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Leonardo Da Vinci: Leonardo's Animals Part 1 Of 2

By Melanie Light

Leonardo da Vinci was born in 1492 at a Tuscan farmhouse in Anchiano, Italy, near the town of

Vinci where he spent most of his childhood. He was the son of Ser Piero and a girl called Caterina who worked for him. After Leonardo was born, the father and mother did not remain together. Only recently have details of Leonardo's birth mother come to light. In 2002, Alessandro Vezzosi, Director of the Leonardo da Vinci Museum in Vinci, Italy, told the press they had found substantial proof Leonardo's mother was a slave girl and not a peasant girl, as previously believed.(1) Vezzosi went on to report that Leonardo's father was a craftsman who owned a Middle-Eastern female slave named Caterina. And, according to their discovery, a few months after Caterina gave birth to Leonardo, she was married off to one of the workers.

Leonardo lived in Anchiana and in Vinci until he was eight years old. Afterwards, he moved to Florence with his father. When Leonardo was 14, he became an apprentice under the famed sculptor and painter Andrea del Verrocchio in Florence. In that period, Verrocchio was the leading Florentine artist. By the time Leonardo was between 21 and 23 years old, he had become a very skilled painter. Verrocchio permitted Leonardo to help with an important painting, The Baptism of Christ (Uffizi Gallery, Florence). Leonardo painted the background and the kneeling angel. It is said that when Verrocchio saw that Leonardo could paint better than anyone he had ever seen, including himself, he gave up painting for good. Verrocchio decided he would concentrate on sculpture.

Leonardo da Vinci was said to have a great love for animals, and his journals further illustrates this. He was a vegetarian, at least in the latter part of his life (we don't have definite proof that he was a strict vegetarian in his early life). He wrote, "The time will come when men such as I will look upon the murder of animals as they now look on the murder of men." He also remarked, "The smallest feline is a masterpiece."

In the 1480s, Leonardo painted Lady With The Ermine. The Lady in the painting is Cecilia Gallerani, the 17-year-old mistress of Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan. She carries an ermine for three reasons. First, for the Duke of Milan, having been appointed to the Order of the Ermine by Ferdinand I of Naples, the ermine was the symbol of heraldry on his coat of arms. Second, the ermine was considered to be a symbol of virtue and purity. And finally, it was a play on Cecilia Gallerani's name

since the Greek name for ermine is "galee".

In Leonardo's notebooks, he wrote that the ermine eats every other day. Most likely the ermine, an animal related to the sable and weasel, stayed in the studio while the painting was being completed. In the Renaissance period, soft-hair paint brushes were made of ermine tail tips. Brushes were also made from squirrel fur and fastened into goose or hen feathers - another reason the ermine might have been at home in the studio.

Leonardo da Vinci included cats in many of his sketches. On one sheet of animal sketches in his notebook, the artist portrayed more than twenty cats, and one dragon. He drew cats in different poses, alone, with other cats, and being cuddled and held. His sketches are lively and reveal the solemn affection he had for felines.

Throughout the mid to late 1470s, Leonardo worked on a series of different studies relating to the

theme of the Madonna and the Christ Child, holding a cat. It was originally thought that no paintings existed beyond his initial studies for these paintings. Recently; however, Madonna with the Cat, which is in the collection of industrialist Carlo Noya in Savona, Italy, was discovered to be a painting by none other than Leonardo.(2) The painting is based on a legend about a cat being born at the same moment as the baby Jesus.

Other sketches for paintings that feature animals and are based on a legend or myth is that of Leda and the Swan. Although no actual paintings exist, there are countless drawings. The story is that Leda was seduced by the God Zeus in the form of a swan and bore two eggs, which resulted in the creation of Helen of Troy with Clytemnestra, and Castor with Pollux.

Although there are countless studies and sketches made by Leonardo, only 13 or 14 actual paintings exist today. One of these is Madonna and Child with St. Anne, painted from 1508 to 1510. The figures depicted all relate to one another, and the baby Jesus is shown tightly holding a little lamb. Da Vinci painted the lamb with sensitivity and detail. The lamb is symbolic of Jesus Christ's sacrificial death for mankind. Leonardo's animal subjects are based on reality and are filled with vitality.

Sources: 1.

<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,810926,00.html>

2.

<http://www.lairweb.org.nz/leonardo/cat.html>

Melanie Light is an artist and site owner of Pet Lovers Art & Resources at

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Rome airport: a city that uses two names for one airport.

By stefano sandano

Leonardo da Vinci and Fiumicino: two names for one airport.

In Europe, the hub-and-spoke mode of operation has an even longer history than in the US, having grown out of the past regulatory framework and of the prevailing geographic and political conditions, rather than as an autonomous market process. Each nation has had its own flag carrier, with a privileged position in and around its domestic market and frequently a large government ownership share. More often than not, flag carriers have been benefiting from considerable amounts of subsidies or direct financial support from the state.

The airport of Rome capacity constraints and the slot allocation regimes with the practices currently in effect in Europe, constitute major barriers to entry and hence to competition and economic efficiency.

However, the Eternal City in 1961 decided to add to the name Fiumicino (that means "small river channel – because the airport is located at the end of the Tiber River) the name of Leonardo da Vinci, in memory of the most brilliant genius mind that Italy ever had.

At Leonardo da Vinci, the airport operator, Aeroporti di Roma, is spending a lot of money in expanding and upgrading terminal facilities to meet the needs of growing traffic numbers and shaking off the airport's rather modest reputation.

There are now three terminals one of which, Terminal C, is linked to a satellite. The handsome new Terminal A is for domestic flights and replaces spartan facilities. Terminal B, a light and airy place, has a dual role handling international and a number of domestic services. Terminal C is located near the major international flights and is connected to satellite C, a mini-terminal in its own right with a full range of shopping, catering and other services.

International passengers will find the satellite a big improvement on the old days when the only way to reach the aircraft steps on many flights meant a bus ride. Despite all the money spent on the satellite, however, the risk has not entirely been removed. Three of the 14 gates are still the prelude to a bus journey to a parked aircraft. How did that happen?

The satellite is connected to Terminal C by the "Skybridge" automated rail shuttle, the first of its kind in Italy, and there are plans to extend the service to the rest of the airport. That will be welcome news for

those who have tramped the endless walkways – the moving walkways are only a partial help – which link the terminals.

New shopping and catering areas have been introduced in Terminal B as the plans to sharpen up the image and quality of Rome's major airport gathers pace.

Stefano Sandano is an archaeologist of Rome and the owner of the website

<http://www.rome-airport.org>

, where you can find more informations about the airports of Rome.



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