

# Leonardo da Vinci Society Newsletter

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## Recent and forthcoming events

### The symposium on 'Lives of Leonardo'

Claire Farago and Matthew Landrus write: Rodney Palmer arranged for the Society a conference on 'Lives of Leonardo', which took place on 15 September 2006 at the Warburg Institute. Nine presentations offered a thoroughly rounded approach to receptions of Leonardo's legacy.

Francis Ames-Lewis (Birkbeck College) chaired the first session on Leonardo's reception in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Italy and the Netherlands. Discussing the authorship of Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*, Charles Hope (Warburg Institute) reported that a quantitative analysis of the research and the variety of literary styles in the *Lives* suggest that Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) could only have written around 40%, or approximately eighty-six biographies, of the extensive volume by 1549, the year the manuscript went to the publisher, Torrentino. The estimated speed with which he compiled the *Lives*, while not interrupting artistic work, would have been fourteen times that of Cellini's writing speed for his autobiography while under house arrest. Although Vasari may have produced a large portion of the research, he apparently sought help in order to compose the fifteen longest biographies and thirty others. He may have written much of the eighty-six shorter biographies, however. Evidence of this includes the ten different spellings of Michelangelo's name in different biographies, and no obvious or rigorous attempt to coordinate the texts. We know that Giambullari and Cosimo Bartoli were involved in the writing of some of biographies, and there is evidence that Vincenzo Borghini also helped. Cosimo Bartoli possibly revised details

regarding *sfumato* in the lives of Leonardo and Giorgione. Hope's most provocative argument was that there is nothing within the biography of Leonardo to explain why he should mark the start of the modern style – at the beginning of Part III and of the second volume – and that this may have been an effect of Torrentino's decision to divide the *Lives* into two volumes. After all, the Prefaces were not considered important before Milanesi's commentary in the late nineteenth century. In the sixteenth century, the *Lives* was used heavily as a guidebook (note the wonderful topographical index), and the Preface to Part III was often eliminated or shifted in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century editions. Moreover, there are only three references within the *Lives* to the three-part scheme.

Paul Taylor (Warburg Institute) considered 'Leonardo in the Low Countries' by discussing Karel van Mander's 1604 *Schilderboeck*, the first source to incorporate much of the 1568 edition of Vasari's *Lives* and the biographies of Netherlandish painters. Taylor also provided a quantitative analysis of the contents of the *Schilderboeck*, which includes a didactic preamble, a third of the book on painting, and a short treatise on symbols. Van Mander offered a good translation of the Italian 1568 edition of Vasari, to which he had nothing additional to contribute. What he left out of his text is, however, more noteworthy than what he included, said Taylor. Van Mander excluded, for example, sculptors, architects, the three Bellinis, and Vasari's references to possible homosexual behavior among the artists; and he culled 150 painter biographies down to sixty. Building a canon of Italian art, he tended to translate only a third of each biography. Of Vasari's biography of Leonardo, he translated only sixty-five percent. Although defective as a tourist guide, the *Schilderboeck* remained an important source in

praise of painting. It was thus influential, for example, for its discussions of Leonardo's *sfumato* and *chiaroscuro*, and the profound effect these had on subsequent painters. Having written the *Schilderboeck* toward the end of his life, Van Mander saw poetry and the written word as the only evidence of what survives of one's fame.

The second session, chaired by Claire Farago (University of Colorado and University of North Carolina), addressed Leonardo's legacy in terms of repeated accounts of Vasari's biography in Italian and French sources. Rodney Palmer's (University of East Anglia) 'Vasarian legacy in versions of Leonardo up to Houssaye' traced approaches to Vasari through the likes of Roger de Piles (1635-1709), Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694-1774), Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897) and Arsène Houssaye (1815-1896). Palmer concentrated on biographical literature that dealt with Leonardo in terms of the mention of the word *bizarria*, associated notions, and concentrated particularly on accounts of Leonardo's death. Some of the sources were often excluded from reviews of Leonardo biographies, such as the October 1516 letter by the Andrea Corsali to Duke Giuliano de' Medici, which was republished in travel literature in 1550. The letter noted Leonardo's vegetarianism and that 'he would not hurt any living thing', information that Vasari chose to suppress in the *Lives*. Palmer discussed Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo's *Libro dei Sogni*, written around 1560, with its explanations of Leonardo's grotesque drawings. Raphaël Trichet du Fresne's 1651 edition of Leonardo's *Trattato della pittura* commented on the artist's *bizarria*, repeating Vasari's comments on the subject. Pietro da Cortona referred to Leonardo's *facezie* not as jokes, but as bizarre marvels, in keeping with the seventeenth-century literary criticism of Baldinucci, Lanzi, Félibien, and Roger de Piles. Instead of adopting Vasari's view of Leonardo's dissipation of his talents through his many interests, De Piles claimed that Leonardo's genius had been due to these many interests, and that these improved his paintings. Mariette copied incorrect dates of Leonardo's age, noting that he had been 75 (rather than 67) at his death. A 1762 Catalogue of the King's Pictures by Nicolas-Bernard Lépicié followed the approaches of De Piles, Lomazzo, and Mariette. Burckhardt and Houssaye were informed by Vasari, even while rejecting his judgements. Houssaye, author of an 1859 account of provincial museums, believed that he had identified Leonardo's corpse at Cloux, noting its

