



Horace, Petrarch and Leonardo da Vinci. Literary Invention and Self-Presentation in the *Mona Lisa*

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Nella *Gioconda*, il celebre contrasto fra la donna dal placido sorriso e il vasto e arido paesaggio alle sue spalle riflette il tipo di *invenzione poetica* che Leon Battista Alberti suggerisce ai pittori nel 1535-1536. Questa *concordia discors* (armonia discordante) delle immagini dovrebbe essere rivista. Le fonti di Leonardo per l'*invenzione* della sua Monna Lisa sono sostanzialmente tre: l'*Ode* 1.22 ("*Integer vitae*") di Orazio, e due sonetti di Petrarca (*Canzoniere* CXLV, CLIX) ispirati all'*ode* di Orazio. Tutti e due i poeti celebrano la loro devozione a donne dal dolce sorriso e dal dolce eloquio (Lalage e Laura), promettendo di amarle e lodarle ovunque nel mondo, dall'umido e tetro Nord agli aridi e infuocati deserti. Anche i sorrisi della Matilda e della Beatrice di Dante si possono fondere al delicato sorriso della *Gioconda*, come parte della leonardesca *finzione* di spirito fiorentino, natura, invenzione, letteratura, intelletto, mimesi e fantasia. Le allusioni petrarchesche costituiscono anche un legame alla tradizione dei ritratti di Laura: da quelli (perduti) di Simone Martini ad altri di Andrea del Sarto, Giorgione e del tardo Bronzino, come base per un allegorico *envoi* alla vita e all'opera di Leonardo.

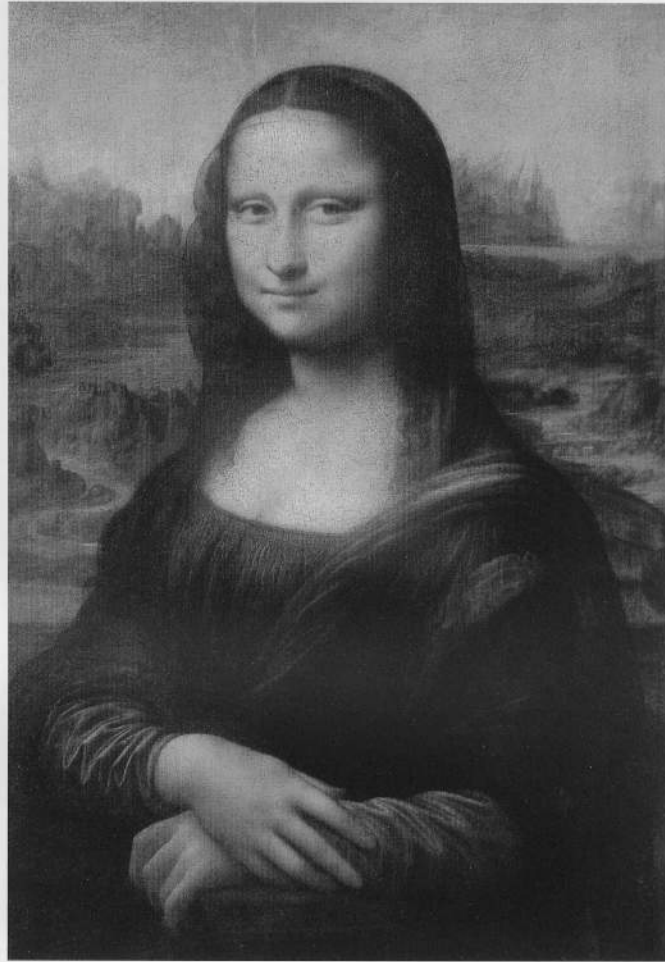
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I advise all painters to be familiar with poets, rhetoricians and other learned writers, for they will provide fresh inventions, or else even help compose their narrative (*istoria*) in a beautiful way. Through them will they win great praise and reputation for their painting. Phidias, the most famous of all painters, confessed to having learned from the poet Homer how to depict Jupiter in all his divine majesty. In the same way shall we, more eager for learning than gain, learn from our poets more and more things useful for painting.

Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*¹

For the *Mona Lisa* (*La Gioconda*, *La Joconde*) Kenneth Clark felt that attempting "to answer the riddle of the Sphinx has been a traditional form of self-destruction," and thus he cautioned critics who might "laugh it off or . . . think one can explain it by the usual processes of formal or philological analysis."² Carlo Pedretti finds the work to be a "victim of too much erudition, too much philology, too much philosophy, too much psychology, too much arrogance and, on the whole, too much misunderstanding."³ Yet Ludwig Heydenreich regarded it as "the most mysterious painting in European art," and psychologist Jan Hendrick van den Berg regarded its famous landscape as "the strangest . . . ever beheld by human beings."⁴ Whatever else it may be, the origins of the *Mona Lisa* include Florence and the Medici. Leonardo (1452-1519) was born at nearby Vinci during the reign of Cosimo de' Medici (1389-1464). He learned his craft apprenticed to Andrea del Verrocchio in the Florence of Piero il Gottoso (1416-1469) and Lorenzo il Magnifico (1449-1492), and within a circle of young artists that included Michelangelo Buonarroti. One memorable link between Leonardo and the stormy political life of Florence is his sketch of the hanged corpse of Pazzi conspirator Bernardo di Bandino Baroncelli from December 29, 1479.⁵ In 1482 he left for Milan as Lorenzo's peace emissary to Ludovico il Moro, bearing the gift

1. Leonardo da Vinci.
Mona Lisa, 76.8 x 53 cm,
oil on poplar panel. Paris,
Musée du Louvre.
Image: Réunion des Musées
Nationaux / Art Resource,
NY.



of a silver horse-head lyre of his own creation, and remained in Ludovico's service in Milan until it fell to the French in 1499. After a very brief stay in Venice he returned to Florence in 1500, where Piero il Fatuo de' Medici (1472-1503) and the Medici were in exile, but it appears from the journals of Don Antonio de' Beatis, a secretary to the cardinal of Aragon (both met Leonardo at Cloux in 1517), that a sitting for the portrait of *La Gioconda* had been arranged (perhaps from Venice) by Giuliano de' Medici (1479-1516), Piero's brother and successor, who returned to Florence in 1512. In 1506, but strangely Leonardo took it with him back to Milan. After 1512 Leonardo would not see Milan or Florence again. After three years in the Rome of Medici Pope Leo X (1475-1521) he accepted a long-standing offer of patronage

from Francis I and moved to Amboise on the Loire, taking the portrait with him once again. There he died, on the second day of May, 1519, two days before the passing of the second Lorenzo (II) in the line of Medici rulers of Florence. *Lisa* was by then a much-travelled lady, and though destined for a permanent home in Paris, in 1911 she made an unexpected trip back to Florence, all too briefly some say. In 1913, following a celebrated tour of Italy, she would return to the Louvre.

The smiling subject of the *Mona Lisa* was later identified by Giorgio Vasari as Lisa di Antonmaria di Noldo Gherardini, third wife of Florentine businessman Francesco del Giocondo, a fact that has been recently confirmed.⁶ Frank Zöllner sees in those slightly puffy hands (right folded over left,

left resting on chair-arm) and that dark gauzy veil a new mother or mother-to-be, with recent analyses at the Louvre confirming her maternal status from her gauzy wrap (*guarnello*), chignon, and bonnet, long obscured by varnish.⁷ Zöllner also read visual references to feminine virtue, idealized beauty, and patronage of the arts,⁸ and John Pope-Hennessy a “new sense of the mystery and the uniqueness of the human personality.”⁹ Giancarlo Maiorino sees a reminiscence of Castiglione’s lady of the court in “a soft and delicate tenderness, with an air of womanly sweetness.”¹⁰ And so, a Florentine businessman with ties to the Medici, a sincere affection for his wife, and a “thoughtful interest in art” commissions a portrait of his wife from Leonardo, but the painter leaves Florence in 1506, taking the unfinished work away unfinished to Milan, then Rome, and finally Amboise on the Loire.¹¹ First then, the mysterious landscape. Could it be Tuscan? When, why, and how was it conceived? Martin Kemp has highlighted some visual links between it and the portrait.

The delicate cascades of her hair beautifully correspond to the movement of water, as Leonardo himself was delighted to observe... The little rivulets of drapery falling from her gathered neckline underscore the analogy, as do the spiral folds of the veil across her left breast. And the delicately streaked touches of paint in the highlights of both the drapery and the landscape underline the sense of identity between foreground and background.¹²

Thus reinvented and idealized—is it still a real portrait?¹³ By Ernst Gombrich’s observation,

[E]ven when Leonardo painted a portrait, he approximated the features of his sitter to his ideal type. What alchemy he used in this transformation remains his secret. His pupils never could do it.¹⁴

Even at Cloux Leonardo appears to have continued refining the work, especially the landscape.¹⁵ And sometime after Leonardo died there in 1519, the *Mona Lisa* came into the collection of his patron King Francis I, and eventually the Louvre.

Although Clark and Pedretti were skeptical about the value of philological analysis of the *Mona Lisa*, we know that Florentine Leon Battista Alberti had advised painters to draw their *invenzioni* (i.e., contents, topics, combinations of images) for *istorie* (narrative paintings) from the poets.¹⁶

*Sarà la storia, qual tu possa lodare e maravigliare, tale che con sue piacevolezze si porgierà sì ornata e grata che ella terrà con diletto e movimento d’animo qualunque dotto o indotto la miri.*¹⁷

Alberti’s concept of “*istorie*” did not exclude portraits; for example he regarded the statue of Zeus at Olympia as an instance (by Phidias’ own admission) of *invenzione* drawn from Homer.¹⁸ A portrait, in any case, can tell a story, and painters could determine the number of figures in a work (*solitudine* being one option). Using themes from literature, *istorie* depicted discernible emotions with variety and richness, and self-restraint,¹⁹ demonstrating mastery of perspective for visual, temporal and spatial unity, along with proper lighting, modelling, colour, and gesture,

directed towards the expression of a new humanist art which will be capable of incorporating the finds of the literary and theological humanists while at the same time satisfying the demands of the artistic humanists.²⁰

As long as painting was seen as “craft,” not “art,” an *invenzione* would be specified to the painter by a patron looking for something new, difficult, and classical in a commissioned work.²¹ As their status rose, painters of real *ingegno* such as Giovanni Bellini and Leonardo began relying on their own inventions, subject to their own *fantasie*:

Leonardo united content and form according to the faculty of imagination and rational potential, since invention involved the *mimesis* of nature; [painting being the primary vehicle for the demonstration of natural truth]²² “poesis... est fervor quidam exquisite inveniendi atque dicendi, seu scribendi quod inveneris” (Bocc.14-15; Osgood 39). And able to remake natural effects in the work of art through a deep understanding of natural causes. (Kemp)²³

