Abstracts
Leonardo. Technique and Territory. Notes on the Exhibitions for Leonardo’s Five Hundredth Anniversary

CHIARA DEVOTTI

The five hundredth anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci’s death is being celebrated all over Europe with many initiatives. On this occasion, the Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning (DIST) of the Polytechnic of Turin promoted an exhibition that, in many ways, complemented the museum tour offered at the Royal Museums in Turin. Without exhibiting authentic works by the Vinciano, the exhibition – which enjoyed wide coverage and received over a thousand visitors – was an opportunity to reflect on Leonardo’s legacy for the polytechnic culture.

From the multifaceted figure of Gustavo Uzielli (the object of a dedicated essay published in this issue) to Leonardo’s acknowledgement of the role of the Naviglio d’Ivrea to build an efficient network of canals to irrigate “Piamonte” (as stated in another related article), and its notion of “Geography”, based on Ptolemy’s approach, but which then expands from it, the exhibition was an opportunity to reflect on Leonardo’s approach to the development of technical awareness. It was also an opportunity to explore the boundaries of his inventions: unpublished models, forgotten patents, polytechnic objects that express Leonardo’s unceasing fascination with the idea of flight, both in liquid and aeriform fluids. A tribute to Leonardo, a reminder of the great Nineteenth-century lesson of the Royal School of Application, more generally a reflection on the polytechnic culture.

History of a hydraulic project at the service of a territory.
The Naviglio di Ivrea: from Leonardo to the Nineteenth Century

MARIA VITTORIA CATTANEO

The article focuses on the Naviglio di Ivrea (Ivrea’s Canal, near Turin), sketched by Leonardo in sheet 563r of the Atlantic Code. The research carried out in the local archives was aimed at gaining an understanding of the historical and geographical context at the time of the canal’s construction – commissioned by the Savoy family in 1466 – and the reasons why the project captured Leonardo’s attention. The analysed documents give a lot of information on the craftsmen involved in its construction and on the techniques and materials that were used. They also show the importance of the canal to boost the economy and productivity of the area between Ivrea and Vercelli. A rich set of charts and drawings emerged in the study - many still unpublished. They are extremely important to properly understand the relationship between the canal and the surrounding areas. They confirm the lasting importance of the canal and its branches throughout the centuries, both for civilian and military purposes. They document the progress made in hydraulic engineering and show the solutions adopted to design machines and tools to control the local water system between the 15th and 19th century. Finally they are a valuable support to analyse the transformations of the territories where the canal is still present and active.

Gustavo Uzielli (1839-1911). A Scholar of Leonardo

ELENA GIANASSO

When, after the mid-19th century, Leonardo’s manuscripts were published in Paris, an important debate – supported by relevant studies – began in Italy on the Vinciano, then known especially as a painter. A great Italian man, who played an important role in the construction of the new national identity, his figure – an artist and then a scientist – was widely discussed especially in the first decade after the unification of Italy, and around the time of the inauguration, in 1872, of the monument dedicated to him in Piazza della Scala in Milan. New scholars, like Gustavo Uzielli (1839-1911), emerged in this context. After his studies in Tuscany, Uzielli worked at the university in Rome and, later, at the Technical School for Engineers in Turin, where he taught Mineral Engineering and Geology. Known as geographer too, he studied Leonardo’s codes and manuscripts in order to understand his scientific thought.

He was also eager to publish all of Leonardo’s works that were kept in Italy. Adopting the same scientific method of da Vinci, Uzielli interlaced historical research with the knowledge of earth and natural sciences. In his first paper on Leonardo’s botany; he focused on Leonardo’s knowledge of real life, his theory on the history of the Earth, and his
studies on water, deeply investigating the relationship that links Leonardo to ‘Piamonte’ and, then, to 19th-century Piedmont.