large cranium, and in 1863 reconstructed Leonardo's skeleton using that cranium.

Discussing Raphaël Trichet du Fresne, Juliana Barone (University of Oxford) shed light on the compilation of Leonardo's *Trattato*, the 1651 *Trattato* edition by Du Fresne, and the official image of Leonardo in France. Du Fresne was a bibliophile, with interests in numismatics as well as the history of religion; thus it was unexpected that he should edit the *Trattato*. To understand his role, it has been important to see the wider context of Cassiano dal Pozzo's activities with a *Trattato* manuscript copy in Milan, the subsequent copy in France of that manuscript, and the differences between the French and Italian editions of 1651. One of the editions is a translation, the other adds Alberti, art book illustrations, a list of books, a bibliography, and Leonardo's biography. The latter additions, Barone argues, were due to Du Fresne's involvement at the latest stages of the project. What, she asked, caused delays between April 30, 1650, when royal rights to publish were granted, and 19 Oct 1651, when Du Fresne sent a presentation copy of the Italian edition to his prime dedicatee, Queen Christina? These, she hypothesized, were due to the appearance of a better manuscript copy, known as the 'Thevenot', but we do not know at this stage which of the copies can be identified as the 'Thevenot' copy. Du Fresne's prefatory letters, the biography of Leonardo, and other additions constitute a new vision of the publication, one that served the needs of the newly-founded Académie Royale by providing texts on both painting and sculpture. Du Fresne's life of Leonardo is based on Vasari and Mazzenta, but also on Du Fresne's own culling of information from all of his sources, including the *Trattato* itself (which is historically extremely important). His 'Life' is the first theoretical account of Leonardo, discussing original manuscripts on anatomy, water and other subjects, and the *Trattato*, overturning Vasari by showing Leonardo's knowledge in the field of art through a selective and critical approach to his sources, as Barone demonstrated with concrete reference to the texts under discussion.

Session three, chaired by François Quiviger (Warburg Institute), offered assessments of seventeenth- through nineteenth-century German, English, and Russian approaches to Leonardo. Thomas Frangenberg (University of Leicester) presented a detailed study of a variety of biographical sources entitled, 'Between translation and fabrication: Leonardo in German-

speaking countries before 1800'. He reviewed German translations of lives of Leonardo with reference, among other sources, to the 1716 French edition of the *Traité de la Peinture*. The life included in this text introduces new material based on a manuscript by Mazzenta which had already been consulted for the life in the 1651 *editio princeps* of the *Trattato della pittura*. Frangenberg noted that the 1724 German translation of the *Trattato* had been organized by the translator under ten new headings. Other texts discussed include Mariette's preface to the Comte de Caylus's edition of caricatures, and translations of lives of Leonardo in works by Roger de Piles and Dézallier d'Argenville, sources that provided the starting point for a number of later accounts written in Germany. In 1763, for example, Fuseli cited Vasari as his source, but going back to de Piles and Dézallier d'Argenville he in fact contributed to later eighteenth-century views of Leonardo in presenting him as a draftsman without expertise in colour, and as a painter of works that are hard and dry. Such notions are reflected in Anselm Elwert's 1785 *Kleines Künstlerlexikon*: 'Like Michelangelo he [Leonardo] copied nature so slavishly that he often lost sight of the beautiful. He executed his paintings so studiously that they often became hard and dry. His colour is weak but harmonious, his expressions of passions are wonderful, and one cannot possibly represent them with greater force and truth than he did. His draughtsmanship is correct and tasteful, and his compositions are noble, spirited and well thought-out.' This 'self-perpetuating' literature led to the works of Fiorillo and his student Wackenroder. The latter not only drew on the life in Boehm's German edition of the *Trattato* but also extracted information from the *Trattato* text itself, which constituted roughly 20% of his biography. He construed Leonardo as possessing a 'divine flame', and as a mysterious, mythical figure. Such an image of Leonardo is fundamental for numerous later writers, including Freud.

