International Herald Eribune





Renaissance master regained

Long overlooked, Lotto is now subject of major exhibition at Quirinale

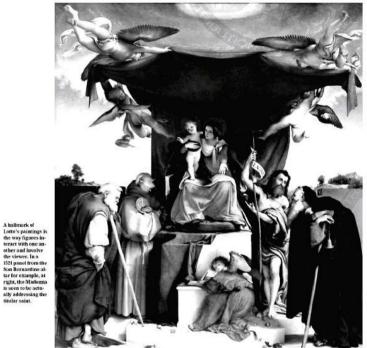
BY RODERICK CONWAY MORRIS

Lorenzo Lotto is one of the best docu-Locenzo Lotto is one of the best docti-mented of the great Renaissance painr-ers but was for a long time one of the least known. Seventy-five works are signed; many others are undisputed attributions; 40

ARTREVIEW

autograph letters and many other docu-ments relating to his life survive, not to mention a personal account book for the years 1538-54, with diarylike details

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Lotto introduced a wide variety of portrait poses and settings, and his "Triple Portrait of a Jeweler," above, showing the same subject from three different angles, was the first of its kind. At top, "Portrait of Andrea Odoni," 1527.

His works came to be attributed to the most bewildering range of artists, from Titian and Tintoretto to Holbein and even Van Dyck.

relates for the Dominican basilica of SS. Govanni e Poolo (both these works are in the exhibition). As a painter of portraits, more than 40 of which survive (nearly half of them on show here), Lotto was the heir of Antonello da Messina and Giovanni Bellini, but he was also an innovator. He definitively dropped the convention of a parapet in the foreground of the picture, bringing his sitters in more direct contact with the viewer. Even the early portraits, pantered before and at the time of his first commissions for altar pieces, of the Bishop of Treviso, Bernardo de Noss, and his windwesterpieces that give on uncanny sense of his siters' presente even fol years. Lotto introduced a wide variety of

recipieses that give an uncanny sense of his sitters' presence even 500 years later.

Lotto introduced a wide variety of portrait poses and settings, and the horizontal format. He made rew and subtle uses of objects to suggest aspects of his subject in portrait of a leweler,' showing the same subject to mit there different angles, was the first of its kind, and his "Triple Portrait of a leweler,' showing the same subject tron three editerent angles, was the first of its kind, and he moved the subject to provide the same later to the same later of the same later of

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torian Bernard Berenson's monograph on the artist of 1895, depicting him as a melancholy genius and prote-Expres-sionist, much in time with the finede-sition of Lotto has come about as a result of a series of exhibitions in Italy, France, England and the United States, the first of them at the Dogo's Palace in Venice in 1983.

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The present magnificent show, curated by Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa, marks the triumphal culmination of this process of revelation, stimulated and underpinned by decades of research. The simple in the "Loverae Latto," dispensing with the almost obligatory subpensing with the almost obligatory subpensing with the almost obligatory subpensing with the almost obligatory subpension of the subpension with the almost obligatory subpension with the almost obligatory subpension with the almost obligatory subpension of the subpension with the almost obligatory subpension of the almost obligatory subpension obligator



stored especially for the exhibition, among them nearly a dozen al-

stored especially for the exhibition, among them nearly a dozen al-tappieces. The first room has three of these from the Veneto and the Marche—from near Treviso, Asolo and Recanati—all painted when Lotto was still in his mid-28s. These stromany percess demonstrate that, although drawing on the example of the great works being continued that, although drawing on the example of the great works being the continued of the continued that the continued of the continued that the continued t

As a painter of por-traits, Lotto was an innovator. Early portraits of the Bishop of Treviso, circa 1501-2, left, and his widowed



whole composition.

Also evident in these Sacred Conversations is what would become another hallmark of his paintings: the way figures interact with one another and involve the viewer. By the time of the San Bernardino altar from Bergamo of 1521, for example, the Madonna, with an openhanced gesture, is seen to be actually addressing the titular saint, and the young angel at the foot of her throne turns away from his book and quill pen looking out at us, drawing the spectat-

of time the picture, into the Correctors to the first time. It is probable that Pope Julius II's an officiated Bramanie sported Lotto when the latter was on a visit to Loreto, the important place of plightings near Recansat. There followed an invitation to the Varican and in 1890 an encouraging commission for decorations in the Paparal Palance, But the inexorable isse of Raphael was leaving title space for other artists there. None of Lotto's Roman works have come down to us. In 1511 he

returned to the Marche, where he was as much in demand as ever and completed two more altar pieces before moving on to the rich commercial centror of Bergamo, where he enjoyed enormous success and was handsomely rewarded.

mous success and was handsomely re-warded.

In 1825 he returned to his native.
Venice, which gave him the opportunity to paint his first altarpiece in the city it-self, of "St. Nicholas in Glory," which includes a capit