

## II

### STORIA, ARTE, CULTURA E SOCIETÀ

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## LEONARDO DA VINCI AND THE ROYAL COURT OF BUDA

*In anniversario annorum D elapsorum post discessum Leonardi da Vinci de hoc mundo*

Eugene Csocsán de Várallja

On folios 14<sup>verso</sup>-15<sup>recto</sup> of the Codex Urbino in the Vatican Library, therefore not far from the beginning of Leonardo's "Trattato delle pittura," Leonardo himself describes,<sup>1</sup> that on a birthday of King Matthias a poet presented a poem to the king, and "a" painter gave "a portrait of his beloved lady" to the monarch. On this occasion discussion started between the king, the poet and the painter according to Leonardo.

In this discussion King Matthias quotes from Plato's Timaios, that the "soul is composed of harmony"<sup>2</sup> while "harmony can not be generated otherwise than when the proportions of the form are seen and heard instantaneously." Therefore according to Matthias painting stands above poetry, because the various parts of a painting appear at once "with the divine beauty of this face before me giving me such delight with their divine proportions." In fact the entire way of arguing by King Matthias reflects Plato's Timaios, and it also corresponds to Plotinos' teaching in the Enneades according to which the beauty transpire mainly in sight: Τὸ καλὸν ἔστι μὲν ἐν ᾧ πλεῖστον, ἔστι δ' ἐν ἀκοαῖς κατὰ τε λόγων συνθέσεις.<sup>3</sup>

This story of Leonardo mirrors the court of Matthias Corvinus surprisingly well, as similar stories were recorded from the Corvinian court by Galeotto Marzio. Secondly Galeotto himself described a similar event, when members of the royal household brought their works to the monarch at New Year.<sup>4</sup> Thirdly the Duke of Milan, Ludovico il Moro wrote to Maffeo Treviglio, his Ambassador at Buda, on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 1485, that "His Majesty" (King Matthias) "enjoys the beautiful paintings very much"<sup>5</sup> just as Leonardo wrote it.

<sup>1</sup> Quotations in English from Leonardo's Trattato della pittura in this chapter are from the translation by Martin Kemp (ed.): Leonardo on Painting, New Haven and London 1989, pp. 24-26.

<sup>2</sup> ἡ δὲ ἁρμονία συγγενεῖς ἔχουσα φοράς ταῖς ἐν ἡμῖν τῆς ψυχῆς περιόδοις Plato: Timaios 47. The translation by R. G. Bury, London 1961, p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> Enneades I. 6(1), lásd Plotinos, in the edition of A. H. Armstrong kiadásában, Volume I., London 1966, p. 232.

<sup>4</sup> Galeottus Martius Narniensis: De egregie, sapienter, iocose dictis ac factis regis Matthiae ad ducem Johannem eius filium liber. in the edition of Ladislaus Juhász, Leipzig 1934, pp. 22-23

<sup>5</sup> et perche havemo inteso, che la Sua Maesta se delecta molto de belle picture presetim, che habino in se qualche devotione, Nagy Iván, br Nyáry Albert: Magyar diplomáciai emlékek, Volume III., Budapest 1877, p. 44.

King Matthias Corvinus' interest in painting is well mirrored also by the fact, that he made Antonio de Bonfinis to translate the work of Philostratos (III. Lemnius) titled *Imagines* into Latin, which is one of the most distinguished book of the Corvinian Library.<sup>6</sup> The magnificent renaissance miniatures in the volumes of his *corvinas* by Attavente de Attavantibus and by Gherardo & Monte di Giovanni also demonstrate splendidly King Matthias' enthusiasm for beautiful paintings.<sup>7</sup>

Finally and mainly it is the prevailing Platonic philosophy in King Matthias' reasoning, what is astonishingly authentic in Leonardo's description. It was explained already by József Huszti, that the Platonic philosophy prevailed in the court of King Matthias.<sup>8</sup> Naldo Naldius recorded, that King Matthias studied Plato's *Politeia* (Republic).<sup>9</sup> According to Galeotto Marzio Matthias studied the work of the Platonic Apuleius.<sup>10</sup> The Έννεάδες codex in Greek written in Crete in 1465 from King Matthias' Library has been preserved in Munich.<sup>11</sup> Ianus Pannonius translated Plotinos' *Enneades* in Matthias court<sup>12</sup> and he certainly finished at least the translation of the first book quoted here, when he died in 1472. The *Timaios* in Latin translation by Marsilio Ficino, and thought to be printed around 1484-85,<sup>13</sup> was also recorded in Matthias' Corvinian Library, just as Marsilius Ficinus' *Enneades* translation.<sup>14</sup> It was explained in our chapter on Ianus Pannonius, that King Matthias contemporary statue in Bautzen represents precisely the *Politeia*'s ruler in contemplation of the Platonic ideas,<sup>15</sup> and in this portrait in

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<sup>6</sup> OSZK Clmae 417.

<sup>7</sup> Csaba Csapodi, Klára Csapodi-Gárdonyi, Tibor Szántó: *Bibliotheca Corniniana*, Shannon 1969, *passim*.

<sup>8</sup> József Huszti: *Tendenze Platonizzanti alla corte di Matthia Corvino*. *Giornale critico della Filosofia Italiana*, XI., (1930) pp. 1-37 and 135-236.

<sup>9</sup> Naldi Naldii Florentini: *De laudibus Augustae Bibliothecae libri quatuor ad Matthiam Corvinum Pannoniae regem serenissimum*. (*Irodalomtörténeti emlékek II.* published by Jenő Ábel, Budapest, 1890, p. 262.)

<sup>10</sup> Galeottus Martius Narniensis: *De egregie, sapienter iocose dictis ac factis regis Mathiae ad ducem Johannem eius filium liber* (Ed. L. Juhász, Lipcse 1934 (*Bibliotheca Scriptorum Medii Recentisque Aevorum*) p. 9. )

<sup>11</sup> Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Graec 449.

<sup>12</sup> József Huszti: *Tendenze Platonizzanti alla corte de Mattia Corvino*. *Giornale critico della Filosofia Italiana*, Volume XI., 1930, pp. 35-36. Ritoók Zsigmond: *Janus Pannonius görög versfordításai* in: Kardos Tibor, V. Kovács Tibor: *Janus Pannonius tanulmányok*, Budapest 1975, p. 407.

<sup>13</sup> Csaba Csapodi: *The Corvinian Library*, Budapest 1973, pp. 318-319, no 506.

