420 × 350 mm. Cf. R. Van N. Hadley, *Drawings. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum*, Boston, 1968, p. 29, no. 13; Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*, pl. 104.

⁵⁹ Paris, Louvre, pen and ink, and body-colour, 333 × 583; Lugt, *Inventaire*, no. 1083 (this drawing may be only retouched by Rubens).

⁶⁰ London, British Museum, ink and body-colour, 528 × 915 mm; cf. A. M. Hind, *Catalogue of Drawings by Dutch and Flemish Artists [...] in the British Museum*, II, London, 1923, p. 20, no. 45; Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*, p. 37 and pl. 91. Veronese's painting, oil on canvas, 3150 × 4510 mm, is now in Turin, Galleria Sabauda. For a good illustration of this painting, see R. Pallucchini, *Veronese*, Milan, 1984, p. 31.

⁶¹ Other examples of Rubens' way of copying are: Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*, pls 62, 70, 73, 78, 130, 156-8, 163, 233; Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, nos 1-3; *Rubens, ses maîtres*, ed. Sérullaz, nos 76-78, 80, 81, 92, 93, 95-107.

⁶² Rubens did not want to be confused with other masters; cf. Ch. Ruelens and M. Rooses, *La Correspondance de Rubens et documents épistolaires*, 6 vols, Antwerp, 1887-1909, I, p. 145; M. Warnke, *Kommentare zu Rubens*, Berlin, 1965, pp. 8-9. However, when Rubens wanted to sell paintings from his workshop, finished or retouched by himself, his position was somewhat different; cf. Ruelens and Rooses, *La Correspondance de Rubens*, II, pp. 149-50.

⁶³ Cf. Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, nos 1 and 2; U. Söding [Rev. Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*], in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, L, 1987, pp. 564-71, p. 565; K. L. Belkin, 'Rubens's Latin Inscriptions on his Copies After Holbein's *Dance of Death*', in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, LII, 1989, pp. 245-50.

⁶⁴ Paris, Louvre, Lugt, *Inventaire*, nos 1040-47; for a further discussion, see Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, p. 74, no. 22, and *Michelangelo e la Sistina. La tecnica, il restauro, il mito*, Rome, 1990, p. 173, no. 44.

⁶⁵ Private Collection, oil on panel transferred to canvas, 720 × 840 mm. This sixteenth-century painting after Leonardo's composition disappeared shortly after its discovery in the nineteenth century. The painting was in the collections of Vicomte de Laborde (1764-1833), Charles Timbal and Charles Jacques (1813-1894). In 1867 it was engraved by William Haussoullier (cf. Larguier, 'Collectionneurs', p. 520) and also photographed (cf. J. P. Richter, *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, 2 vols, London, 1983, I, p. 336; Suter, 'A Copy in Color', pl. IIIa, and id., *Das Rätsel*, p. 31-33). The painting reappeared at a sale in the Palais d'Orsay, Paris, on 21 November 1978 (no. 38. Cf. N. Dacos, 'Pedro Machuca en Italie', in *Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Federico Zeri*, 2 vols, Milan, 1984, I, pp. 323-61, p. 360, note 22. (I owe this reference to Nicole Dacos, Rome, and Domenico Laurenza, Naples.) It is here reproduced for the first time in colour by kind permission of the owner.

⁶⁶ Florence, Museo Horne, no. 6, oil on canvas, 1540 × 2120 mm (here, however, the dagger has become a sword); cf. Suter, *Das Rätsel*, p. 30 and pl. IIIa; F. Rossi (ed.), *Il Museo Horne a Firenze*, Milan, 1967, p. 147 and pl. 69; *Firenze e la Toscana*, p. 130, no. 253; Joannides, 'Leonardo', p. 78 and pl. 68.

Louvre drawing was not copied from a combination of other copies (such as the ones mentioned above) and completed according to Vasari's description.⁶⁷ If one accepts that Rubens' copies after complete compositions of older masters generally show recognizable vestiges of his personal style, then it becomes clear that the human and equine physiognomies in the Louvre drawing can hardly be the creation of the Antwerp master. The faces of the two horsemen to the left, with their hooked noses and thick creases around the mouth, are in no way Rubenesque. They very much resemble Leonardo's well-known type for an old man (see below). In comparison, the physiognomy of the horses in the Louvre drawing is less Leonardesque but, again, it is equally distinct from Rubens' favorite type of horse, which usually has a much more slender head (see, for example, the drawing for the *Duke of Lerma*).

