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ATTI E MEMORIE DELL'ATENEIO VENETO

Linda L. Carroll

PROVIDUS VIR LEONARDUS
PICTOR FLORENTINUS*

In April 1478, the Paduan notary Luca Talamazzo entered into his ledger an agreement ending a business association labelled “*Pro ser Jacopo Magnano / finis*”¹. A trusted and prominent professional, Talamazzo recorded societies formed by early printers such as Gabriele Ferrari and Bartolomeo di Valdizocco for the production of various works often intended as university texts; legal acts of Venetian patricians whose families were involved in publishing, including Marin Giustinian qu. Pangrati², probably the uncle of a group of family members prominent in publishing in the early sixteenth century³; the patrician Federico Corner’s sale of paper to a student whose ability to pay was guaranteed by the nobleman Conte Alvaroto⁴; sales of books by merchants including the Milanese nobleman Lazaro Beolco⁵. One of the witnesses to the act under con-

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¹ PADUA, *Archivio di Stato* (cited hereafter as ASPd), Archivio Notarile (cited hereafter as AN), b. 247, fol. 105r. Of the entries from this notarial ledger cited in the present article, those involving Lazaro Beolco were studied by PAOLO SAMBIN, *Lazzaro e Giovanni Francesco Beolco, nonno e padre del Ruzante (Relazioni e aspetti di famiglia, lavoro e cultura)*, in *Per le biografie di Angelo Beolco, il Ruzante, e di Alvise Cornaro*, ed. Francesco Piovan, Padua, Esedra, 2002, pp. 59-86, pp. 9, 23, 25, 28; most of those involving printers were cited by ANTONIO SARTORI, *Documenti padovani sull’arte della stampa nel secolo XV*, in *Libri e stampatori in Padova*, ed. Antonio Barzon, Padua, Tipografia Antoniana, 1959, pp. 111-228 and see notes 2 and 6 below; the other entries cited here, to my knowledge, have not received scholarly attention.

² ASPd, AN, b. 247, fol. 109r.

³ Cfr. GIORGIO PADOAN, *Fortuna della ‘Pastoral’*, in *Momenti del Rinascimento veneto*, Padua, Antenore, 1978, pp. 193-207, 203; LINDA L. CARROLL, *Introduction*, in ANGELO BEOLCO IL RUZANTE, *La prima oratione*, ed. and trans. Linda L. Carroll, London, Modern Humanities Research Association, 2009, pp. 5-74.

⁴ ASPd, AN, b. 247, fol. 307.

⁵ *Ibid.*, fols. 154v-55r; SAMBIN, *Lazzaro*, pp. 21-26; SARTORI, *Libri e stampatori*, esp. pp. 166-167, 176-177, 188.

sideration, Francesco Giusti, was himself a notary who recorded numerous acts for printers⁶.

Talamazzo's Venetian patrician clients had property, residences, or business in and around Padua⁷. Federico Corner, for example, had a monopoly on paper in the city⁸; a Bolani was involved in a real estate transaction with the Paduan nobleman Zacaria Zacaroto, probably the great-grandfather of Giacomo Zacaroto, a theatrical associate of Angelo Beolco (Il Ruzante)⁹. There were also Venetian *cittadini*, including the law student Alvise Anzelieri, who founded the extensive real estate holdings upon which Alvise Cornaro, his nephew and Ruzante's patron, would later build¹⁰. Paduan nobles included several members of the Alvaroto family, signally the wealthy Conte but also the Francesco who would become the father of Marc'Aurelio Alvaroto, Ruzante's stage partner¹¹. There were foreigners with business in Padua such as Lazaro Beolco, Ruzante's grandfather, who resided in Venice and who had investments in Padua where his son was beginning university studies¹².

Artists figure several times in Talamazzo's entries, including the painter Bartolomeo di Cremona and a *sculptor* (sculptor or creator of lead devices for printing) paid by Anzelieri¹³. A painter was the second party to the termination agreement, which took place at the Ufficio della Volpe, one of the totemically-named judicial offices of the *comune* associated with financial matters.

⁶ SARTORI, *Libri e stampatori*, pp. 124-125, 142-145, 154-155, 158-159, 178-179, 182-188, 192-193, 198-199, 211, 226.

⁷ ASPd, AN, b. 247, fols. 99r, 149v-50v.

⁸ *Ibid.*, fols. 113r, 171r; for monopoly, SARTORI, *Libri e stampatori*, pp. 132-134; VENICE, *Archivio di Stato*, Archivio Grimani Santa Maria Formosa, b. 3, *Acquisti di folli C[arta]*, fol. 1r.