Discussing 'eighteenth-century English versions of Leonardo as empiricist', Matthew Craske (Oxford Brookes University) connected the influences of John Locke's empiricism on Joseph Addison's (1672-1719) writings (on 'genius' and the like) and Leonardo's legacy in eighteenth-century England. Addison's influential statements, such as that in the 5 December 1712 edition of the *Spectator* (v. III, n. 554), drew a short *Life* of Leonardo from Du Fresne and

Vasari and a catalogue that attributed various projects to the artist. Addison conceived of Leonardo as a man of the Enlightenment who looked at nature directly. This view was disseminated through inexpensive editions during the eighteenth century. Craske noted the popularity of plagiarism, as in John Senex's copy of Du Fresne when he published the 1721 *Treatise of Painting*, 'prefix'd' with the author's life. Senex was a surveyor, spinning Leonardo as a natural philosopher in the same league as Newton. Craske also referred to Joshua Reynolds (1723-92), who did not have much good to say about Leonardo. The anatomist William Hunter (1718-83) called Leonardo the father of modern anatomy because he observed the actual body and had been the first to make anatomical drawings of it. Dr. Brooke Taylor (1685-1731), as popularized by Joshua Kirby (1716-74), stressed Leonardo's importance as a student of nature. Craske also discussed statements that had been somewhat dismissive of Leonardo, by Locke, Fuseli, Stubbs, and Hogarth.

Julia Friedman (University of Durham) explored the foundations of Dmitry Sergeevich Merezhkovsky's (1865-1941) analysis of the 'prophet, demon, or magician' that he claimed Leonardo had been. She discussed the original Russian edition of Merezhkovsky's romantic novel, part of a trilogy on the death of gods and anti-gods. As an historical vision, a dialectic between paganism and Christianity, it won him nominations for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1921. In the novel, Leonardo appears as a forerunner of 'a still unknown day', though his lack of will impedes his genius, and he loses his ability to act in contrast to the integrity of his contemplations, bifurcating the world around him. According to a poem by Merezhkovsky in 1894, Leonardo was 'the forerunner of a still unknown day / indifferent to all earthly passions / ...he who had despised all the gods / an autocratic / God-like man'. Extending from this kind of opinion was a complicated, orderly system of Leonardo's associations around which Merezhkovsky had organized his biography. Leonardo's paintings function as Albertian windows to his ideas: for example, the *Virgin and Child with St. Anne* is discussed by Merezhkovsky as transcending a simple binary, a triangle of energy. Friedman also discussed Merezhkovsky's views of Christian history in three stages with respect to Leonardo's process of painting, such that this process had developed into a union between masculinity and femininity,

associated by Merezhkovsky with the bisexuality of God. This had been a view, according to Friedman, that he took from his wife Gippius who fashioned herself as androgynous.

In the fourth session, chaired by Elizabeth McGrath (Warburg Institute), psycho-biographical, recent biographical, and non-biographical approaches were discussed. 'Freud's Leonardo: its Cultural Moment and its Legacy' was presented by Bradley Collins (New School University). He reviewed the main arguments of his published work on Freud's understanding of Leonardo in clear, concise terms. Freud used Merezhkovsky, Pater, and *fin de siècle* concepts of women as destructive, with close ties to nature. Collins cited examples of the cult of the femme fatale by the likes of Franz von Stuck, Gustave Moreau, Edvard Munch and others, stressing the central role of ambivalence in emotional development due to contradictory impulses toward parental figures. Freud's view of Leonardo as isolated changed with the 1871 publication of a document of Leonardo's baptism, showing that he had at least 10 godparents. Yet Freud's insights are still useful in at least three ways. First, that Caterina might have wet-nursed Leonardo for two years. Second, looking at how actively Leonardo might have pursued his possible homoerotic tendencies. Third, offering insight into Leonardo's conscious orchestrating of human emotions, as for example in his discussion of the Louvre *Virgin and Child with St. Anne*.

Martin Kemp (University of Oxford) gave the final paper, 'Does biography matter? Recent biographical and non-biographical approaches to Leonardo', which addressed the ways in which authors compose their biographies of artists. Articulating broad themes about the value of biography, Kemp compared his own thematically organized 2005 biography, *Leonardo*, with the recent chronological biography by Charles Nicholl, *Leonardo da Vinci, the Flights of the Mind*. In Kemp's book, the biographical chronology of documented dates offers the fixed datum, around which the artwork is discussed. In Nicholl's, the works of art are the fixed data, around which the chronological material is discussed. Discussing biography as a genre, Kemp explored our strange desire to know what someone looked like, by conjoining physiological and biographical imperatives. Introducing purported authentic self-portraits of Leonardo, Kemp noted that the Aristotelian idea that the artist's soul is a form of the body was a well-founded doctrine in Leonardo's own lifetime.