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III *The question of reliability*

FROM THE ABOVE considerations we can conclude that the Louvre drawing was originally by a Cinquecento master and that it was enlarged and reworked with wash, body-colour and lead white by a later draftsman, most likely by Rubens. Rubens's alterations in some places obscure the original Cinquecento drawing and a layer of blue and grey wash covers the background almost entirely. Fortunately, we still have precise knowledge of the drawing's appearance prior to the alterations, because it was copied very accurately at least twice before Rubens began to rework the older sheet. The two drawings in The Hague and in Los Angeles are extremely faithful copies; they give all details exactly and they also have roughly the same size as the Cinquecento part of the Louvre drawing, i.e. the central sheet without the pieces of paper added later by Rubens. In the following, I shall argue for the fidelity of the drawings in the Louvre, The Hague and Los Angeles to Leonardo's original conception.

The drawing in The Hague has been credited at least twice with having the quality of a Cinquecento work of art.⁶⁸ The same is true of the drawing in Los Angeles which, when in a private collection in Paris around 1929, was attributed by its owner to Leonardo himself or at least to some sixteenth-century draftsman.⁶⁹ At a sale in Paris in 1977, the same drawing reappeared under attribution to Giulio Romano.⁷⁰ The source for both the version in The Hague and in Los Angeles was the Louvre drawing prior to its enlargements and reworking, because preliminary strokes in chalk around the front legs of the horse to the left and around the rear legs of the horse to the right can be found only in the Louvre version. In comparison, the drawing in The Hague has a different character: the tentative strokes are completely missing. That this work is a copy of another drawing — most likely copied from the Louvre version — also becomes apparent from the simplifications at the neck of the second horse (the shade between neck and head is transformed into a meaningless flat shape) and on the dress of the soldier at the lower left side (the bands of the dress are mistakenly fixed to the shield).⁷¹ The version in Los Angeles also seems to be a copy after a drawing, but without knowing the original I would not venture any further judgement.

The drawings in the Louvre, The Hague and Los Angeles constitute a homogeneous group of copies after the 'Fight for the Standard', whose archetype is the Louvre version in its unaltered condition. One important and striking feature of all three drawings, as discussed above, is their conscious reference to unfinished parts at the upper right side of Leonardo's composition. These references to an incomplete original are slightly obscured by the additions in the Louvre drawing, but they are clearly visible in the versions in The Hague and

⁶⁷ Cf. Joannides, 'Leonardo', p. 80, who discusses the same point, however, with a different conclusion.

⁶⁸ Cf. Heydenreich, *Leonardo*, II, text to pl. 64; Regteren Altena, 'Rubens as a Draughtsman', p. 199.

⁶⁹ Cf. Larguier, 'Collectionneurs'.

⁷⁰ Logan, [review of Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*], pp. 70-71.

⁷¹ Cf. Müller-Hofstede, 'An Early Conversion', p. 101.

in Los Angeles. The horseman to the far right in particular suffers from being incomplete: his right hand with the shaft of a spear is hardly visible, the piece of cloth on his shoulder could be either a coat or a part of the Milanese banner, and the visible part of his leg (which is probably just a copy of the leg of the horseman to the far left) remains without a proper stirrup to rest on. The incompleteness of the rider to the right stands in a vivid contrast to the horseman on the left which shows an extraordinary amount of detail. This incompleteness of the right side of Leonardo's original composition is confirmed by the 'Tavola Doria' and the panel in the Palazzo Vecchio.

There are, however, some inaccuracies in this group of drawings. For example, the straight sword of the horseman to the right is certainly drawn according to the phantasy of the copyist, because all other copies give a curved sabre. The second rider from the right, i.e. the Florentine horseman in the background, poses another problem because his head-gear in our group of drawings is very different from the dragon helmet given in most other copies. However, Lorenzo Zacchia's print of 1558 shows this figure wearing a turban⁷², and physiognomies similar to that of the Florentine horseman are known from other Leonardo drawings.⁷³ It remains therefore possible that the appearance of this rider reflects one of Leonardo's original concepts.