⁹ ASPd, AN, b. 247, fol. 104r; SAMBIN, *Lazzaro*, p. 19, n. 52; for connections with Ruzante, LINDA L. CARROLL, *Venetian Attitudes toward the Young Charles: Carnival, Commerce, and Compagnie della Calza*, in *Young Charles V 1500-1531*, ed. Alain Saint-Saëns, New Orleans, University Press of the South, 2000, pp. 13-52; CARROLL, *Introduction*, p. 14.

¹⁰ ASPd, AN, b. 247, fol. 230v and see EMILIO MENEGAZZO, *Ricerche intorno alla vita e all'ambiente del Ruzante e di Alvise Cornaro*, in *Colonna, Folengo, Ruzante e Cornaro*, ed. Andrea Canova, Padua, Antenore, 2001, pp. 223-66, esp. pp. 223-242.

¹¹ Francesco qu. Francesco: e.g. ASPd, AN, b. 247, fols. 170r, 492v-93v.

¹² ASPd, AN, b. 247, fols. 94, 142v, 154v; SAMBIN, *Lazzaro*.

¹³ *Ibid.*, fol. 230v and see also fols. 58v-59v, 202r, 231v.

Die veneris XXIII mensis Aprilis ad officium Vulpis. Providus vir magister Leonardus pictor florentinus quondam ser Pauli¹⁴ et ser Jacobus Magnanus ex alia, visis rationibus inter ipsos de rebus habitis ad invicem¹⁵ et mercede picture preste per ipsum magistrum Leonardum, et rebus habitis ab ipso ser Iacobo et demum computatis omnibus datis et receptis usque in diem presentem, ambo vocaverunt sibi ad integrum fuisse satisfactum salvo quod dictus magister Leonardus promisit eidem ser Iacobo quandocumque ipse¹⁶ ser Iacobus dabit eidem unum quadrum Beate Marie illum sibi ornare cum suis coloribus absque aliqua¹⁷ solutione et ponere aurum dandum per ipsum ser Iacobum. D [...] omnia pro quibus etc¹⁸.

Testes ser Franciscus Iusto notarius
ser Antonius Stuyanus¹⁹.

Friday, the 24th day of April, at the Ufficio della Volpe (Office of the Fox). Goodman Master Leonardo the Florentine painter son of the late ser Paolo²⁰ and ser Jacopo Magnano on the other [side], given the accounting that has been made between them about the things they have had from each other²¹ including the recompense in the form of [a] painting by the same Master Leonardo, and the said items that he has had from ser Jacopo and, having now calculated everything given and received up to the present day, both de-

¹⁴ Omitted: *ex una parte*. Crossed out: *sponte etcetera confessus est se teneri et dare debere prudenti viro ser Jacobo magnano de contrata sancte Juliane praesentialiter futuro unum quadrum*. The ‘*etcetera*’ probably abbreviates the formula *per se et suos haeredes iure proprio et in perpetuum*, commonly included in documents involving finances or items of value.

¹⁵ Crossed out: *videlicet*.

¹⁶ This emphatic identification may have been prompted by the existence of a homonymous kinsman: ASPd, AN, b. 247, fols. 650r-51r.

¹⁷ Crossed out: *mercede*.

¹⁸ The final portion of the entry is extremely difficult to decipher. Its first segment, which may reflect a formula or be missing abbreviation marks, is particularly opaque; one reading proposed would include it in the previous sentence: ‘per ipsum ser Iacobum dicto magistro’. Another possible reading for the second segment is ‘Pro quibus coloribus’ ‘In exchange for the colors’. A possible reading for the final segment, which would imply a truncated formula, is: ‘omnia per quemlibet etc. ‘everything for those who etc.’.

¹⁹ I am grateful to editor Dr. Marino Zorzi and to my colleague Prof. Roberto Pesce for assistance with the transcription and with the Latin; any errors are my responsibility alone.

²⁰ Omitted: ‘on one side’. Crossed out: ‘spontaneously, etc. concerning himself confesses and is held to the obligation to give to Goodman Ser Jacopo Magnano of the parish of Santa Giuliana in person in the future one painting’. The ‘etc.’ probably abbreviates the formula ‘for himself and his heirs and in his own right and in perpetuity’, commonly included in documents involving finances or items of value.

²¹ Crossed out: ‘that is to say’.

clare themselves to have had full satisfaction, except that the said Master Leonardo promises to the same ser Jacopo that when at some future time this ser Jacopo will give him one painting of the Blessed Virgin, he will decorate that for him²² with his own colors without any other²³ payment and place the gold[leaf] [on it] that will be given to him by this ser Jacopo. [Indecipherable] For all these things [indecipherable] etc...

Witnesses: ser Francesco Giusto, notary
ser Antonio Stuynus.