Wanting to see the face of someone is part of the larger desire to know the person. There are today multiple biographical models and the genre of biography remains a potent area of study. The way an artist's life is characterized even becomes a model for living a life. There are now so many alternatives at the intersection of biography and psycho-biography in art history that these choices have become entirely parallel: indeed, we expect that there will be many interpretations, rather than just one.

### **The Annual General Meeting and Annual Lecture, 2007**

The 2007 Annual General Meeting and Annual Lecture will be held on Friday 11 May next year, in the Kenneth Clark Lecture Theatre at the Courtauld Institute of Art, Somerset House, Strand, London. The AGM will be at 5.30 pm, followed at 6.00 pm by the Annual Lecture, which will be given by Dr Juliana Barone (University of Oxford). Her provisional title is 'Leonardo's cartoons, workshop methods and "jigsaw" compositions'. Wine will be served in the Front Hall of the Courtauld Institute after the lecture.

### ***Leonardesque News***

#### **An exhibition on *Leonardo da Vinci: Experience, Experiment and Design* at the Victoria & Albert Museum**

*Matthew Landrus writes:* To 'illuminate the most fundamental aspect' of 'arguably, the greatest artist and thinker of all time' has been a recent mission of the Victoria & Albert Museum exhibition (14 September 2006 – 7 January 2007), as noted at the online ticket booking portion of the exhibition at [vam.ac.uk](http://vam.ac.uk). This is not the specific rhetoric of Martin Kemp's intentions in the exhibition catalogue, where he simply states that 'the exhibition is about how Leonardo thought on paper'. It is however a perception that has attracted sell-out crowds to London for a rare viewing of exquisite notes on paper that had been closest to the investigative and inventive business of the great master. Fifty-nine sheets, three manuscript booklets, six computer animation LCD projections of drawings, and large reconstructions of Leonardo's designs for a parachute, hang glider,

cone-covered multiple cannon cart (tank), giant crossbow, and glass heart valve study comprise the exhibition. Viewers young and old have enjoyed the show. Six-year-old Lucas, attending the show with his parents and me, had been rather curious about Leonardo's intentions with the interesting designs, not making the assumptions adults often make. I had to explain to him, for example, Leonardo's comparisons between layers of the head's nervous system and layers of an onion on Windsor RL 12603r (cat. no. 5), the *Vertical and horizontal sections of the human head and eye*. Warders encourage viewers not to stand in line as they walk in, but this has meant that a small queue remains at the first three exhibits at the left, as some of the viewers have been conditioned at exhibitions to walk through a set order of views (especially with audio guides and chronological arrangements). As partially suggested in the guidebook handed to queuing visitors, one can see that the show is in four non-chronological and non-successive themes: the mind's eye, lesser and greater worlds, force, and making things.

Still, 'the mind's eye' is a natural first approach to the group, as its work stems from a general programme of treatise ideas that Leonardo began to formulate in the late 1480s. Proportion theories dominated his approaches to these ideas on natural philosophy, the human eye, light rays, functions of the brain, perception, the nervous system, human proportion, volumes, solids, gravity, and perpetual motion. All of these are quite a bit to take in at first, but they are nonetheless at the core of Leonardo's personal philosophy about the operations of other subjects studied in his notebooks.

Around 1488, he intended to formulate fully comprehensive pictorial treatises on anatomy, on human movement and on the rules of design, a series of books that now remain in fragments within a massive body of around 6000 drawings, approximately one fifth of his actual production. Late fifteenth-century painters studied anatomy, though Leonardo took this to a higher level, analyzing the specific actions of the muscles, bones, organs, and blood vessels of the body. Hence, the exhibition's second theme regards the 'lesser world' of the human body and the 'greater world' of the earth, since both bodies were understood to operate in similar ways.

The third theme, addresses problems of 'force' specifically in terms of human, animal, muscular, military, and geological actions. Investigative elements of Leonardo's lateral thinking are displayed here in a variety of ways in which force

had been considered possible. He compared, for example, detailed anatomical studies of a bird's wing on Windsor RL 12656 (cat. no. 39) with the drawing of a flying bird and a proportional analysis of the possible forces of each section of wing while the bird is in flight. To assist the viewer, a computer animation projected on the wall above illustrates Leonardo's lateral thinking when he compared the proportional actions of the human arm with those of the hang-glider wing.

