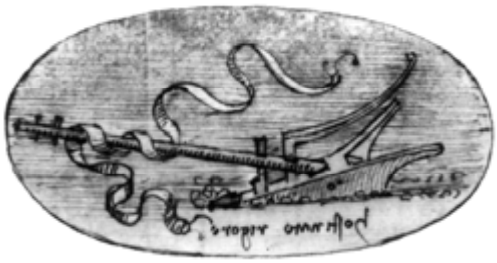
Leonardo da Vinci Society Newsletter



editor: Francis Ames-Lewis

Issue 37, November 2011

Recent and forthcoming events

The Annual General Meeting and Annual Lecture 2012

The AGM and Annual Lecture next year will be held as usual in the Kenneth Clark Lecture Theatre at the Courtauld Institute of Art, on Friday 27 April 2012. The AGM will be at 5.30 pm and the Annual Lecture at 6.00 pm. The Annual Lecture will be given by Dr Matthew Landrus, whose title will provisionally be 'New Evidence of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* as a Humanist Contribution'.

Following an extensive period of research on the recently restored *Last Supper*, there is new evidence of Leonardo's intentions for it as a Humanist contribution to the Sforza Court. Detailed assessments of the painting's preparatory marks, measurements, designs, and associated texts offer proof of its role within the socio-political activities of the Court, and more specifically within a Humanist debate developing in Florence and Milan. It was for Leonardo an opportunity to argue in a visual manner the role of Painting as the ultimate artifice of Nature, reason and experience. His *Last Supper* is in this case a more complex, holistic contribution than previously determined, an early form of manifesto on Painting as a systematic, Humanist discourse within the Liberal Arts.

A conference on 'Fame in Art and Science'

Organised jointly by the Leonardo da Vinci Society and the Royal Institution, a conference on 'Fame in Art and Science' was held on Friday 4 November at the Royal Institution. In both Art and Science some people become famous, whereas others, considered equally significant by their peers, or by historians, do not. Why has Leonardo (rather than, say, Michelangelo) become the standard-bearer of the popular idea of the Renaissance? In science, Galileo has similarly heroic status in regard to heliocentric astronomy and Faraday for the modern study of electricity. How far are such images indebted to Romantic notions of individuality? Fame is obviously different in Art and in Science, but as we want to examine fame itself rather than the history of either art or science, comparisons may be illuminating.

Paul Hills (Courtauld Institute, University of London) spoke first, on 'Titian and the Performance of Painting'. Jacob Burckhardt argued that the modern idea of fame has its roots in ancient Roman writers whose works were closely studied in Renaissance Italy. Titian belonged to a generation who sought to become 'the new Apelles'. Thus Titian emulated Apelles in painting *Venus Anadyomene*, and his supporters presented his relationship with the Emperor Charles V in terms of Apelles' friendship with the Emperor Alexander. Several grounds for Titian's success stand out: early public visibility in Venice (the *Assumption* in the Frari); the widening of his client base to include the most powerful princes of Italy; the dissemination of his paintings throughout the extent of the Hapsburg Empire; the services of a tireless publicist, Pietro Aretino; and his residence in Venice at the hub of the printing and communications network.

In the centuries after his death Titian's paintings assumed blue-chip status thanks to their presence in royal collections. They were widely replicated. The fact that his character and work were hotly debated only contributed to his fame. He was depicted as avaricious and as overly devoted to his female models. Above all he was famous as a performer in paint, the master of colour. Over the centuries great artists – including Rubens, Van Dyck, Velazquez, Reynolds and Manet – 'performed Titian' by copying, imitating, emulating or appropriating his work. In this way his fame was continually renewed and reframed.

Next, Stephen Pumfrey (University of Lancaster) spoke on 'Galileo Galilei', first addressing the question of why Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) has been so famous for so long. His answer in brief was that Galileo exemplified the fourth maxim for immortality in the journal *Science*: 'embrace controversy'. Pumfrey reminded us that different communities have different criteria for allotting fame, and so, whilst a few internalist historians would cite Galileo's innovative dynamical theory, most of us recall his prosecution in 1633 by the Roman Catholic Church because of his promotion of the heliocentric cosmos.

