

And They Will be Made One

The Jesus Mystery

by Andrew Linnell

Anthroposophists know of Rudolf Steiner's profound work in revealing the mystery of two Jesus children¹. This was developed further by Edward R. Smith² and Paulina Leonard³ who explored the theme in the works of Renaissance artist Ambrogio da Fossano Bergognone. Simon Cade Williams brilliantly describes Bergognone's painting *Christ among the Doctors* in the autumn 2009 issue of *New View*.⁴ Given that Bergognone appears to have known about two Jesus children, we can ask how did he come upon this knowledge? Where else can it be found?

We learn from the Dead Sea Scrolls that the Essenes and other groups working out of the Mysteries were expecting two Messiahs. The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947, well after Steiner's death. More scrolls were found up through 1979 in eleven caves in and around the ancient Essene settlement of Qumran. These Dead Sea Scrolls were being written around 150 BCE and writings continued until the Roman army dispersed the Essenes in 70 CE, a period of 220 years. During those years, the initiates of Qumran wrote 872 scrolls in Hebrew and Aramaic. These reveal that two messiahs were expected: one was to be of a priestly lineage and one of a kingly. "Its members [the Essenes of Qumran] were looking forward to a 'Messiah of Israel' and a 'Messiah of David', who resembled the priestly and kingly descendants."⁵ One of the documents, the Damascus Document, says "The Messiah, which is the Son of Joseph *will be made one* with the Son of David [the other Messiah], but he will be killed..." [my italics]. Elsewhere the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel are mentioned several times.



We also find in Manuscript A, Fragment 3 of 4Q286-287 (entitled "The Chariots of Glory"), that some time after the two Messiahs have been made into one that "the Holy Spirit will settle upon His Messiah."⁶ Compare this passage to Isaiah 11:2 "The Spirit of the Lord would settle on Him" and to John 1:32-33 "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him [his cousin] except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'" This change in Jesus' entelechy at the Baptism completes the preparation made for the Logos to become Man and flesh.

We also find evidence of knowledge of this theme in the Zohar of the Jewish Kabbalistic traditions. The Zohar first appeared in Spain in the 13th century. Within fifty years it was being quoted by many kabalists, including the early fourteenth century Italian writer Menahem Recanati whose mystical work includes *Perush 'Al ha-Torah* (published in Venice in 1523). Similarly to the Dead Sea Scrolls, in the Zohar we find "Another Messiah, the son of Joseph, will unite himself with the Messiah, the son of David. But the son of Joseph will not remain in life, he will be killed and will become alive again, when the little hill receives life upon the great hill."⁷

Lastly, we find Old Testament passages that also could be interpreted as anticipating two Messiahs. From Ezekiel 37, “The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, moreover, thou Son of Man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, for Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions. Then take another stick, and write upon it, for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and for all the house of Israel his companions. And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.”⁸ This passage implies that two branches (sticks) will become one in the Messiah. Unlike Abraham from whom came many nations, Jesus reverses the process of creating new streams to begin the process of fusion, of uniting all of humanity. In addition to Ezekiel, there is Balaam’s prophecy from Numbers 24 "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near. There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel"⁹ which many have interpreted as indicating two Messiahs, one as a star, that is of the heavens, and one as a scepter, that is of the earth. And these two shall merge to make the proper earthly vessel for ‘Him’. This passage suggests that the Messiah would have sources from the pure beginnings of Man (the star out of Jacob) and from the heights of what Man had accomplished, that is, from the kingly side (the scepter out of Israel).

Bergognone (aka Borgognone) was a student of Leonardo da Vinci and Perugino. He finished the fresco in Milan’s St. Ambrogio Basilica (*shown above left*) in 1509. He had been da Vinci’s student in Milan during the time the second version of Leonardo’s *Madonna of the Rocks* was painted. We can imagine the students discussing this painting with Leonardo and probing into the mysteries Leonardo learned during his years in Florence.

Leonardo da Vinci, over a twenty-five year period, completed two paintings both called the *Madonna of the Rocks* (or the *Virgin of the Rocks*). One can be seen at the Louvre in Paris (*top left, next page*) while the other hangs in the National Gallery, London (*top right, next page*). Why did he paint two?