The remaining major inaccuracies, which cannot be related to Leonardo's ideas, occur at the upper right side of the composition, between the misplaced spearhead and the head of the right horseman. But at least the awkward presence of the misplaced spearhead could also have occurred in the original composition, an infelicity, as we can conclude from other copies, Leonardo seems to have eliminated later. It is therefore not unreasonable to ask if the archetype of our group of drawings derives from a work that was altered later, i.e. after Leonardo's unfinished cartoon. In this case, the copyist would have copied a misplaced spearhead which Leonardo emended later in the execution of the wall painting. This conclusion must remain hypothetical; on the other hand, it would explain the existence of an embarrassing error in drawings that otherwise aim at correctness and reliability.

The observations made so far suggest that the draftsman of the Louvre drawing saw Leonardo's unfinished composition and that he took into account its incomplete state. This incompleteness provoked some free additions (e.g. the straight sabre) on the right side of the composition, but generally our artist tried to render all features copied as accurately as possible. In particular, the first rider to the left shows a wealth of detail which is confirmed by other early copies, for example by the 'Tavola Doria' and by a drawing in the Louvre showing the single horseman alone.⁷⁴ The draftsman of this sheet, whose obvious objective was a high degree of reliability, gives an extremely detailed account of the original, and his striving for accuracy goes as far as depicting the horseshoe nails under one front hoof of the horse. The comparison of this copy with our group of drawings shows that these versions are generally very reliable, and only in the rendering of the drapery and the octopus on the right shoulder of the horseman are there some minor variations. But further observations confirm that our group of drawings is sufficiently accurate in most important details such as the sword with its handle in the shape of a lion's paw, the armour, the head-gear, the horse's tail and the strong veins of its rear legs. Furthermore, a major strength of the versions in the Louvre, The Hague and Los Angeles becomes apparent: the impressive rendering of this horseman's Leonardesque physiognomy, which in the single rider in the Louvre is still recognizable, albeit much weaker.

⁷² Lorenzo Zacchia the Younger, Vienna, Albertina, Engraving, 374 × 470 mm. Zacchia was born c. 1524 in Lucca and he died after 1587; cf. Thieme-Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*, vol. XXXVI, Leipzig, 1947, p. 375. For the Florentine horseman, see also the drawing attributed to Leonardo in Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts (cf. Joannides, 'Leonardo', p. 78, note 8, and fig. 13). In my opinion both the date and the reliability of Zacchia's print need reconsideration.

⁷³ Windsor, RL 12276 v, 12499 and 12500 (compare in particular the shape of the nose).

⁷⁴ Paris, Louvre, inv. no. 2559, metalpoint, pen and ink, heightened with lead white, on tinted paper, 246 × 242 mm, published for the first time by Emil Möller, in *Raccolta Vinciana*, XIV, 1930-1934, p. 15, fig. 4. Cf. Suter, *Das Rätsel*, pl. IVb.

- 9 ANOTHER EARLY drawing of a single horseman after the 'Fight for the Standard' exists in the British Museum.⁷⁵ It is a rather pedantic but therefore also reliable work and shows the unfinished rider to the far right. This drawing confirms that the incompleteness of Leonardo's original composition and the 'physiognomy' of the horse are rendered correctly in the versions in the Louvre (prior to the reworking), The Hague and Los Angeles. A significant difference between these drawings and the British Museum rider emerges: here the horse's teeth, very prominently displayed in our group of three drawings, are covered by its lip and are therefore not visible. However, both Vasari's description of these teeth, and their appearance in Zacchia's print and in the Timbal copy, suggest that our group of drawings is also reliable in this instance.

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A comparison between the two copies of single horsemen and the versions of the 'Fight for the Standard' in the Louvre, The Hague and Los Angeles points to the high degree of reliability of these drawings. Furthermore, the few differences noted suggest that the Louvre version of the 'Fight for the Standard' was not copied after the drawings of a single rider.