Inventive strategies appear in the fourth theme on 'making things'. Minute, precise marks illustrate these objects, the actual sizes of many of them reproduced in the exhibition catalogue. One such sheet is Codex Arundel folio 241r (cat. no. 58), *Devices for the measurement of the force of wind and the jets of air or water*, on which Leonardo notes that he should 'test' these theoretical devices with air and water. His reasons for these measuring inventions are not entirely obvious, nor should they have been to him, as they are an addition to what appears to have been a general lifelong interest in finding better ways to interpret and manipulate the effects of nature.

At each end of the oblong room we have glimpses of the early and the late Leonardo. Exhibit number two at the far end of the room – the British Museum's *Bust of a warrior in profile* – is the earliest drawing in the group, from around 1478, drawn with swift, confident, ultra fine metalpoint lines and white heightening on cream paper. What Verrocchio had taught Leonardo about dramatic multi-textural, multi-dimensional relief in bronze warrior portraits in the late 1460s and early 1470s is realized in the three-dimensional quality of the early *Warrior* drawing. Exhibit number one, to the right of both the exhibition entrance and the frontispiece of the catalogue, is the famous Windsor red chalk portrait of Leonardo from around 1508. As the only surviving reliable evidence of the likeness of Leonardo, it is, like his warrior, the product of a worthy heir to the master's deft touch with a relatively new medium (red chalk in this case) to sculpt with diminishing lines the minute lit and shaded areas that form the well-rounded features of this intimate portrait.

As part of the international Universal Leonardo programme ([universalleonardo.org](http://universalleonardo.org)), the Victoria & Albert Museum exhibition draws together a significant number of the United Kingdom's Leonardo resources, concentrating on the empirical and epistemological elements of this extraordinary inheritance that had been collected in England between the early seventeenth century and the late nineteenth century. In the early seventeenth

century, the Earl of Arundel purchased what is now known as the Codex Arundel, whereas the collection of H. M. Queen Elizabeth II at Windsor has been in the family from as early as the mid-seventeenth century, first recorded there in 1690. The Codex Leicester, purchased by the Earl of Leicester in 1717, had been expected to make another British contribution to the show, though the Victoria & Albert decided that it would not be possible to meet the demands of Bill Gates (and his consultants?), such as air-port style security and the showing of the manuscript for only an hour per day or with very little lighting (according to *The Art Newspaper*). Gates has at least had an active interest in the show, funding much of the early research and development of the project. The Codex Forster has been in England since 1873, when it was purchased by Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

The exceptional range of Leonardo's investigative and inventive approaches in the exhibition are offered in a remarkably focused and organized set of four groups, illustrating that these many ideas were for Leonardo part of a unified theory, as well as a unified methodology about the acts of learning and of making things. It is perhaps this sense of order among the chaos of what we know about Leonardo that makes the Victoria & Albert Museum exhibition most compelling. As Kemp notes, the exhibition 'shows what a human mind is capable of'.

### The 'Leonardo and Oxford' exhibitions

In association with the Universal Leonardo project, a series of exhibitions was recently held in Oxford. *Juliana Barone writes*: On the theme of 'Leonardo and Oxford', the Oxford trail consisted of five simultaneous exhibitions: 'Imagining Leonardo' at the Ashmolean Museum; 'Leonardo and Milan' at Christ Church; 'Leonardo and the mathematical arts' in the Museum of the History of Science; 'Leonardo's plants' in the Botanic Garden; and 'The *Last Supper* from Leonardo's circle' in the ante-chapel of Magdalen College. The basic premise was that the exhibitions would only display or highlight items that are part of the institutions' own holdings (or which are on long loan), so that the sense of the history of the Oxford collections would clearly emerge. At the same time, the variety of material offered in the exhibitions as a whole would create an Oxford 'microcosm' of the breadth of Leonardo's interests.

Featuring the portraits of Oxford collectors of Leonardo next to the drawings, the Ashmolean

exhibition focused on how his work was seen by British collectors and scholars, as well as received by other artists. All the Leonardo drawings displayed were from his first Florentine period. It was noteworthy that the only double-sided sheet was displayed to show its interesting and little known optical studies. The perspective study of receding arches probably relates to Leonardo's elaborate spatial background in the *Adoration of the Magi* in the Uffizi; the diagram with four columns deals with one of the paradoxes of linear perspective and suggests that his concern with the subject was earlier than usually supposed; and the mathematical notations may reflect his earliest thinking about harmonic proportions in perspective.

Leonardo's small-scale drawings were accompanied by large-scale cartoons by followers and admirers. Of these, three are closely related to major Leonardo works. The copy of his *Portrait of Isabella d'Este*, probably executed by a workshop assistant under Leonardo's supervision, gives us clues to Leonardo's refining of the pose and clarifies the lower portion of the composition, which was cropped from the original version in the Louvre. The cartoon of the *Shouting soldier*, although extensively reworked and restored, is probably a direct and contemporary copy from Leonardo's original cartoon for the central group of the *Battle of Anghiari* (lost), as the recent scientific examination undertaken by Maurizio Seracini from Editech (Florence) has suggested. The cartoon is thus crucial for estimating the dimensions of the group that Leonardo painted. And the cartoon of the *Last Supper*, probably preparatory for a print, gives us a flavour of what a reconstruction of Leonardo's work by an accomplished eighteenth-century French artist looks like.