Pumfrey proposed that Galileo's fame depends upon his fit with the widely held 'conflict thesis', that science and religion are essentially incompatible ways of knowing. As Dr Field would confirm, the pious Kepler's failure to fit the model partially explains his lesser fame or, more exactly, fame based upon his de-contextualized, de-personalized and enduring results ('Kepler's Laws'). The same distribution is found among today's scientists. Among communities of experts fame is proportional to productivity, but among lay publics some individuals break the relationship. Such distributions are partially explained by the Matthew effect ('whosoever hath, to him shall it be given...') investigated by Robert Merton. A case in point is Galileo's lunar science, which has obscured earlier (and even later) work by others, including Kepler.

Pumfrey concluded by tracing Galileo's evolving reputation in seventeenth-century England, where his fame originated with the astronomical discoveries of his *Starry Messenger* (1610). In what Pumfrey thinks is the first printed reference, in John Donne's *Ignatius His Conclave* (1611), Galileo is presented as a tool of the pope. This is ironic given his fame, post-1633, as a martyr to the cause of philosophical liberty, an image cemented in Salusbury's editions in English of the 1660s.

J. V. Field (Birkbeck, University of London) next spoke on 'Fame and Johannes Kepler (1571 - 1630)'. Kepler's name is well known among scientists and historians of science because it is attached to the three laws of planetary motion that he discovered. On a more specialised level, it is of interest that he was the first author to show the Copernican system in a way that allows one to see the relative dimensions of the planetary orbits. Moreover, in connection with this diagram, he asks some 'modern' questions to which the Copernican system can supply reasonable answers whereas the geocentric Ptolemaic one cannot – questions such as why Jupiter and Mars may be seen at any angular distance from the Sun whereas Mercury and Venus are always seen close to it. Ptolemaic answer: the Universe is like that; Copernican answer: Venus and Mercury have orbits that lie inside the orbit of the Earth. It is, however, difficult to portray Kepler simply as a Hero of the (Scientific) Revolution because at the same time as asking these questions, in *Mysterium cosmographicum* (1596), he proposes an explanation of the spaces between the planetary paths that considers the ratios between the diameters of the inspheres and circumspheres of the five convex regular polyhedra (described in Plato's dialogue *Timaeus* and treated in detail by Euclid in the *Elements*). Kepler's account of this theory is accompanied by a handsome plate that makes it look even more 'old-fashioned' than it truly is, showing what seem to be solid polyhedra nested between solid planetary spheres (which Kepler did not in fact believe in). The Third Law, relating periodic times to the dimensions of orbits, occurs in a similarly 'old-fashioned' cosmological context, of musical ratios among planetary speeds (*Harmonice mundi* 1619).

Similar problems arise with almost all of Kepler's work. Historians may sigh and point out that Kepler is simply hard to understand if divorced from the intellectual life of his times. However, the result is that Kepler – who was moreover a deeply religious Protestant and saw no conflict between his religion and his science – does not make a good simplified figurehead in the way that Galileo did for Bertold Brecht.

Jon Whiteley (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) spoke on 'The Cultural Hero in the Age of Romanticism'.

Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* were partly written to demonstrate that artists have a status in society among the practitioners of the Liberal Arts. Vasari illustrated his point with many stories of the honours that were given to artists throughout history by emperors, kings and popes. These tales, however dubious, were taken up by later artists in an effort to bestow high status on their profession. Artists knew that not all painters were Raphaels or Titians and they distinguished between the

jobbing genre painters and the greatest history painters by involving the idea of Genius. It was universally accepted that Genius was an inborn faculty which could not be acquired through training. The area of dissent, however, involved the extent to which Genius was sufficient in itself, and to what extent it could only make itself manifest by the acquisition of an education. Reynolds argued for the necessity of an academic training, others attacked it as inimical to the free expression of native talent. The idea that the Genius exists outside social norms combined with opposition to the academic system and the growth of critical and sometimes mocking reviews of exhibitions in London and Paris, gave rise to a sense of alienation among artists. The idea that misunderstanding and poverty were attributes of true talent became a Romantic commonplace. History was distorted to show that great artists in the past had not been recognized in their lifetimes. Correspondingly, artists who were famous in their lifetime became suspect. This notion, linked to the idea of the Avant-Garde, has had a profound effect on the reputation of artists. Many academic painters, successful genre painters and artists who were held in high regard in their day, have been cast into outer darkness by posterity in favour of those artists whose talents were disputed or unrecognized by their contemporaries. As a result, the Vasarian notion that honours and wealth are attributes of true talent was fundamentally undermined.