Could this ‘Leonardo the Florentine painter’ be Leonardo da Vinci? The absence of the surname ‘da Vinci’ is not necessarily indicative, as the notary may have taken it simply as the foreigner’s place of origin. The only details that contradict known facts regard the patronym, as Leonardo’s father’s name was Pietro and he was alive at this date. However, given the common notarial assumption that the fathers of adult men were deceased that could creep in even when the notary personally knew the father to be alive²⁴, the notary’s probable unfamiliarity with the painter, the possibility that in the *minuta* he had abbreviated the name as ‘P’, and the frequent association of saints Peter and Paul, it is possible that these were notarial errors in an entry bearing numerous others. Moreover, Leonardo may not have been present at the act to correct any mistakes, given the absence of the usual notarial formulas indicating presence in person or through a representative and length and place of dwelling in the city.

What could have induced Talamazzo to record such an irregular entry? The answer may lie in his history with Magnano, his family, and his associates. An elderly blacksmith, Jacopo Magnano was closely related to the prosperous Antonio Magnano qu. Zuan. As may be deduced from the leasing out of anvil and bellows to others by Jacopo’s heirs in 1480 and repairs made by Antonio Magnano “ferarolo” for a “cavalarius” (horsed messenger), they produced high-quality iron prod-

²² See note 16. For *sibi* as referring not to the subject of that verb but to another personal noun or pronoun in the sentence, see ASPd, AN, b. 1759, fol. 146r.

²³ Crossed out: ‘recompense’.

²⁴ FRANCESCO PIOVAN, *Tre schede ruzantiane*, «Quaderni Veneti», XXVII-XXVIII (1998), pp. 93-105, 94.

ucts including horseshoes²⁵. Antonio's relationship to Jacopo and his own relatively high status are illuminated by the division of property occurring after Jacopo's death. On July 31, 1480, Antonio Magnano qu. Zuan of the parish of Saint Giuliana – a wealthy and centrally-located parish also the residence of the deceased Jacopo, and whose church functioned as the seat of the goldsmith's guild²⁶ – gave a perpetual livello to Jacopo's heirs, his sons Zuan and Alvisè, on a small warehouse near the Palazzo del Podestà, as well as acquiring his own brother Jacopo's half of the family home for 350 ducats. The witnesses to the act are a goldsmith and Batista Alioto, the *fattore* who handled the lease of the equipment for the heirs of the deceased Jacopo. This information suggests that perhaps the notary agreed to record the 1478 termination to satisfy a querulous elderly client whose business and the business of whose heirs and associates he wished to retain. Smiths were crucial to the military installation in the heart of the city through which Venice was turning walled Padua into the bulwark of its mainland defense²⁷, as well as to the printing industry then taking root in the city and nourished by the University.

The documentation of Leonardo's whereabouts in this period does not exclude one or more trips to the Venetian dominion, Kenneth Clark having deduced that "Leonardo travelled oftener and more extensively than was formerly supposed"²⁸. On January 10, 1478 he had received as his first commission an important one: the altarpiece for the chapel of Florence's Palazzo Vecchio. It had first been given to Piero Pollaiuolo in December and then, with a change of regime, to Leonardo, "possibly through the intervention of the Medici"²⁹. On March 16, Leonardo received a rare twenty-five florin advance. Had it been requested for a trip to the Venetian dominion for professional purposes? At the time, Andrea Verrocchio, the mas-

²⁵ ASPd, AN, b. 247, fols. 577r, 624, 596r.

²⁶ For Jacopo's residence, see note 14; for the parish in general, see LIONELLO PUPPI and GIUSEPPE TOFFANIN, *Guida di Padova. Arte e storia tra vie e piazze*, Trieste, LINT, 1983, p. 137.

²⁷ See e.g. *L'architettura militare veneta del Cinquecento*, ed. Sergio Polano, Milan, Electa, 1988.

²⁸ KENNETH CLARK, *Leonardo and the Antique*, in *Leonardo's Legacy*, ed. Charles Donald O'Malley, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1969, pp. 1-34, p. 12.

²⁹ DAVID ALAN BROWN, *Leonardo da Vinci. Origins of a Genius*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1998, p. 150.

ter whose workshop Leonardo was then leaving, was negotiating with Doge Andrea Vendramin for his funeral monument, intended to rival the one planned for *condottiere* Bartolomeo Colleoni³⁰. Wendy Stedman Sheard noted “[Antonio] Rizzo’s sudden awareness of Leonardo during the 1480s” and posited as the cause Verrocchio’s presence in Venice after 1486 for work on the Colleoni monument, a presence that Anne Markham Schulz’s work brings to the early 1480s³¹. Perhaps Leonardo visited Venice even earlier, in the spring of 1478, to further negotiations with the dying doge and to gather information for the Colleoni competition. While the latter would not be announced until 1479, it had been awaited since the *condottiere*’s death in 1475 and Verrocchio, with his connections to high government circles, might have received inside information or simply wanted to procure the advantage by having a proposal at the ready.