<sup>14</sup> Csapodi, *op. cit.*, p. 324, no 519-520, and p. 332, no 543.

<sup>15</sup> Váralljai Csocsány Jenő: *A magyar monarchia és az európai reneszánsz*, Pomáz 2005, pp. 30-31, 45-46, 242 (pictures 2.74a-2.76)



Bautzen reflected the King's effigy in the royal court of Buda, where Matthias was represented similarly "cogitabundus".<sup>16</sup> (picture 1.a, b)



1.a) Briccius Gauske: Matthias Corvinus the philosopher king "cogitabundus" (Bonfini 4.7.96) in a Platonic cave high on the barbican tower of Ortenburg in Bautzen 1486 (cf.: Balogh Jolán: A művészet Mátyás király udvarában, Budapest 1966, vol. I., p. 293; Schallaburg '82, p. 206 (no. 86)).



1.b) King Matthias Corvinus gazing the Platonic ideas from Platon's Politeia (VII.514a-518a) on the tower of Ortenburg in Bautzen 1486

The fact that this description of Leonardo reflects King Matthias court so astonishingly well, and that according to his story the painter gave the beloved lady's portrait to the King, is hardly by chance, because the Virgin's fair hair and features (picture 2.1b) in Leonardo's Annunciation in the Uffizi<sup>17</sup> matches Queen Beatrix's features on the Regiomontanus corvina now in Vienna<sup>18</sup> (picture 2.1a), as well as her description by Bonfini, according to whom Beatrix had "spacious forehead, high eyebrows, embossed brows, ... proportionate nose, shapely mouse."<sup>19</sup>

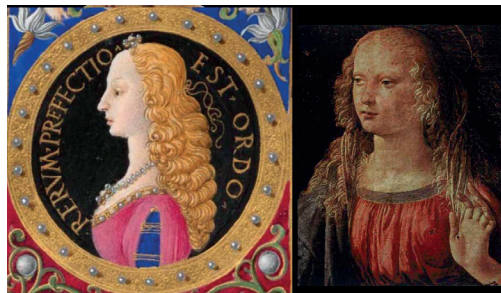
<sup>16</sup> Antonii Bonfinii Asculani Rerum Hungaricarum Decades. Decas IV, Liber VII, n° 96. Edited in: "Bibliotheca Scriptorum Medii Recentisque Aevorum" by I. Fögel, B. Iványi, L. Juhász. Tomus IV. Budapest 1941, p. 136.

<sup>17</sup> Uffizi inventory number 1618.

<sup>18</sup> It is attributed now to Francesco Roselli. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Lat 44., folio 1<sup>recto</sup>. See Csaba Csapodi, Klára Csapodi-Gárdonyi, Tibor Szántó: Bibliotheca Corviniana, Shannon 1969, p. 291.

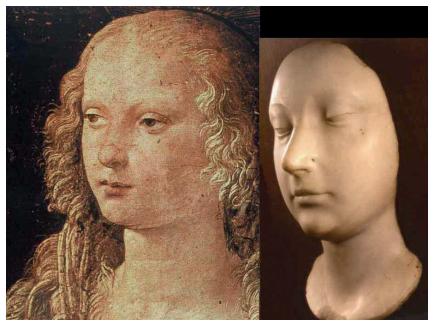
<sup>19</sup> Antonii Bonfinii Asculani Rerum Hungaricarum Decades. Decas IV, Liber IV, n° 58. Edited

2.a) Francisco Rosselli: Queen Beatrix aged 19 1475 Regimontanus Corvina, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod.Lat.44, fol 1<sup>recto</sup>



2.b) Leonardo: Annuntiation circa 1475 Firenze Uffizi (inv. no. 1618)

2.c) her “beautiful face has cold expression, her neck is exceedingly stiff and keeps her small head high...” Ottino della Chiesa, (introduced by Mario Pompilio): *L'opera completa di Leonardo pittore*, Milano 1967, 1978.p.89., first column (no2.picture).



2.d) Beatrix mask, Chambéry

Around the time of her marriage in 1476 Beatrix was reported to have blond hair.<sup>20</sup> Ottino della Chiesa observed, that this “Madonna’s beautiful face has cold expression, her neck is exceedingly stiff and keeps her small head high...”<sup>21</sup> which betrays that the sitter was a royal princess. Meanwhile the only

in: “Bibliotheca Scriptorum Medii Recentisque Aevorum” by I. Fögel, B. Iványi, L. Juhász. Tomus IV. Budapest 1941, p. 69.

<sup>20</sup>

“Mira le trezze bionde et quello ameno  
Fronte bello et sereno che dimostra  
Tanta bellezza vostra, mira il viso  
Specchio del paradiso che riluce  
De una amerosa luce et mira quello  
Naso regale et bello, et quelle ciglie  
Con le guarantie vermiglie et ameroze  
Ad guisa de doe rose nel’aurora,

Mira la bocca ancora e i bianchi denti  
Che fan sì dolci accenti, che par sia  
Soave melodia in ogni suo decto  
Mira la gola el pecto bianche gigante  
Il comoparer costante in ogni cosa,  
Prudente et gratiosa, che beato  
Qualuncha e destinato al tuo servitio”

“Farse allegoriche” quoted by Albert Berzeviczy: Beatrix királyné, Budapest 1908, p. 139-140; (from Franco Torrona: “Studi di storia letteraria Napoletana” Livorno 1884, pp. 292-298).

<sup>21</sup> Quanto alla Madonna, sono state messe in evidenza la fredda espressione del bellissimo volto e la eccessiva rigidità del collo e la piccola testa eretta...” Ottino della Chiesa, (introduced by Mario Pompilio) *L'opera completa di Leonardo pittore*, Milano 1967, 1978. p. 89., first column (n°2. picture).

explanation might be, that features of Beatrix of Aragon could appear on the Annunciation in the Uffizi, if it was the young Leonardo, who was sent from Verocchio's workshop working already for the royal court of Buda to Naples, to paint the prospective brides. This was the reason that Beatrix features reappear in the Florence Annunciation, which shows a seaport in the background. There was no sea, and no port at Nazareth, unlike to Naples, the hometown of Beatrix. (picture 2.e) Namely Matthias had to choose between the Neapolitan princesses, Eleonora and Beatrix of Aragon in 1474. The King chose the beautiful Beatrix, as he could not know, that only Eleonora could have secured the survival of his dynasty.