IV Leonardo's concept of balanced motion

- 9 THE BRITISH MUSEUM drawing of a single horsemen draws attention to a particular and important compositional feature of Leonardo's 'Fight for the Standard'. In this drawing, the rider sits awkwardly far back on his horse and this undynamic position renders his violent movement towards the shaft of the standard incomprehensible. The horseman seems to be stuck to the horse instead of being in movement towards the standard, which is the goal of his efforts. This movement is particularly conveyed in our group of drawings, where the rider grasps the standard with his left hand, thus moving away and being pulled out of the saddle. A faint trace of his being pulled away by the force of the struggle is also visible in the Uffizi copy, since here as well the rider rises slightly from the saddle, pressing his leg and knee against the neck of the horse.

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The highly-developed understanding of balanced movement and the coincidence of details described so far suggest that the prototype of our group of drawings (most likely the version in the Louvre, traditionally attributed to Rubens) has been copied from Leonardo's original composition. In particular, the convincing and accurate rendering of balanced movement, almost entirely absent from all other copies, confirms the highly Leonardesque character of these drawings. Significantly, the balance between the major forces centers around the motif of the struggle, i.e. around the standard which for only a short and transitory moment unites the movements of the horsemen.⁷⁶ This balance is transitory because the shaft of the standard seems to be breaking under the strain of opposing motions. It breaks firstly behind the back of the first horseman and secondly — at least in the Louvre version — further to the right, close to the hand of the fourth horseman. It remains, however, unclear whether the standard breaks twice, because in the drawing in The Hague there is no indication of a crack. But evidently our group of drawings shows the battle at a moment when a clearly visible balance of forces will be compelled to break up in the next second.

From a further analysis of Leonardo's works, we can deduce that it was exactly this breaking up of balance he wanted to demonstrate. While working on the *Battle of Anghiari* between 1503 and 1506, Leonardo developed a renewed and strong interest in the problem of balance, even planning to write a book on this subject.⁷⁷ Leonardo's increasing concern for problems of

⁷⁵ London, British Museum, pen and ink, grey wash, on pink tinted paper, 267 × 237 mm. Cf. A. E. Popham and E. Pouncy, *Italian Drawings in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, London, 1950, no. 117; Suter, *Das Rätsel*, pl. IVa and pp. 26-27.

⁷⁶ Cf. also the analysis of Heydenreich, *Leonardo*, I, pp. 48-52.

⁷⁷ Cf. Lu 397 (McM 331) in CU, ff. 129 r-v. Cf. F. Zöllner, 'Die Bedeutung von Codex Huygens und Codex Urbinas für die Proportions- und Bewegungsstudien Leonardo's da Vinci', in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, LII, 1989, pp. 334-52, p. 351. In the

equilibrium in motion also emerges in a number of drawings from the period between 1503 and 1506, for example in his preparatory sketches for the *Battle of Anghiari*.⁷⁸ These drawings demonstrate Leonardo's striving for a compositional balance between the opposing movements of a fierce and violent struggle. In the first sketch, the battle seems to be a cluster of fighting men and beasts, held loosely together without a proper centre of balance. This centre of balance is added in a second sketch, which shows almost the final solution for the 'Fight for the Standard'. Two horses with their legs interlocked are placed in the centre, and the counter movements of the fighting figures and animals to each side are held together by the banner and its shaft. Precisely this particular device of merging movement and counter-movement into a transitory compositional balance can be found in a number of other drawings of the same period, for example in Leonardo's drawing of *Neptune with the Sea Horses*⁷⁹ or, less violently, in some sketches for the kneeling Leda, all drawings which take into account the lesson of Antiquity.⁸⁰ In particular, the Neptune drawing shows exactly that balance of movement which is about to disintegrate in the 'Fight for the Standard'. The Leonardesque character of the group of drawings in the Louvre, The Hague and Los Angeles is not only manifested in their exemplifying Leonardo's concept of balanced movement. There are also other Leonardesque features, such as the rearing horses which are very similar to Leonardo's horses for the Trivulzio Monument.⁸¹ But above all, the fierce physiognomy of the Milanese horseman breathes the spirit of faces very typical for Leonardo. In fact, no other copy shows a similarly strong and Leonardesque type of facial expression, and a comparison of the Louvre and the Los Angeles drawings with Leonardo's preparatory study for one of those faces⁸² or with the sixteenth-century fragment done after Leonardo's cartoon⁸³ suggests that our group of drawings must be extremely close to Leonardo's original idea in this point as well. Thus, in the most difficult and impressive parts, i.e. in the motif of balanced movement and in the human physiognomy, the drawings in the Louvre, The Hague and Los Angeles surpass all other copies in quality.