Padua would have been a logical stop on such a trip. It offered a signal sculptural model, Donatello’s pathbreaking monument to Gattamelata, and was still the home of a number of powerful figures who had known Colleoni and who could perhaps influence the competition or comment on models. Padua also presented many fine examples of live animals trained in ceremonial and military use: long an important horse market and the headquarters of the Venetian army, Padua was also the home of many imperial noble families who prided themselves on their horsemanship³². Kenneth Clark noted a group of Leonardo’s early sketches of horses, the first of which he saw as preparatory for Leonardo’s 1481 *Adoration of the Magi* (Florence, Uffizi Gallery). If the sketches instead date to slightly earlier, they may

³⁰ WENDY STEDMAN SHEARD, “ASSA ADORNA”: *The Prehistory of the Vendramin Tomb*, «Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen», XX (1978), pp. 117-156, 133 on Colleoni commission.

³¹ WENDY STEDMAN SHEARD, *Verrocchio’s Medici Tomb and the Language of Materials; with a Postscript on His Legacy in Venice*, in *Verrocchio and Late Quattrocento Italian Sculpture*, ed. Steven Bule, Alan Phipps Darr, and Fiorella Superbi Gioffredi, Florence, Le Lettere, 1992, pp. 63-90, 84 n. 75; ANNE MARKHAM SCHULZ, *A New Venetian Project by Verrocchio: the Altar of the Virgin in SS. Giovanni e Paolo*, in *Festschrift für Otto von Simson zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Lucius Grisebach and Konrad Renger, Frankfurt, Propyläen, 1977, pp. 197-208.

³² PADUA, *Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile*, cod. 555, ANTONIO MONTEROSSO, *Reggimenti di Padova dal 1459 sino al 1533*, 4 vols., vol. 3, fasc. V, fols. 3r, 12r; fasc. VIII, fols. 5v, 8r, 12v, 16v, 26v; vol. 4, fasc. IX, fols. 10v, 12r, 13r, 34r, 35r; fasc. XI, fols. 5r-v, 35r, 39r.

have been undertaken to assist Verrocchio in preparing his proposal, which drew some of its inspiration from Donatello's statue and which would win the competition in 1481³³.

A second purpose of Verrocchio's could have been served by a visit to Donatello's associate Bartolomeo Bellano, who lived in Padua. Bellano's work in relatively small, freestanding statues and bronze reliefs³⁴ might have been of special interest at the time to Verrocchio because of two projects in which he was engaged. The *Putto with Dolphin* involved particular techniques because it would be viewed in the round atop a fountain. A commission for a silver panel and small-scale statues for the Florentine Baptistery altar involved work that was more similar to Verrocchio's early goldsmithing than to the large bronze casting to which he had subsequently turned with such noteworthy results.

Leonardo could have also served his own professional purposes with a trip to the Venetian dominion. In terms of painting, Giovanni Bellini at the time was close to initiating serious work on the large altarpiece that he had been commissioned to paint by the Tuscan Martini family for their chapel in the Venetian church of Saint Giobbe, decorated in the 1470s with Della Robbia-style maiolica probably by Tuscan artists³⁵. Regarding sculpture, and given Clark's hypothesis that some of the equine sketches were preparatory to the monument to Sforza whose court Leonardo would join in 1482, the artist may have already been looking for ways to garner Sforza patronage. The kinds of military machines that he saw as the key to suc-

³³ CLARK, *Leonardo*, pp. 6-8; cfr. KENNETH CLARK, *Leonardo da Vinci. An account of his Development as an Artist*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1939, fig. 13; date: VANNA ARRIGHI, pp. 133-134, no.III.20, in exh. cat. *Leonardo da Vinci. La vera immagine. Documenti e testimonianza sulla vita e sull'opera*, ed. Vanna Arrighi, Anna Bellinazzi, and Edoardo Villata, Florence-Milan, Giunti, Florence, Archivio di Stato, 2005; GÜNTER PASSAVANT, *Verrocchio. Sculptures, Paintings, and Drawings*, trans. Katherine Watson, London, Phaidon, 1969, pp. 62-63.