Kemp sees Leonardo’s view of *invenzione* as complex; he had earlier regarded it as going hand in hand with imagination, speculation, judgment and divine creativity, but it became more disciplined, reflecting his own scientific method.²⁴

The dominant tone of the fifteenth century was that the visual arts were governed by rational procedures of discovery and making, which could be given almost infinite extension by imaginative invention, rather than by capricious creativity of an anarchically modern kind. (Kemp)²⁵

The literary poetic form of *invenzione* is concerned with “topics” for painting—original iconographical schemes, new allegories, fresh variations upon mythologies and histories and fresh ornaments for the main theme. (Kemp)³⁶

Before beginning his portrait of Lisa del Giocondo in 1503, Leonardo seems to have been reading Alberti,²⁷ whose *istorie* were based on classical themes, revealing the workings of the soul with *dignità* and *verecundia* (decorum) as advocated by Cicero and Horace.²⁸ While little is known about Leonardo’s early schooling, by the 1490s he was actually teaching himself Latin.²⁹ In France, Benvenuto Cellini would hear that Leonardo had a reputation there as a literary scholar (“*qualche cognizione di lettere latine e greche*”).³⁰ And his notebooks reveal a familiarity with Vitruvius in Latin, and Archimedes and Xenophon in Latin translations.³¹ (Landino’s Italian translation of Pliny’s *Naturalis Historia* had appeared in print in 1476.)³² He cites Horace a number of times; e.g., paraphrasing the *Ars Poetica*, “*ut pictura poesis*” (*Ars P.* 361: a poem is like a picture) as “*la pittura è una poesia muta*” (painting is silent poetry).³³ And he concurs with Horace that art without rational knowledge is vain (*Ars P.* 379): “*il errore di quelli chi usano la pratica senza scientia (vedi primo la poetica d’Oratio)*,”³⁴ and he joined the debate on artistic licence with Horace,³⁵ who urged both poets and painters to take risks (*Ars P.* 9-10: “*pictoribus atque poetis / quidlibet audendi semper fuit aequa potestas*”)³⁶ while conceding that a painting had greater immediacy (*Ars P.* 181-182).³⁷ Leonardo cites *Satires* 1. 9. 59-60: “*nil sine magno / vita labore dedit mortalibus*”: “*Tu o Iddio ci vendi tutti li beni per prezzo di fatica*” (“Thou, o God dost sell us all our blessings at the cost of toil”), and at least three *Odes* (3.1.25,³⁸ 4.7.13, 1.34.78).³⁹ He cites passages from Vergil (*Aen.* 4.181-3, 9. 548) and Lucan (*Phars.* 4.130, 4.593), and in Ovid he found a parallel for the fossilized fish he saw in a mountain cave. His description of Helen of Troy in old age (*Met.* 15. 232-234) caused him to reflect on the earth’s natural processes, on flux, time, and necessity.⁴⁰ He appreciated Lucretius as a poet of reason and science.⁴¹ From his classical references, John Gwyn Griffith concludes that he Leonardo “calls those happy ‘who lend ear to the works of the dead—who read good

works and obey them’... [but with] most pleasure in Horace and Ovid.”⁴² Kenneth Clark regarded “The turning point in the process of self-education—we may almost say in Leonardo’s life—[as that] period about 1494 when he taught himself Latin.”⁴³ Leonardo’s breadth of interests, therefore, invites us to look for some literary invention underlying the remarkable disconnect between the smiling *Gioconda*; his weird, “dreamlike” landscape has suggested “fearful resonance” (Webster Smith),⁴⁴ “analogy between woman and nature” (Garrard),⁴⁵ “personification of the landscape with a cosmological significance” (Tolnay)⁴⁶ or “microcosm of man against the macrocosm of the world” (Keele).⁴⁷ McMullen has perceived in the *Mona Lisa*

a two-storied structure... below there is a relatively—or formerly—human landscape, with a bridge that spans a partly dry river bed and a road that winds to a hidden end through hot, reddish brown rocks; above there is a frosty region with two glaucous lakes, or sea inlets, and a mountain range whose jagged spires vary from olive green to light blue and finally become transparent in the flooding light of the distant horizon.⁴⁸

Two more impressions of the world of this landscape are these:

The background may be a representation of the universe, with mountains, plains and rivers. Or possibly it is both reality and the world of dream. One could suppose that the landscape doesn’t exist, that it is the young woman’s own dream world. (Jean-Pierre Cuzin)⁴⁹

What matters is the ever so slight failure of the two parts to cohere, thus drawing attention to the formal process itself: the action of a symbolic system to organize reality. There are no words in Leonardo’s picture, but the background involves a reference to language. (Darian Leader)⁵⁰

Van den Berg went so far as to identify Leonardo’s distant “ragged and snow-capped” mountains with the Alps so famously described by the Florentine Petrarch from the summit of Mont Ventoux on the Rhone in 1336.⁵¹ Since Leonardo had some degree of familiarity with Horace’s poetry in Latin, let us begin there in the search for *invenzione* in his *Mona Lisa*.⁵² The well-known *Ode to Fuscus* (1. 22, “*Integer vitae*”) contains a striking antithesis of images: its sweetly-smiling, sweetly-speaking Lalage (Gk. “Prattler”), and its complex antithetical landscape.

Horace, Ode 1. 22

*Integer uitae scelerisque purus
non eget Mauris iaculis neque arcu
nec uenenatis grauida sagittis,
Fusce, pharetra,*

4

*sive per Syrtis iter aestuosas
sive facturus per inhospitalem
Caucasum uel quae loca fabulosus
lambit Hydaspes.*

8

*Namque me silua lupus in Sabina,
dum meam canto Lalagen et ultra
terminum curis uagor expeditis,
fugit inermem,*

12

*quale portentum neque militaris
Daunias latis alit aesculetis
nec Iubae tellus generat, leonum
arida nutrix.*

16

*Pone me pigris ubi nulla campis
arbor aestiua recreatur aura,
quod latus mundi nebulae malusque
Iuppiter urget;*

20

*pone sub curru nimium propinqui
solis in terra domibus negata:
dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,
dulce loquentem.*

24

He of upright life, and with crime untainted,
needs no Moorish darts, nor a bow that's bended,
nor a burdened quiver with arrows venomed,
Fuscus, with poison.

Let his path lie far past the sultry Syrtes,
let him plan to venture the hostile peaks of
Caucasus, or banks that are washed by streams of
fabled Hydaspes.

A wolf, you see, while out in my Sabine forest,
singing songs of Lalage,—her I love so!—
strolling carefree well past my boundary marker,
Fled from *me—unarmed!*

Such a monster never did warlike Daunias
ever breed in all of its boundless oak woods,
or the land of Juba produce, that arid
nurse of the lions.

Place me on some desolate barren tundra,
where no tree's restored by a breeze of summer,
on a side of earth where the clouds and threatening
Jupiter lower.

Place me where the car of the sun flies all too
close to earth, in land that's devoid of dwellings:
I will love my Lalage, sweetly smiling,
So sweetly speaking!

The ode begins with maxim and poetic program: the man pure-in-heart, especially the *poet*, enjoys divine protection wherever he goes.⁵³ In *Odes* 3. 4 he tells of playing as a child on the slopes of Mons Vultur near his home at Venusia (Venosa) in Apulia, and being miraculously saved from snakes and bears, the mark of a divinely gifted child (*non sine dis animosus infans*: 3. 4. 20). In that *Fuscus Ode* (1. 22) he sets an encounter with a monstrous wolf in his Sabine woods against a catalogue of hostile deserts where a poet could also be safe: in Africa (2-5, 15-16), Central Asia (6-7a), India (7b-8), Apulia (9-16), the damp, dreary north (17-20), and the arid, sun-scorched south (21-22).⁵⁴ At the axis (10) sounds the magical name “Lalage” (*dum meam canto Lalagen*), and again at the end (*dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo, / dulce loquentem*: 23-24).⁵⁵

The layered landscapes in both the *Ode to Fuscus* and the *Mona Lisa* offer interesting parallels between Leonardo’s “hot reddish broken rocks” (McMullen) and Horace’s African desert (1. 22. 2, 5, 15-16, 21-22);

the upper level of the painting (“frosty region with two glaucous lakes or sea-inlets”) and Horace’s far north (17-20); the “mountain range with jagged spires” and Horace’s Caucasus (6-7); the river in the desert and Horace’s Indian Hydaspes (17-18).⁵⁶ Thirteen centuries later, the same ode provided the *invenzioni* for two of Petrarch’s *Canzoniere*.⁵⁷

CXLV

*Ponmi ove 'l sole occide i fiori e l'erba
o dove vince lui il ghiaccio e la neve;
ponmi ov'è il carro suo temprato e leve
et ov'è chi ce 'l rende o chi ce 'l serba:*

*ponmi in unil fortuna od in superba,
al dolce aere sereno al fosco e greve;
ponmi a la notte, al dì lungo od al breve,
a la matura etate od a l'acerba:*

*ponmi in cielo od in terra od in abisso,
in alto poggio, in valle ima e palustre,
libero spïro od a' suoi membri affisso;*

*ponmi con fama oscura o con illustre: sarò qual
fui, vierò com'io son visso,
continuando il mio sospir trillustre.*

CLIX

*In qual parte del ciel, in quale idea
era l'essempio onde natura tolse
quel bel riso leggiadro, in ch'ella volse
mostrar qua giù quanto là su potea?*

*Qual ninfa in fonti, in selve mai qual dea
chiome d'oro sí fino a l'aura sciolse?
quando un cor tante in sé vertuti accolse?
benché la somma è di mia morte rea.*

*Per divina bellezza indarno mira,
chi gli occhi di costei già mai non vide,
come soavemente ella gli gira;*

*non sa come Amor sana e come ancide
chi non sa come dolce ella sospira.
e come dolce parla e dolce ride.*

Petrarch's fourfold anaphora in *Canz.* CXIII (*Ponmi ove*, "Place me where") is an expansion of Horace's once-repeated challenge (*Pone me*). His desert landscapes underscore his undying devotion to Laura (13-14). As Petrarch's "Lalage" sonnet, *Canz.* CXLV a Platonic *concelto* out of a simpler idea of Horace:

*Who does not know how sweetly she doth sigh
And sweetly speak, and ah, so sweetly smile.⁵⁸*

Canz. CCCX borrows an antithesis from Horace's spring lyric to Vergil (*Odes* 4. 12: smiles and flowers against hostile desert): "The Zephyr returns with flowers, grass, and the nightingale (1-4); the meadows smile, and sky, air, water and earth seem full of love (5-8)." But for Petrarch it is only heavier sighs that return (8-11). "Bird songs, flowering shores, the charming motions of chaste ladies all become a wilderness of savage beasts and forest" (12-14):

*E cantar augelletti e fiorir piagge,
E 'n donne oneste atti soavi
sono un deserto, e fere aspre e selvagge.⁵⁹*