David Knight (University of Durham) discussed 'A Romantic genius in science: Davy and his contemporaries'. In his 'Age of Personality' (see *The Friend*, ed. B. E. Rooke, Routledge, 1969, 1, 471), Coleridge wrote: 'If in SHAKESPEARE we find nature idealised into poetry, through the creative power of a profound yet observant meditation, so through the meditative observation of a DAVY, a WOOLLASTON, or a HATCHETT… we find poetry… substantiated and realized in nature; yea nature itself disclosed to… us as once the poet and the poem'. What, we may ask, does and did fame mean, particularly for a chemical philosopher? How necessary was fame to Davy's career? What about posthumous fame?

Fame comes in various shapes: fickle fame (wayward aristocrats, courtesans, mountebanks, actors, pugilists, and jockeys); brash, tawdry, self-advertising fame, or both meritocratic & snobbish as in the 'Regency' period. Notoriety, as when Priestley and Davy were recorded in cartoons by such as Gillray; eminence, as in Sir Joseph Banks; repute, as in Wollaston; professional standing (Hatchett); Dalton as a local worthy: or Humphry Davy, the star performer and researcher, both pure and applied.

Davy's fame came about through his electrifying lectures; his scientific discoveries (of laughing gas, in electro-chemistry, in isolating potassium and sodium, in the use of hydrochloric acid), and most importantly the Davy Safety Lamp. It was enhanced by his increasing prominence in the Royal Society and election to the presidency in 1820, his baronetcy, his desirability as dinner-party guest, his 'swagger' portraits by such as Thomas Lawrence, and his bursts of creative scientific research. But what offers lasting fame in science? A few examples are named units (Watt, Volta, Ampère), geographical features (Dolomieu, Murchison), medals or lectures (Wollaston, Davy, Rumford), research schools (Gay-Lussac, Davy, Faraday), devices or apparatus: (Davy, Liebig), and syndromes (Parkinson, Dalton).

Frank A. J. L. James (Royal Institution) asked 'Why is Faraday so famous and Maxwell not?' He began by pointing out that in the 2002 BBC poll of 100 Greatest Britons, Michael Faraday (1791-1867) came in at 22, while James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879) achieved 91st place. Of course, fame is mediated by the social group asked, so had the poll been taken of physicists Faraday and Maxwell's rankings would undoubtedly have been higher and the order possibly reversed. But for the general public as a whole the result does suggest Faraday is far better known and this needs to be explained.

A number of factors might account for this, including, first, that Faraday apparently fulfilled the Romantic trope of rising from obscurity to fame by his own efforts while Maxwell was born into a fairly wealthy family. Second, that a page of Faraday's writings was far easier to read than a page of Maxwell's which tend to be full of 'mathematical hieroglyphs', as Faraday referred to them in a letter to Maxwell. Third, Faraday was an excellent lecturer and could write accessibly (his 1861 *Chemical History of a Candle* has never been out of print in English), whereas Maxwell was a notoriously

poor lecturer – presumably a contributory factor in his having to leave two university posts. Fourth, Faraday was a prominent scientific adviser to the state and its agencies while Maxwell's work in this area was restricted to helping define electrical units. Faraday was thus better known than Maxwell to a wide variety of audiences.

Finally, and in the speaker's view most significantly, by the early twentieth century Faraday had become the symbol for electrification and thus of modernity. The centenary of Faraday's discovery of electro-magnetic induction in 1931 was marked by an enormous array of events including an exhibition at the Albert Hall and a grand commemorative meeting addressed by the Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald. The publicity material for the events was designed by Edward McKnight Kauffer emphasising the modernity of electrification, but also by looking to the past Faraday provided a very respectable pedigree for the wide-spread application of this new engineering practice. It would have been difficult to have used Maxwell's image in this way to provide such effective publicity and this goes a long way to explain why Faraday, very rarely for a scientific figure, has a statue out of doors in London and appeared on the Bank of England £20 note in the 1990s. See further Frank A.J.L. James, 'The Janus Face of Modernity: Michael Faraday in the Twentieth Century', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 2008, **41**: 477-516.