³⁴ VOLKER KRAHN, *Bartolomeo Bellano (Padova 1437/38-1496/97)*, in exh. cat. *Donatello e il suo tempo. Il bronretto a Padova nel Quattrocento e nel Cinquecento*, ed. Davide Banzato, Milan, Skira, 2001, pp. 63-90; PASSAVANT, *Verrocchio*, pp. 8, 17-19, 21-23, 62-63.

³⁵ LORENZO FINOCCHI GHERSI, *Il Rinascimento veneziano di Giovanni Bellini*, Venice, Consorzio Venezia Nuova-Marsilio, 2003, p. 40; CRAIG HUGH SMYTH, *Venice and the Emergence of the High Renaissance in Florence: Observations and Questions*, in *Florence and Venice: Comparisons and Relations*, 2 vols., Florence, La Nuova Italia, 1979, vol. I, pp. 209-249, 223-224.

cess in that endeavor were available for observation in Padua³⁶. An interest in horseshoes or military machines may have been what put him in contact with the blacksmith Jacopo Magnano.

For an artist as keenly interested as Leonardo in capturing the forms and functions of human anatomy, the University of Padua's medical faculty with its Aristotelian emphasis on nature offered extensive resources. Somewhat later Leonardo had contact with Marc'Antonio della Torre, of the renowned Veronese family of medical experts, when della Torre was at the University of Pavia; Marc'Antonio's father Girolamo taught at the University of Padua in the late fifteenth century, where, among other duties, he served on the graduation committee of Gian Francesco Beolco, Ruzante's father³⁷. Another attraction of Padua was the gamut of employment possibilities that it offered to even a young artist. Venetian patricians who lived there purchased or commissioned devotional panels for their homes; as Magnano's case illustrates, many of the city's artisans and of the University's prosperous students also had the means to purchase small paintings; guilds and *scuole* commissioned altarpieces and fresco cycles; professors of the university's medical and legal faculties commissioned art works including tomb monuments; high-ranking *condottieri* were interested in classicizing medallions and other depictions of themselves and their deeds.

Leonardo had his own connection to this world. Bernardo Bembo, one of the potential conduits of Venetian influence on Florentine art posited by Craig Hugh Smyth, had either recently commissioned or would soon commission of him the painting of the retro of his earlier portrait of Ginevra de' Benci with Bembo's personal device surrounding a symbol of Ginevra³⁸. In 1478, Bembo was re-elected as Venetian ambassador to Florence, an office that he had held

³⁶ On war machines, see MARTIN KEMP, *Leonardo da Vinci*, in *Biography and Early Art Criticism of Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. Claire Farago, New York, Garland, 1999, pp. 40-59, 41.

³⁷ DOMENICO LAURENZA, *De Figura Umana: Fistognomica, anatomia e arte in Leonardo*, Florence, Olschki, 2001, pp. 76-77; GIUSEPPINA DE SANDRE, *Dottori, Università, Comune a Padova nel Quattrocento*, «Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova», I (1968), pp. 15-47, 42; SAMBIN, *Lazzaro*, p. 32.

³⁸ JANE MARTINEAU, *Bernardo Bembo and Leonardo's portrait of Ginevra de' Benci*, «Burlington Magazine», CXXXI (1989), pp. 811-816.

from 1475 to 1476. During one of the ambassadorships he and Ginevra developed an intense platonic relationship. Both were members of the Medici inner circle, Bembo acquiring favor and favors (including loans to support a lifestyle more lavish than his income) from them and the Benci being important managers of their bank. With Jane Martineau's identification of Bembo's device has come a reconsideration of the portrait's date, now seen as 1473 and associated with Ginevra's engagement³⁹. To the evidence adduced for this association may be added the two social prescriptions apparently governing her clothing: somber tints and absence of jewelry in accord with the late stages of mourning for her father's death of five years before – or perhaps the impoverishment of her affianced, whose family normally paid for bridal finery – and sky-blue bodice laces reflecting the joy of her marriage⁴⁰.

During February, April, and June of 1478, Bembo held the high office of Capo dei Dieci (Head of the Ten). While it normally required presence in Venice, in June at least he was in Padua to escape the plague⁴¹. His choice of refuge was consistent with a lengthy family history, as well as his personal one. Francesco and Antonio Bembo had held high office in late-Carrara Padua⁴²; immediately after the Carrara state's absorption into the Venetian dominion in 1405, Bernardo's grandfather acquired a significant piece of confiscated Carrara land. His son – Bernardo's uncle – Zuan Marco Bembo purchased additional former Carrara land in 1450, around the time that Bernardo began his studies at the university, and by 1466 Zuan Marco was living in Padua. Bernardo himself would remain there for at least ten years, studying philosophy and law and developing a close friendship with the calligrapher Bartolomeo Sanvito. Decades later, Sanvito's great-niece, Giustina Palatino, would become the wife of

³⁹ BROWN, *Leonardo*, pp. 104-121.