La Gioconda's gauzy veil and "dark décolleté gown, pleated and embroidered across the neckline with Leonardo's familiar knots" (Pedretti) are reminiscent of Petrarch's Laura in her green dress and veil (her hair blond and braided, unlike *Gioconda's* dark locks falling in loose waves, pulled back at the temple and held in a bun by her bonnet).⁶⁰ Laura's "sweet gentle smile quenches the heat of my desires" (*l' dulce mansueto riso / pur acqueta gli ardenti miei desiri*).⁶¹ *La Gioconda's* feminine warmth and elegance are

also heightened by their contrast with the bleak landscape below the loggia.⁶² According to Vasari, Leonardo engaged jesters and musicians to keep all melancholy from her face; and Lomazzo states he once studied laughing rustics by telling them silly stories over dinner, then drawing their faces from memory.⁶³ Daniel Ménager's study of smiles and laughter in Renaissance art and literature confirms that a smile was thought to be more discrete than laughter, though *riso* ('laugh') might also signify *sorriso* ('smile').⁶⁴ For her poet, Laura's sweet, luminous smile was marvel of discretion, as *aérien* as the breeze in her hair (CXXIII 1-2):⁶⁵

*Quel vago impallidir, che 'l dolce riso
D'un'amorosa nebbia ricoperse.²*

Laura was angelic, paradisaical, peaceful, and never the coquette.⁶⁶ Ménager also finds a close relationship between laughter and silence:

Il penser, e 'l tacere, il riso e 'l gioco.⁶⁷

Smiling ladies won praise from Dante, "[qui] a illuminé son Paradis de rires et sourires."⁶⁸ In *Purgatorio* (vi. 46-48) Vergil assures Dante he will see Beatrice smiling in Paradise:⁶⁹

*Non so se intendi; io dico di Beatrice:
tu la vedrai di sopra, in sulla vetta
di questo monte, ridere e felice.*

Seeing Matilda gathering flowers in Eden (*Purgatorio* xxviii), he likens her to Proserpina (37-42). She raises her eyes to him from across the stream, in a radiant smile (64-79):

*Non credochesplendesse tanto lume
sotto le ciglia a Venere, trafitta
dal figlio, fuor di tutto suo costume.*

*Ella ridea dall'altra riva dritta
traendo più color con le sue mani,
che l'alta terra senza seme gitta.*

Pedretti concurs with Kenneth Clark that a black-chalk drawing at Windsor, "Woman standing in a landscape," (fig. 2) may represent Matilda:

The most compelling reference is to the character, if not the spirit, of a drawing at Windsor—a very late one—of a woman standing in a landscape that is barely visible in the mist. She has the body, the clothing and even the smile of the *Mona Lisa*; her pointing hand indicates a symbolic distance in space and time.⁷⁰

The image of Matilda gives way to Dante's new guide, the smiling Beatrice: "*dolce guida, / che sorridente ardea negli occhi santi.*"⁷¹ At the sphere of Saturn, the star of poets, which imparts melancholy, true genius, and contemplation, Beatrice too must restrain her smiles (*Purg.* xxi. 4-12):⁷¹

*e quellanonridea, ma: "S'io ridessi,
mi cominciò, "tu ti faresti quale
fu Semele, quando di cener fessi.*

*Ché la bellezza mia, che per le scale
dell'eterno palazzo più s'accende,
com'hai veduto, quanto più si sale,*

*se non si temperasse, tanto splende,
che il tuo mortal potere, al suo fulgore,
sarebbe fronda che tuono scoscende.*"⁷²

At *Convito* III. ii, Dante rejoices in the sweet words and Elysian smiles of his beloved:

Lo suo parlar sì dolcemente suona

*Cose appariscan nello suo aspetto
Che mostran de' piacer del paradiso;
Dico negl'occhi e nel suo riso,
Che le vi reca Amor com'a suo loco.*

In *Vita Nuova* (XXV) the personified *Amore* also smiles as he speaks.⁷³

Dico anche di lui che rideva, ed anche che parlava.

It was *Petrarchismo* that brought the unique quality to the literary conventions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Elizabeth Cropper sees Pietro Bembo (editor of the Aldine Petrarch of 1501)⁷⁴ as conciliator of the vernacular and humanist traditions of love and beauty, achieved largely through an elevation of Petrarch... the model for a classical vernacular style.⁷⁵

The *Mona Lisa* was not Leonardo's first portrait of a lady of Florence to incorporate a poetic invention. In 1475, the year of Giuliano de' Medici's celebrated *giostra* and the bust by his teacher Verrocchio, the then twenty-five-year-old Leonardo painted the rather melancholy Ginevra de' Benci.⁷⁶ (fig. 3) Along with Ginevra's talent for poetry⁷⁷ her beauty, virtue, and *smile* were celebrated in Latin elegiacs by Cristoforo Landino and Alessandro Braccesi and in sonnets by Lorenzo himself.⁷⁸ Landino also praised Bernardo Bembo's Platonic affection for Ginevra,⁷⁹ likening her to the virtuous Alcestis



2. *A Woman Standing in a Landscape*, ca. 1515, black chalk, 21 x 13,5 cm. Windsor, Royal Collection. Image: The Royal Collection, Windsor.

and Penelope, and beautiful women painted in antiquity by Parrhasius, Apelles, and Praxiteles.⁸⁰ And a verbal allusion (*Elegy* VIII. 67-68) compares her with Lalage and Laura:⁸¹

*Dulce loqui dulci risu ingenuoque pudore
Mercurius facili sidere, Bembe, dedit.
Nam pudor et risus coeunt sic viribus aequis
Ut rubeat fulgor, fulgeat ore rubor.* 70

Sweetness in speaking, and that sweet smile,
[and a modesty inborn,
Bembo, Mercury granted her, god of a
[kindlier star.⁸²
Modesty blends with her smile so, and with
[similar power,
That she radiates blush-radiance incarnadined.

David Brown observes how Ginevra's "pale luminous skin and golden hair combine with the juniper leaves and distant scene... [to] form a sequence of tonal and textural effects that is unprecedented in Florentine art":

Leonardo's approach, using tonal color and light to unify the composition suggests he was seeking further guidance from Alberti's treatise, which prescribes not only perspective, but "rilievo" or the allusion of relief obtained through modeling with black and white. In attempting to put these theories into practice, Leonardo must have hoped that Alberti's definition of painting as a "liberal" or intellectual pursuit would apply to his own efforts.⁸³



3. Leonardo da Vinci, *Ginevra de' Benci*, c. 1475, oil on panel, 42 x 37 cm. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art. Image: National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Alberti's intellectual requirements for painters were developed by Leonardo Bruni (humanist, historian, and chancellor of Florence):

Alberti foresees, nay requires, that a new breed of humanist-painter will come into existence, and he describes the activities of creating and enjoying a painting so as to make them mutually intelligible to humanist and painter alike... Bruni makes an implicit demand that the painter, like the poet, exhibit a decorum and harmony (*gratia et concinnitas*) that will regulate the copiousness of his *incentio*.⁸⁴

Leonardo himself praised the virtues of painting over poetry, which relied on *mortal* words:⁸⁵ "Painting presents its subject to you in one instant through the sense of sight."⁸⁶

In his *Paragone* there is a debate between Painting and Poetry, in the course of which a poet's jealousy over his royal patron's preference by for a *painting* of his beloved receives just rebuke:

[T]he proportions of the beautiful forms that compare the divine beauties of the face here before me... being all joined together and reacting simultaneously give me so much pleasure with their divine proportions that I think there is no other work of man on earth that can give greater pleasure.⁸⁷

Female portraits in the Renaissance, John Pope-Hennessy notes, often made a "statement on the sitter's personality... reinforced by literary means"⁸⁸ (visual emblems, code letters or words,⁸⁹ flowers or plants).⁹⁰ The sitter could hold a *Petrarchino* open to a favourite poem (e.g., Andrea Del Sarto's *Portrait of a Girl Holding a Volume of Petrarch*, and Agnolo Bronzino's *Laura Battiferri*).⁹¹ Del Sarto's sitter is portrayed reading *Canz.* CLIII (*Ite, caldi sospiri, al freddo core*) and CLIV (*Le stelle, il cielo e gli elementi a prova / tutte lor arti*); Bronzino's reads XXIX (*Giovene donna sotto un verde lauro / vidi più bianca e più fredda che neve / non percossa dal sol molti e molti anni*). Portraits were expected to be intellectual, literary, and allusive, rich in poetic invention and Platonism, and strive for perfection and originality in technique and execution.

Petrarch had marvelled at the sublime perfections of a portrait of Laura by Simone Martini that returned the gaze of a beholder, and lacked only speech.⁹² And for the *Mona Lisa*, Kemp sees poetic influences from Dante and Petrarch:

The tone of Leonardo's portrait is, I believe, deeply imbued with Dantesque qualities and fully in keeping with the poetic tradition which Dante largely instigated. This was the first painted portrait to be composed in the equivalent of the 'dolce stil nuovo,' some two centuries after the debut of the 'sweet new style' in poetry. She is Dante's Beatrice and Petrarch's Laura—at least in a generic sense.⁹³

Paul Barolsky, discussing the presence of Petrarchan conceits in Vasari's *Lives* in the context of anti-*Petrarchismo* later in the Cinquecento, comments: "Martini's portrait of Laura—not inconceivably a fiction—was a metaphor for Petrarch's own creation of Laura."⁹⁴ Leonardo was working in that same "tradition of idealized women celebrated by the Tuscan poets":

She takes her place, as has often been suggested, alongside Dante's Beatrice and Petrarch's Laura. When Vasari further describes the Mona Lisa by cataloguing the beauty of her face, detail by detail—her forehead, eyes, nose, and mouth—he appropriately uses the language of the Tuscan poets to bring out her divine grace and loveliness.⁹⁵

L'Envoi

La Gioconda is, in the truest sense, Leonardo's
[masterpiece,
the revealing instance of his mode of thought
[and work.
Walter Pater

Horace's *Ut pictura poesis* ('poetry is like painting') analogy in the *Ars Poetica* had impressed Leonardo. In his *Satires* Horace had earlier compared his predecessor Lucilius' verse to a votive picture of the writer's life and thoughts.⁹⁶ The *Mona Lisa* he seems to fuse his portrait and landscape into a self-presentation of the artist *alla posterità*. Martin Kemp notes these three constant elements in Renaissance art: (1) rational knowledge (*intelletto*), (2) rational mimesis of nature as method (*natura*), (3) a guiding influence of antiquity (*invenzione*).⁹⁷ Alberti and Leonardo add imagination (*fantasia*) as the "vital image-forming capacity of a painter."⁹⁸ *Qua* painter, though, Leonardo has been criticized for a lack of *diligenza* in that "too often [he] remained satisfied with the invention and shrank from the labour of carrying it out."⁹⁹ In any case, his *Gioconda*, seated *simplex munditiis* in her armchair¹⁰⁰ on the loggia of a villa, against a vast landscape, and with a sweet, gentle smile for the painter and the viewer, left Milan unfinished,¹⁰¹ but was gradually transformed by that collaborative *invenzione* from Horace and Petrarch.¹⁰²