The meeting ended with an evening lecture given by Martin Kemp (University of Oxford) on 'Leonardo and the Mona Lisa. Why?' There are many 'why's. Why did he paint it? Why did he paint it in the way he did? Why is it so famous? Its fame ultimately depends on its extraordinary visual qualities, above all its ability to communicate, however ambiguously, to the viewer. The first thing to say is that identity of the sitter is in little doubt. She is Lisa Gherardini, wife of Francesco del Giocondo. The portrait was underway by 1503, when Agostino Vespucci noted as much in a marginal annotation of Cicero's *Letters to Friends*.

Leonardo made something extraordinary out of an unexceptional project. It was still daring at the time to portray a woman making direct eye contact, and unprecedented to show her reacting to us. That reaction is given an enigmatic quality that invites the viewer in. This quality relates to Renaissance poetry on the 'beloved woman', above all to Dante's evocation of his lady's eyes and smile (veiled and as if on a balcony) in his *Convivio*.

Leonardo extends this poetic dimension into a philosophical meditation on the body of the human being and the body of the earth, under the aegis of the microcosm. The flows of hair, and twists and rivulets of drapery echo the meandering water courses. The high and low lakes will undergo the kind of changes that he observed in the Arno Valley, which he believed once to have been covered by two lakes at different levels.

The image is both about what is seen and how it is seen. In MS.D from c. 1507 he explains how the 'eye does not know the edge of any body'. He explores the consequences of the eye operating with a receptive surface of finite dimensions rather than the point of a pyramid, and this results in indefinite edges. The eye thus acts not only as the 'window of the soul' in terms of the beloved's glance and but also as a complex organ for the perception of form and distance. The portrait thus makes the transition from a commissioned likeness, through a poetic evocation and the analogies of the microcosm, to a compelling exploration of the acts of looking and being looked at.

Leonardesque news

The exhibition of *Leonardo da Vinci. Painter at the Court of Milan*, at the National Gallery, London, 9 November 2011 to 5 February 2012.

One of the most ambitious exhibitions of the paintings and drawings of Leonardo da Vinci and his Milanese circle ever to be mounted is currently on display at the National Gallery, London. The exhibition focuses on the period between 1482 and 1499 when Leonardo worked for the Sforza of Milan. The bulk of the exhibits are shown in the Sainsbury Wing exhibition galleries, while the section on 'Character and Emotion', dealing with the *Last Supper* and related drawings, spills over into the Sunley Room. The range and number of loans brought together for this exhibition is remarkable, and is a testament to the time and patience that was

devoted to preparing the exhibition by its principal curator, Luke Syson, and colleagues at the National Gallery.

The first room, 'The musician in Milan: a quiet revolution', centres on the *Portrait of a Musician* (Milan, Pinacoteca Ambrosiana). Through comparisons with other Milanese portraits and portrait drawings made between 1485 and 1490, the impact that the Ambrosiana painting may have made is suggested. The second room, 'Beauty and love: Leonardo's portraits of women' compellingly juxtaposes the *Belle Ferronnière* (Paris, Louvre) and the exquisite *Portrait of Cecilia Gallerani* (Krakòw, Czartoryski Foundation), two of Leonardo's finest portraits, with appropriate related material. The former is, perhaps controversially, identified as possibly a likeness of Beatrice d'Este, Duchess of Milan. Leonardo's *Portrait of Ginevra de' Benci* (Washington, National Gallery of Art) would have made a further significant contribution to this display, but this of course was painted during Leonardo's first Florentine period.

In the third room, 'Body and soul: Saint Jerome in penitence', the unfinished *Saint Jerome* (Vatican City, Vatican Museums) dominates over a display largely of anatomical drawings and studies of human proportion. The two versions of the *Virgin of the Rocks* (Paris, Louvre, and London, National Gallery) are displayed together in the large central gallery. Of all the outstanding loans that the National Gallery secured, the Paris painting is perhaps the most remarkable. It provides an extraordinary opportunity, unlikely ever to be repeated, for direct comparison of the two paintings and their noteworthy contrasts in style and pictorial handling. The contrast in condition and state of conservation is also apparent: the later version in the National Gallery has recently been beautifully cleaned and conserved, whereas the Louvre version is much abraded and damaged, and is obscured by a yellowing varnish.