National Gallery



Louvre

During the time Leonardo studies in Florence, he was exposed to the Medici household (Lorenzo the Magnificent) and its related schools, some of which were secret due to the teachings which might have been deemed heretical in those times. Not more than 250 years earlier the Cathars had been exterminated

and the first Inquisition was still active rooting out any philosophical remains. Leonardo was admitted as a member of the Garden of San Marcos, a group that discussed the teachings of Marsilio Ficino and John Argyropoulos. Marsilio ran the Medici's Plato Academy at Careggi and taught not only Plato but other Greek and Egyptian philosophers while John Argyropoulos, from Constantinople, was a renowned Aristotelian scholar and alchemist. Even Ficino, perhaps the most respected intellectual of the Florentine district, ran afoul with the church because of his writings on Hermetic magic and astrology. Only a strong defense acquitted him of heresy charges and a possible death sentence. Hence, much of what was taught in these schools attended by Leonardo was kept secret.

In 1480, the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception requested three paintings to be completed by 8 December, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Giacomo del Maino was first commissioned but for some unknown reasons withdrew. With the door opened, Leonardo, who had arrived in Milan from Florence in 1482, attempted to win the commission by offering his original *Madonna of the Rocks* which he had begun in Florence. Apparently the Confraternity liked the painting but wanted changes. Leonardo and the monks came to some agreement for a new painting and the work commenced.

Rather than altering the original, Leonardo employed his students, the de Predis brothers Ambrogio and Evangelista, to paint a new but slightly modified version. He drew the outlines (recently additional outlines¹⁰ were found underneath the paint), consulted with the brothers periodically, and likely participated at times in the actual painting. But, true to Leonardo's reputation, this painting took much longer to complete than expected. Ambrogio finally completed his portion of the work sixteen years later (Evangelista died in 1491) just after the outbreak of the 2nd Italian War in 1499. The war had caused Leonardo to flee Milan with his other paintings. Now a legal dispute ensued as Ambrogio wanted payment. But the Confraternity does not want to accept the painting "as is". The dispute was finally settled on April 27th, 1506, with the requirement that Leonardo would return to Milan within two years and complete the painting. Since he was paid for this in 1507, he apparently did put the requested finishing touches on the work. These finishing touches are clear, as we shall see later. This second painting was installed in the Confraternity in 1508.

Why Was the Original Rejected?

The brief explanation is that the monks rejected Leonardo's original depictions of how the two Messiahs, the two Jesus children, would be made into one. If the children could be depicted as Jesus and the John the Baptist, then the monks would accept this painting. Rather than touching up the original, Leonardo proposes to paint them another consistent with the monk's theology.

Today the National Gallery claims that its painting, the second one, depicts a scene in an apocryphal story in which the holy family, fleeing to Egypt, meets John and Uriel in the desert. But the National Gallery fails to tell us what apocryphal story this is and whether it existed in Leonardo's time. A search of known apocryphal books did not find this scene.¹¹ Although halos in this second painting make it clear who is Mary and who is Jesus, we cannot reach the same conclusion about identities of the characters of the original painting; one cannot tell which child is Jesus.



While not discussed in public documents of the National Gallery, one can see that the three halos and the "St. John" staff in the copy are painted on *top* of the varnish that is used to protect a completed painting.

These are clearly the finishing touches required by the confraternity that Leonardo applied in order to receive his portion of the commission in 1507.

Pinturicchio and Luini

Besides Bergognone, were other students of Leonardo inspired by this wisdom teaching about two Messiahs?

Bernardino di Betto (1454-1513), called Pinturicchio (“Little Painter” due to his height) was a paid assistant of Perugino and a close acquaintance to Leonardo. Pinturicchio gets into this mystery with his version of *Christ among the Doctors* (above) in 1501. Here the twelve year old Jesus is in the center, wearing a rich outfit adorned with a blue robe. The Temple doctors surround him. His hand gesture shows two fingers of his left hand raised and his right hand points to the second finger. His bare feet firmly stand on the ground. Another very similar child is on the left with the clothes of a poor child but to show his connection to the first his outfit is the same blue color. This child is resigned to being led away by another child. Their feet, covered by stockings of the same red color, no longer have direct contact with the earth. On the right, Joseph and Mary have just arrived on the right in search of their child.

Simon Cade Williams notes that the exact same hand gesture that Pinturicchio showed Jesus making is also in a painting (right) by another of Leonardo’s students, Bernardino Luini.¹² As part of Leonardo’s circle of students, Luini completed *Christ among the Doctors* in 1515. Here we see Jesus as a teenager with the Temple doctors behind him. He holds up his left hand with two fingers raised and with his right hand he touches the second finger as if counting. His face could be saying “don’t you get it?” and with his hands saying “there were two.” It should also be noted that Leonardo’s signature appears on the back of this painting and that Luini had studied under Bergognone as well.