2.e) The seaport at the background of Leonardo's Annuntiation in the Uffizi in Florence refers to Beatrix, because there is no port and no sea at Nazareth unlike to Naples the birthtown of Beatrix

One of Leonardo's most famous paintings is the *Madonna of the Rocks*. Art historians however can not explain it to this day, why were made two copies of this masterpiece, and why is it, that the first *Madonna of the Rocks*, which was ordered in 1483 and painted in the years 1483-1486, has not been placed into the church of San Francesco Grande in Milan, where it was ordered, and why was the second copy placed there only in 1506, when the original payment of 800 imperial liras, (that is 200 golden ducats), were delivered already in 1485.<sup>23</sup>

The contract signed on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 1485 for chapel of the Immaculate Conception in the Church of San Francesco in Milan prescribed, that the altarpiece has to show Our Lady with her son and two angels as well as two prophets.<sup>22</sup> By contrast the *Madonna of the Rocks* in the Louvre<sup>23</sup> (picture 3.a) shows

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<sup>22</sup> la tavola centrale, centinata doveva contenere la Madonnna col Bambino contornata da un gruppo di angeli e da due profeti (probabilmente Isaia e David) Angela Ottino della Chiesa (introduced by Mario Pomilio): *L'opera completa di Leonardo pittore*, Milan 1967, 1978, p. 96, third column, no 15.

<sup>23</sup> Louvre, inventory number 777.

only one angel, and the two prophets are completely missing. Moreover and in clear deviation from the prescriptions of the contract we find the child Saint John the Baptist on the composition. Therefore the Madonna of the Rocks in Paris<sup>24</sup> cannot be painted originally for the Immaculate Conception’s altar in question.



3.a) Virgin of the Rocks, Louvre inv.no 777

3.b) Virgin of the Rocks, London NG 1093

All these problems can be solved by the letter by the Duke of Milan Ludovico il Moro has written to Maffeo da Treviglio, his ambassador in Buda dated 13<sup>th</sup> April 1483: “as we were informed, that His Majesty” (King Matthias) “enjoys the beautiful paintings very much, especially if they have a certain religious inspiration, and finding a best painter, and seeing his works we do not know any of his rival, we have ordered him to paint such a beautiful, excellent and devout picture of Our Lady as he can, not sparing the expenses. Presently he is working on this, and he is not making any other work until this is finished. After that we shall order to give this to His Majesty mentioned earlier.”<sup>25</sup>

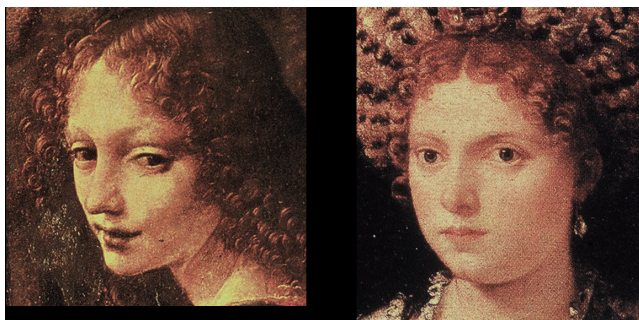
<sup>24</sup> Louvre, inventory number 777.

<sup>25</sup> “... et perche havemo inteso, che la Sua Maesta se delecta molto de belle picture presetim, che habino in se qualche devotione, ritrovandose de presente qua uno optimo pittore, al quale



It is obvious that the best painter, who could not be matched by anyone, could not be anybody else, but Leonardo staying at the court of Milan, who remained matchless ever since, and it is also obvious, that the representation of the Virgin in question could be only the Madonna of the Rocks in Paris (*picture 3.a*), which was painted by Leonardo precisely in the years 1483-1486, when he did not paint anything else according to Ludovico il Moro, but such a beautiful, excellent and devout picture of Our Lady, as the Madonna of the Rocks in Paris, as not even Leonardo himself have painted such a beautiful, excellent and devout picture another time.

It is well known that Leonardo struggled with his masterpieces for years, and concentrating on them he left other works undone: he has not finished the Battle of Anghiari in three years between 1504-1506, he painted the Last Supper for two years in Milan in 1495-1497. This in itself shows, Madonna of the Rocks painted in the years 1483-85 could have been painted by Leonardo only for the court of Buda as according to Ludovico il Moro he did not paint anything else in those years. This destination appears also from the head of the angel on the painting (*picture 3.c*), which matches the features of Queen Beatrix's niece, Isabella d'Este on Titian's portrait based on Francesco Francia's painting<sup>26</sup> (*picture 3.d*), if we take into consideration that Isabella was only 9-11 years old in 1483-85, therefore much younger, than on Titian's representation.

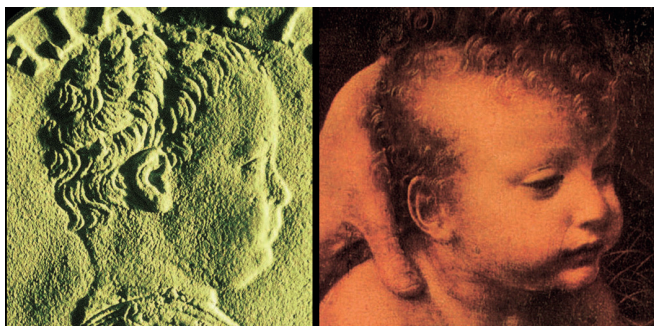


3.c) The niece of Queen Beatrix Isabella d'Este aged 11 as angel on the Virgin of the Rocks 1485 Louvre inv. no 777

3.d) Titian: Isabella d'Este aged 37 based on the portrait by Francesco Francia in 1511 Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum inv no 58

havendo veduto experientia del ingenio suo, non cognoscemo pare, havemo dato ordine cum epso pictore, che ne facia una figura de Nostra Donna quanto bella eccellente et devota la sapia piu fare, senza sparagno de spesa alcuna, et accinga ad l'opera de presente, ne facia altro lavoro finche l'abia finita, la quale poi madaremo ad donare alla prefeta Sua Maesta.” (The letter of Ludovico el Moro to his amdassaodor inBuda 13th April 1485. See: Nagy Iván, Báró Nyáry Albert: Magyar diplomáciai emlékek Mátyás király korából, III. kötet, Budapest, 1877, 44. oldal.

<sup>26</sup> Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum inv. no. 58



3.e) Ferrara's crownpince Alfonso d'Este's medallion in the British Museum (mirror image). Louvre inv. no 777  
Sir George Hill: A corpus of Italian Medals, London 1930, Table 24 medallion no 118.