Room 5 houses 'The Madonna Litta: Leonardo and his companions'. The *Madonna Litta* (Saint Petersburg, Hermitage) is a problematical attribution, if only because it was painted in tempera and not in oil (the suggestion in the catalogue entry that 'It is highly probable that [Leonardo] harboured a desire to create an easel painting using this traditional technique…' is open to question). Several of the related drawings exhibited close by are however undoubtedly by Leonardo, who clearly had a major hand in the painting's design. In room 6, 'The miracle of talent: Leonardo and the French', the recently-discovered *Salvator Mundi* (New York, Private Collection) is displayed in public for the first time. Although the face has suffered severe abrasion and is difficult to evaluate, the figure's hands are exquisitely painted, following a characteristically Leonardesque practice, and seem to be entirely the master's work. Also displayed in this room is the *Madonna of the Yarnwinder* from the Duke of Buccleuch's collection (regrettably the second high-quality version, the so-called *Lansdowne Madonna*, is not shown alongside), and the *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and the infant Saint John the Baptist* cartoon (London, National Gallery: the so-called 'Burlington House cartoon'). It is debatable whether any of these three works in fact dates to any great extent from the period during which Leonardo was a 'painter at the Court of Milan', although the two panel paintings are on walnut, the wood used for most of Leonardo's Milanese paintings.

Finally, displayed in the Sunley Room is the full-scale copy, by Giampietrino, of Leonard's *Last Supper* (London, Royal Academy of Arts; normally on display at Magdalen College, Oxford). Almost all of the surviving drawings made by Leonardo in preparation for this mural painting are displayed alongside the huge canvas painting. Both the copy on canvas and the group of studies of apostles' heads together illustrate Leonardo's constant concern with expressing character and human emotion through pose, gesture and facial expression. Over thirty drawings from the Royal Library are included in this important exhibition, and a further twenty or so from other collections. Also on display are all the surviving paintings (except the *Last Supper* mural) that Leonardo is known to have started on during his first period in Milan (ca.1482 – 1499), two (or possibly three) other paintings by Leonardo, and a considerable group by members of his Milanese circle. This is a noteworthy achievement, and the exhibition is accompanied by a substantial catalogue of high scholarly quality, in which many important issues are raised and debated. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this exhibition's contribution to Leonardo da Vinci studies.

A conference on *Leonardo da Vinci: Painting as Philosophy*, at the National Gallery and the Warburg Institute, on Thursday 2 February 2012.

Organised by Professor Peter Mack, Director of the Warburg Institute, and Luke Syson of the National Gallery, this conference will focus in particular on Leonardo's paintings. Speakers will be asking how Leonardo set about expressing visually different and sometimes competing ideas about the universe and its causes, in a Christian era. What did Leonardo mean by promoting painting as a science, as knowledge, and how should we understand the scientific painting of traditional (or novel) devotional subjects? How did his theory of painting affect his treatment of secular commissions, such as portraiture? How did his thinking change? How did he react to classical thought and the ideas of his contemporaries and what impact did this have on his art? Speakers will include Martin Clayton (Royal Library, Windsor Castle), Frank Fehrenbach (Harvard University), Francesca Fiorani (University of Virginia), Alessandro Nova (Kunsthistorisches Institut, Florence), Mary Pardo (University of North Carolina) and Robert Zwijnenberg (University of Leiden). After a special viewing of the exhibition at the National Gallery, from 8.30 to 10.00 am, the conference will open at the Warburg Institute at 10.45 am and will close at 6.00 pm.

An exhibition of drawings by Leonardo da Vinci in Turin, until 29 January 2012

Entitled *Leonardo. The Genius. The Myth*, this exhibition of thirty drawings and writings by Leonardo is on show until January 29 2012 at the Reggia di Venaria, a seventeenth-century palace just outside Turin. It celebrates the 150th anniversary of the Unification of Italy. The major exhibit is the celebrated portrait drawing in red chalk that is often identified as a self-portrait, although some scholars consider that the man shown in the drawing appears to be older than sixty-seven, Leonardo's age at his death in 1519. This drawing has been shown in public only twice before, in 1929 and 2006.

A touring exhibition of *Ten Drawings by Leonardo da Vinci* from the Royal Library.