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Madonna of the Rocks; Sacred Geometry

Let’s examine Leonardo’s paintings to see what he is saying about the mystery of two Messiahs. It was a common Florentine practice to arrange the characters and the action within a central isosceles triangle. The woman in blue and gold occupies the central position of the composition. If any character is to be considered a spiritual being it would be this central character who is cloaked in the colors of the heavens, the rich deep blues with gold near her heart shining through. She can represent both Mary and a divine being at the same time. Her right hand receives through the shoulder of the child on the left and transfers through heavenly means to the child on the right. The child on the right is not fully within with the triangle. His left hand and his body are outside the triangle meaning that nothing of the physical body will be changed. Only the head and the right hand of this child are within the triangle suggesting that he will receive the wisdom and spirit of the other child. The purity of the child on the right will receive only what is purified and spiritualized. This younger child on the right is the purity of Adam Cadmon that was withheld in Eden and lacks kingly wisdom of earth as well as the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge.

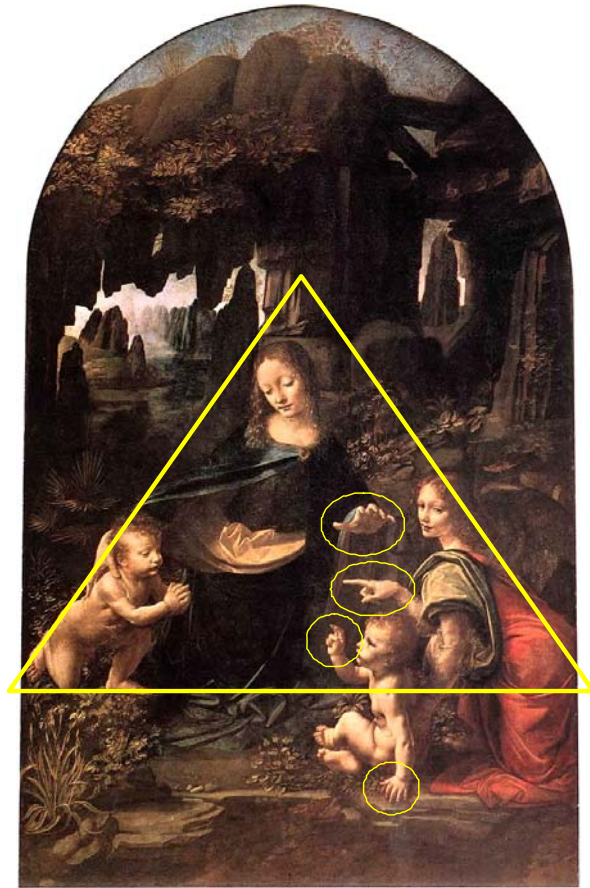
Hand gestures

We see four hands on the right and two on the left. The child on the left has his two hands together in a prayerful gesture revealing only one hand. On the right, a fifth hand, namely the left hand of the kneeling character on the right, is mostly hidden behind the arm of child on the right. She provides a gentle yet firm brace for the child on the right whose left hand rests on the earth just above the reflecting pool. Her gaze appears to be directed at her unseen reflection in the pool

Beginning with the left hand of the child on the right we see that since it provides a grasp of the earth, it represents the physical body, that which relates us to the mineral kingdom or the earth element. His right hand is raised in a blessing gesture. This right hand represents the Life Body which relates us to the plant kingdom which adds life to the mineral. His eyes are fixed on the other child as if seeing what will come to him in the near future.

Going vertically, the next hand belongs to the supposed archangel next to this child. She is pointing with her right hand at the other child. This hand represents the Astral Body which is related to the element Air and is the seat of consciousness.

Lastly, we come to the fourth hand, the left hand of the woman who is central in the composition. Her left hand transfers to the child below what she receives through her divine wisdom and golden heart from the prayerful child on the left. In the Greek model, this fourth hand would represent the ego which is related to the element fire. What Leonardo has portrayed here, using the Greek model of the 4-fold human, is that these two children, although from separate births and parents, will be united. Something from the older child on the left will be merged with the younger child on the right. As suggested by the hands, that something would be the ego as well as the spiritualized and purified astral (spirit self) and etheric (life spirit) bodies. [Note that Rudolf Steiner mentions only the Ego as being transferred.]



The Unsolved Mystery



I have attempted to show that the two children depicted in the original *Madonna of the Rocks* are the two Messiahs, the kingly and the priestly ones as told in the gospels of Matthew and Luke respectively and in ancient texts. I have not been able to determine the identity of the supposed archangel. Originally, I had felt this to be the mother of the Matthew Jesus, yet she does indeed have wings which I could not see at

first. I am now leaning towards the conclusion, derived from the fact that her wings are transparent and blend into the rocky background, that this is an angel who is in the process of becoming an archangel.