⁴⁰ Cfr. ROBERTA ORSI LANDINI and MARY WESTERMAN BULGARELLA, *Costume in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Portraits of Women*, in exh. cat. *Virtue and Beauty. Leonardo's Ginevra de' Benci and Renaissance Portraits of Women*, ed. David Alan Brown, Washington, National Gallery of Art, 2001, pp. 89-97; cfr. DAVID ALAN BROWN, 'Ginevra de' Benci', pp. 142-145, no. 16.

⁴¹ NELLA GIANNETTO, *Bernardo Bembo umanista e politico veneziano*, Florence, Olschki, 1985, pp. 33-34.

⁴² BENJAMIN KOHL, *Padua under the Carrara, 1318-1405*, Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, pp. 293, 328.

Angelo Beolco⁴³. Of course Bernardo also was the owner of a renowned villa at Santa Maria di Non, already in existence by 1478⁴⁴.

What other evidence is available regarding Leonardo's whereabouts in the spring of 1478? Some may be deducible from apparent absences. The Pazzi Conspiracy, in which Lorenzo de' Medici was wounded and his brother Giuliano killed, occurred just two days after the notarial entry. The Medici reacted swiftly, catching and hanging most of the conspirators immediately and commissioning Sandro Botticelli to record the event. One of the few who escaped was apprehended late in 1479, and suffered a similar fate. Of that execution Leonardo made a well-known and copiously-annotated sketch "that was probably meant to serve for an admonitory painting"⁴⁵. Did the choice of Botticelli for the first episode represent solely Medici favor or did it also reflect Leonardo's absence from Florence? Among the reasons for Leonardo's sketch were there the echoes that the conspiracy had in Venice? The daughter-in-law of the commissioner of Bellini's altarpiece, married to one of the conspirators, was rendered a widow by his execution and the commissioner's close relatives refused to be buried in the chapel. Work on the altarpiece was also likely have been delayed by the events⁴⁶.

The next known document involving Leonardo is dated May 3, 1478, and records the long-term lease (*livello*) of a mill by his uncle and father. The agreement included the usually forbidden arrangement for the lease to pass to the illegitimate Leonardo in the absence of legitimate patrilineal male heirs, though only during his lifetime. The notarial record of the transaction bears a second curious detail:

⁴³ Property: VITTORIO LAZZARINI, *Beni carraresi e proprietari veneziani*, in *Studi in onore di Gino Luzzatto*, 2 vols., Milan, Giuffrè, 1949, vol. I, pp. 274-88, pp. 281, 285; ASPd, Estimo 1418, b. 418, fol. 120v; *ibid.*, AN, b. 477, fols. 71v-73r, 258r; GIANNETTO, *Bernardo Bembo*, pp. 50, 162-163, 206 (Zuan Marco), 91-110 (university career). For other family members see ASPd, Estimo 1418, b. 418, fol. 219v; *ibid.*, b. 427, fol. 78r; *ibid.*, Estimo 1518, b. 352, fols. 267v, 135r, 316r and, for Pietro Bembo, fols. 119v, 132r, 135r, 203v, 298v; for Palatino, PAOLO SAMBIN, *Briciole biografiche del Ruzante e del suo compagno d'arte Marco Aurelio Alvarotti (Menato)*, in *Per le biografie di Angelo Beolco*, pp. 87-114, 95-98.

⁴⁴ LIONELLO PUPPI, *Le residenze di Pietro Bembo 'in padoana'*, «L'Arte», VII-VIII (1969), pp. 31-65; GIANNETTO, *Bernardo Bembo*, pp. 190-191, n. 259.

⁴⁵ BROWN, *Leonardo*, p. 123.

⁴⁶ FINOCCHI GHERSI, *Il Rinascimento veneziano*, p. 40.

the phrase attesting to Leonardo's presence, "ibidem presentis", is added above the line, as is clearly evident in a reproduction of the document⁴⁷, Was the omission from this detailed contract, which was further marred by other notarial omissions, just a slip on the notary's part? Was Leonardo absent when the *minuta* was written but returned by the time the final form was prepared?

Two final issues are raised by Talamazzo's 1478 entry. The first is the lengthy crossed-out passage and its substitute, through which the painter Leonardo, originally cast as a debtor to Magnano, becomes his equal in a mutual agreement. Might this assertion of professional status on the painter's part have expressed intolerance toward a subordinate position by one who was leaving his master's shop and striking out on his own? Did it function as a declaration of adulthood by a young man who had only a year before reached the age of majority of 25? Was it part of Leonardo's effort to further the concept of artists as intellectuals developed by Alberti, who had also spent years in Padua?