Pietro Canonica, a timeless sculptor

WALTER CANAVESE

On the sixtieth anniversary of the death of sculptor Pietro Canonica (Moncalieri, March 1st 1869 - Rome, June 8th 1959), the article traces the stages of his activity, and offers a critical reading of his artistic production, from the beginnings at the school of Odoardo Tabacchi to his maturity and last years. The essay highlights some typical aspects of his work: the deliberate indifference to the themes of twentieth-century art and of the vanguards; the search for roots in Renaissance sculpture; the deepening of psychologically expressive aspects; his particular portraiture ability.

The qualities and limits of his conception of art made him an almost unique case in the Italian art scene, also in terms of his social recognition. Interestingly, he enjoyed fame during his life, despite his desire not to recognize himself in the developments and problems of the art of his time.

Carved coats of arms at the Exilles Fort (Susa Valley)

ATILIO OFFMAN

Based on the heraldic analysis of two armorial low reliefs found in the Exilles Fort in the Susa Valley, the essay suggests their attributions and dating, which partially differ from what has been published so far on the matter.

One of the two coats of arms is the armorial bearing belonging to Francis of France, who had been heir presumptive to the throne of France (therefore Dauphin) since 1547. According to the essay, Francis’s arms can be dated to the period from April 1558 to July 1559, immediately before he ascended the throne as Francis II.

The other coat of arms, so far attributed to the Duke of Mayenne – Charles de Guise Duke of Mayenne, leader of the Holy League since 1589 – is actually to be attributed to Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Aumale and (since 1550) second Duke of Guise, father of the previous one, who had been nominated governor of the Dauphiné in May 1547.

Lastly, the essay explores the modification of the Guise coat of arms, dating back to the time when the Exilles Fort was occupied by Huguenot troops (1590-1593). At that time, an animal head (maybe a fox’s mask) replaced the arms of Lorraine inside the escutcheon over all, so as to add an abatement of honour. This can be easily explained in the context of hatred caused by the French Wars of Religion.

Legionari fiumani between D’Annunzio and Fascism (1919-1925)

ALDO A. MOLA

Gabriele d’Annunzio’s Endeavor of Fiume (the March of Ronchi, September 12, 1919) was promoted by military and political groups. On the political side, the Grand Orient of Italy (GOI) played a relevant role. Its key figures were Antonio Vio, mayor of Fiume and a venerable Mason of the local "Sirius" lodge, and the founders of the “Oberdan” lodge, created in Trieste in December 1918. Among these, Giacomo Treves from Turin had a prominent role. His “papers” document the contacts that existed between members of the Masonry and d’Annunzio in the preparation for the “endeavor”. However, there was no real “plan” for it. After a few months of deadlock, some followers of the “Commander” hinted at a second “march” from Fiume/Trieste to an indefinite destination (maybe Rome?).

Faced with the prospect of a short circuit, subversion, socialist uprising and military repression, the great master of GOI, Domizio Torrigiani, rejected any further political coverage, as document by Treves’s “report” (presented here in the Annex). After 1921, he would still support d’Annunzio, including as organizer of the anti-fascist Federazione Nazionale Legionari Fiumani.

Cesare Pavese, Reader of Vittorio Alfieri

MARIA ROSA MASCIRO

All writers, before turning to writing themselves, are more or less systematic, usually omnivorous readers of books written by others. Cesare Pavese was no exception to the rule. This article opens a window onto his activity as a reader, and on his personal and professional book collection – now kept at the “Guido Gozzano-Cesare Pavese” Center at the University of Turin.
It also presents Pavese's enlightening and unpublished reading notes, which fill the pages of Greek and Latin authors, as well as classic books of Italian literature. Among these, we find Vittorio Alfieri, read and reread as an autobiographer, playwright and author of "political" essays.