3.g) Dr. David Baum head of Oxford Pediatrics (12<sup>rd</sup> August 1983): „Saint John Baptist and the small Jesus are very similar to each other on the Virgin of the Rocks in the Louvre (inv.no 777).” This is because they were modelled on the nephews of Queen Beatrix, namely



3.f) on Alfonso d'Este and 3.g) on Hippolyto d'Este  
by Leonardo

According to the letter of Cesar Valentini the Ambassador of Ferrara dated on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 1486 Isabella stayed at the Hungarian court of her aunt.<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile the face of the young Saint John the Baptist (*picture 3.f*) is unmistakably identical with the profile Isabella's brother, Alfonso, the crown prince of Ferrara, on his medallion made in 1477 in the British Museum<sup>28</sup> (*picture 3e*). Furthermore it was pointed out by Dr David Baum, the head of Paediatrics of the

<sup>27</sup> "... le Magnifice Madonne Aloysa, Isabella attincte ad Vostra Signoria Nardella et altere de tal nova, me hano adimandato il beveragio, che ha ad esser fornice coltelli e borchai de quelli dorati da Modena, si che ala Signoria Vostra tocha fare provisione de tal cosa...". Nagy Iván, br Nyáry Albert: Magyar diplomáciai emlékek, Volume III., Budapest 1877, p. 201.

<sup>28</sup> George Francis Hill: A Corpus of Italian Medals, London 1930, Table 24, medallion numbered 118.

Radcliff Hospital at Oxford University, that the head of the St John Baptist and the head of the Little Jesus on the Madonna of the Rocks is quite similar<sup>29</sup> (*pictures 3.f-g*). The explanation of this is, that Bambino's head was based on the crown prince's (three years) younger brother: Hippolyto d'Este, who was so beautiful infant, that there was no such other according to the Orlando furioso.<sup>30</sup>

In this connection it is quite significant and confirms our conclusion, that Queen Beatrix sent a letter to the children's father, Hercules d'Este, Duke of Ferrara from Pozsony on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1486, saying, that the Ambassador of Ferrara will write about this more completely, but we write only because your sons, who were painted after life are very pleasing, and they pleased His Majesty my Lord, the King, who can not be satisfied by their view saying, that... His Highness Ippolito is much more beautiful, than the first born, His Highness Don Alfonso...."<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile the same letter of Beatrix proves that as well, that the Duke of Milan sent the first version of the Madonna of the Rocks to the Hungarian court, because otherwise there was no reason to paint and dispatch the portraits of little children abroad, whose appearance changes rapidly from year to year as they grow. The fact recorded by Cesar Valentini, Ambassador of Ferrara, namely that King Matthias kissed the small Ippolito d'Este on the picture before his entire court, and made all the lords present at the court do the same,<sup>32</sup> is explained by the composition of the Madonna of the Rocks, in which the small Ippolito d'Este personifies the Little Jesus, and that is the reason, why his picture was kissed by everybody at the court. In this way this message of

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<sup>29</sup> letter of dr David Baum dated 23rd August 1983.

<sup>30</sup> "si bello infante n'apparantza, che 'l mondo non ebbe un tal dal sececol primo al quarto" Orlando furioso, canto XLVI, 85, a cura di Emilio Bigi, Milano 1982, vol II., p. 1927.

<sup>31</sup> "... non curamo scrivereli altro si non, che ne sono piaciuti li soi figlioli, quali ne ha mandati retracti del naturale, et per lo simile sono piaciuti ancora alo Serenissimo Signor Re nostro consorte, lo quale non se ha possuto saciar de riguardarelli et dire, che quello se havite levato: no, e, delo Ill-mo Don Ipolito, e, molto piu bello del primogenito no, e, dello Ill-mo Don Alfonso; et tuctili baronj, che sono qua similmete diremo et confexano, che quisto figliolo, che li have donato Vostra Signoria per Archiepiscopo et Signore, e, multo piu bello, che non e, li primogenito, et ancora che io vi siamo dello medesimo parere et videre...." Nagy Iván, br Nyáry Albert: Magyar diplomáciai emlékek, Volume III., Budapest 1877, p. 155.

<sup>32</sup> Valentini Cesar Ambassador of Ferrara at the court of Buda to Eleanor of Aragonia from Pozsony 4<sup>th</sup> August 1486 reported that King Matthiassaid to him: "Messer Cesare .....che havete con voj la effigie del mio charo figliolo S Don Hipolyto .....fate che sbito la vedi"...e subito facto presentare el figlio, si Don Hipolito come del Signor Alphonso.....[Sua Maesta del Signor Re].e per tenerezza non se potte ritenere, che molto volto non basiasse la figura, a cosi fecerno tutti gli baronj e nobili..." Nagy Iván, br Nyáry Albert: Magyar diplomáciai emlékek, Volume III., Budapest 1877, p. 146

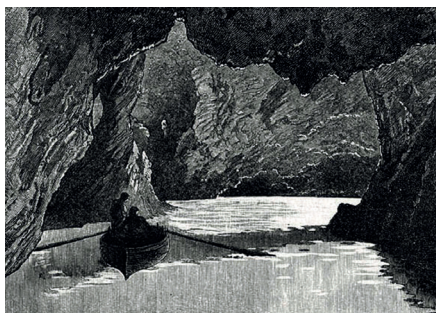
Cesar Valentini too confirms, that the first version of Madonna of the Rocks was sent to the court of Hungary.

This also explains, why were made two versions of the altarpiece of the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception in the Church of San Francesco in Milan, which was not explained satisfactorily before, because the first version had to be sent to the King of Hungary on the order of the Duke of Milan, and an other altarpiece was needed in its place in the chapel of immaculate Conception of the Church of San Francesco Grande in Milan,<sup>33</sup> which was painted only in the years 1503-1505 (*picture 3.b*).

Before painting the Virgin of the Rocks Leonardo purchased lace for Milan cathedral in Cyprus in 1481,<sup>34</sup> therefore he had to travel through the Adriatic twice, where he could have seen the rock formations on the islands of Lacroma (*picture 3.h*)<sup>35</sup> and Busi (*picture 3.i*)<sup>36</sup> belonging to the Holy Crown of Hungary, and these might have inspired the scenery of the painting.



3.h) Arc from rocks on the Adriatic island of Larcoma by Crownprincess Stephania



3.i) The cave on the Adriatic island of Busi. Drawing by Jenő Ransonnet.