Conclusion

FOR MORE than a century the Louvre version of the *Battle of Anghiari* has been regarded as an example of the Flemish Baroque, and therefore one might find it hard to accept that this drawing gives a reliable rendering of an early Cinquecento work of art. However, looking at his drawings for the Trivulzio Monument, it becomes clear that at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Leonardo achieved a compositional quality which much later would be categorized as baroque.⁸⁴ Obviously, aside from Raphael and the draftsmen of our group of drawings, most artists found this quality particularly difficult to capture (therefore we only have a few, and for all that, bad copies after the 'Fight for the Standard'). But drawings with

same period the problem of pushing and pulling also becomes more important; cf. Lu 391 (McM 364) in CU, f. 128 r, from Madrid MS. II, f. 78 v, c. 1504. For the dates of these notes, see C. Pedretti, *Leonardo da Vinci on Painting. A Lost Book (Libro A)*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1964, pp. 194-5.

⁷⁸ Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia, no. 215, pen and ink, 160 × 152 mm, and no. 216, pen and ink, 101 × 142 mm. Cf. *Disegni di Leonardo e della sua cerchia alle Gallerie dell'Accademia*, ed. L. Cogliati Arano, Venice, 1980, nos 11 and 14.

⁷⁹ Windsor, RL 12570, black chalk, 251 × 392 mm.

⁸⁰ E.g. Rotterdam, Boymans Museum, pen and ink over black chalk, 125 × 111 mm. Cf. also *Leonardo da Vinci*, Cat., Hayward Gallery, ed. J. Roberts and M. Kemp, London, 1989, no. 14, and the discussion of movement in nos 71-75, *ibid.* These aspects of design in relation to the Antique are taken up by Gigetta Dalli Regoli, 'Mito e Scienza nella "Leda" di Leonardo', *XXX Lettura Vinciana*, Florence, 1991 (with updated bibliography). For the relation of Leonardo's Neptune and Anghiari compositions to Antiquity, see H. Ost, *Leonardo Studien*, Berlin and New York, 1970, pp. 101-37, and M. J. Marek, *Ekphrasis und Herrscherallégorie. Antike Bildbeschreibungen im Werk Tizians und Leonardos*, Worms, 1985, pp. 75-104.

⁸¹ Windsor, RL 12360, lead-point, 224 × 160 mm, and RL 12354, black chalk, 201 × 124 mm.

⁸² Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts, red and black chalk, 192 × 188 mm.

⁸³ Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, black chalk, 386 × 504 mm; cf. Parker, *Catalogue of Drawings in the Ashmolean Museum*, II, no. 20; Suter, *Das Rätsel*, pp. 64-72. A painted copy of this fragment is in Milan, Brera (Photo G.F.N., no C 3526).

⁸⁴ On the Baroque qualities in Leonardo's drawings for the *Battle of Anghiari*, see M. Lessing, 'Leonardo da Vinci's *Pazzia Bestialissima*', in *The Burlington Magazine*, LXIV, 1934, pp. 219-31.

comparable monumentality and with a similar rendering of the figure in the round are known from Cinquecento artists such as the Anonymo Cantabrigensis,⁸⁵ Baccio Bandinelli,⁸⁶ Benvenuto Cellini,⁸⁷ Bronzino⁸⁸ or Giulio Romano. In fact, the latter has been associated already with the version of the 'Fight for the Standard' in Los Angeles.⁸⁹ Also, some features typical for the Cinquecento or for Leonardo in particular have been noticed both in the Hague copy and in the Louvre drawing (see above).

