
This book, beautifully produced with lavish illustrations, deals with several aspects of Leonardo da Vinci's career as a painter. In six chapters, three of which have been published before, Marani discusses practically all the paintings attributed to Leonardo, plus a number of important drawings and sculptural projects. After the main text there follows a catalogue of paintings attributed to Leonardo (including works by Verrocchio and other painters in which the young Leonardo may have been involved) and of lost works. The catalogue gives technical data and brief information about the provenance of each painting and in some cases a few bibliographical references. An appendix follows with a choice of a hundred documents edited by Eduardo Villatta, mostly concerning Leonardo's career as a painter. The documents, most of them previously published by Beltrami in 1919, have been checked against the original sources in the archives of Florence, Milan, Mantua, Rome, Paris and Naples. This is a valuable undertaking because Beltrami's book is not only now out of date, given that important documents have been discovered in the last few decades, but also because very often it does not indicate the exact archival references.

The leitmotiv of this book is the relationship between Leonardo's paintings and drawings on the one hand, and sculpture, both antique and contemporary, on the other. Although no single work of sculpture which could reasonably be attributed to Leonardo has come down to us, the theme 'Leonardo and Sculpture' has haunted generations of scholars. Probably, this interest reflects two very simple facts: first, the importance of three-dimensional models in the training of young artists in the fifteenth century and, secondly, the high aesthetic and cultural value attached to antique sculpture. But in discussing Leonardo's interest in the antique, one should not forget that most of his drawings are studies after nature or fantastic variations on natural themes.

Marani's first chapter deals with Leonardo's training as an artist in Verrocchio's workshop and draws particular attention to the use of sculptural models, for example for the depiction of drapery. He tries to identify Leonardo's hand in three of Verrocchio's Madonnas - in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, and in the National Gallery in Washington - and also in the Tobias and the Angel in the National Gallery in London. In particular the landscape backgrounds in these paintings show some similarities to landscape settings in Leonardo's drawings, thus suggesting that the younger artist could have contributed to his master's paintings. The evidence for this kind of attribution is naturally open to question and one could argue that for example in the case of the two Berlin Madonnas Verrocchio used popular types of landscape. Some years ago, E.H. Gombrich directed our attention to a similar procedure for the use of facial types in Madonnas by renaissance artists, and the same might be true for landscape types used by both Leonardo and his teacher.

Leonardo stayed for quite a long period in Verrocchio's studio, yet his ability to depart from his master's particular style becomes evident in his portrait of Ginevra de' Benci, which Marani believes to have been produced on the occasion of Ginevra's wedding in 1474 (pp.36–48). Given the arguments presented by Jennifer Fletcher some years ago, this assumption is not convincing: most likely, the painting was commissioned between 1478 and 1480 by Bernardo Bembo and for this reason could not have been a wedding portrait. Bembo's device on the back of the small painting clearly indicates Fletcher's interpretation to be correct.

In discussing the Adoration of the Magi in the Uffizi and the St Jerome in the Vatican, Marani introduces the issue of antique sculpture which he considers responsible for Leonardo's rendering of three-dimensional forms in his early paintings. Thus he argues that Leonardo was inspired by the study of antique sculpture in Lorenzo de' Medici's garden at Piazza San Marco and finds this view confirmed by the Anonimo Gaddiano who speaks of Leonardo's attachment to the garden (pp.113–16). Whereas one is inclined to see some vestiges of a study of antique sculpture in Leonardo's St Jerome, the same cannot be said of his Adoration of the Magi. Given the size, format and spatial arrangement of the latter, its major points of reference are not antique reliefs (which the artist may or may not have seen), but rather Botticelli's Del Lama Adoration (with...
BOOK REVIEWS


'The first note reads 'A Tivoli vacchio, casa di Adriano' and bears no date; the second gives the date: 'Lais deo 1500, a di 20 [P] marzo', but its handwriting is somewhat different and the date almost illegible. For this reason both Carlo Pedretti and Agostino Marinoni had suggested that the date was not written by Leonardo at all, though later Pedretti convinced himself of the authenticity of the handwriting (p.297). However, some doubts remained and to explain the different handwriting Carlo Vecce suggested that the artist had written the date with a 'mano tremolante' as if writing while travelling. Since the whole argument for Leonardo having studied antique sculpture in Tivoli in March 1501 is closely linked to this slender piece of palaeographic interpretation one hopes for some stronger evidence to emerge.

In his concluding chapter Marani turns to yet another difficult issue, Leonardo's St John the Baptist in the Louvre. Almost everything about this painting is controversial: the attribution, date and occasion of its commission, as well as its exact meaning. Marani, like most scholars of a later decade, opts for a date around 1508. Thus he can return to the leitmotiv of his book, the importance of sculpture for Leonardo's painting. In this case Leonardo's ideas for the Trivulzio Monument supposedly influenced the sculpture-like form of his St John. In conclusion, then, this book contains an impressive amount of up-to-date information about Leonardo's paintings and adds some interesting suggestions about his use of antique sculpture. It is in its discussion of pictorial content that the book sometimes turns out to be rather unsatisfactory, and one would have wished to be provided with at least the basic references concerning the iconography of individual paintings.

There are also occasional minor errors: for example Filippo Lippi's Novitatis' Chapel altar-piece from S. Croce in the Uffizi is incorrectly given to Domenico Ghirlandaio (p.17).

FRANK ZOLLNER
University of Leipzig