It has to be pointed out, that *Leonardo's drawing in Cambridge*,<sup>37</sup> showing the ermine ready to be killed rather, than to be stained (*picture 4.b*), represents in

<sup>33</sup> London National Gallery NG 1093.

<sup>34</sup> Cyprus issued stamps to commemorate Leonardo's travel to Cyprus in 1981.

<sup>35</sup> near to Ragusa Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia írásban és képen, vol VIII, Budapest 1894, p. 424.

<sup>36</sup> near to Lissa Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia írásban és képen, vol VIII, Budapest 1894, p. 420.

<sup>37</sup> Cambridge, Collection of L. C. G. Clarke; see A. E. Popham: The Drawings of Leonardo de Vinci, London 1946, 1952, p. 114, picture 109A.



fact Queen Beatrix's motto: μάλλον θνήσκαν ἢ μαιίνειν surrounding the ermine's emblem on Antonio de Bonfinis corvina Symposium de Virginitate et pudicia conjugali.<sup>38</sup> (picture 4.a) An ermine is sitting next to the throne of Queen Beatrix on the Ransanus corvina (picture 4.c) showing the ermine's significance for Beatrix.



4.a) The motto of Beatrix: μάλλον θνήσκαν ἢ μαιίνειν (rather to die, then to be soiled «Better dead then dishonoured») Bonfini: Symposium, OSZK Clmae 421 folio 1<sup>recto</sup>



4.b) Leonardo's drawing in Cambridge (PD.120-1961.) represents the motto of Queen Beatrix: Malo mori, quam foedari



4.c) The ermine next to the throne of Beatrix refers to his motto as well as to the chivalric order of his father (1490, Ransanus corvina, OSZK Clmae 249, f. 17<sup>recto</sup>)



4.d) Queen Beatrix at 34 years of age with the Dragon order in her neck 1490 OSZK Clmae 249, folio 17<sup>recto</sup>



4.e) Francesco Laurana: Queen Beatrix 27 years of age 1484 Vienna, Kunsthistorische Museum no. 3405



4.f) Queen Beatrix 27 years of age 1483-84 Agathias corvina OSZK Clmae 413 folio 1<sup>recto</sup>

<sup>38</sup> National Széchényi Library, Budapest, OSZK Clmae 421, folio 1<sup>recto</sup>. See: Ilona Berkovits: Illuminated Manuscripts from the Library of Matthias Corvinus, Budapest 1964, Plate XXXVII.

4g-j) The profile, dark hair and coat-of-arms on folio 17recto of the Ransanus corvina shows that the king represented was Wladislav II, and not King Matthias Corvinus



4.g) Giorgione: Wladislav II, Munich (inv no 524) 1502; cf. RSU 2006, p. 80-81

4.h) Ransanus corvina, OSZK, Clmae 249 folio 17recto, 1490,

4.i) Briccius Gauske: King Matthias, Bautzen 1486

4.j) Erlangen MS 6 King Matthias had fair hair Bonfini 4.8.244;

Contrary to the usual interpretation in this miniature of the Ransanus manuscript in question it is not King Matthias, who sits on the throne next Queen Beatrix, but Wladislav II, as shown by his coat-of-arms, his dark hair<sup>39</sup> and profile. Both of them wear the Hungarian Dragon Order

Attavente's Breviarium corvina (dated 1487 & 1492) on folio 7<sup>40</sup> (Vat. Cod. Urb.112, folio 7<sup>verso</sup>, *picture 5*) shows an altar decorated by two shields displaying the Árpáds' stripes (*picture 5.a*) indicating that it was in the Hungarian court.

5) The stripes of the Árpáds on both shields held by the puttos, show, that this altar was in the Hungarian court Breviarium corvina by Attavante 1487-92, Vat. Libr., Cod. Urb. 112, f. 7<sup>verso</sup>



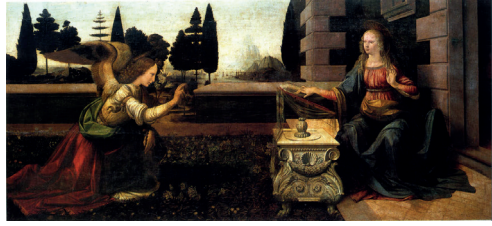
5.a) The Árpád dynasty's stripes on the shields

<sup>39</sup> cf.: Eugene Csocsán de Várallja: Giorgione and the Royal Court of Buda, Rivista di Studi Ugheresi, 2006 (IV<sup>th</sup> year), pp. 80-81.

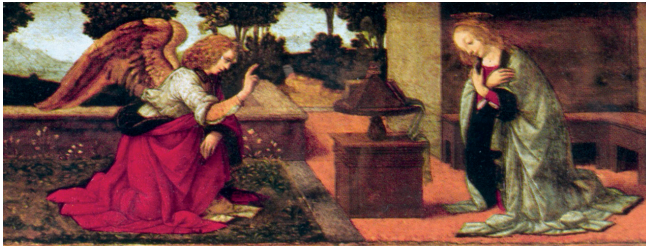
<sup>40</sup> Csaba Csapodi: The Corvinian Library, Budapest 1973, pp. 403-404, n° 725. The date of 1492 appears on the decoration of folio 345<sup>verso</sup>. See Csaba Csapodi, Klára Csapodi-Gárdonyi: Bibliotheca Corviniana, Shannon 1969, p. 245.



5.b) This Annuntiation is shown before a low brickwall with pine trees behind, but Archangel Gabriel's swinging descent betrays Leonardo's hand on the original, which surpasses his other such compositions and reflects his studies on flying



5.c) On Leonardo's Annuntiation painted around 1475 now in the Uffizi (inv. no. 1618) Archangel Gabriel arrives just before a low brick-wall, behind which pine trees grow



5.d1) On the painting in the Louvre (M.I.598) from 1478 the Annuntiation takes place before a low brick-wall, behind which trees grow.