The Christ Church exhibition focused on the rich material assembled by John Guise in the eighteenth century. Here we have examples ranging from Leonardo's minute *Study of a sleeve* (for the angel of the *Annunciation* in the Uffizi) to the impressive cartoon of the so-called *Scaramuccia*; and from intricate allegories to one of the most complex sheets of technical studies, which would not be out of place in one of Leonardo's manuscripts. Chronologically, these drawings span the period c. 1472 to c. 1508. The works by Leonardo's students and followers were also well represented. They included drawings by Boltraffio, Giampietrino, Carlo Urbino and Talpino. The subjects ranged from careful training exercises and standard devotional paintings to theoretical studies

of proportion and motion. The exhibition also offered selected examples of what a 'Leonardo' was thought to look like by early collectors, who inscribed the artist's name on sheets which, however, are now attributed to artists as diverse as Sodoma and Hans Holbein the Elder.

Within the permanent collection of the Museum of the History of Science, Italian scientific instruments from the sixteenth century were highlighted. They were accompanied by reproductions of Leonardo's drawings in order to exemplify the kinds of instruments available to him and at his time. In the main gallery, the juxtaposition of a surveyor's compass with Leonardo's *Map of Imola* (Windsor) is a case in point. A further pleasure was in the basement gallery, where these relationships were further extended to mathematical treatises. The display here included a copy of Barbaro's *La pratica della prospettiva*, showing a stellated geometrical body, which connects with the original illustrations of geometrical solids that Leonardo provided for Pacioli's *Divina Proportione*. Also interesting was the modern sculpture that was based on Leonardo's drawing of the *Great Lady* anatomy (Windsor, RL 12281), displayed in the upper gallery. As Leonardo made use of a 'transparent' view to reveal the internal organs, so his drawing was brought into three dimensions by the superimposition of eighty transparent, horizontal layers. The sculpture was created by Marilène Olivier, with the advice of the surgeon Francis Wells on the anatomical design of the additional layers.

The Botanic Garden highlighted plants that Leonardo drew. In this case, visitors were provided with a map of the garden, accompanied by reproductions of four of Leonardo's plant drawings; they were challenged to identify these four specimens in the garden. Just across the bridge is Magdalen College, where were shown depictions of human motion, more specifically of what Leonardo calls 'moto mentale' (mental motion), which viewers were invited to explore through the varied reactions of the apostles in the *Last Supper*. This painting is an early sixteenth-century copy attributed to Giampietrino, and on loan from the Royal Academy of Arts since 1993. One of the earliest and most faithful copies of Leonardo's mural, it offers an interesting comparison with Dutertre's later copy in the Ashmolean.

The sense of the universality of Leonardo's interests and investigations clearly emerged from this joint effort of simultaneous displays and arrangements by the five Oxford institutions, all

associated with the 'Universal Leonardo' project. The exhibitions were based on a new concept, in which it was the viewer who moved from one display to the next, breathing fresh air and recollecting images until another dimension of Leonardo's achievement was revealed, and subjected to yet newer perceptions.

### **The *Madonna of the Carnation* at the Alte Pinakothek in Munich**

Also in conjunction with the Universal Leonardo project, an exhibition was recently on display in Munich around the Alte Pinakothek's early Leonardo *Madonna and Child*. The exhibition divided into two parts: the first showed the *Madonna of the Carnation* in the context of paintings and drawings by Leonardo and other members of Verrocchio's workshop in the mid 1470s, and the second presented the results of scientific and other analysis carried out while the painting has been under study at the Doerner Institut during the past two years.

The works grouped around the Leonardo *Madonna* included Verrocchio's terracotta *Madonna and Child* (Florence, Bargello), the *Dreyfus Madonna* by Lorenzo di Credi (Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art), the relatively lifeless *Madonna and Child* in Frankfurt, and the *Madonna and Child* in Berlin that is now usually attributed to Pietro Perugino. Especially in comparison with this last example of Verrocchio workshop output in the early to mid-1470s, the novelty and expressive vitality of Leonardo's painting were notable. His control of the lighting in the interior setting permitted a greater tonal range and deep shadow that contrast with Perugino's high-key tonality. The lively movements of the Christ Child as he stretches for the carnation held by the Madonna contrast with the static, standing Christ Child of the Perugino and indeed of all the other Madonnas on display except for Munich's own late Filippo Lippi *Madonna and Child*, also exhibited nearby. Also remarkable were the closeness of the Madonna's facial type to Verrocchio's exquisite black chalk 'Head of a Woman' drawing (London, British Museum), and Leonardo's virtuoso treatment of her fluidly rippling drapery, which again contrasted with the angular, crumpled drapery of the other Verrocchio workshop works on display.