According to theological teachings, each human being has a guardian angel. When a human being achieves enlightenment, they no longer incarnate. Such was the case of the Gautama Buddha. Hence, they no longer require a guardian angel that otherwise helps the human from one incarnation to another. If the figure is an angel, we must ask whose angel? Some of the possible guardian angels include that of the Matthew Jesus, the Nathan Jesus, or even the Gautama Buddha's who Rudolf Steiner claims watched over the Nathan Jesus' birth. It is my conjecture that this mysterious being is the guardian angel of the Luke Jesus, the Adam Cadmon, whose mission is completed following the merger with the Zoroastrian-Matthew Jesus. Thus the scene of the original *Madonna of the Rocks* shows the two Messiahs with the priestly one being instructed by its angel of its future while the kingly one is in awe at what will take place. A cosmic Mary will, like a high priestess, assist in this coming merger. Then, at the Baptism, the body will be sacrificed to the Logos spirit thereby freeing the priestly one's guardian angel to becoming an archangel.

John the Baptist

Lastly, Leonardo's own painting of St. John the Baptist completes this story. Historians claim he used his own pupil, Gian Giacomo Caprotti da Oreno, nicknamed Salai, as the model for John the Baptist.¹³ (This painting done c.1514 is found today at the Louvre.) John points with two fingers of his left hand at his heart and with the index finger of his right hand at God. Again the face has a knowing smile that proclaims "I am revealing to you something you don't understand." Could the John in this painting be implying that at the baptism, the entelechy of the merged Messiahs was changed once again with the incorporation of the Logos spirit which descended from above? As Luke 3:22 states "This is my dearly beloved son; *today* I have begotten him." Leonardo seems to be directing John's expression at the Church. In his paintings, Leonardo may have found a medium in which to embed the so-called heretical mysteries and yet retain deniability to avoid prosecution.



Conclusion

In the original version of *Madonna of the Rocks*, I conclude that Leonardo da Vinci was portraying the two Messiahs from the books of Luke and Matthew as well as his understanding of how these two would be resolved into one person. We see that on the right side Leonardo has depicted the purity of Adam, untarnished by the Fall, as the Jesus of Luke's gospel. On the left is the Jesus whose kingly lineage from David through Solomon is described in Matthew's gospel. As foretold in the kabala and the Dead Sea Scrolls, these two will unite later in life. Perhaps in solidarity, three of Leonardo's pupils depicted supporting scenes. It is likely that the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception rejected it for this reason. If Leonardo was to be paid, a second painting more acceptable to contemporary theology was needed.

In the heretical traditions, the human ego that was in the Jesus of the Matthew story enters the Luke Jesus at age twelve, and finally, at the Baptism at age thirty, the Logos descends so that God could become Man. Leonardo had likely become familiar with this through the schools of Ficino and Argyropoulos or through secretive schools left over from the Cathars or the Knights Templar, though his sense of privacy and concerns about the Inquisition make it unlikely to find hard proof. Although St. Paul described the human as a being of body, soul, and spirit,¹⁴ over time the human constitution was reduced to body and soul; the eternal quality of spirit was only attainable by the righteous on Judgment Day. In our time, it has become a form of scientific heresy for an educated person to speak about spirit or soul as realities. The concept

“human” has been reduced to body alone. No wonder it has become so difficult to conceive what Leonardo’s painting might actually depict!

Footnotes

¹ Steiner, Rudolf, *According to Luke*, Anthroposophic Press, CW 114, ISBN 0-88010-448-0

² Smith, Edward R., *The Incredible Births of Jesus*, Anthroposophic Press, ISBN 0-88010-448-1

³ Leonard, Paulina, Were There Two? The Two Jesus Children, (published on the web site <http://www.transintelligence.org/Occult%20Christological%20Research/weretheretwo.htm> but currently no longer online)

⁴ *Christ Among the Doctors*, Simon Cade Williams, 2009, New View, Issue 53

⁵ http://www.livius.org/men-mh/messiah/messiah_14.html

⁶ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/3649853/Dead-Sea-Scrolls-Uncovered>

⁷ *Holy Kabbala*, Arthur Edward Waite, 2003, Kessinger Publishing

⁸ *Ezekiel* 37:15-17.

⁹ *Numbers* 24:17

¹⁰ <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/hosted/leonardo/newsnov2005.pdf>, and

<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/collection/news/newsitems/leonardo.htm>

¹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flight_into_Egypt

¹² *Christ Among the Doctors*, Simon Cade Williams, 2009, New View, Issue 53, pg. 39

¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonardo_da_Vinci

¹⁴ *I Thessalonians* 5:23, Paul refers to human nature as consisting of soma, psyche, and pneuma; that is body, soul, and spirit respectively.