Alessandro Ardente between Romagna, Tuscany and Piedmont: the Beheading of St. John the Baptist in Borgo San Dalmazzo

CLAARA SECHESIO

The article traces the career of Alessandro Ardente (Faenza, Turin 1595). He was active between 1565 and 1595 in Lucca and in Turin, where he worked for the Dukes of Savoy Emanuele Filiberto and Carlo Emanuel I. The essay also explores the history of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist found in the Church of the Misericordia in Borgo San Dalmazzo, attributed to Ardente. Originally, the painting was part of a complex altarpiece that decorated the church of St. Dalmazzo in Turin, home of the confraternity of Saint John the Beheaded from 1580 until the beginning of the 17th century. During this time, they were forced to leave as a result of a conflict with the Barnabite. Nothing remains of the 16th century decor, but we know something about it thanks to some descriptions of the time. From these documents, we also know that the choir had to be decorated with Alessandro Ardente's frescoes. From what we know from existing documents, Ardente was also a member of this confraternity since the beginning of the 1580s.

The article also sheds light on some aspects of Ardente's activity. First of all, it looks at the training in his hometown, Faenza -- which existing studies have never considered. It also highlights some similarities between Giacomo Bertucci and Ardente's manner -- especially in his first paintings in Lucca -- which lead us to believe that Ardente was in Bertucci's entourage.

Saint Mary of the Angels in Bra, a Hidden Story

LUCA PIER GIOVANNI ISSELLA

Luca Pier Giorgio Isella's essay on the architecture of the 18th century Church of Saint Mary of the Angels in Bra introduces the paradoxical case of a monumental art building, unique in its distinctive, yet anomalous architectonic transversal plan. The essay is an attempt to portray the building's little-known identity, as no historical analysis has been carried out yet. Its hidden history emerges from the consultation of the public sources of the town of Bra, from the documentation provided by the "Ordinari" and from the fortunate finding of the early 18th century original plan, which was considered lost. The drawing presents the building plan of the convent at the end of the 17th century, before the Church of Saint Mary of the Angels was built in 1742. It highlights the serious damages caused during two centuries by the instability of the territory in the urban area called "della Rocca". An unfortunate situation emerges, as the choices of the Municipality were heavily influenced by the strong contrasts within the oligarchies of the town of Bra in the 18th century. In addition to the clashes between social groups, urban planning choices were also influenced by the local environment and the chronic problems due to the nature of the hydrogeological site of the town of Bra. The destiny of the community of the Friars Minor, marked by the events at the time of the Napoleonic Suppression, deprived the church of its religious role; for more than one hundred eleven years, it was only used for civilian purposes.

The practice of eclecticism. The drawings by Giovanni Battista Schellino for the Church of Saint John in Bra

LORENZO MARINO

The essay is a contribution to the redefinition of the historical architecture's identity of south-western Piedmont in the 19th century. Some years ago (November 1979) an essay by the same author presented fifty original drawings for the Church of Saint John Baptist in Bra -- built between 1884 and 1897 -- made by G. B. Schellino (1818-1905). The church has three naves with a transept, an octagonal cupola and an high bell tower. The drawings show that this was Schellino's last, great project. He made continuous proposals for higher elements and he was always much more concerned with issues of form and space than with the laws of construction. The façade would be completely consolidated.
and refurbished between 1925 and 1950, erasing all Gothic elements. Schellino also spent much time designing the altars and the bell tower. Overall, the Church of Saint John at Bra is an important testimony to the difficult relationship between a self-taught architect and the trades and clients, but also with the evolving culture of the Schools and Academies of Architecture of the time. It highlights the great lack of certainties in Eclecticism, particularly in smaller towns. The paper mentions that G.B. Schellino, who spent all his life in Dogliani (Cuneo), had few contacts with the rest Europe and, instead, many within the Langhe region. His architecture, in short, is a more elusive expression of Eclecticism: rural, romantic, practical, far from the examples of the European culture of the time.

"Why do we say /tuˈrɛn/ and not /tuˈrɛŋ/ in Piedmontese?"

LIVIO TONSO

The article explains how some vowel harmonies, such as metaphony, work in Piedmontese. Elements of other similar coarticulation phenomena are also illustrated, especially those that led to the rise of the "new" vowels /y/ and /o/. The starting point for the article is the Piedmontese pronunciation of the name of its capital city; its historical, regional and international versions are discussed as well.