In the second section of the exhibition attention was focused on technical issues such as Leonardo's pigments, including his use in decorative details of

shell-gold, which is not found elsewhere in his work. Also highlighted was his early, and inexperienced, handling of the oil medium which has resulted in considerable wrinkling to the paint surface in passages where he laid on further layers to increase the tonal depth in modelling the flesh forms. The infrared reflectogram showed only sporadic underdrawing, suggesting that Leonardo will have developed the composition in detail through preliminary drawings on paper. Finally, it was shown how skillfully Leonardo constructed the complex foreshortened forms of the virtuoso flower vase at lower right, and how the geometric patterns in the roundels above the windows foreshadow Leonardo's 'ludi geometrici' and in general his later interest in mathematics.

### ***Raccolta Vinciana XXXI, 2005***

The recently received vol. 31 of *Raccolta Vinciana* includes the following articles:

Vittorio Pini, 'Presenza della "magnifica et generosa Cecilia" Gallerani, nonché delle famiglie paterna, materna e maritale in imbreviature notarili dal 1407 al 1573, all'Archivio di Stato di Milano'

Gigetta Dalli Regoli, 'Da riflessioni intorno alla Battaglia d'Anghiari, una nota sui "nichi" di Leonardo'

Domenico Laurenza, 'Alcune precisazioni sul foglio anatomico di Leonardo RL 12597r'

Giulio Cesare Maggi, 'The atrial septal defect, Leonardo's Anomaly. A (reasonable) hypothesis'

Max Marmor, 'The Prophetic Dream in Leonardo and in Dante'

Josephine Jungic, 'Leonardo da Vinci in Rome: Meditations on the Sermons of Savonarola'

Marco Versiero, "'O per sanguinità o per roba sanguinata": Il pensiero politico di Leonardo'

Frank Zöllner, 'Leonardo da Vinci e il paesaggio roccioso: fra "scienza" e simbolismo religioso'

Maria Theresa Fiorio, 'Un Salvator Mundi ritrovato'

Luisa Cogliati Arano, 'Un importante inedito leonardesco'

Pietro C. Marani, 'Da Bramantino a Cerano: un'altro tassello per il seguito dei "motisti" leonardeschi nel Seicento lombardo'

Laure Fagnart, 'Contributions à la fortune de la Cène de Léonard de Vinci en France: la copie de Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois à Paris et la copie de Saint-Martin à Saint Martin des Monts'

Domenico Laurenza, 'Possibili tracce di Leonardo nella cultura artistico-scientifica bolognese all'epoca di Passerotti e dei Carracci (una incisione di soggetto animalistico, il Codice Huygens)'

Mario Valentino Guffanti, 'Leonardo e l'Olanda: Bibliografia delle edizioni a stampa olandesi del Trattato della Pittura di Leonardo'

Paola Cordera, 'Leonardo dipinge il Cenacolo. Ancora sull'immagine del Vinciano nel XIX secolo'

Marta Fumagalli, 'Le annotazioni di Morelli alle fotografie di dipinti e disegni di Leonardo e dei maestri lombardi e rinascimentali trascritte da Giulio Carotti'

### **Leonardo da Vinci, 'Il fondatore dell'Idraulica'**

Lene Østermark-Johansen, 'On the Motion of Great Waters: Walter Pater, Leonardo and Heraclitus' in John E. Law & Lene Østermark-Johansen Eds. *Victorian and Edwardian Responses to the Italian Renaissance*, 2005, Ashgate Publishing Company, Aldershot & Burlington, USA. ISBN 0 7546 5057 X

*Vivienne Northcote writes:* In 1804 Carlo Amoretti published a biography of Leonardo da Vinci in which he described Leonardo as *il fondatore dell'Idraulica* and discussed his 'obsession with water' (to use the author's phrase) at some length.<sup>1</sup> In her chapter in this interesting and useful book, *Victorian and Edwardian Responses to the Italian Renaissance*, Lene Østermark-Johansen draws attention to Walter Pater's ideas about Leonardo's interest in every aspect of the various properties of water, and his intention to publish a book on the subject. She argues that this aspect of Walter Pater's essay on Leonardo in his *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* deserves greater study.<sup>2</sup> Pater's view of the Renaissance, according to Østermark-Johansen, was that it was a unifying and harmonious movement with Leonardo at its heart. She points out that his essay on Leonardo is placed carefully in the centre of the book, and that Pater's view of the Renaissance and its importance is in sharp contrast to that of John Ruskin, who had been criticising Leonardo as an artist since the