Even granting the arguments developed above, it might still be difficult to see a drawing, which has become almost a symbol of the Baroque, as the work of a sixteenth-century artist. Indeed, only a chemical analysis of the paper of the drawing in the Louvre could produce irrefutable proof for my hypothesis that this drawing and its copies are sixteenth-century reproductions of Leonardo's composition. However, today our conception of Leonardo's composition is generally defined by the drawing traditionally attributed to Rubens, and in the literature of the last hundred years or so, my hypothesis has already found wide-spread approval: the judgement of the eye has succeeded and most books on Leonardo illustrate the *Battle of Anghiari* with this powerful drawing.⁹⁰ Images often speak for themselves, but sometimes they need a little help.

⁸⁵ Cambridge, Trinity College, Ms. R 17,3 (Codex Cantabrigensis, c. 1549-1556). Cf. E. Dhanens, 'De Romeinse ervaring van Giovanni Bologna', in *Bulletin de L'Institut Historique de Belge de Rome*, XXXV, 1963, pp. 159-90; *Michelangelo e la Sistina*, pp. 164-7, no. 38.

⁸⁶ Cf. Baccio Bandinelli (1493-1560). *Drawings from British Collections*, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, ed. R. Ward, Cambridge, 1988, nos 5, 7-8, 13, 24, 26, 28-29 and 38.

⁸⁷ Paris, Louvre, inv. no. 2740. Cf. E. Camesasca, *Tutta l'opera del Cellini*, Milan, 1955, p. 39, fig. 17.

⁸⁸ Cf. C. H. Smyth, *Bronzino as Draughtsman*, New York, 1971, figs 5 (Uffizi), 8 (Louvre), 33 (Ashmolean Museum) and 40 (Louvre).

⁸⁹ Cf. Logan, review of Held, *Rubens. Selected Drawings*, p. 71.

⁹⁰ Only three of the major monographs fail to illustrate Leonardo's *Battle of Anghiari* with the Louvre drawing: J. Wasserman, *Leonardo da Vinci*, New York, 1975; C. Gould, *Leonardo. The Artist and the Non-Artist*, London, 1975, and P. C. Marani, *Leonardo*.



'The Fall of Phaëton'
An ancient cameo from the Medici Collection.
Florence, Bargello



1. Sixteenth-century Anonymous (retouched by Rubens?), Copy of Leonardo's 'Fight for the Standard'. Paris, Louvre.



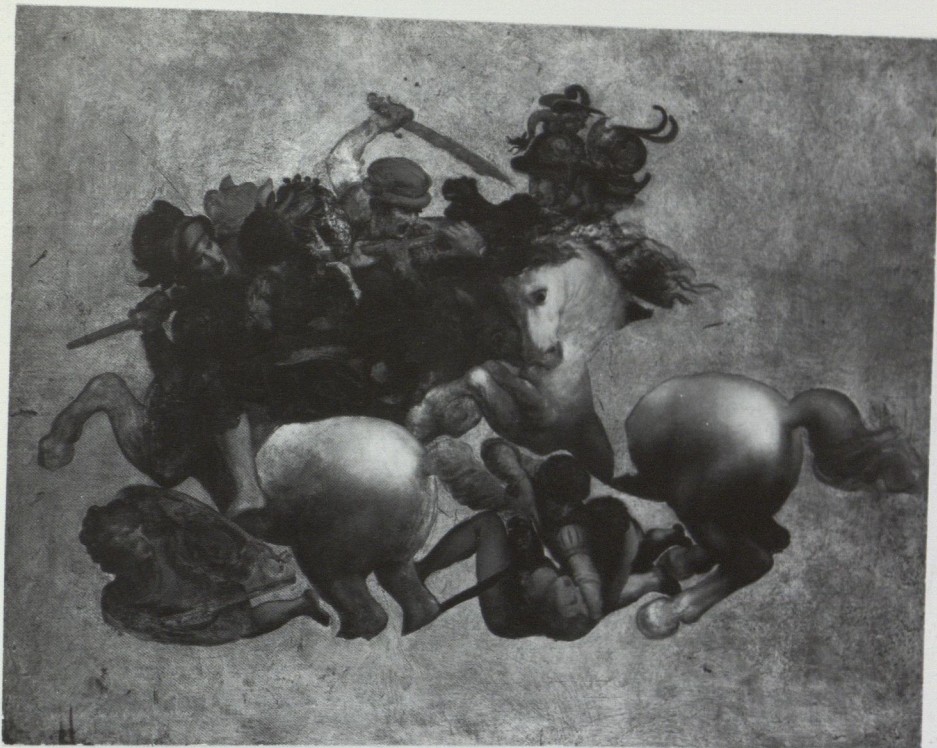
2. Anonymous, Copy of Leonardo's 'Fight for the Standard'. The Hague, Collection of H.R.H. Princess Juliana of the Netherlands.