This painting was attributed to Domenico Ghirlandaio in the Campana Collection and Ludwig Goldschneider attributed it to Lorenzo di Credi in 1952



5d2) Leonardo's drawing in the Uffizi no 438E shows that the head of this Madonna was drawn by his hand and therefore he certainly participated in the preparation of this predella

In the lunette above this altar we see the Annuntiation taking place before a low brick-wall, behind which pine trees grow (*picture 5.b*) just as on Leonardo's Annuntiations now in the Uffizi<sup>41</sup> (*picture 5.c*) and in the Louvre<sup>42</sup> (*picture 5.d*). The dynamics of Archangel Gabriel's descent seems to reveal Leonardo's studies of flying on the original as his swing appears to be even better than shown in the Uffizi. The inclination of the Virgin's head (*picture 5.e*) is identical with the *Virgin's head on Leonardo's drawing with number 12534* in Windsor (*picture 5.f*), where the Virgin's features were inspired by Queen Beatrix of Hungary's appearance as seen for example on Laurana's statue now in the Frick Collection in New York (in.nº. 1961.2.86 *picture 5.g*).

<sup>41</sup> Uffizi inv. n° 1618.

<sup>42</sup> Louvre M.I. 598.





5.e-f) Leonardo's drawing in Windsor inv. no. 12534 is in fact a preliminary drawing for the Virgin in the Annuntiation reproduced in the Breviarium corvina Cod. Urb 112, folio 7<sup>verso</sup>



5.g) The bust of Queen Beatrix by Francesco Laurana now in N. Y. Frick Collection inv.no. 1961.2.86 shows, that Leonardo's drawing in Windsor no. 12534 was inspired by the appearance of the face of Beatrix

In the British royal collection of Windsor *Leonardo's famous and enigmatic drawing is preserved in Windsor with the number 12496 (picture 6) 43.*

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<sup>43</sup> Popham, op. cit., p. 120, picture 125.



6) The meaning of Leonardo's enigmatic drawing in Windsor with no. 12496 was not found by the reserchers for long time



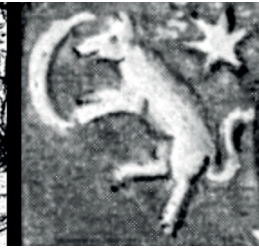
6.a) The Jagellonians' white eagle on the coat-of-arms of King Wladislaw II on the royal balcony in Prague cathedral



6.b) This crowned white eagle stands above Lithuania



6.c) The ship is steared towards the Jagellonians' eagle by the de Szapolya's wolf

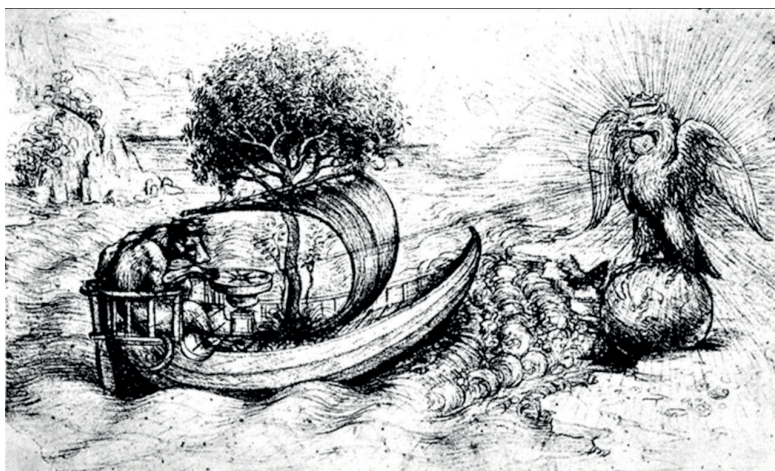


6.d) The de Szapolya's wolf on the memorial shield of John and George de Szapolya  
Fraknói Vilmos: A Hunyadiak és a Jagellók kora. in: Szilágyi Sándor: A magyar nemzet története, Volume IV., Budapest 1896, pp. 307,463 & 310

Its enigma has not been deciphered so far. This drawing however shows a globe displaying clearly the Adriatic Sea and the Balkans, and from these it is clear, that the eagle in the focus of the picture stands just at Lithuania on this globe. It must be obvious from this, that this crowned white eagle is the eagle of the Jagellons<sup>44</sup> (picture 6.a-b). The ship on this drawing is steered exactly towards the just mentioned Jagellonian eagle by a wolf. It is well known however, that the ancient coat-of arms of the Hungarian nabobs de Szapolya was precisely the

<sup>44</sup> Cf.: Joseph Elm: Praha, Prague 1977, picture 19.

wolf<sup>45</sup> (pictures 6.c-d) and therefore the picture's composition shows, that Hungary's ship was steered to Jagellonian waters by the Palatine Stephen de Szapolya as a result of the Wladislav II's election in 1490.



6.e) Leonardo's drawing no 12496 in Windsor shows, that de Szapolyas' wolf directs Hungary's ship towards the Jagelloneans' eagle standing above Litvania, as Palatine Stephen de Szapolya engineered the election of Wladislav II to be the King of Hungary in 1490

This makes it obvious therefore, that even in 1490 Leonardo followed Hungary's destiny with attention, when Leonardo's old acquaintance Queen Beatrix was seemingly married by Wladislav II. Wladislav however wanted only to obtain the castles controlled by the Queen through a simulated marriage ceremony, and he succeeded to annul it eventually, but through a lawsuit lasting ten years until 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1501.

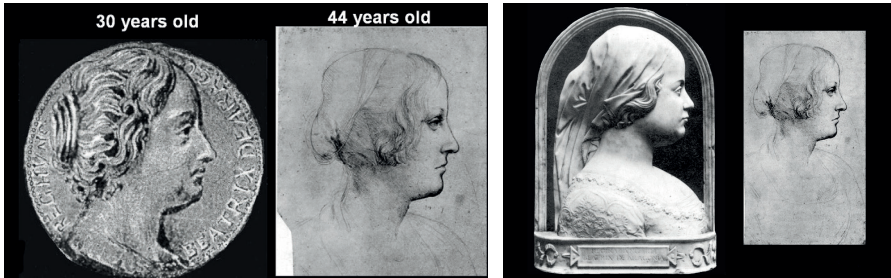
The Madonna of the Rocks might have been brought into the French court, when Wladislav obtained new bride from King Louis XII in 1502, as it could not have pleased Wladislav to pray before an altarpiece, which must have reminded him of his marriage swindle. The Madonna of the Rocks however can not be documented in the French royal collections before 1625, and it is possible, that Queen Mary of Hungary brought it with her, when she escaped from Buda in 1526, and it fallen into King Henry II's hands, when the French spoilt Queen Mary's castles in the Low Countries in 1554.