In choice of subject matter, in the depiction of a smile and expressive eyes, in the inclusion of landscape and of pictorial equivalents of figurative language, the picture is like a poem. (Webster Smith)¹⁰³

The *Mona Lisa* reflects other Horatian principles too: *i.e.*, *ars* (learned skills, rational knowledge), *ingenium* (talent, imagination), *callida iunctura* (clever collocation), and *concordia discors* (harmony in discord).¹⁰⁴ As the late Daniel Arasse observed,

La structure du tableau et la densité des associations d'idées qui s'y sont progressivement nouées constituent en effet la creuset des attentes multiples et souvent contradictoires que l'image ne cesse indéfiniment de combler.¹⁰⁵

Renaissance portraits of women incorporated visual clues to the name and virtues of the sitter (e.g., Leonardo's *Ginevra de' Benci*—juniper; Lorenzo Lotto's *Lucina Brembat*—moon, *lu-CI-na*; Bronzino's *Laura Battiferri*—laurel),¹⁰⁶ or her family (Ghirlandajo's *Giovanna Tornabuoni*),¹⁰⁷ or the painter or *committente*. In Leonardo's earlier portrait of Ludovico Sforza's mistress Cecilia Gallerani, the ermine represents both her fidelity and purity, and his *Neapolitan Order of the Ermine* (*L'Ermillio*), as well as punning on her name (Gk. γαλῆ, *galê*, ermine).¹⁰⁸ Unlike *La Gioconda*, his Cecilia gazes at a third participant, the unseen lover, the *committente*.¹⁰⁹ His unfinished *St. Jerome* (1480) includes the saint's cardinal's hat, crucifix, skull, cave, and lion, while through an opening in the cave we see the facade of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, a monument of the Rucellai family. (Bernardo Rucellai, the presumed *committente*, was a Platonist and scholar of antiquities and the son of Leon Battista Alberti's patron, Giovanni.) A flaming lion (*leone*) suggests a visual pun on the painter's name.¹¹⁰ In his unfinished *Adoration of the Magi*, the *commentatore* standing on the right (as recommended by Alberti for *istorie*) could be a self-portrait.¹¹¹ "The wife of Francesco del Giocondo was ripe to be identified as 'she who smiles,'" writes Kemp. But there are additional references in the work to players in the *commedia* of Leonardo's life.¹¹² The *vinci* (osier-knots, interlacings) sewn along her neckline could be a signature.¹¹³ Leonardo had created a number of 'knot-designs' (*disegni di gruppi*), and this may encode an allusion to Beatrice d'Este in Milan, for whom he designed a fresco of intertwining knots (*vinci*) in mulberry trees (*mora*) for the Sala dell'Asse in the Castello Sforzesco on the occasion of her wedding to Ludovico *il Moro* in 1491.¹¹⁴ In 1500 Leonardo had produced a drawing of Isabella d'Este (later pricked for transfer to a painting), suggested as a possible prototype for *La Gioconda*'s hands.¹¹⁵ He had noble patrons in Florence (Lorenzo de' Medici, Giuliano de' Medici, Cesare Borgia), in Rome (Giuliano de' Medici, Pope Leo X de' Medici), and later in France (Louis XII, and Charles

d'Amboise, later Francis I). At Amboise in 1516 he showed a painting to Cardinal Luigi of Aragon and his secretary Antonio de' Beatis, for which Giuliano de' Medici had arranged "a certain Florentine lady" to sit.¹¹⁶ Use of the poetic *envois* (self-presentation, *sphragis*, 'seal', memoir to posterity) is notably associated with Horace, the most familiar being *Ode* 3. 30 (*Exegi monumentum aere perennius*, 'I have raised a monument more lasting than of bronze'), which concludes:

... *ex humili potens*
princeps Aeolium carmen ad Italos
deduxisse modos, sume superbiam
quaesitam meritis et mihi Delphica
lauro cinge volens, Melpomene, comam.

... though lowly once, and then influential,
 I was first to bring Aeolian song to our
 measures Italian. Accept the pride of place
 those merits earned for you, and circle
 joyfully with Delphi's laurel leaf, Melpomene, my
 locks.

(*Odes* 3. 30. 12-14)

Vergil too had ended his *Georgics* with an *envoi* dedicating the work to his patron Maecenas, recalling his youthful *Eclogues* and lauding young Caesar (*Georg.* 4. 559-566). The *envoi* to Horace's *Epistles* tells his perverse, ungrateful book to see the world if it must, but to tell his readers how he "was admired by the leaders of Rome in war and peace" (*me primis urbis belli placuisse domique: Epist.* 1.20.23) and to mention his humble origins, education, status, friends, and reputation.¹¹⁷ Petrarch's prose memoir, *Posteritati* (*Alla posterità*), mentions his appearance, character, circumstances, and birth at Arezzo, and thanks God for freeing him from his sordid (though devoted and honorable) servitude, and his good fortune in having noble friends. He praises Vaucluse near Avignon with its famous spring *Sorgue* (echoing Horace's praise of his Sabine farm and Bandusian spring, a gift from Maecenas and his frequent inspiration). It was at Vaucluse that his literary works were completed, begun, or conceived, and where he received invitations to receive poetic laurels at Rome and Paris.¹¹⁸

If the *Mona Lisa* incorporates the painter's visual *envoi*, allusions to Petrarch would have special significance.¹¹⁹ When Van den Berg identified the distant mountains of that

landscape with the Alps Petrarch had seen from Mont Ventoux,¹²⁰ he was recalling a passage from the epistles *Ad familiares*:

I turned my eyes towards Italy, whither my heart was most inclined. The Alps, ragged and snow-capped, seemed to rise close by, although they were really at a great distance.¹²¹

He likely identified the nearer peaks appearing on the left with the *Dentelles de Montmirail* west of Ventoux, and the river beneath the deserted bridge as the Rhône. Nicholas Mann sees in Petrarch's topographies of crossroads, mountains scaled and descended, wrong roads taken and retraced, an allegory of Augustinian self-examination.¹²² One false turn (his passion for the beautiful and virtuous Laura) brought misery, but also fame.¹²³ Endless travel was also a false choice, but between the laurels of Rome and the vices of Paris he chose prudence with the former.¹²⁴ Leonardo was rather amused by Petrarch's fussing over laurels:

*Se 'l Petrarca amò sì forte il lauro, fu perch'egli è buon fralla salsiccia e tor(do); io non posso di lor ciancie far tesauro.*¹²⁵

"The balcony," Kemp observes, "just a sliver of columns, does just enough to suggest a majestic loggia in a hilltop palace or villa," and may represent the villa of the Gherardini family outside Florence.¹²⁶ The bridge and winding road below seem to suggest last traces of human presence and travel in an imaginary world. But identified as the Ponte Buriano near Arezzo (13th-century) over the Arno, it is also the first bridge crossed on the road to Florence¹²⁷ (which Leonardo may have seen in 1502 as an army engineer of Cesare Borgia.)¹²⁸ And near Arezzo the Tiber begins its course to Rome, Leonardo's final residence in Italy. Arezzo was also the birthplace of Petrarch. Bridges (*ponti*) can serve as metaphors for decisions, uncertainties, doubts, crucial junctures on the journey of life, death and finality;¹²⁹ and in the remarkable vertical break between the horizons on each side of the landscape there could be cosmological significance:

A vast transformation is in prospect, in which the quietly meandering course in the lower lands below her balcony, with their neatly fabricated bridge, are to be overtaken and reconfigured by a force majeure before which any human engineer will be impotent. (Kemp)¹³⁰

At the left, a long, deserted road is seen winding towards distant mountains. Leonardo had travelled in northern Italy and Tuscany, and south to Rome and Tivoli, and (again like Petrarch) possibly as far as Naples.¹³³ He knew the Alps, having explored Lombardy and the Val di Chiavenna (*monti sterili e altissimi*, as Eduardo Solmi called them), Val Sassina, Valtellina (*circondata di alti e terribili monti*), Monte Rosa, “Momboso” (*e superò arditamente qualche picco superiore ai tre mila metri*), Montagne bergamasche, and Valcava.¹³² Had he seen Avignon, then, and the celebrated view from Mont Ventoux Petrarch describes?¹³³ The surviving notebooks do not say, although Charles Ravaisson-Mollien (*Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 1881) used Leonardo’s note “*nemonti brigantia*” as evidence that Leonardo was in France in August of 1515 as a military engineer of King Francis I. He did pass Briançon en route from Lyon to Italy following a victory over the Sforza at Marignan.¹³⁴ (Such a journey could have been made via Marseilles and Genoa, with perhaps a side visit to Petrarch’s beloved Mont Ventoux.) Two years later, in 1517, he returned to France for good, via Turin and across the Alps, or Genoa to Marseilles, then north to the Loire.¹³⁵

The *ultima manus* to the *Mona Lisa* would likely have been added there at Amboise, including perhaps the dramatic Alpine landscape,¹³⁶ as he strove, it has been suggested, towards the Albertian vision of “the absolute, perfected art of painting.”¹³⁷ He does not encode allusions to Petrarch and Laura, and Horace in an open *Petrarchino*, but in the powerful dramatic antithesis between portrait and landscape.¹³⁸ While Ernst Gombrich’s concept of the “beholder’s share” seems characteristic of Leonardo’s portraits, it is only in the *Mona Lisa* that the subject looks directly at the painter, and thus the viewer.¹³⁹ That perfection of Simone Martini’s portrait of Laura (who seems to have died of plague in 1348) moved Petrarch deeply, and may be imagined as producing the same effect on the viewer (*Canz.* LXXVII): “No artist in history including Polyclitus ever saw her like (1-4); Simone must have visited Paradise, and then brought back her portrait as proof (5-8).” In the following sonnet (LXXVIII) Petrarch continues his melancholy reverie:

*però ch'n vista ella si mostra unile
promettendomi pace ne l'aspetto. 11
Ma poi ch'i' vengo a ragionar con lei,
benignamente assai par che m'ascolte!
- se risponder sapesse a detti miei!*

Simone’s portrait was possessed of a divine, Platonic beauty (CLIX 1-4):

*In qual parte del ciel, in quale idea
era l'esempio onde natura tolse
quel bel viso leggiadro, in ch'ella volse
mostrar qua giù quanto là su potea?*

