



La Notizia Italiana



POINTers in Person: Lou Costello Chapter #15

In This Issue:

**The
Lost Leonardo:**



**The Battle
of Anghiari**

The Battle of Anghiari (1505) is a lost painting by *Leonardo da Vinci* at times referred to as "The Lost Leonardo", which some commentators believe to be still hidden beneath one of the later frescoes in the *Salone dei Cinquecento* (Hall of the Five Hundred) in the *Palazzo Vecchio*, Florence. Its central scene depicted four men riding raging war horses engaged in a battle for possession of a standard, at the *Battle of Anghiari* in 1440.



**Clues to Long-Lost
Leonardo da Vinci Masterpiece
Found**

Samples from a hidden wall in Florence seem to contain a pigment like one in 'Mona Lisa' and brushed-on material, say UC San Diego researchers who are looking for Leonardo's 'Battle of Anghiari.'



Professor Maurizio Seracini and team view footage seen by the endoscope behind the Vasari wall at Palazzo Vecchio

By Jason Felch, Los Angeles Times
March 13, 2012

UC San Diego researchers say they have found tantalizing clues to a mystery that has puzzled the art world for five centuries: the fate of a lost masterpiece by Leonardo da Vinci.

Samples taken from a stone wall hidden behind a fresco that adorns the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, Italy, appear to contain a black pigment similar to the one Leonardo used on his masterpiece "Mona Lisa," the researchers announced Monday. Other samples contained a red lacquer-like substance and a beige material apparently applied with brush strokes — both consistent with the presence of a painting.

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The findings are the latest in a quest to discover whether Leonardo's missing masterpiece, "The Battle of Anghiari," might have been intentionally spared by a fellow artist, Giorgio Vasari, when Vasari decorated the palazzo with his own frescoes.

Experts have long believed the Leonardo was destroyed a few decades after it was abandoned, unfinished, by the Renaissance master. And Monday's announcement left some skeptical because the results have not been independently verified. But Maurizio Seracini, the UC San Diego researcher who has led the search for the Leonardo for three decades, called the findings "very encouraging."

"The evidence does suggest we are searching in the right place," said Seracini, director of UC San Diego's Center of Interdisciplinary Science for Art, Architecture and Archaeology.

Seracini, whose current work is a partnership with the National Geographic Society and the city of Florence, acknowledged that the results were preliminary. "There is still a lot of work to be done to solve this mystery."

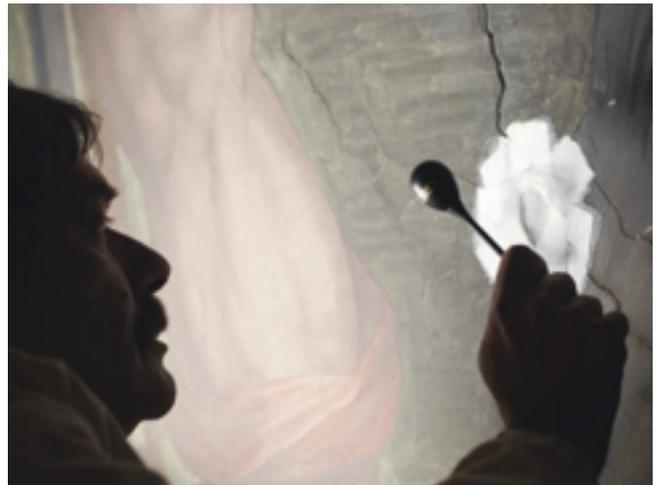
The stone wall where Seracini has focused his research is in the Hall of 500, the seat of government in Florence. In the early 1500s, Leonardo and his rival Michelangelo Buonarroti were commissioned to decorate the hall with scenes of Florentine military victories.

Michelangelo completed only a sketch of his scene before being called back to Rome to paint the Sistine Chapel. Leonardo completed a central scene but abandoned his painting when his experimental technique — oil painted on a base of plaster mixed with wax or linseed oil — failed. In some areas, the colors ran together and the plaster separated from the wall, according to contemporary accounts.



*Preliminary sketched by Da Vinci for **The Battle of Anghiari.***

Still, both works were hailed as masterpieces.



Preparing the Fresco

Photograph by Dave Yoder

An old gap in the Vasari fresco is prepared for the scientists to begin their search for the Leonardo painting, which has been missing for almost 500 years

Today the stone wall on which Seracini thinks Leonardo worked is hidden behind a large fresco painted by Vasari, who was asked to decorate the room a few decades after Leonardo and Michelangelo abandoned their scenes.

Vasari, considered a father of art history for his biographies of Renaissance painters, was an admirer of Leonardo, and he praised the "incredible skill" demonstrated in the master's incomplete scene. Some have thought it would be out of character for Vasari to have destroyed Leonardo's work to make way for his own.