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<sup>45</sup> Fraknói Vilmos: A Hunyadiak és a Jagellók kora. in: Szilágyi Sándor: A magyar nemzet története, Volume IV., Budapest 1896, pp. 307, 463 and 310. Géza Csergheő de N(agy)-Tacsikánd: Wappenbuch der Adel von Ungarn sammt den Nebenländern der St. Stephans-Krone, Nürnberg 1885-1893 pp. 615-616, Tafel 435 (Johann Siebmacher's Grosses und Allgemeines Wappenbuch, Vierter Band, Theil XV.)



The relief of Queen Beatrix profile in the Bruxelles corvina Missale (MS 9008 folio 411<sup>verso</sup> picture 7.a)<sup>46</sup> reveals that Leonardo's drawing in Windsor with the number 12505 (picture 7.b) is her late representation at the age 44, which is confirmed firmly by her relief made by Giovanni Dalmata now in the Royal castle of Buda (picture 7.c) made around 1487, when she was 30.

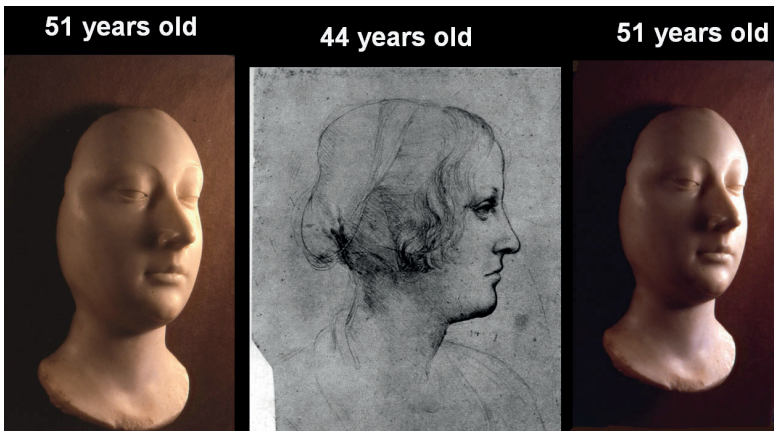


7.a ) Beatrix on Missale corvina now in Bruxelles Bibliothèque royal, MS 9008 folio 411<sup>verso</sup> (See: Fraknói Vilmos: Hunyadi Mátyás király, Budapest 1890, p. 2566. a) Leonardo's drawing in Windsor no. 12505)

7.b) Leonardo's drawing in Windsor no. 12505 1501

7.c) Giovanni Dalmata: Queen Beatrix circa 1487 30 years old

7.b) Leonardo: Queen Beatrix 1501, 44 years old Leonardo's drawing in Windsor no. 12505



7.e1) Death mask of Queen Beatrix 1508 IX 12 Chambéry

7.e2) Death mask of Queen Beatrix 1508 IX 12 Chambéry

<sup>46</sup> reproduced: Fraknói Vilmos: Hunyadi Mátyás király, Budapest 1890, 256. oldal.

This drawing by Leonardo seems to show it masterly, that she lost her ten years long fight for the validity of her marriage with King Wladislav II, and she was on her way to Mantua and finally to Naples, when she stayed on Venetian territory from the 30<sup>th</sup> December 1500 to 21<sup>st</sup> January 1501. Leonardo was in the service of Venice between 13<sup>th</sup> March 1500 and 1502. His drawing now in Windsor with the n° 12505 implies, that they met around this time. We might observe that the nose of Beatrix on this drawing is strikingly similar to her masque in Chamberly (*picture 7.e*).



8) Leonado:

The Virgin and Child with St Anne 1510-11 Paris, Louvre inv. no. 776

Queen Beatrix of Hungary died on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1508 in Castel Capuano in Naples. It is surprising however, that on Leonardo's painting Virgin and Child and Saint Anne in the Louvre<sup>47</sup> (*picture 8*) Saint Anne's features (*picture 8.a*) are

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<sup>47</sup> Inventory number 776.



astonishingly similar and in fact correspond to the portrait statue of Beatrix de Aragon by Laurana now in Frick Collection (1961.2.86 picture 8.b).



8.a) Leonardo: Saint Anne circa 1510-11, Paris, Louvre inv. no. 776

8.b) Francesco Laurana: Diva Beatrix Aragonia, NY, Frick Collection inv.no. 1961.2.86

According to art historians this painting showing Saint Anne with the Virgin and Child was painted by Leonardo around 1510-1511, which implies that after her death this statue by Laurana was used for her model.<sup>48</sup> It was Isabella

<sup>48</sup> It is true, that Saint Anne's hair is dark on this painting. In this connection it has to be observed, that Antonio de Bonfini repeatedly recorded various important male persons' hair colour (Bonfini 3.3.324-327, 3.6.302, 3.8.136-7, 3.8.255, 3.8.326, 4.7.126-127.4.8.61-67, 4.8.244-249.), but he does not mention the hair colour of Queen Beatrix, though he gives the descriptions of Beatrix three times (Bonfini 4.4.37-38, 4.4.58 and in the introduction of *Symposion de virginitate et pudicitia coriugali* (edited by Stephanus Apró, Budapest 1943, *Bibliotheca scriptorum medii recentisque aevorum*). Bonfini however must have known Beatrix personally, as originally he came to the court of Buda to be a reader for the Queen. This implies, that Beatrix coloured her hair at least sometimes. The bleaching of hair was fashionable in renaissance times for example in Venice (cf.: Paola Ojetti [et alii] Palladio, Veronese and Vittoria at Maser, Milan 1963 p. 93.). It was recorded, that Queen Catarina Cornaro was fair haired on her portrait made at the time of her marriage, but her hair is maroon in the Szépművészeti Múzeum in Budapest (inv. n° 101) *Queen Beatrix is brunette* in the Agathias corvina (National Széchenyi Library (Clmae 413 folio 1<sup>recto</sup>), which was made in Naples around 1483-84; and in the Marsilius Ficinus corvina now in Wolfenbüttelben (Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Cod 73. Aug 20, folio 2<sup>recto</sup>), made in Florence around 1488-90, and in the Didymus corvina made in 1487 now in the Pierpont Morgan Library (Morgan MS 496, folio 1<sup>verso</sup>), on which however the brown hair of Beatrix has a red tint. (See Csapodi, Csapodi-Gárdonyi, op. cit. pp. 101, 353, 195.) Queen Beatrix is brunette also

d’Este, who wanted to commemorate her beloved aunt in this form, because the profile of Virgin (*picture 8.c*) sitting on the lap of Saint Anne is identical with Isabella d’Este’s profile on Giancristoforo Romano’s medallion in the Victoria & Albert Museum (*picture 8.d*), and on Leonardo’s drawing<sup>49</sup> (*picture 8.e*). This origin of the painting now in the Louvre (in. no 776) confirmed by its provenance, because it was found by Cardinal Richelieu in Casale Monferrato, therefore in the inheritance of Isabella d’Este on Gonzaga territory in 1629-30 during the Gonzaga inheritance war.<sup>50</sup>