The second issue is whether or not it is possible to identify among the works of Leonardo ones that could correspond to those to which the entry refers. To date no record of an agreement regarding the original *pictura* has emerged from Talamazzo's preceding documents⁴⁸, perhaps because it, like many contemporary agreements, was made informally. The nature and subject of the *pictura* may only be guessed at, and the promised *quadrum* of the Madonna itself raises numerous questions. Was it one of the two recorded in the partially-preserved annotation on a sheet of sketches reading: "bre 1478 Inchominciai le 2 Vergine Marie..."⁴⁹? Was it the *Benoit Madonna* (St. Petersburg, Hermitage)⁵⁰? If so, the fact that ser Jacopo gave the Florentine a partially-completed pre-existing work may account for the relatively poor quality of the execution and the anomaly of style of that work as com-

⁴⁷ See VANNA ARRIGHI, *Una clausola contrattuale a favore di Leonardo*, in ARRIGHI, BELLINAZZI and VILLATA, *Leonardo da Vinci*, pp. 129-130, no. III.16.

⁴⁸ ASPd, AN, vols. 250, 254. For Alberti, see BROWN, *Leonardo*, pp. 16-18.

⁴⁹ EDOARDO VILLATA, *Leonardo da Vinci, Due 'Vergini Marie'*, in ARRIGHI, BELLINAZZI, and VILLATA, *Leonardo da Vinci*, pp. 130-131, no. III.17.

⁵⁰ Cf. BROWN, *Leonardo*, p. 130; EVERETT FAHY, *The Legacy of Leonardo*, Washington, National Gallery of Art, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, New York, Knoedler, 1979, pp. 18-23.

pared with the Madonnas of the Uffizi *Annunciation* and *Adoration of the Magi*.

While a 1478 trip of Leonardo to the Venetian dominion remains a matter of hypothesis, possible earlier trips there in the company of his master, Andrea Verrocchio, are increasingly attracting the attention of scholars. Verrocchio had made a professional journey to Treviso in 1469, probably also stopping in Venice and possibly Padua⁵¹. He may have visited Giovanni Bellini's workshop during that trip and Leonardo could have accompanied him or visited the Venetian dominion separately⁵². A distinctive trace of one or more visits may remain in the background of Leonardo's earliest work, the 1472-73 *Annunciation* (Florence, Uffizi Gallery), in the extremely rugged mountainscape, which bears characteristics of the Julian Alps and rises abruptly behind a seaport resembling Trieste⁵³. A similarly harsh mountainscape is glimpsed through the window in Leonardo's *Madonna with a Carnation* (Munich, Alte Pinakothek), which Brown dates to "the mid 1470s"⁵⁴. While these have usually been identified as Tuscan landscapes, that they are not is immediately evident in a comparison with Leonardo's genuinely Tuscan 1473 *Landscape Study*⁵⁵ and background of his portrait of Ginevra de' Benci. The hills of these latter works, rolling and covered with vegetation, are close to human settlements. The peaks of the first two paintings, instead, rise abruptly to a great height and are frosty white, barren and isolated. In Verrocchio and Leonardo's *Baptism* (Florence, Uffizi Gallery), a few such crags have been incorporated into a Tuscan landscape that Brown believes Leonardo "altered" after its painting by Verrocchio⁵⁶. John Pope-Hennessy observed with regard to the harsh mountains that "Leonardo's landscape is one with which nobody in Florence in the middle of the 1470s could have identified". Citing Leonardo's dictum that the mind of the painter must reflect the natural world around him and recalling Leonardo's climbing of Monte

⁵¹ DARIO COVI, *Verrocchio and Venice, 1469*, «Art Bulletin», LXV (1983), n. 2, pp. 253-273.

⁵² SMYTH, *Venice*, pp. 215, 223-228.

⁵³ Painting's date: BROWN, *Leonardo*, pp. 75-76; image: fig. 80, p. 91.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 134 figg. 124 and 125, p. 98 fig. 87.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-141 and fig. 128.

