

# Giovanni Battista Lombardelli

Italian painter  
(ca. 1540-1592)

He was born between 1535 and 1540 in Montenuovo today Ostra Vetere, in the Ancona area, and for his origin he is often remembered as "della Marca" or even "Montano".

Skilled fresco decorator, he was a pupil of Marco Marchetti from Faenza and imitator of the manner of Raffaellino da Reggio.

Many non-flattering critical judgments weighed on the evaluation of his artistic personality.

Two panels with the *Archangel Raffaele, Tobiolo and a patron* and a *Saint with a patron commissioned* in the church of the Crucifix in Ostra Vetere, dated 1574, are to be attributed to the first phase of Lombardelli's activity. Also attributed to Lombardelli are the other frescoes in the small oratory including a *Nativity*.

Lombardelli also painted the frescoes of the church of S. Croce di Serra de Conti, former oratory of the Confraternita della Morte, attributed to the painter's youthful phase. In the apsidal area, although significantly damaged, there is a *Crucifixion*, personifications of the *Virtues* and two figures, probably Isaiah and David.

In this work, Lombardelli's narrative ease and attention to the scenographic layout of the sacred compositions appear, motifs taken from the example of F. Barocci. The artist's eclectic formal background is built in the manner of Raphael, Pinturicchio (Bernardino di Betto) and Michelangelo's plasticism.

From 1579 to 1581 Lombardelli was in Perugia to fresco the lunettes, now lost, with the *Stories of the life of S. Domenico* in the main cloister of the church of the same name. Of these paintings there remains a preparatory drawing depicting the *Abbot Gioacchino who predicts the foundation of the Franciscan and Dominican Order*. The frescoes with Franciscan stories also disappeared in the cloister of the church of S. Girolamo and a fresco in the Capuchin church, also in Perugia.

The Roman period of Lombardelli began in 1581. Between 1583 and 1585, with Pasquale Cati, he painted the frescoes in the old room of the Montecavallo palace and the monumental allegorical figures of *Hope, Loyalty, Vigilance* and *Patience* in the old room of the Swiss in the Vatican. Together with Marco da Faenza he participated in the decoration of the third floor of the Vatican lodges and in the works in the hall of vestments and the secret consistory.

With N. Circignani (the Pomarancio) he collaborated in the cloister of S. Pietro in Montorio creating eleven lunettes with *Stories of S. Francesco* and together with Marco da Faenza, Paris Nogari and Cristoforo Roncalli frescoed the cloister of the church of Trinità dei Monti.

Lombardelli executed in the lunettes of the cloister of the church of the Minerva eight stories with scenes taken from the life of S. Domenico is a *Nativity of Mary* in the church of S. Spirito in Sassia. Also referable to these years is the decoration with mythological scenes in Palazzo Cesi and the altarpiece with the *Crucifixion* of the Cesi chapel in the church of S. Cecilia in Acquasparta.

Always Baglione indicates in the destroyed church of S. Angelo in Borgo a lunette, today in the church of the Annunziata, with the *appearance of the archangel Michael to Pope Gregory on the Mole Adriana*, influenced by the manner of Cati and by certain Michelangelo tortuosities.

Between 1585 and 1586 he painted the frescoes of the church of S. Antonio Abate on the Esquiline with Circignani.

From 1587 he worked on the chapel of the Madonna of the Mongiovino sanctuary, near Panicale in the Perugia area. In November of that year Lombardelli was paid 120 scudi for "the entire vault of the chapel of the Most Holy Madonna above the three arches and all the paintings of the choir with the windows and the door".

Lombardelli painted the altarpiece with the *Assumption*, a *Christ in piety with angels* and an *Eternal Father* in a small chapel in the parish church of Mongiovino. He worked in the chapel of S. Antonio in the basilica of Loreto, probably completed in 1587 and destroyed during the nineteenth century restoration. However, the news does not find documentary evidence: the sources instead indicate the work by Lombardelli in the chapel of the Immaculate Conception, located in the left transept of the Holy House. In 1596 the heirs of the bishop Francesco Cantucci entrusted to Lombardelli the sixth chapel of the right aisle today dedicated to the Marriage of the Virgin. The Lauretan company was the last job accepted by the Lombardelli. The presence of the painter in Loreto remains *on site*, in the room of S. Teresa in the apostolic palace, the work *La Madonna di Loreto and the translation of the Holy House*.

Crispolti was the first to mention the frescoes commissioned by Gerolamo Danzetta in 1588 for the Perugia chapel of S. Agostino. In the scenes, especially in the box with *The alms of S. Lucia* appears an agitated style, with nervous and eccentric mobility typical of late Mannerism.

In 1591 Lombardelli made two paintings, the *Parnassus* and the *Wedding at Cana*, in the room of the old library of the Palazzo dei Priori in Perugia. The payments for the decoration of the church of S. Pietro in the same city also date back to the end of 1591. In May 1592 Lombardelli completed the figure of *Prudence*, *The handover of the keys*, *The conversion of s. Paul*, *Christ and the centurion*.

The last undertaking he made in Umbria was the coordination of the decoration of the Coli-Pontani chapel in the basilica of S. Maria degli Angeli in Assisi, on the recommendation of Laura Pontani. Recognized as of Lombardelli are the scenes with the *forgiveness of Assisi* and the *death of the lord of Celano*, rendered according to the compositional schemes already adopted for the sanctuary of Mongiovino. He also participated in the work in the halls of the Gambarara building in Bagnaia and Buzzi palace in Orvieto.

The date of his death, on 23 July 1592, based on the *Book of Obituaries* of the parish of S. Croce di Perugia.

by Bernadetta Nicastro - Biographical Dictionary of Italians - Volume 65 (2005)

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