This sonnet might have provided Leonardo’s early contact with Platonic thought, which he would use for the Ginevra de’ Benci portrait, which was commissioned by her Platonic admirer, Bernardo Bembo.¹⁴⁰ The Cecilia Gallerani portrait (*Lady with an Ermine*, ca. 1483-1486) was celebrated in a sonnet by Bernardo Bellincioni (1452-1492), which is cast as a dialogue between Nature and Art.¹⁴¹

*Di che te adiri, a chi invidia hai, Natura?
Al Vinci, che ha ritratto una tua stella,
Cecilia sì bellissima hoggi è quella
che a' suoi begli oculi el sol par umbra oscura.*

*L'honor è tuo, se ben con sua pictura
la fa che par che ascolti e non favella.
Pensa quanto sarò più viva et bella, più a te fia
gloria in ogni età futura.*

*Ringratiar dunque Ludovico or poi
et l'ingegno et la man di Leonardo
che a' posteri di lei voglian far parte, Chi lei
vedrà così ben che sia tardo,
vederla viva, dirà; basti ad noi
comprender or quel che è natura et arte.*

Sonnet and portrait give Ludovico pride of place as lover and *committente*.¹⁴² So through Bellincioni’s verse Leonardo had entered the Petrarchan tradition of praise for painters. In 1493 Baldassare Taccone eulogized Leonardo in verse for his model for the Sforza horse (which was never cast), and praised him as sculptor, painter, and geometer of divine genius like Phidias, Myron, Scopas and Praxiteles.¹⁴³

*Vedi che in corte fa far di metallo
Per memoria del padre un gran colosso;
I' credo fermamente e senza fallo
Che Gretia e Roma mai vide el più grosso.*

*Guarde pur come è bello quel cavallo:
Leonardo Vinci a farlo sol s'è mosso.*

In a curious travelogue of Roman antiquities, the *Antiquarie prospetiche Romane* (published ca. 1497) an anonymous Milanese

painter praises Leonardo's eloquence as the equal of Cato's, as well as his remarkable, antique style as sculptor.¹⁴⁴

Kenneth Keele (gynaecologist and medical historian), and Sherwin Nuland (surgeon and medical historian) have wondered why Leonardo, if so resistant to private commissions, would choose a young yet matronly Lisa del Giocondo as a sitter, and not some more famous, aristocratic lady.¹⁴⁵ Painter and savant, he had imitated one (or a composite) of her smiles, with decorum and a knowledge of anatomy and literature,¹⁴⁶ agreeing apparently with Alberti that emotions, grief, or the happiness of a smile, were difficult to imitate, since the mouth, chin, eyes, cheeks, forehead, and brows must be studied and mastered from nature.¹⁴⁷ Horace and Petrarch had provided the *invenzione* for his portrait and landscape, fused into metaphor for the painter's literary and scientific preoccupations, so that the "image [might] develop into a vehicle for the deepest ideas that he thought painting should embody."¹⁴⁸ Although idealized through allusions to Petrarch's great love (Laura's her smile, green dress, and veil), the realism of his *Gioconda* intrigues even medical historians of art. Kenneth Keele saw the contented smile of an expectant mother with the normal symptoms of hypothyroidism and edema, as a microcosm of human life and generation within a macrocosm of earth and sky, mountains, caves, and waters in a geological motion. Sherwin Nuland recognizes this as

Leonardo's tribute to idealized motherhood... the ultimate expression of the inner life of a man who lived by the proposition that the greatest art is that "which by its actions, best expresses the passions of the soul... The artist is himself the subject of his art."¹⁴⁹

Digital imaging of the *Mona Lisa* in 2004 revealed that the sitter also wears a *guarnello*, the gauzy wrap of a new or expectant mother.¹⁵⁰ Jaclyn Duffin, a haematologist and medical historian at Queen's University, also sees medical and Petrarchan implications in her face and neck: the thinning of the eyebrows (*Gioconda* has none at all) and thickened sallow skin accompanying hypothyroidism. Laure de Noves succumbed to the plague in 1348, while the stricken poet awaited the end.¹⁵¹

*Così lo spirito d'or in or ven meno
a quelle belle care membra honeste
che specchio eran di vera leggiadria.*

The *Mona Lisa* encodes a lifetime of thought and art on the part of Leonardo da Vinci, as a Florentine, a painter, theorist, philosopher, scholar, engineer, traveller, and restless prober of the mysteries of physics, biology, anatomy, geology, cosmology, and life itself. "If any landscape can be said to embody a geological narrative," Kemp writes, "this one can."¹⁵² Leonardo had exulted in the power of the master painter to imitate Nature—whether beautiful women, monsters, or vast landscapes:

*Sel pittore vol vedere belezze, che lo innamorano,
egli n'è signore di generarle, et se vol vedere cose
monstruose, che spaventino, o che sieno
bufonesche, e risibili o veramente
compassionevoli, ei n'è signore e dio (creatore). E
se vol generare siti e deserti, lochi ombrosi o
foschi (freschi) ne' tempi caldi, esso li figura, e
così lochi caldi ne' tempi freddi. Se vol valli (al
simile), si vole delle alte cime de' monti scoprire
gran compagne, et se vole dopo quelle vedere
l'orizzonte del mare, egli n'è signore, e se delle
basse valli vol vedere gli alti monti, o delli alti
monti le basse valli e spiagge, et in effetto, cioè,
ch'è nel universo per essentia, presentia o
immaginatione, esso l'ha prima nella mente, e
poi nelle mani; e quelle sono di tanta eccellentia,
che in pari tempo generano una proportionata
armonia in un solo sguardo, qual' fanno le
cose.¹⁵³*

In terms of what is sometimes referred to as the "beholder's share," readers of Robertson Davies' novel *The Cunning Man* might be expected to project Kingston and its Queen's University onto his fictional town of "Salterton" and its "Waverley University."¹⁵⁴ Thus the *Mona Lisa* also presents a complex of possibilities for pleasurable "projection." Horatian and Petrarchan inventions provide a key to its complexity of composition, as do Leonardo's own scientific and critical writings (in his time unpublished). Of those two lakes in its landscape, Daniel Arasse wrote:

Ces deux lacs sont particulièrement révélateurs de l'esprit dans lequel Léonard a "inventé" Mona Lisa.¹⁵⁴

The gently smiling *Gioconda* in green dress and veil is linked to the vast landscape that stretches behind her, as physical, literary, and autobiographical elements merge into a cosmic vision of Leonardo's life and art.

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- 1) Latin text 1435; Italian 1436. *Pertanto consiglio ciascuno pittore molto si faccia familiare ad i poeti, rethorici e ad li altri simili dotti di lettera, sia che costoro doneranno nuove inventioni o certo aiuteranno abello componere sua storia, per quali certo adquireranno in sua pittura molte lode e nome. Fidas, più che gli altri pittori famoso, confessava avere imparato da Homero poeta dipignere love con molta divina maestà; così noi, studiosi d'inarare più che di guadagno, da i nostri poeti inpareremo più e più cose utili alla pittura.* Leon Battista Alberti [1404-1472]. *Della Pittura*. Edizione critica a cura di Luigi Malle. Firenze: Sansoni Editore, 1930.105 (3. 54). On the painting of *(i)storia* see also Alberti 111 (3. 60-63); Hulse 47-76; Richter I. 50; Spencer (1956) 22-36.
- 2) Clark (1973) 144.
- 3) Pedretti (2004) 71-72. Rilke (1938) 221 gave different requirements for historians of landscape painting: "er müsste nicht allein Historiker sein, sondern auch Psycholog, der am Leben gelernt hat, ein Weiser, der das Lächeln der Monna Lisa... mit Worten wiederholen kann..."
- 4) Heydenreich 48; van den Berg 231. For details of the landscape, see also Webster Smith 190-197.
- 5) 26.8 x 6.8 cm. Bayonne, Musée Bonnat.