3. Anonymous, Copy of Leonardo's 'Fight for the Standard'. Los Angeles, The Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center.



4. Raphael, Copy of Leonardo's 'Fight for the Standard'. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.



5. Anonymous, Copy of Leonardo's 'Fight for the Standard' ('Tavola Doria'). Private Collection.



6. Anonymous, Copy of Leonardo's 'Fight for the Standard'. Florence, Palazzo Vecchio (formerly Uffizi, depo).



7. Anonymous, Copy of Leonardo's 'Fight for the Standard'. Private Collection.



8. Anonymous, Horseman after Leonardo's 'Fight for the Standard'. Paris, Louvre.



9. Anonymous, Horseman after Leonardo's 'Fight for the Standard'. London, British Museum.



EX TABELLA PROPRIA
LEONARDI VINCI MANU
PICTA OPVS SVMPVTVM
A LAVRENTIO ZACCHIA
LVCENSI AB EODEMQVE
NVNGEXCVSSVM . ISS8. Z.

10. Lorenzo Zacchia, Engraving after Leonardo's 'Fight for the Standard' (1558). Vienna, Albertina.



11. Anonymous, The 'Fight for the Standard' after Leonardo ("Timbal copy"). Private Collection.



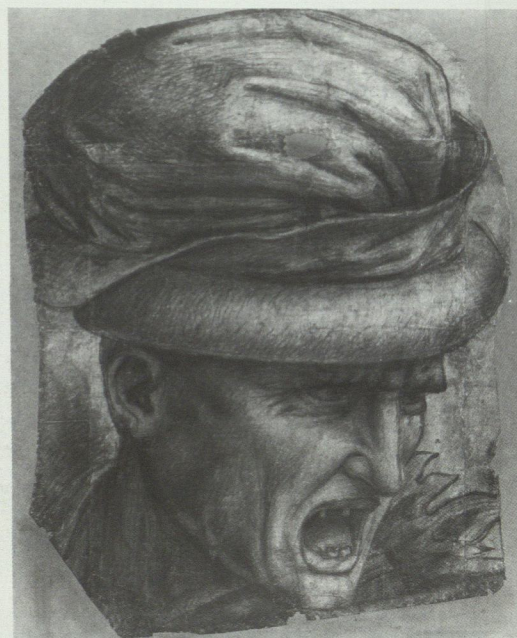
12. Gerard Edelinck (?), Copy of Leonardo's 'Fight for the Standard'. Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Art Museum.



13. Gerard Edelinck, Engraving after Leonardo's 'Fight for the Standard'. London, British Museum.



14. Peter Paul Rubens, 'The Duke of Lerma'. Paris, Louvre.



15. Anonymous, Head of a horseman after Leonardo's 'Fight for the Standard'. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.



16. Study for the 'Battle of Anghiari', c. 1503-4. Venice, Accademia, no. 215.



17. Study for the 'Battle of Anghiari', c. 1503-4. Venice, Accademia, no. 216.



18. Study for the 'Neptune with the Sea Horses', c. 1504. Windsor, RL 12570.



19. Study for the Trivulzio Monument, c. 1508-10. Windsor, RL 12360.



20. Study for the Trivulzio Monument, c. 1508-10. Windsor, RL 12345.



21. Study for the heads of warriors in the 'Fight for the Standard', c. 1503-4. Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts.



22. Peter Paul Rubens (?), 'Battle of Constantine'. Paris, Louvre.



23. Peter Paul Rubens, 'Augustus and the Sybil'. Paris, Louvre.



24. Peter Paul Rubens, 'Feast in the House of Simon'. London, British Museum.