"Nuto Revelli, a writer and an "outlier"

GIOVANNI TESIO

Starting from the similarities shared by the three friends Levi, Revelli and Righi Stern — writers who do not come from a recognized literary tradition, but are rather moved by the need, first and foremost, to testify — the essay tries to define the context where Nuto Revelli can be located. Also, it gives an overview of his research and literary work, trying to define the uniqueness of his experience: a fully-fledged writer, and an outlier in the Italian literary landscape.

"On the tenth anniversary of Nico Oreno’s death"

MARCO DEBENEDITTI

The tenth anniversary of Nico Oreno’s death (May 30, 2009-2019) was celebrated with many initiatives between Turin and Liguria, which gathered his many admirers and friends. Among these, the publishing house Einaudi re-published one of his most relevant texts: Il salto dell’acciuga. Looking back at Oreno’s work means following his two areas of interest: his lyrical and narrative search, and his work as a journalist. His is a very large production, which originates from a "cult of nature" (the nature of his most beloved places) and, more importantly, from a moral urgency; the desire to use poetry to give voice to a basic need of decency.

"Emblematic mirror and enlightened memory. Dedicated to Sergio Mamino"

ANDREINA GRISERI

"An exceptional, carefully thought out project, shared by a group of critically engaged authors" has generated the collective volume La Grande Galleria. Spazio del sapere e rappresentazione del mondo nell’età di Carlo Emanuele I di Savoia (The Great Gallery, Knowledge and Representation of the World at the Time of Charles Emmanuel I of Savoy), edited by Franca Varallo and Maurizio Vivarelli (Rome, Carocci, 2019). The work is dedicated to Sergio Mamino, a sharp pioneer in the research and study of the historical moment marked by 1607. The same period is interpreted with "conceptual clarity" in these pages full of suggestions, which explore the many fields of knowledge at a particularly thriving time in Piedmont and beyond.

"A Marian Sanctuary in Vercelli Plain. From Archive Sources to the Interpretation of the Historical Yard for Holy Virgin of Trompone Complex in Moncrivello"

GIOSUE FIER CARLO BRONZINO

Originating from a miraculous healing, the devotion to the Holy Virgin of the "Trompone" developed considerably thanks to the direct involvement of the Pope himself. With the bull of August 31, 1562, Pius IV gave Cesare di Maio, Marquis of Moncrivello, the possibility of erecting a Sanctuary with the right to
celebrate its anniversary each year, and to grant the plenary indulgence on the same day. A few years later, Saint Carlo Borromeo also reached the sanctuary. He promoted the expansion of the complex, and he gave the “Rotunda” to the Fathers of the Order of the Minims. Over the centuries, several buildings with multiple functions – temporarily, even monastic ones – were built next to the first sanctuary.

Today, they are all used for health and welfare purposes. The use of very modern survey tools, in particular H-BIM (Heritage or Historical BIM), means that all (unpublished) archive data can be put into a system with an extremely accurate metric survey, and this makes it possible to reconstruct the historical building site and the stages in the evolution of the articulated complex.

A season in Turin in 1819
From the Letters of Countess Flore de l’Escarène
Simonetta Trombaccini

A member of the aristocracy d’outrê-Var, Flore de Théas settles in Nice at the beginning of the 19th century, after marrying Count Antonio Tonduiti della Scarena. She continues to frequently exchange letters with her French relatives, especially her grandmother Émilie de Montgrand. She is the recipient of about a dozen letters sent in spring 1819, when Flore’s husband, after leaving his post at a ministry in Paris, moves to Turin hoping to find a job at some Savoy office. These letters reveal the habits of the time and of that social milieu. They also outline the scenario of a city, with its holy celebrations and profane distractions. Once she reaches her destination after a miserable journey through the Alps, Countess Flore hangs out with aristocrats who have moved to the capital from Nice, especially the Thaon de Saint-André and the Cays de Gilette. Together, they visit churches covered in shiny gold and have fun at horse races. In particular, she discovers and enjoys the countryside of Piedmont: a fertile and colorful landscape for a girl from Provence, who is used to the greyness of olive groves.