<sup>1</sup> Carlo Amoretti, *Memorie storiche su la vita, gli studi e le opera di Lionardo da Vinci*, Milan 1804

<sup>2</sup> D.L. Hill, ed., *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, Berkeley, 1980; from the 1893 text.

publication of *The Stones of Venice* in 1851-3.<sup>3</sup> Østermark-Johansen precedes these conclusions with an important discussion of Pater's understanding of philosophy, particularly the writings of Heraclitus. She draws a link between Pater's own interest in Heraclitus and the possibility that Leonardo also knew something of this philosopher's writings. She points out that there is no direct mention of Heraclitus in Leonardo's writings, but that he did own 'a copy of Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Philosophers* which contains a biography of Heraclitus and a summary of his most important ideas'. She also refers to Giancarlo Maiorino's suggestion that there is 'a number of parallels between Heraclitus and Leonardo in their approach to the world' including 'their dialectic mode of thinking, their emphasis on visual experience and their obsession with the elements and their transmutation'.<sup>4</sup> That Leonardo was fascinated by water in all its aspects is well known. It is, however, open to question whether this was an 'obsession' or, in fact, a scholarly and artistic insistence upon finding out about and imparting as much information as possible on a particular scientific study. Østermark-Johansen refers to the Codex Leicester with its statement by Leonardo that 'in these eight pages there are seven hundred and thirty conclusions on water',<sup>5</sup> and comments that Leonardo was acting thus as a good Aristotelian codifying his results. She also underlines this by referring to Ernst Gombrich's notion that Leonardo was trying to provide a 'water vocabulary'.<sup>6</sup> Østermark-Johansen's chapter is, in the main, a discussion of Walter Pater's attitudes, but it does raise a number of stimulating ideas about Leonardo's own interest in and ideas about philosophy and its relationship to his water studies. Scholars may not agree with all her conclusions, but it is a topic which deserves discussion: Østermark-Johansen has provided a useful introduction to this topic.

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<sup>3</sup> E.T. Cook & A. Wedderburn, eds. *The Complete Works of John Ruskin*, 39 Vols, London 1903-12, Vol XIX, 129-30

<sup>4</sup> G. Maiorino, *Leonardo da Vinci, The Daedalian Mythmaker* University Park, 1992, 21-2, 28

<sup>5</sup> *Codex Leicester* 26r

<sup>6</sup> E.H. Gombrich, 'Leonardo's Method of Analysis and Permutation: The Form of Movement in Water and Air' in *The Heritage of Apelles: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*, Ithaca 1976, 39-56, 41-2

## The Vinci Summer School

The first Vinci Summer School dedicated to the history of technology was held in the Biblioteca Leonardiana at Vinci from 22 to 29 September this year, under the aegis of the European 'La tecnica come bene culturale' project. The theme was 'Technical drawing in the Renaissance' and the intention was to explore the knowledge and study of the history of technology and of technical drawing in the Renaissance and Early Modern Europe. The presentations were concerned principally with aspects of machine drawings and architectural drawings of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries.

## The Kenneth Keele collection of books on Leonardo da Vinci

At her death last March (reported in the May 2006 issue of this *Newsletter*), Kenneth Keele's widow Mary bequeathed to the Leonardo da Vinci Society her husband's library of books on Leonardo. This collection includes many important publications, especially on Leonardo's anatomical studies, such as the monumental catalogue, by Kenneth Keele and Carlo Pedretti, of the *Anatomical Studies by Leonardo da Vinci in the Queen's Collection at Windsor Castle*, 3 volumes, 1979-80, and several volumes of facsimiles of those drawings. Discussions are currently in progress to resolve where the Keele library might be accommodated and how it might be made accessible to members of the Society.

## *The Leonardo da Vinci Society*

The Secretary is very grateful for the comments and suggestions made by members and very much regrets that he has not had time to reply to them individually. An electronic copy of this *Newsletter* will be sent to everyone who has requested it. If you have requested an email copy but have not received it by the time that you read this, please could you convey to the Secretary (at <A.Mann@gre.ac.uk>) your current email address either in case he misread it or if it has changed.

We would always be grateful for suggestions of material, such as forthcoming conferences, symposia and other events, exhibitions, publications and so on, that would be of interest to members of the Society for inclusion or report in this *Newsletter* or on the webpage, which can be visited at the following web address: <<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/hafvm/leonardo>>

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