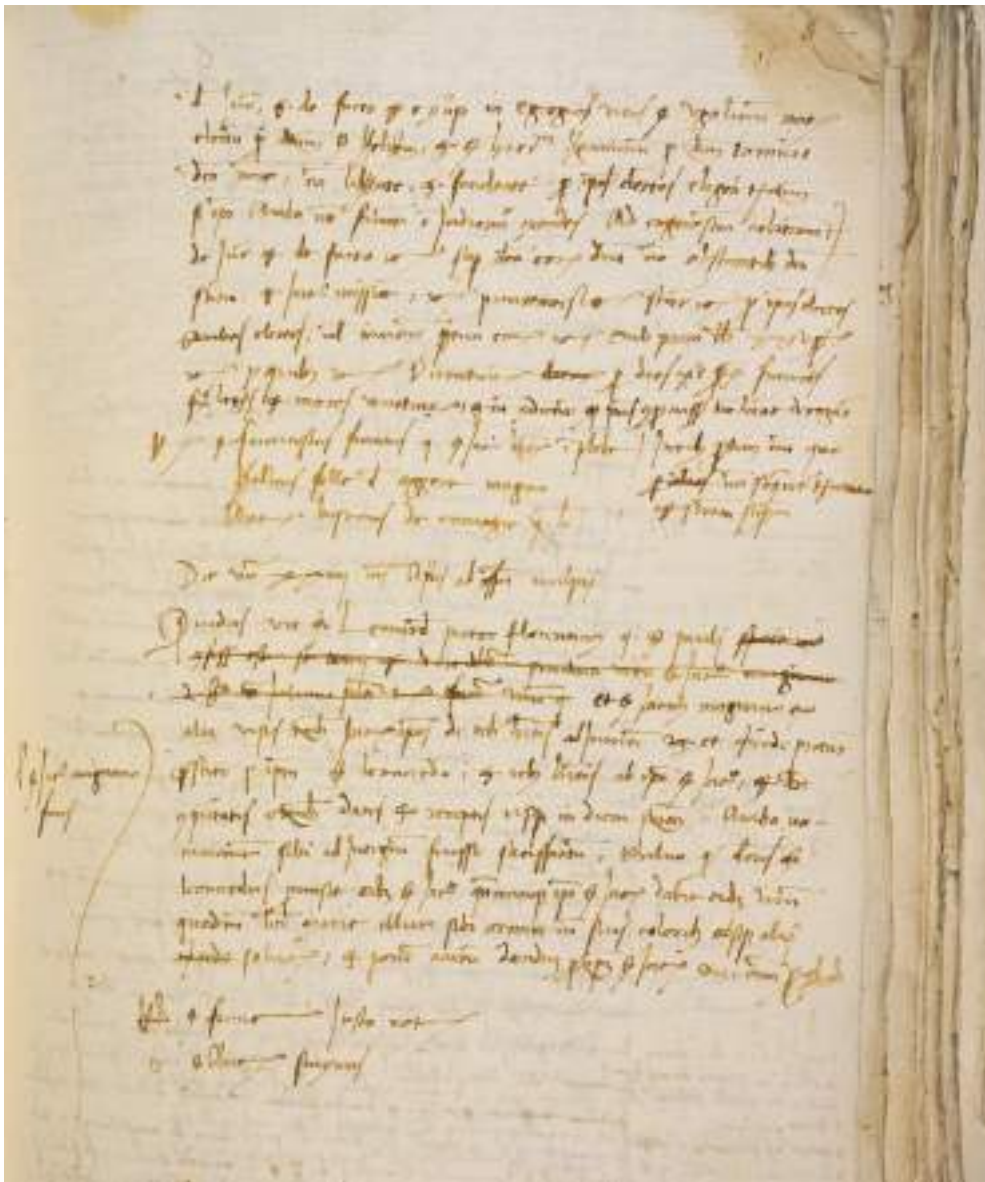
Rosa, Pope-Hennessy notes that, in the works created after his move to Milan, Leonardo made accurate and “supreme imaginative use” of the Alps north of the city and observed sea shells on Italian mountains⁵⁷. Kenneth Clark noted Leonardo’s study of “outcrops and disturbed stratification, where the rock has broken through the comfortable humus, and reveals the ancient, grim foundations on which living things have their precarious existence”⁵⁸. On this basis, the harsh mountains in the first paintings are more likely based on observation than invention, their likely model the Julian Alps.

A possible presence of Leonardo in Padua and the many, if secondary or tertiary, connections between his associates and those of Ruzante open the question of what influence Leonardo’s cultural authority and his choice of nature as a central element in his artistic works might have had on Ruzante’s similar choice of ‘nature’ and ‘natural’ as the central concept of his work, made when Leonardo was at the height of his fame and in the context, superbly evoked by Smyth⁵⁹, of a distinctive Venetian development of realism in painting.

⁵⁷ JOHN POPE-HENNESSEY, *Leonardo: Landscape Painter*, «Antaeus», LIV (1985), pp. 41-54, pp. 45, 49-50, 54, and cfr. p. 52.

⁵⁸ CLARK, *Leonardo da Vinci*, pp. 150-151.

⁵⁹ SMYTH, *Venice*, p. 234.



1. *Providus vir Leonardus pictor florentinus*, fol. 105r, PADUA, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Notarile, b. 247