The theory took on new life in recent years as Seracini's team used high-tech analyses to find a narrow gap between Vasari's fresco and the building's original stone wall. With the help of ultra

sound, infrared, ultraviolet, microwave and other imaging technologies, they were able to virtually peel away layers of pigment, plaster and brick, stripping the centuries-old wall to its bones and narrowing the potential locations of Leonardo's work.

The search stirred controversy last fall when Italian conservation authorities let Seracini's team drill holes through Vasari's fresco to insert tiny probes into the wall. The holes were made in areas where Vasari's original paint was already missing.

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Nevertheless, hundreds of leading art historians from Europe and the United States decried Seracini's work, saying that he was destroying a known masterpiece in a futile quest to find a missing one.

It is those probes that revealed the evidence announced Monday, including beige marks that, according to a news release from National Geographic, "could only have been applied by a paintbrush."

Seracini said Monday's announcement was a vindication of his quest.

His critics are not convinced.

"The results are from a private lab and have not been verified by any third party," said Tomaso Montanari, an Italian art historian who launched a petition to stop the work. "These data do not change the situation one iota."

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Drilling Begins

Photograph by Dave Yoder

An art restorer carefully drills a small hole through an old gap in the Vasari fresco to avoid creating any new damage.



Material Analysis

Photograph by Dave Yoder

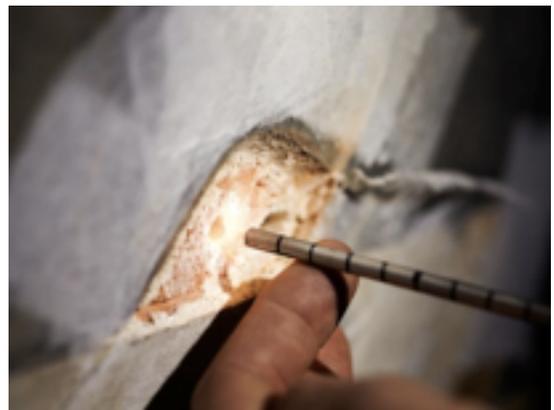
A carefully placed sampling tool will extract materials for analysis.



The First Hole

Photograph by Dave Yoder

Fresco restorers Alberto Felici and Fabrizio Bandini prepare the first hole for drilling. Restorers and scientists worked carefully together to protect the Vasari mural.



Endoscope

Photograph by Dave Yoder

The endoscope and sampling tool are used to investigate the air gap behind the Vasari mural.



A Steady Hand

Photograph by Dave Yoder

Dr. Maurizio Seracini threads an endoscope into the 500-year-old wall to look for the lost Leonardo painting



POINTers in Person

The POINTers In Person program, an autonomous branch of **POINT - (Pursuing Our Italian Names Together)** was founded in 1992. Our group, Chapter 15, was organized in September 1996. The 21 nationwide chapters of POINTers In Person provide genealogical researchers an opportunity to meet socially, and learn and share information pertinent to Italian research. Each chapter is independent and sets forth its own procedures and schedules of events.

We cordially invite Italian genealogical researchers to attend our quarterly meetings. Membership is open to all. In addition to regular meetings our group takes occasional field trips to genealogical research sites in the New Jersey/New York area.

Membership in our parent organization, POINT, is not a prerequisite to joining our group; however, it is highly recommended

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Volume 11, Number 1

The Lou Costello Chapter

POINTers In Person
Chapter 15
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Calendar

POINT Chapter 15 Future Meetings:

Future Meetings:

Elmwood Park Municipal Building, 10 AM

August 4, 2012:

Program: "For the Love of Wood/For the Love of Food"

Book Presentation by Joanne Ferreri

Passaic County Genealogy Club:

May 12, 2012

10 a.m. at Lambert Castle Museum:

Genealogy Club Meeting:

Presenter: Peter Osborne:

"The Silent Cities:

Graveyards, Churchyards, and Cemeteries"

June 9, 2012

PCHS Genealogy Club Bus Trip

Buck's County, Pennsylvania

Tpur Byer's Choice & Pearl Buck House

Dine at Plumsteadville Inn

Passaic County Historical Society & Lambert Castle Events:

January 28 -September:

2012: A Presidential Year.

An exciting new exhibit at Lambert Castle exploring the role of the 44 Chief Executives in our cultural history.

May 20, 2010

Drew Petersen in Concert

Sunday, 5 PM

May 30, 2010

Garret Hobart Talk

A discussion of New Jersey's own Garret Hobart, Vice president under William McKinley.

Presented by:

Passaic County Historian, Ed Smyk and local writer, bob Cohen

Wednesday, 7 PM

\$5 admission, FREE to members

June 10, 2012

Conert: Andy Siebert & "CSJO on the Go"

Performers from the Central Jersey Symphony Orchestra

Sunday, 5 PM

June 13, 2012

Andrew Jackson Lecture

Pat Schuber presents a discussion of Jackson, the War of 1812, and Indian Removal

Wednesday, 7 PM.

**For more information on PCHS
& Lambert Castle Events:
973- 247-0085 ext 200
www.lambertcastle.org**