- 6) In 2005 Dr. Armin Schlechter discovered in a printed edition of Cicero's *Epistolae ad familiares* (Bologna 1477, Bl. 11a) in the library of University of Heidelberg, a marginal note dated 1503 by a Florentine official named Agostino Vespucci. After comparing Leonardo to Apelles, Vespucci adds that he was then painting the portrait of Lisa del Giocondo. See <http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/news/monalisa.html>.
- 7) Arasse 389 identifies the veil (with reference to the volume *Decor Puellarum*, Venice, 1461) as the type worn by married women. (I suggest below that the veil may also be an allusion to Petrarch's Laura.) For a full description, see Pope-Hennessy 106-109, 315 note 6. Maiorino 255 comments, "her arms and hands fold into a restful posture free of specific concerns." Pedretti (1973) 134 likens her armchair to "the cornice of a round building... made of a row of balusters as in Bramante's Tempietto." For such *guarnelli* see Jean-Pierre Mohen, Bruno Mottin, Michel Menu. *Mona Lisa: Inside the Painting*. New York. Harry N. Abrams, 2006. 70.
- 8) For such idealization see Arasse 395, 406. Zöllner reads the smile, the loggia with two columns (Mohen et al. 66) and the landscape as references to earlier portraiture, perhaps Flemish: the *Mona Lisa* is larger, however, to reflect social aspirations, and lacks "meaning-laden attributes" such as crystal, rosary, unicorn, prayer book, or wedding-rings. As the occasion for the portrait, Zöllner (125) proposes the purchase of a new del Giocondo family house in April of 1503. L. would have worked three years therefore (1503 to 1506), not Vasari's "four" (Zöllner 120). Pedretti (1973) 133 argues for a later date.
- 9) Pope-Hennessy 105; Brown (2001). For "restrained self-reliance" in her expression (258) and "self-congratulatory happiness" see Maiorino 259.
- 10) Maiorino 263 (emphasis mine).
- 11) Zöllner 124. Brown (2001) 80 suggests the patron was unwilling to accept the portrait because it "embodied the artist's rather than the patron's interests," and signals such as loose hair (loose morals?) might seem mixed. Spencer 26-27: "Such an art, of necessity, is not to be reserved for the bedroom of a merchant prince or petty tyrant but is to be made public where all can see it. It will make the painter's contemporaries judge him another god and will give him perpetual fame; it will give the dead life, aid religion, and by its example raise the humane level of all men."
- 12) Kemp (1981) 264 (citing ms. W, 12379r for the exact words of L.).
- 13) Clark (1973) 146; Franklin 20, 29: "The *Mona Lisa* is the best example of an overwrought Leonardo painting, about which it seems permissible to speculate on the loss of likeness given the rather unfeminine appearance of the sitter, who should be recognizable as a woman in her mid-twenties... The portrait was not necessarily far advanced before Leonardo left Florence for Milan in 1506, as elements of its pictorial style and technique correspond more to his French period..."; Arasse 395.
- 14) Gombrich (1986) 112. Maiorino 254-255 cites Baudelaire's comment on making a picture out of a portrait (Charvet 83-84). "A host of writers on the *Mona Lisa* from Walter Pater to Kenneth Clark have recognized that it is not only, and perhaps not at all, a portrait, but rather an image that conflates portraiture with broader philosophical ideas" (Garrard 67). Barolsky (1992) 63 and Hohenstatt (116) assume Leonardo called it *La Gioconda*, "The Merry Lady," not "*La Madonna Lisa*." Zöllner (1980) 161: "It became the definitive example of the Renaissance portrait, and perhaps for this reason is seen not just as the likeness of a real person, but also the embodiment of an ideal."
- 15) Some of the landscape is painted over with the gauze of the veil (Mohen et al. 66). Pedretti (2000) 70; Mabileau 150. With the *ML* were also his *St. Anne, Leda, St. John, and La Belle Ferronnière*. The Queen Mother, Louise of Savoy had offered Leonardo her small castle at Cloux (Clos-Lucé).
- 16) *Istorie* = picture-narratives, pictures with figures. Filarete and Jacopo Barbari agreed, but Alberti's views regarding *invenzione* in architecture were more complex (Kemp [1977] 357). Cicero defined *inventio* as: *excogitatio rerum verarum et verisimilium* (Inv. 1.7). In Pino's *Dialogo, poesia* is also specifically mentioned with *storia*. Topics for paintings would be amplified by the artist with "original iconographic schemes, new allegories, fresh variations upon mythologies and histories and fresh ornaments for the main theme" (Kemp [1977] 356).
- 17) *Della pittura* 91 (2.40); Panofsky (1939) 6; Hohenstatt 41.
- 18) Alberti 105 (3.54): A. 76 (2.25) had earlier referred to such a statue at Aulis (Hom., *Iliad* 1. 528-530; Strabo 8. 354).
- 19) Spencer 22.
- 20) Spencer 23.
- 21) Kemp (1977) 358. Invention may also be defined as a "visualization of the poem's total shape" (Falabella 213).
- 22) L. was not bound by humanistic concepts and terminology, but shared Alberti's "high regard for *istorie*" (Kemp [1977] 376); Kemp 359 cites a letter of 1501 from Pietro Bembo to Isabella d'Este describing Bellini's independent attitude regarding *invenzioni* (Caye II, 71-73). *Dottrina* further enhanced the intellectual respectability of painting and painters (Kemp 349, 376). Like the ancients, Boccaccio also defined poetry in terms of imagination or inspiration.
- 23) Kemp (1977) 376, 381. Renaissance *mimesis* typically incorporated nature or antiquity (Kemp 347).
- 24) Kemp (1977) 383-384.
- 25) Kemp (1977) 397; Hulse 65-66: "The intellectual requirements for painters had been laid down by Leonardo Bruni and Alberti: Bruni makes an implicit demand that the painter, like the poet, exhibit a decorum and harmony (*gratia et concinnitas*) that will regulate the copiousness of his *inventio*... Alberti foresees, nay requires, that a new breed of humanist-painter will come into existence, and he describes the activities of creating and enjoying a painting so as to make them mutually intelligible to humanist and painter alike. *Invenzione* would be defined in 1548 by Pino as "the ingenious ability (*virtù*) to formulate *poesie* and *istorie* by oneself" (Pardo 234). Falabella 108: "questa (*invenzione*) s'intende nel trovar poesie, e istorie da sé, virtù usata da pochi delli moderni." Pino continues (Falabella 108-109): "E anco invenzione il be distinguere, ordinare, e compartire le cose dette dagli alteri, accommodando bene i soggetti agli atti delle figure, e che l'attitudine delle figure siano varie e graziose." *Invenzione* would also contribute *convenevolezza*, 'decorum' (Ludovico Dolce *Aretino*); Roskill 156-157; Hulse 112-113, 120-121; Falabella 108-109).
- 26) Kemp (1977) 356.
- 27) Ca. 1500. Kemp (1977) 383-384; Falabella 55.
- 28) Spencer 25-27.
- 29) For L.'s method of self-instruction see Griffiths 267. Marinoni 215 classified various opinions of L.'s facility in Latin: "self-instructive" (Solmi), "philosophical" (Geymüller), "didactic" (Govi, Bettrami, Morani,

Olschki). Marinoni 226 believed L.'s actual motive was to enrich his Italian style by drawing on Latin; Clark (1959) 62; Nicholl 53-59. Nuland 21-22 is unaccountably doubtful: "The fact that he never did master the classical languages may in part be due to inadequate early teaching, but he seems not to have made any sustained efforts to learn them as he became older, even though he dabbled in Latin from time to time... His knowledge... came from a combination of reading them in Italian translation and discussing them with various of his learned colleagues." For Leonardo's books, language and style see Arasse 37-45.

30) Richter I 41.

31) Richter II 366; Griffiths 268. Richter (like Nuland) had doubts about L.'s Latin (I 41-43) and thought he would have relied on translations, but did accept that "he was acquainted at any rate with parts of the works of Vergil, Horace, Ovid, Livy and Pliny translated into the vulgar tongue; and... owned a number of literary works" (I 42). L. also mentions Celsus, Seneca, and the Bible (Wallace 179). Griffiths (266-267, 273-274) follows "without supine admiration" Marinoni's more positive attitude towards L.'s Latin.

32) *Historia naturale di C. Plinio Secondo, tradotta di lingua latina in fiorentina per Christophoro Landino fiorentino al serenissimo Fernando re di Napoli. Venetis: Opus Nicolai Iansonis Gallici, impressum anno salutaris. M.CCCCXXVII.*

33) *Trattato della pittura*. Richter I, 59; Griffiths 269. The thought goes back to Simonides (Plut. *de Gloria Athenensium* 3, 346 f) and is noted in Renaissance commentaries on Horace. Parrhasius comments (*Q. Horatii Flacci Ars Poetica cum trium doctissimorum commentariis, A. Iani Parrhasii, Acronis, Porphyronis, adiectae sunt ad calcem doctissimae Glareani adnotationes, a Philippo Rhomano. Lugduni veno MDXXVI*, p. 187): "Saepe a nobis dictum, pictorem esse mutum poetam, poetam vero loquentem pictorem," but P. also insists Homer was a better epic narrator than Apelles; Reti 216-239; Kristeller 182-183 [515]; Lee 199-202; Hulse 60-63.

34) L. later added "*Oratio*" as clarification (Richter II 237, 273; Griffiths 272, 274).

35) Kemp (1977) 375, notes 146-147.

36) Richter I 57; Griffiths 270.

37) Richter I 60; Griffiths 270.

38) Or perhaps *Epode* 4.13, Griffiths 274.

39) *Sat.* 1. 9. 59-60, Griffiths 275.

40) E.g. Ovid, *Met.* 15. 176-390; Richter II 243, 257; Griffiths 270-271. For the effect of old age on a woman's beauty cf. Giorgione (*Col tempo*, Venice, Accademia). L. was also familiar with *Met.* 13. 12-15 and Ovid's *Heroides* (Richter II 368; Marinoni I 137; McMullen 96-97).

41) Griffiths 275.

42) Griffiths 476.

43) Clark (1959) 62.

44) Webster Smith 198: "[L.] thought that a portrait might by itself demonstrate the superiority of painting over poetry."

45) Garrard 68: "Missing from these analyses is a framework that would situate in historical perspective the analogy between woman and nature, an analogy that was already ancient in the Renaissance."

46) Tolnay 26.

47) Keele 144.

48) On L.'s landscapes, McMullen 89-104, esp. 90-91, 126; Clark (1959) 112-114; Pope-Hennessy 108: "[T]he landscape may have been inserted, in the absence of the sitter, after 1506 when Leonardo returned to Milan."

McMullen's "flooding light" might even represent the Aurora Borealis (named by Galileo in 1609: *Le opere* II 231; Reeves 64-68), which is seen from time to time in Italy. L. advocated working on a portrait under a cloudy sky, or an awning, or at sundown (Richter I 316). "The colour of the sky was originally a pure and brilliant blue fading into a vaporous atmosphere behind the mountains" (Pedretti [1973] 133). McMullen sees the bridge and road representing a "post-historical" world (103-104), "soberly real and crazily inimical" (95); Arasse 394. The landscape of the *Mona Lisa* finds echoes in Leonardo's later *Virgin and Child with St. Anne* (1510; oil, 168.5 x 130 cm. Paris, Louvre), but that group is all part of the rocky landscape, being seated on an outcrop of native rock. The landscape for his 1498 cartoon of *Virgin and Child with St. Anne and St. John* (139 x 101 cm. London, National Gallery) is indistinct. Raphael's 1504 drawing of *The Mona Lisa* (22.3 x 15.9 cm. Paris, Louvre) shows sketchy architecture on the horizon (Arasse 389-390). "The background may be a representation of the universe, with mountains, plains and rivers. Or possibly it is both reality and the world of dream. One could suppose that the landscape doesn't exist, that it is the young woman's own dream world" (Jean-Pierre Cuzin; note 49 below). The landscape of L.'s *La Madonna dei Fusi* (New York, Private Collection) shows trees in the warmer section. There too (as in the *Mona Lisa*) Leonardo's bridge is thought to represent the Ponte Buriano near Arezzo (Starnazzi 46). Alessandro Vezzosi 92 sees L.'s maps and landscapes as "a primal and timeless vision of the earth's surface that raised topography to the level of poetry"; Sassoon: "In traditional Renaissance portraiture, the main function of a landscape was to contribute additional elements for the identification of the sitter—for instance, the Tuscan countryside, or an urban setting. The landscape background of the *Mona Lisa* is not easily identifiable. Behind the balcony on which the woman is sitting are rocks, lakes, streams, but apparently no trees or plants. The sole human structure is a bridge on the right-hand side"; Arasse 393: "The landscape is constructed vertically, the depth being obtained by 'reading' it from top to bottom, like a Chinese painting where the base is foregrounded. Th[e] affinity between *Mona Lisa* and the background works like a call and response in music. The vagueness of the intention and the uncertainty of the sitter echoes the ambiguous and mysterious location of the background. The pyramidal composition echoes the mountains. The landscape is barren echoing the lack of adornment (no jewelry) on Lisa. The landscape and *Mona Lisa* both with smoky sfumato ambiguities are a kind of *Tabula Rasa*, left open to interpretation, adding an aura of mystery to the whole of the painting" (<http://www.monalisamania.com/background.htm>).

49) Jean-Pierre Cuzin; private communication from producers of "Treasures of the World" (Public Broadcasting System).

50) Leader 110 cites Levi Strauss 245-268 on "split-representation."

51) Van den Berg 231-232: "In April, 1335, Petrarch climbs Mont Ventoux near Avignon [the last Alpine mountain ridge before the Rhône plain], and was surprised and delighted at the view; he was seeing the landscape behind *Mona Lisa*, the 'first landscape'."

52) See Alberti epigraph above. *Invenzione* was for Raphael *una "certa idea"*. See Hulse 80-114 for R.'s view and *Dolce's*.

