

Leonardo da Vinci

(1452-1519)

- 1452 Born April 15th
- 1468 Leonardo's grandfather and guardian dies
- 1469 Apprenticed to Andrea Verrocchio
- 1473 *River Arno Landscape* drawing,
The Annunciation
- 1474 Portrait of *Ginevra de' Benci*
- 1479 Accused of sodomy
- 1481 Commission: *Adoration of the Magi*
- 1482 Letter to Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan. First visit to Milan
- 1483 Contract for *Virgin of the Rocks*, and *St. Jerome*
- 1488 Portrait of *Cecilia Gallerani*
- 1490 Giacomo Salai joins Leonardo, aged ten: Salai 'steals money' from his master.
- 1491 Plan for casting the *Equestrian Monument* for Ludovico Sforza
- 1493 Clay model of the horse exhibited
- 1495 Portrait of 'La Belle Ferronnière' (Lucrezia Crivelli)
- 1496/7 Working on the *Last Supper*
- 1498 *Salla delle Asse*, Castello Sforza, Milan
- 1499 Leaves Milan for Florence, via Venice.
- 1501 Cartoon for *Virgin & Child, St. Anne & John the Baptist* (London)
- 1502 Befriends Niccolo Machiavelli
- 1503 Begins cartoon of *Battle of Anghiari*
Portrait of 'Mona Lisa' started.
- 1504 Consulted regarding the placing of Michelangelo's *David*.
Leonardo's father dies.
- 1505 Working on the *Mona Lisa*.
- 1506 Legal disputes over father's will and payment for *Virgin of Rocks*
- 1510 *Virgin & Child w. St. Anne* (Louvre)

Michelangelo Buonarroti

(1475-1564)

- 1475 Born March 6th
- 1481 Michelangelo's mother dies
- 1488 Apprenticed to Domenico and Davide Ghirlandaio
- 1490 Befriended by Lorenzo de Medici
- 1494 In Venice and Bologna, *S. Proculus*
- 1495 Returns to Florence.
- 1496 First visits to Rome & Carrara
The (?Metropolitan) *Cupid*
- 1498 The *Bacchus* completed.
Begins the Rome *Pietà*.
- 1501/2 Begins work on *David*
- 1503 *St Matthew*, out of twelve planned Apostles for Florence Cathedral
- 1504 The *Doni Tondo*. Begins cartoon for the *Battle of Cascina*
- 1505 Summoned to Rome by Julius II:
Commission for Julius's Tomb.
Searching marble at Pietrasanta.
- 1506 Flees Rome in anger at Pope's change of heart. Bronze statue of Julius II, S. Petronio, Bologna (melted down for cannon, 1510)
- 1508 Commission for *Sistine Ceiling*

1512 Study of Embryo in the Womb.
 1513 *Battle of Anghiari* still unfinished.
 In Rome, given quarters in the
 Vatican Belvedere by Leo X
 1516/7 Leonardo moves to France with
 3 pictures: *Mona Lisa*, a 'Young
 John the Baptist' & the 'St Anne'.
 1519 Last will & testament written, 23rd
 April. Dies May 2nd.

1529 Paolo Giovio, *Life of Leonardo*

1550 Giorgio Vasari publishes his *Lives
 of the Great Artists*
 1553 Ascanio Condivi publishes his *Life
 of Michelangelo*

1512 Unveiling of the *Sistine Ceiling*
 1513 *Captives*, *Moses*, *Medici Tombs*

1516 2nd Contract for Julius's Tomb
 with Julius's heirs.
 1517 In Pietrasanta quarrying marble
 1519 Design for façade of San Lorenzo,
 requiring 22 statues...
 1520 ...S. Lorenzo contract cancelled
 1523/4 Working on the *Medici Tombs*
 & *Laurentian Library*
 [1527 The Sack of Rome.]
 1527/28 Asked to work on Florence's
 defence and fortifications
 1529 Medici tombs *Night & Dawn*
 1532 Moves to Rome. New contract for
 reduced version of Julius's tomb.
 Quarrels with Julius's heirs.
 Meets Tommaso de' Cavalieri
 1533/4 Sistine Chapel *Last Judgement*
 Visits Florence for the last time.
 Friendship w. Vittoria Colonna
 1536 Begins work on the *Campidoglio*, or
 Capitol Square, in Rome for
 Pope Paul III
 1543 Frescos of *St Paul* and *St Peter* in
 Vatican Pauline Chapel.
 1545 Final reduced version of Julius's
 tomb finally set up in San Pietro
 in Vincoli – much of it the work
 of Michelangelo's assistants.
 1546 Begins Florence Duomo *Pietà*
 1547 Appointed architect of St. Peter's
 Basilica in Rome.

1555 Mutilates *Pietà* in fit of anger
 1561 Model for the dome of St. Peter's
 1564 Working on the Rondanini *Pietà*:
 catches fever; dies February 18th.

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1978-1999 Conservation of Leonardo's
 Last Supper.

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1980-1989 Conservation of the Sistine
 Chapel *Ceiling Frescos*.
 1990-1994 Conservation of the Sistine
 Last Judgement.

