

Ludovico AntonioDavid

Italian painter and historian
(1648-c.1709),

He was born in Lugano on June 13, 1648. The few news about his life derive from the letters and the "narrow" biography that David sent to P. Orlandi in 1703 and 1704. "Released by human studies ..., he applied to painting in Milan under the discipline of Cavalier Francesco del Cairo in 1666, and died this master, under the direction of Hercules Procaccini. A year later he came to Venice, having to copy the works of Titian, Paolo Veronese, Tintoretto, etc. From there he went to Bologna, inviting him from Colonel Bati Rospigliosi, and kept the entire vacancy, until Pope Clement X was created [the conclave lasted from 20 Dec. 1669 to April 29, 1670], during which time he designed the whole Magnani de 'Carracci room, part of the Claustro di S. Michele in Bosco, and the main altar tables of the same and of their other famous disciples, with very nice documents by Mr. Carlo Cignani, whom he likes to be the least of his disciples, then returned to Venice and a year later went to Mantua, where he designed all of Giulio Romano's works, Raffaello's tapestries and other things and then returned to Venice, and stayed there until the giugn or 1684 ... ".

In Venice, David managed to acquire a certain reputation as a painter, so as to receive a constant flow of commissions: portraits of the "main senators and ladies" as well as "public works".

Of what was to be a large number of Venetian works, few paintings have been identified: in S. Maria del Carmelo a great canvas with the Madonna delivering to John XXII the saline bubble is signed with the monogram of David.

In the same church it was attributed to a Temptation of Stylistics. Alberto. Still in the chapel of the Lombardi in S. Maria dei Frari, St. Charles Borromeo distributing alms to the churches, which David mentions a letter from 1691; is painted in the fully Baroque, dark, dramatic style of Cairo.

A great mediocre canvas, indifferently titled as Apelle painting the Graces or The School of Naked or The Study of a Painter is preserved in the pal. Albrizzi to S. Aponal (Apollinare). Finally a Sacred Family, already in coll. Mario Nono, was attributed to David for stylistic reasons.

In 1815 Mocchini described in the church of S. Silvestro a Nativity, which "to put it to this site on the other, is cruelly all around cut"; there is no trace of it, nor is it

possible to identify those works which in his letters to the Orlandes and to Bottari David said were once in St. Alexander of Bergamaschi, S. Aponal, S. Maria della Salute, in the monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore ("a large painting"), or Allegory of Patriarch Morosini on the ceiling of a family palace salon or paintings, of which David does not give the title, in the church of S. Mattia in Murano. From Venice the artist "went to Rome, but having not seen or studied the works of Correggio, resolved to pass for Parma" where, in addition to copying the Correggio, he also painted "his own invention the table of St. Teresa in S. Maria Bianca".

In Rome, his work survives even less. Two beautiful, large canvases with the Adoration of the Magicians and the Adoration of the Shepherds, commissioned by CarDavid Pietro Ottoboni, nephew of Alexander VIII, after 1691, are in the first chapel to the left in S. Andrea al Quirinale: they reveal a strong influence of Baciccio, whose Death of Francesco Saverio had been placed shortly before in the same church with great success. In 1688, for the chapel of the Clementine College (destroyed in 1936), which had been built on the design of C. Fontana, David painted the altarpiece with the Coronation of the Virgin (lost) and in 1694 the dome with the Virgin in Glory surrounded by saints and angels, of which Adam, Eve and the Baptist should be saved, now unavailable.

Among the works of the Roman period, which are also currently unavailable, they are reminded: The founders of the Order of the Fathers of the Redemption for S. Dionysius areopagita and a picture of Animals ("peacocks, rabbits, hens"), named in the inventory of the Imperial Cardinal of 14 Feb. 1737.

While in Venice, David set up competing with Peter of the Old - certainly more famous than David as a painter - an academy that seems to have been a graphite success. In 1732 V. from Canal in his Life of Gregorio Lazzarini. He first attended the school of the Old, where he studied design, perspective, anatomy and optics, "but more pleased by Lodovico David, deep in mind and very talented in those sciences, and passable in art. He did not contradict the Old by any point, which made the quarrels more subtle and debated the reasons, with great pleasure of the listeners, so Gregory did not take time to intervene, neglecting most of the design, to settle in those cognitions ... ". This quote is important because it reveals itself to this era (before 1686) David had begun to diminish the importance of the design, which was then considered fundamental to the artist's education and why, in addition to documenting a David's natural disposition to the controversy is illuminating for further developments in David's life, particularly with regard to the issue with the St. Luke's Academy.

For many years, probably for decades, David worked on a monumental history of Italian art, titled "Ildising the main news and the erudition of the noblest arts of design, divided into three parts: the first above the school of Tuscany and Rome, the second above that of Venice, and the third above the other of Lombardy"; he went on to say that the "Book promised to prints"; intended to "refute the lies of Vasari and others around the work, as in the lives of the principal founders of the Italian schools ..."; like Malvasia, David had the tooth poisoned with Vasari, who considered the source of errors of fact and judgment: for him the Lombard school was the best and Correggio the top of the artists: "I go searching for the glory of Lombardy".

Failing to publish his manuscript, David made him circulate among his friends; to his death, he went to his son Antonio who denied him to those who asked him, including the Bottari: already in the middle of the last century was considered lost. On the other hand, we know from his correspondence with the Muratori that David used modern historical methods, searching for parental records of birth, marriage, or death; he constantly questioned the news based solely on oral tradition. He was also wisely dubious about the attributions given by the owners: "I have great doubts," he wrote in a letter of May 23, 1703, "for the respect of the donor who believes he has owned not a work but almost a gallery of works by Allegri between paintings and drawings, and have always been copies".