53) Nisbet and Hubbard 261-273: "nulla... arbor recreatur" (17-18) suggests either there are no trees, or any existing trees are parched. (If there were some trees

- [pace Sassoon and others] below the bridge, they [with bridge] would make a point of demarcation between the civilized world of the smiling woman and the desert.) The theme is also handled in *Satires* 1. 9, and *Odes* 1. 17, 2. 17, 3. 4.
- 54) H.'s toponyms (1-16) include Syrtes (*Sirda*), Caucasus, Hydaspes (the River Jhelum in the Punjab), Sabine Hills (his farm), Mt. Vultur in Apulia (boyhood home).
- 55) H.'s phrase *dulce ridentem* (23) echoes Catullus 51. 5 and Sappho (*gelaisas himmeroen*); Sappho gave H. his matching epithet, *dulce loquentem* (Gk. *hadu phoneisas*). The Greek text is known only from Longinus, *On the Sublime* 10 (Bergk fr. 2. 5-8 = Lobel-Page fr. 31. 5-8); *Éditio princeps* Robortello, 1555; Ménager 147. Lalage has been identified by Lucas with a freedwoman of Livia Augusta from an inscription in the Capitoline Museum in Rome (CIL VI. 2. no. 3940). Connections between Longinus' citation of Sappho's text and Catullus were probably first made by Henri Estienne in 1555 (Rigolot 28-30).
- 56) Again, it is not clear whether there are trees in either the ode or the painting (see note 47 above). I would like to thank Professor François Rouget and also M. Pascal Torres of the Musée du Louvre for inspecting the *ML* for me.
- 57) Ponte's text. Michele Regillo in 1938 noticed a Horace-Petrarch connection, as did Long and Maclean (1881).
- 58) "The famous and much-discussed smile is the key to the 'mystery' of the The Mona Lisa" (Heydenreich 52); Cropper 390 sees "effulgence of the spirit."
- 59) These sonnets appear as CXVIII and CXXVII. L. did own a Petrarch (Richter I 42, II 368; Nicholl 215).
- 60) E.g., *Canzoniere* XI 1, 9, 12; XII 6; XXIX 20; CXCVI 6-14; CXCVII 9-11. She may also recall Horace's Pyrrha, who charmed lovers with her simple elegance (*simplex munditiis*; *Ode* 1. 5. 5): "plain in her neatness" (trans. Milton). For a modern analysis of Lisa's hair and austere clothing see Mohen *et al.* 66-70, 85-86. The original dress-colour is still uncertain: Cassiano del Pozzo saw a dark tawny, and Mohen *et al.* 63 suggest a greenish-brown.
- 61) *Canzoniere* XVII 5-6.
- 62) Kemp (2004) 191; Pedretti (1973) 134: "The mountainous landscape curving around the foreground suggest the principle of a structure conceived as the nucleus of an architectural setting." See Clark (1959) 110-111 for Vasari's account. Arasse 386 concludes V. had seen only a copy of the *ML*. Some early comments survive: e.g., "art can do no more" (Raffaello Borghini, 1584), "made from nature" (Antonio de' Beatis, who saw it at Cloux in 1517), and "lacks only speech" (Cassiano del Pozzo, 1625). For a wider survey, Ménager 203-208. Hohenstatt 116 suggests Leonardo gave it the title *La Gioconda* (*La Joconde*), the "merry" lady. Pliny's *Natural History* (which Leonardo read) connects the Latin adjective *iucundus* 'pleasing' (opposite *durus*; *Nat.* 135. 34. 35. 98) with bright colours and *elegantia* (*Nat.* 34. 66); Pollitt 6-7; Clark (1973) 146; McMullen 28; Pedretti (1973) 134: "Originally, then, the overwhelming presence of the lady was kept in check by the architectural structure of her setting."
- 63) Vasari V 31; Gian Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scoltura et architettura* 2. 1 (II 96-97 Ciardi).
- 64) Ménager 188; Trumble 22-31 also favours a verbal link between the smile and the title *La Gioconda* (*La Joconde*). For a survey of Leonardo's smiles see Ménager 202-216.
- 65) Ménager 187 omits *Ode* 1. 22 and Petrarch LXXVII-VIII.
- 66) Ménager 192-193, and 200: "Si le sourire de Laure est parfois énigmatique, ceux des personnages de Léonard le sont encore plus. L'amie de Pétrarque donne parfois les sens de son sourire, alors que la peinture est mouette."
- 67) Petrarch *Canzoniere* CCLXX 76 (also CCVII 5 *et pass.*); Ménager 196.
- 68) Ménager 144.
- 69) Ménager 144.
- 70) Pedretti (2004) 70; (1973) 26: "poetic image as a religious symbol, a majestic figure which has the smile of the *Mona Lisa*." Ca. 1515. Black chalk, 2,10 x 1,35 cm. Windsor, Royal Collection 12581r; Zöllner (2003) 486, fig. 189; Arasse 485-486.
- 71) Chastel 157-171. I am grateful to Dr François Rouget for this reference.
- 72) For a catalogue of smiles in the *Commedia* see Ménager 144-145.
- 73) *Vita Nuova* XXV (*Opere* 222); Ménager 14; Kemp (1981) 267.
- 74) *Le cose volgari di Messer Francesco Petrarca. Impresso in Vinegia nelle case d'Aldo Romano, nel anno. MDI, del mese di Luglio, et tolto con sommissima diligenza dallo scritto di mano medesima del Poeta hauuto da M. Piero Bembo. Con la concessione della Illustrissima signoria nostra, che per. X. anni nessuno possa stampare il Petrarca sotto le pene, che in lei si contengono.* Cropper 390-391.
- 75) Cropper 390 regards Flora in Botticelli's *Primavera* (ca. 1582) as an "important step towards the suggestive effulgence that marks the beautiful face of the *Mona Lisa*, the work of an artist who was also deeply indebted to the legacy of Petrarch, Luigi Pulci, and the Ficinian revival of the theories of Platonic love."
- 76) Ca. 1475. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art. 42 x 37 cm. Oil on panel. Leonardo's first secular painting, in which he broke from profile. Zöllner (2003) 37 sees Ginevra as "listless"; Brown (2001) 101-121, 142. Ginevra de' Benci (b. 1457-d. 1537) was small, delicate and appealing, and from a family background of wealth, culture, patronage, and political influence. Her husband became a *gonfaloniere* in Florence, but when he died in 1505 his brothers were hard-pressed to repay her dowry (Walker 2). Leonardo and her brother Giovanni seem to have been friends (Brown 102).
- 77) Anderson 215.
- 78) Walker 28-38; Brown 104.
- 79) Walker 28-35; Arasse 409. The emblem painted on the reverse of the Ginevra portrait (*Virtutem forma decorat*) is a "Platonic-Petrarchan commonplace" (Nicholl 110).
- 80) Landino III 39-41; V 21 (Walker 28).
- 81) Landino VI 47-48 (= Walker 30). Landino's notes on Horace were published in 1496: *Qu. Horatii flacci opera Venetiis Impressa. Anno salutis. M.CCCCXCV. die. xvi. februarii* (with the commentaries of Antonio Mancinelli, Pseudo-Acro, Porphyrius, and Landino).
- 82) For the mediaeval view of the influence of Mercury on the human personality, see C. S. Lewis 107-108 ("skilled eagerness" or "bright alacrity").
- 83) Brown (2001) 121; "is at one with nature" (114).
- 84) Hulse 65-66.
- 85) "Poetry invents speeches for people speaking to one another" (Richter I 49, 53). Ludovico Dolce judged that Raphael had "surpassed the descriptions that inspired him," ranking his frescoed *Triumph of Galatea* (Rome, Villa Farnesina) more highly than Poliziano's poetic image her (Richter I 50; Hulse 86-88). *Dialogo della*

pittura di M. Lodovico Dolce, intitolato l'Aretino, nel quale si ragiona della dignità di essa pittura e di tutte le parti necessarie che a perfetto pittore si acconvegono. In Vinegia: appresso G. Giolito de' Ferrari, 1557.

86) Richter I 59.

87) Richter I 65; Kristeller 182 [514] discusses Leonardo's definition of painting as a science.

88) Pope-Hennessy 205 ("Image and emblem" 205-256).

89) Pope-Hennessy fig. 225 (*Lucina Brembat*: Lorenzo Lotto: Bergamo), fig. 245 (*Ginevra Rangone*: Correggio, Leningrad).

90) Pope-Hennessy, fig. 242: "Laura" (Giorgione: Kunsthistorisches Museum of Vienna); "Ginevra d'Este" (Pisanello: Paris), "Betrothal Portrait" (Lorenzo Lotto: Madrid).

91) Pope-Hennessy, fig. 258 (*Drawing of a Lady*: A. del Sarto, Uffizi), 259 (*Girl holding a volume of Petrarch*: A. del Sarto, Uffizi): the latter is possibly a portrait of the artist's step-daughter), fig. 260. (*Laura Battiferri*: Bronzino, Uffizi); Francesco Laurana's painted marble bust of *Petrarch's Laura* (h 44 cm. Historisches Kunstmuseum, Vienna, KK Inv. No. 3405). Laura Battiferri's favorites are XLIX and CLXXXII. Giorgione's "Laura" (Vienna) remains a riddle, for she might represent a courtesan, wife, or "ideal" (laurels for her name, poetry, or conjugal virtue). Anderson 208 suggests this is an "idealized image of Petrarch's Laura."

92) *Canzoniere* LXXVII and LXXVIII; Tinagli 73. On the traditions of Simone Martini's likeness of Laura (lost or imaginary) see J. B. Trapp.

93) Kemp (1981) 268; Cropper 390: "Leonardo was deeply indebted to the legacy of Petrarch, Luigi Pulci, and the Ficinian revival of the theory of Platonic love. The smile of Mona Lisa makes her divine, as Vasari says in his famous description of her, which otherwise is an awed acknowledgment of nature and art jointly perfected." Rensselaer Lee 197 quotes a comment of Poussin's as a reminder that Horace saw poetic invention as making something new from something old: "La novità nella Pittura non consiste principalmente nel soggetto non più veduto, ma nella buona e nuova disposizione e espressione, e così il soggetto [dall'essere] commune, e vecchio diviene singolare e nuovo."

94) Barolsky (1991) 35-37.

95) Barolsky (1991) 65.

96) Hor., *Ars P.* 281; *Sat.* 2. 1. 32-34: *quo fit ut omnis / rotiva pateat veluti descripta tabella / vita senis.*

97) Kemp (1977) 396.

98) "The dominant tone of fifteenth-century writings was that the visual arts were governed by rational procedures of discovery and making, which could be given almost infinite extension by imaginative invention" (Kemp [1977] 396-397).

