

ANDREA DEL VERROCCHIO

| A Renaissance Master

Sculptor, Goldsmith & Painter of the Early
Renaissance

Presentation for English Class
2nd Year High School (B' GEΛ)
by Christina Tsigani



Who Was Verrocchio?

A Towering Figure of the Italian Renaissance

Verrocchio (c. 1435–1488) was born in Florence, Italy. His full name was **Andrea del Verrocchio**. He was an Italian sculptor, goldsmith, and painter who became one of the most important artists of the Early Renaissance.

He is ranked **second only to Donatello** among Italian sculptors of the Renaissance. He worked at the court of **Lorenzo de' Medici** in Florence — one of the most powerful patrons of the arts in history.

Fact	Detail
Born	c. 1435, Florence
Died	1488, Venice
Professions	Sculptor, Goldsmith, Painter
Patron	Lorenzo de' Medici



Early Life & Background

From a Brick Maker's Son to the Medici Court

Verrocchio's father, **Michele di Francesco Cioni**, worked as a tile and brick maker and later as a tax collector — a humble origin for such a great artist. Verrocchio never married but took on the responsibility of providing financial support for members of his family. He began his artistic career as an **apprentice to a goldsmith**, which gave him the precise technical skills that would define all his later work in sculpture and painting.

The Workshop: A School for Genius

Verrocchio's Workshop Shaped the Greatest Artists of the Renaissance

The Baptism of Christ (1474–75)

A Painting That Made Verrocchio Put Down His Brush Forever

This masterpiece, now in the **Uffizi Gallery, Florence**, is the most famous painting associated with Verrocchio.

He was assisted by his young pupil **Leonardo da Vinci**, who painted the **angel on the left** and part of the background landscape.

“*Andrea resolved never to touch the brush again because Leonardo, his pupil, had far surpassed him.*”



Detail showing the angels, with Leonardo's angel on the left.

Tobias and the Angel

A Small Panel Painting with a Powerful Story



The painting **Tobias and the Angel** depicts the biblical story of young Tobias travelling with the **Archangel Raphael**.

In the image, Tobias carries a fish with which he was to **heal his father's blindness**. This small painting on panel was probably made as a **private devotional picture** — meant for personal prayer and reflection rather than public display.

It is now housed at the **National Gallery, London**.

The Madonna Enthroned

A Masterpiece Left Unfinished — Completed by a Loyal Pupil

The **Madonna Enthroned with John the Baptist and St Donato** is located in the **Cathedral at Pistoia**. Verrocchio left this work unfinished when he travelled to Venice near the end of his life.

It was completed by his faithful pupil **Lorenzo di Credi**. This painting reflects the deep bonds between master and student in Renaissance workshops, where pupils were trusted to carry on and complete the master's vision.

— CATHEDRAL AT PISTOIA, ITALY —



The Equestrian Statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni

Verrocchio's Last and Greatest Work

Verrocchio's **greatest importance** was as a sculptor. His final and most celebrated work is the equestrian statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni in **Venice**.

This monumental bronze statue is **universally accepted as a masterpiece** of Renaissance sculpture. It captures the power, authority, and movement of a military commander on horseback with extraordinary realism and technical mastery.

It stands as the crowning achievement of Verrocchio's career, completed after his death in 1488.

Vocabulary Focus

Key Words from the Text — Build Your English Vocabulary

Word	Meaning
apprenticed	trained under a skilled master
attributed	believed to be the work of a particular artist
equestrian	relating to horse riding
devotional	used for prayer or religious worship
surpassed	went beyond; was better than
masterpiece	an outstanding work of art
Renaissance	the great cultural rebirth in Europe (14th–17th century)

Comprehension Check

Test Your Understanding – Quick Questions

1. Where and when was Verrocchio born?
2. Who was his most famous pupil?
3. Why did Verrocchio stop painting?
4. Where is the *Baptism of Christ* kept today?
5. What is considered Verrocchio's greatest work?
6. Who completed the *Madonna Enthroned* after Verrocchio?
7. What does the word "surpassed" mean in the text?

Timeline of Verrocchio's Life

A Life Dedicated to Art — Key Dates at a Glance

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- c. 1435** Born in Florence
 - Early Career** Apprenticed to a goldsmith
 - Active Period** Works at the court of Lorenzo de' Medici
 - 1474–75** Paints **The Baptism of Christ** with Leonardo da Vinci
 - Late Career** Travels to Venice; begins equestrian statue

VERROCCHIO'S LEGACY

Lives On Through His Pupils and His Art

Ranked **second only to Donatello**
among Italian Renaissance sculptors.

Set an example for other sculptors and
brought many new artists into the
world.

His most enduring legacy may be the
training of Leonardo da Vinci — the
defining genius of the Renaissance.

*"Andrea resolved never to touch the brush again
because Leonardo, his pupil, had far surpassed him."*