8.c) Leonardo:  
Virgin Louvre  
inv. no. 776



8.d) Giancristoforo Romano:  
Isabella d’Este 1499  
Victoria & Albert Museum  
Department of Sculpture, A  
232-1910



8.e) Leonardo:  
Isabella d’Este  
1500, Paris,  
Louvre M.I 753



8.f) Leonardo:  
Virgin 1510-11,  
Louvre inv.  
no. 776

on her statue by Laura in Vienna.

*Queen Beatrix has blond hair:* Regimontanus Corvina, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod.Lat.44, fol 1<sup>recto</sup> (photo taken 2.2.2019 in Buda castle; Beatrix’ hair is not reddish-blond as on Csaba Csapodi, Klára Csapodi-Gárdonyi, Tibor Szántó: Bibliotheca Corviniana, Shannon 1969, p. 291.) on the corvina preserved in Milan (Biblioteca Trivulziana Cod.no. 817 folio 1<sup>recto</sup>), on the Caraffa corvina in Parma (Biblioteca Palatina, G.G.III. 170. 1654, folio 4<sup>recto</sup>), in the Braviarium corvina in the Vatican Library (Cod. Urb. Let. 112, folio 8<sup>recto</sup>; cf.: Csapodi, Csapodi-Gárdonyi pp. 141., 219., 239.) and in the Ransanus codex of the National Széchényi Library (OSZK, Clmae 249, folio 17<sup>recto</sup>; see: Ilona Berkovits: Illuminated Manuscripts from the Library of Matthias Corvinus, Budapest 1964, picture XXXIX.).

*Queen Beatrix has reddish hair:* in the Missale corvina now in Bruxelles (Bibliothèque Royale, Ms 9008, folio 8<sup>verso</sup>), in the Biblia corvina in Florence (Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Plut.15. Cod 17, folio 1<sup>verso</sup> at the bottom of the page in the Aquinas corvina in Vienna (Hofbibliothek Cod. Lat-2458, folio 1<sup>recto</sup>) (cf.: Csapodi, Csapodi-Gárdonyi, op. cit. pp. 93, 119, 291, 337) and in Bonfini’s Symposion (OSZK Clmae 421, folio 1<sup>recto</sup>, see Berkovits op. cit. picture XXXVII.). In the Mathias Graduale on folio 3<sup>recto</sup> Beatrix has reddish blond hair, while on folio 119<sup>verso</sup> and on folio 184<sup>recto</sup> Beatrix has brownish blond hair (See: Soltész Zoltánné: A Mátyás Graduale, Budapest 1980, pp. 55, 11, 141 and the attached facsimile.)

<sup>49</sup> The Louvre M.I. 753

<sup>50</sup> Ottino della Chiesa, (introduced by Mario Pompilio) L’opera completa di Leonardo pittore, Milano 1967, 1978, p. 109, third column n° 35.

It ought to be pointed out, that Laurana's Diva Beatrix Aragonia in Frick Collection (1961.2.86 *picture 8.g*) mirrors perfectly that certain divine serenity of the countenance and cheerfulness "divina quaedam serenitas vultus et hilaritas" by which Bonfini characterised Queen Beatrix in his Syposion,<sup>51</sup> and in this serenity and cheerfulness originates the Leonardesque smile, which was born on Beatrix's lips.



8.g) "Your serenity is decorated and beatified not only by the virtues' most complete army, but also by the body's form of immeasurable charm, by a certain serenity's expression and good humour, by which there is no one who would not be confused to be delighted by serene cheer"

*Antonio de Bonfinis: Symposion de virginitate et pudicitia coniugali, Basel 1572, page 3.*

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<sup>51</sup> Antonius de Bonfinis: Symposion de virginitate et pudicitia coniugali, Bale 1572, p. 3.

Váralljai Csocsány Jenő, *Leonardo da Vinci és a budai királyi udvar*

A Trattato della Pitturaban Leonardo pompás ábrázolása Mátyás udvarának platonizmusáról és festmény rajongásáról említi „szerettének” képét is (Codex Urbino folios 14<sup>verso</sup>-15<sup>recto</sup>). Valójában ezért ütnek az Uffizi Angyali üdvözetében (inv. no. 1618), a szőke Szűz arcvonásai Beatrix ábrázolására Francisco Rosselli minitúráján a Regiomontanus corvinában (Bécs, Cod. Lat.112, folio 8<sup>recto</sup>).

A Sziklás Madonnából azért kellett Leonardonak két példányt készítenie, mert az elsőt Ludovico el Moro a magyar udvarba küldette, ezért mintázta Beatrix királyné Este-i unokatestvéireiről: Izabelláról az angyalt, Alfonzról a Kis Keresztelő Jánost, és Hippolytról a Kisjézust.

A Breviárium corvinán (Vat. Cod. Urb.112, folio 7<sup>verso</sup>) ábrázolt Angyali üdvözet szintén Leonardonak a művészetét és repülési tanulmányait tükrözi, és a Windsorban 12534 számon őrzött Szűzanya fej ennek az előtanulmánya lehetett. Leonardo rajzán (Windsor 12496) a hajót a Litvánia fölött álló koronás fehér sasra kormányzó farkas valójában azt ábrázolja, hogy II. Ulászló megválasztásával Szapolyay István nádor Magyarország hajóját a Jagellók vizére kormányozta. Leonardo 12505-ös rajza Windsorban mesterien ábrázolta Beatrix királyné végtelen szomorúságát 1501-es velencei találkozásukkor, mert elvesztette tíz évig tartó hiábavaló küzdelmét II. Ulászlóval való házassága érvényesítésére.

Leonardo másik gyönyörű festményén a Louvreban (inv. no. 776), Szent Annán feltűnően Laurana Beatrix portréja tér vissza, a Szűz pedig Isabella d'Este arcvonásait viseli, mert 1510-11-ben készülvén, a mantuai örgrófnő kedvenc nagynénjének az emlékére készíttette.