99) Osborne 585; Kemp (2004) 6; Nuland 9-11 defends him: "What was mistaken for instability was only Leonardo's itch to get back to scientific work, from which he too often felt distracted by the more practical matters of artistic productivity."

100) Mohen *et al.* 66.

101) "Lo lascio imperfetto" (Vasari V 30). "To put it bluntly, he did not make a living by delivering completed paintings" (Kemp [2004] 6); Kemp also observes that the landscape does not suggest the view seen from the Gherardini villa (219).

102) Keats 4 vehemently rejects L.'s innovation: "Along the way he likely added that misfit backdrop, an absolutely inexplicable alteration."

103) Webster Smith 198; and 195: "The landscape takes its cue from the figure, was painted with reference to it."

Arasse 339-390 assumes that L. conceived the landscape later; that it was "un travail lentement mûri"; and (391) was the first time L. placed a portrait before a landscape (with the possible exception of the *Ginevra de' Benci*).

Brown (2001) 77: "Thirty years after Ginevra de' Benci's gaze of indifference, Leonardo introduces the illusion of emotional warmth to the female portrait"; Pedretti (1968) 31: "Anche la figura umana fa parte del paesaggio (vien da pensare alla Gioconda, alla Santa Anna, alla Lida), ed è perciò partecipe dei fenomeni di riflessione, di riverbero, e di ombre colorate, come ogni altro elemento posto sotto la luce del cielo."

104) Hor., *Ars P.* 47: *concordia discors* (*Epist.* 1. 12. 19) is a cosmological concept.

105) Arasse 409.

106) Note 93 above.

107) 1488. Tempera on wood. Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Lugano-Castagnola, Switzerland; Simons 38, 44-45.

108) Nicholl 229-230.

109) Kemp (2004) 209.

110) Nicholl 163: L.'s rebus from the 1480s similarly shows "a lion engulfed in flames next to a table... *leone + ardere + desco*" (*Leonardesco*). In his *Fables* Alberti had referred to himself as a *lion* "burning with desire for glory"; and Grafton 214.

111) Alberti 94 (2. 42): *et piacemi sia nella storia che admonisca et insegnì ad noi quello si debbono muovere ad che sia ordinata la storia*. Fra Filippo Lippi, Mantegna, G. Bellini, Perugino, and Ghirlandajo all used self-portraits (Nicholl 173-174).

112) Kemp (2004) 212.

113) There is a contemporary engraving of a medallion reading "*Academia Leonardi Vinci*", possibly by a student of L. (McMullen 60-63; Hohenstatt 128-129; Nicholl 40-42). For the "rush" pattern as an emblem of the town of Vinci, see Vezzosi 18, 80 (McMullen 135 calls L.'s use "completely baffling." For the ceiling of the Sala dell'Asse in the Castello Sforzesco in Milan see Maiorino 240; McMullen 61. See Arasse 134-143 for a thorough account of the design; Mohen *et al.* 70.

114) Niccolò da Correggio created one for her sister Isabella, Marchioness of Mantua that Beatrice d'Este admired, referring to this pattern as "*fantasia del passo cum li vincì*" (Kemp [1977] 374, note 136). *Fantasia* was a topic of discussion in Isabella's circle, owing perhaps to her own interest in Philostratus; only Filarete seems to have used the term as an "indispensable part of his vocabulary of art" (Kemp 375).

115) Black chalk, red chalk and yellow pastel chalk on paper, 63 x 46 cm. Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, Inv. M.I. 753, Paris. Hohenstatt 68, fig. 69; Nicholl 226-228; 325-327; Kemp (2004) 209. No painting survives.

116) Antonio de' Beatis refers in his journal to "una certa dona Fiorentina facta di naturale ad istantia del quondam mag.co Giuliano de Medici." Nicholl 490-493; at 365-367 N. suggests that the connection between Lisa and Giuliano is entirely possible; Pedretti (2003) 71-72.

117) On the technical aspects of the *sphragis* (seal) or poetic *envoi* see Fraenkel 362-363. *Epist.* 1. 19 serves as a kind of preliminary *envoi* to 1. 20, with more information about his past achievements.

118) Ponte 886-901; cf. *Seniles* 10. 2 (Ponte 850-878).

119) Yeats 2 insists that he "never addressed posterity, not intentionally."

120) "... unlike anything in Tuscany"; Mohen *et al.* 66.

121) *Fam.* 4. 1; Mann 9.

122) Mann 12.

123) Mann 12.

- 124) *Familiars* 4, 4; Mann 2, 9, 11.
- 125) CA 327r / 119r-a; Richter 2, 312 (1332): "Petrarch is affirming that he aspires to laurel for medicine, not glory"; also Nicholl 222, 526, note 60; Anderson 211.
- 126) Kemp (2004) 214; and 215-222.
- 127) Starnazzi #6 (note 45 above): "Di notevole rilevanza artistica, recentemente riconosciuto come probabile sfondo del celebre dipinto de 'La Gioconda' di Leonardo da Vinci, Ponte Buriano domina le acque del fiume Arno nell'omonima frazione. Nell'antico percorso stradario che parte da Arezzo fino a raggiungere Firenze, Ponte Buriano è la prima struttura architettonica. Arezzo was also the site of the Battle of Anghiari. Kemp (2004) 221 dismisses claims that the landscape represents the region near Arezzo.
- 128) Nicholl 345 (343-353).
- 129) Battaglia. *Dizionario* XIII 857-858.
- 130) Kemp (2004) 149; (1981) 263; Keele 150.
- 131) Solmi 183-187; Nicholl 276-280.
- 132) Solmi 184.
- 133) Notes 52, 122 above.
- 134) Richter II 191(1033); Ravaisson-Mollien 528. For L.'s map of the canal from the Loire to the Sàone, Richter II 202. Nicholl 466 discounts Lomazzo's statement (without citing Ravaisson) that Leonardo had demonstrated his automaton of a lion before King Francis at Lyon: "Leonardo was not there himself, however, as Lomazzo's account might imply." N. 485 believes Francis and L. did not meet until Dec. 1515 at Bologna.
- 135) See Nicholl 460-464. Solmi 218 notices a lack of information about L.'s activities for the spring of 1518 after producing a festival at Tours. Did he travel between Italy and France across the Alps from Milan, or from Genoa to Marseilles by sea? From the evidence of the *Codex Atlanticus*, Solmi favoured the former: L. departing January 6, 1517 via Geneva and Tours. Nicholl #87 favours August or September, 1516, to avoid the Alpine winter. (N. includes the particles "probably," "surely," "perhaps" [as hypothetical narrative]: "Leonardo heads north into the mountains.") From Amboise to Avignon would have taken about two weeks by river and road in the 1500s. (My sincere thanks to Dr Paul Claval of the Sorbonne for this.)
- 136) Some of the background is covered by the edge of her veil. See Mohen *et al.*
- 137) *la pittura assoluta e perfetta* (Alberti 114 [3, 63]); Hulse 65; Brown (1998) 94 (of *Ginevra de' Beni*): "In attempting to put these theories in practice, Leonardo must have hoped that Alberti's definition of painting as a 'liberal' or intellectual pursuit would apply to his own efforts." Not all critical assessments of the *Mona Lisa* have been adulatory: Franklin 30: "The burden of the expression comes instead through the searing look, enlarged features and the now infamous smile on an otherwise immutable and other worldly face. The result seems surprisingly ponderous, uneasily relentless and even cloying in some of its aspects and, again, was less widely imitated in Florentine art than the novel arrangement of the portrait sitter in a particular, localized setting." Arasse 388 estimates L. worked for a dozen years on the *ML*.
- 138) For "coding" see Gombrich (1960) 181; and 182: "The mind of the beholder also has its share in the imitation" (on a passage from Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*); and 195: "It is an art in which the painter's skill must be matched by the public's skill in taking hints."
- 139) Kemp (2004) 210, 213; "Moreover she smiles at and even through us... no painting had made such claims upon our personalized attention."
- 140) Venetian ambassador to Florence. Before leaving Florence in 1481, L. frequented Marsilio Ficino's Platonic Academy at Careggi (Nicholl 110-114).
- 141) Like Ginevra, Cecilia was also an accomplished writer: "Oltre alla lingua latina, nella quale elegantissimamente scriveva epistole, molto leggiadramente compose versi in idioma italiano, e discorreva con tal prontezza, e vivacità etiandio alla presenza di gran filosofi, e teologi, ch'era stimata non cedere alle antiche Assioete e Aspasic donne eloquentissime dei suoi tempi" (F. A. Della Chiesa. *Theatro delle donne letterate*, Mondovì, 1620). For Baldassarre Castiglione's sonnet praising his own portrait by Raphael with his wife as the imagined admirer, see Richter I 56.
- 142) Kemp (2004) 208. Bellincioni also celebrated L.'s *Festival of Paradise* to honour Duke Giovanni Galeazzo Sforza and Isabella at Milan, in which each of the seven planets had praised Isabella (Nicholl 257-259).
- 143) Nicholl 283, 531 note 120; Taccone 99.
- 144) Nicholl 308-309, 539.
- 145) Giuliano de' Medici may have been a link, Nuland 79-80.
- 146) Clark (1959) 121 spoke of his "extraordinary quickness of eye."
- 147) Alberti 94 (2, 42): *E chi mai credesse, se non provando, tanto essere difficile, volendo dipignere uno viso che rida, schifare di non lo fare piuttosto piangioso che lieto? Et ancora chi mai potesse senza grandissimo studio esprimere visi nei quale la bocca, il mento, li occhi, le guance, il fronte, i cigli, tutti ad uno ridere o piangere convengono? Per questo molto coniensì impararli de la natura, e sempre seguire cose molto prompte e quali lassino da pensare, a chi le guarda, molto più che elli non vede.* "Or perhaps that smile is in itself Leonardo's ultimate message to the ages" (Nuland 11).
- 148) Kemp (2004) 212.
- 149) Keele 139-144; Nuland 82-83; Arasse 107-115.
- 150) Note 5 above.
- 151) Personal communication, 24 February 2005. *Canzoniere* CLXXXIV 9-11. Petrarch wrote in his copy of Vergil: "Laura, illustrious by her virtues, and long celebrated in my songs, first greeted my eyes in the days of my youth, the 6th of April, 1327, at Avignon; and in the same city, at the same hour of the same 6th of April, but in the year 1348, withdrew from life, while I was at Verona, unconscious of my loss... Her chaste and lovely body was interred on the evening of the same day in the church of the Minorites: her soul, as I believe, returned to heaven, whence it came. To write these lines in bitter memory of this event, and in the place where they will most often meet my eyes, has in it something of a cruel sweetness, but I forget that nothing more ought in this life to please me." For P.'s response to the plague, see *Ad seipsum (Epistola Metrica I. 14)*.
- 152) Kemp (1981) 264.
- 153) Richter I 54.
- 154) Arasse 393.