The Disappointing Manuscript was lost (David mentions a summary in the introduction of his treatise *The Love of Art*); it is impossible to determine David's contribution to artistic historiography. A letter that Florentine painter A. Franchi wrote to him gives us an example of the consideration of which he disapprove David Franks, whom David had sent a handwritten copy, professed "all the treaty due to a virtuoso peer," he writes that he has "read a great deal and enjoyed the great book of the book" and is "I was admired of the fatigue made, the many erudition found and the strong reasons behind his propositions." He also claims that he has "copied many of those eruditions in the ... My Treatise of Theoretical Picturesque", of which he exposes the content, declaring himself ready to receive any suggestions.

David is also considered to be Leonardo's first modern scholar, the first person to have sought true information about the artist through the study of his manuscripts. Although the essay on Leonardo is lost, like all the rest of the *Disunion*, we can have an idea of how he works from his own letters. We also know that he studied mathematics, science, and astronomy, and was therefore in a position of advantage over other artists and writers to grasp the meaning of Leonardo's scientific studies. He had the opportunity to study the original of the

manuscript, now called the Leicester Code, which was then in Rome in possession of G. Ghezzi. "I really think the difficulties of reading them through the mirror, because of the shrillness of the character from the time, also corroded, while I try it at least one day a week, which, far away from my home, let me read the above ms, and I seem to do a lot when I can read and understand a facade in 4 hours.

Although at other times the other mss were not very sought after. of Leonardo kept in the Ambrosian Library, like the great Atlantic Code and a dozen smaller volumes (then dispersed in the Napoleonic period), David was very interested in them. He was constantly writing to the Bricklayer, who had been a librarian at the Embassy for information, but every time he was discouraged and advised to return to his studies on Correggio. Among David's various activities during his life, it will easily keep alive the name is the contribution to theory and artistic education. It is provided by the Treaty on the subject entitled Love of Art, circa 1704, which, like Disinganno, circulated manuscript among his friends but was never published.

The treaty, dedicated to Clement XI, the ruling pope, is in the form of a virulent attack, somewhat in the style of Salvator Rosa, the official artistic organization of Rome of time, as represented by the Academy of St. Luke. there divided into three parts. The first is the most important and in it David attacks the dominant position that the design from the real and draping studios had in the Academy's programs for young artists. David considered instead that it was necessary to give the emphasis on mathematics and in particular to the Euclidean geometry, from whose study it would be possible to derive a general sense of pictorial unity. As Turner points out, his position leaves a much deeper trace than it may appear at first glance: it is thus beginning to strike the heart of the educational system of the Academy and, consequently, as David points to artistic education in all the institutions, where, after the success of the Academy of Carracci in Bologna, live design had become a preeminent element in the formation of young artists.

But the implications were wider: David directly attacks the classical tradition that realism, or rather the idealization of reality, is capable of expressing the deepest emotions and is therefore the most noble form of art. His ideas reflect both the great consideration in which era of enlightenment was held in science, and the dissatisfaction with the glorification of the drawing, pre-litigation of the controversy over the color-contrast and in this way an appreciation of more abstract values , dear at the time rococo.

In the second section of his *Love of the art*, attacks the Academy of St. Luke as responsible for much of the decline of the school in Rome. Decline caused, according to him, by the growing abandonment of Raffaello's appreciation and the tendency of academics to prefer foreign artists to their own. These assessments must be read in the background of the growing French dominance of Roman artistic life in the last part of the seventeenth century, and in the first of the next. Predominantly favored by the Academy itself, which at one point elected Prince Le Brun, and by important academics such as Bellori, who considered Poussin as his ideal artist and who devoted his opus magnum to Colbert.

The third part, which seems to us most superficial today, is the one that at the moment aroused the greatest controversy. This is an attack on the undertaking that G. Ghezzi invented in 1704 to be used in the Clementine Competition of that year by the Academy of San Luca, a company consisting of a triangle formed by brush, chisel and compass. These symbols had to affirm the equality between painting, sculpture and architecture, a premise of the harmony that was to reign in the Academy. Indeed, during the principality of F. Zuccari, all the discussions on this delicate subject were forbidden. David, however, came to the point of suggesting that architecture was completely eliminated in the Academy's curriculum; it is no wonder he thinks painting superior to other limbs. It was warmed in particular because of the importance the architects had in the business of the Academy and came to attack Carlo Fontana, who did not appreciate architecture. Since the Fountain was a kind of dictator in the artistic world and that through his hands spent much of the commissions, the attack had to raise a great interest and in some places even a positive response. As far as the company was concerned, and despite David's attack, perhaps precisely because of it, the Academy used the Ghezzi's enterprise almost as much a century.

Despite the queer tone and some petty aspects, David's treatise is important as it anticipates, for more than half a century, the romantic attitude that the artist must be free to follow his genius, free from any regulation regarded as a obstacle and even the constraints of the institution.

Two other writings published in Rome are known: *Declaration of Painting of the Chapel of the Clementine College* (1695) and *Illustrissimo & Eccellentissimo principi coeterisque divi Lucae Academicis artium graphidis ... duo problemmata* (1705).

David lives again in 1709, as it appears in his letter of 6 July to the Burial. They ignore the place and date of death.

by Robert Enggass - Biographical Dictionary of the Italians - Volume 33 (1987)

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<http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ludovico-antonio-david> (Dizionario-Biografico)