THE LIFE OF LEONARDO DA VINCI

LEONARDO, born at Vinci, an insignificant hamlet in Tuscany, has added great lustre to the art of painting. He laid down that all proper practice of this art should be preceded by a training in the sciences and the liberal arts which he regarded as indispensable and subservient to painting. He placed modelling as a means of rendering figures in relief on a flat surface before other processes done with the brush. The science of optics was to him of paramount importance and on it he founded the principles of the distribution of light and shade down to the most minute details. In order that he might be able to paint the various joints and muscles as they bend and stretch according to the laws of nature he dissected the corpses of criminals in the medical schools, indifferent to this inhuman and disgusting work. He then tabulated all the different parts down to the smallest veins and the composition of the bones with extreme accuracy in order that this work on which he had spent so many years should be published from copper engravings for the benefit of art. But while he was thus spending his time in the close research of subordinate branches of his art he only carried very few works to completion; for owing to his masterly facility and the fastidiousness of his nature he discarded works he had already begun. However, the wall-painting at Milan of Christ at Supper with His disciples is greatly admired. It is said that when King Louis saw it he coveted it so much that he inquired anxiously from those standing around him whether it could be detached from the wall and transported forthwith to France, although this would have destroyed the famous refectory. There is also the picture of the infant Christ playing with His mother, the Virgin, and His grandmother Anne which King Francis of France bought and placed in his chapel. Moreover, there remains the painting of the battle and victory over the Pisans in the Council Chamber at Florence which was extraordinarily magnificent but came to an untimely end owing to the defective plaster which persistently rejected the colours ground in walnut oil.¹ It seems as if the very natural regret caused by this unexpected injury and interruption of the work was instrumental in making it famous. For Lodovico Sforza he also made a clay model of a colossal horse to be cast in bronze, on which was to be seated the figure of the famous condottiere Francesco, Lodovico's father. The vehement life-like action of this horse as if panting is amazing, not less so the sculptor's skill and his consummate knowledge of nature. His charm of disposition, his brilliancy and generosity was not less than the beauty of his appearance. His genius for invention was astounding, and he was the arbiter of all questions relating to beauty and elegance, especially in pageantry. He sang beautifully to his own accompaniment on the lyre to the delight of the entire court. He died in France at the age of sixty-seven to the grief of his friends, which was all the greater as among the great crowd of young men who contributed to the success of his studio he left no disciple of outstanding fame.

¹ *Il Libro di Antonio Billi* asserts that Leonardo was deceived over the linseed oil which was deliberately

adulterated. 'Fu ingannato nello olio del seme del lino che gli fu falsato' (ed. Frey, p. 52).

1. Letter from Michelangelo to the historian, Benedetto Varchi, cited by the latter in his lectures on Art given at the Florentine Academy in 1549.

Rome 1549.

To Messer Benedetto Varchi

Messer Benedetto,

So that it may be clear that I have received your booklet which has been delivered to me, I will say something in reply to your questions, although ignorant.

It seems to me that the nearer painting approaches sculpture the better it is, and that sculpture is worse the nearer it approaches painting. Therefore, it has always seemed to me, at least, that sculpture was a lantern to painting and that the difference between them is as that between the sun and the moon. But after reading your booklet where you say that, speaking philosophically, things that have the same end in view are the same, I have changed my mind, and I now say that if the use of greater discretion and labour, and the overcoming of greater difficulties and impediments do not confer greater merit, then painting and sculpture are equal. If this be so, every painter should not fail to practise sculpture as well as painting, and similarly every sculptor painting as well as sculpture. By sculpture, I mean that which is done by carving – sculpture that is done by adding on resembles painting. In short, since both Sculpture and Painting require similar accomplishment they might be induced to make peace with one another and give up such disputes, which waste more time than it takes to produce a statue. As for him [i.e. Leonardo] who wrote that painting was nobler than sculpture, if he understood the other subjects on which he wrote no better than this, my servant could have done better.

I might continue indefinitely to speak on such subjects, but, as I said, it would take too much time, and I have little to spare, as I am old and almost to be counted among the dead. Therefore please excuse me. I recommend myself to you, thanking you to the best of my abilities, for bestowing too much honour on one so undeserving.

Yours, Michelagnuolo Buonarotti at Rome.

2. Michelangelo on Flemish Painting, as reported by Francesco de Hollanda in his Dialogos of 1548:

Flemish painting will appeal to certain noblemen who have no sense of true harmony. In Flanders they paint with a view to external exactness.... They paint stuffs and masonry, the green grass of the fields, the shadow of trees, and rivers and bridges, which they call landscapes, with many figures on this side or on that. And all this, though it pleases some persons, is done without reason or art, without symmetry or proportion, without skilful choice or boldness, without substance or vigour.

Good painting is nothing less than a copy of the perfection of God... It is a music and a melody that only the intellect can understand – and that with great difficulty.

Io già fatto ingozo tenero stato
Chome fa lacrya agatti i lombardia
ouer da lero paese ch'essi chesisia
cha forza luete apicha sotto lmeto

Labamba a lcielo e lla memoria sento
Tullo scrignio elpecto fo dargia
el pamel sopraluiso tuetania
melfa gocciando n richio panimeto

E lobi entrati miso nella peccia
e fo del cul p cho trapeso groppa
e passì seza gliochi muono tuano

Di nazi misalluga la chortaccia
e p pregarsi adietro siragroppa
e todomi comarchio soriano

po fallace e scrano
surgie il iudicio ch' lomete porta
ch' mal si fra p cerbotana tortu
lammia pictura merta

da fe di orma giouanni e luis onore
no sedo flog bo me io pectore



וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁמַע
 ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל
 וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁמַע
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