An exhibition of ten Leonardo drawings in the Royal Collection will be displayed in several UK locations to celebrate the Queen's diamond Jubilee in 2012. The exhibition will be mounted at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery from 23 January until 25 March next year, and will then transfer to Bristol, Belfast, Dundee and Hull. The exhibition has been selected to show the extraordinary scope of Leonardo's interests – painting and sculpture, engineering, botany, mapmaking, hydraulics and anatomy – and his use of different media – pen and ink, red and black chalks, and metalpoint. It includes a design for chariots of war, one of the studies for the *Sforza Monument*, one of the studies for the head of Leda in the (lost) *Leda and the Swan*, one of the late *Deluge* drawings, one of the costume designs for a masquerade of King François I, and the late profile portrait of a bearded old man.

A new book on Leonardo da Vinci's *Madonna of the Yarnwinder.*

A handsomely produced book devoted to the two autograph paintings by Leonardo of the *Madonna of the Yarnwinder* has just been published. Explored in detail are the history and provenance of the so-called *Lansdowne Madonna* (New York, Private Collection) and the *Buccleuch Madonna* (Drumlanrig Castle, Duke of Buccleuch Collection). Part I, 'Forensics', written largely by Martin Kemp, presents the 'detective story': this is 'written as a personal narrative… cast in the first person'. It starts with the initial scientific examination of the *Buccleuch Madonna* as long ago as 1990, and the positive results of the first scrutiny of the painting using infrared reflectography (IR). In the planning for the 1992 exhibition of both paintings at the National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh, the *Lansdowne Madonna* was also examined by IR, again with unexpected but positive outcomes. An excursus on the organization and reception of the Edinburgh exhibition leads to consideration of the scholarly value of examining both versions together: both, it is concluded, are essentially by

Leonardo, with variations in the inputs of his assistants.

Yet more IR examination of the *Buccleuch Madonna* at the National Gallery, London, provided further evidence of significant changes at the underdrawing stage, and these changes contribute to a discussion of the iconographies of the two panels. A second excursus follows, on the 2006 Universal Leonardo project and its analytical laboratory; an exhibition of the *Lansdowne Madonna* at Arezzo; the problems involved in making progress with the Universal Leonardo agenda; and further productive IR and other scientific tests on the *Lansdowne Madonna*. Part I ends with an account of the theft inn 2003 and dramatic recovery in 2007 of the *Buccleuch Madonna*, the trial of the perpetrators, and a summing-up of the significance of the evidence that has been obtained from the scientific testing of the two versions of the *Madonna of the Yarnwinder*.

Part II deals with issues around the conservation and attribution of the two paintings. Their attributional history is recounted in some detail, through various phases of connoisseurial debate over the past 150 years or so. Part III, researched by Thereza Wells, deals with the complex provenance of the two paintings, seeking to clarify which was the version commissioned by Florimond Robertet, Secretary of State to King Louis XII of France, and recorded as being in progress in Leonardo's workshop in April 1501. The results are not conclusive, but it seems likely that this painting was the *Buccleuch Madonna*. However, the *Lansdowne Madonna* also has a possible connection through France to its later English owners. Part IV, 'The Influence of an Image' considers the families of derivative images that have survived, and demonstrates that the *Madonna of the Yarnwinder* was a composition of great influence in both Italy and Spain in the early sixteenth century.

Martin Kemp and Thereza Wells, *Leonardo da Vinci's Madonna of the Yarnwinder. A Historical & Scientific Detective Story*, London (Artakt & Zidane Press) 2011. ISBN 978-0-9554850-6-0. £25.99

A book on the afterlife of seven paintings by Leonardo da Vinci.

In a slim volume published to coincide with the National Gallery's Leonardo da Vinci exhibition, Marina Wallace explores not so much the seven selected paintings by Leonardo themselves, but more the later fortunes of those paintings. In the case, for example, of *La Belle Ferronnière*, less attention is paid to issues of attribution and the identification of the sitter than to the connoisseurial storm that was provoked in the 1920s by attempts to demonstrate that another version of the painting was Leonardo's original, and to the litigation that ensued. There is much detail on the ownership and display of the *Mona Lisa* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; Walter Pater's paeon of praise for this painting is quoted at length; and much is made of the story of the *Mona Lisa*'s theft in 1911 and its recovery two years later. The issues surrounding the provenance and later history of the two versions of the *Virgin of the Rocks*, and of the two versions of the *Madonna of the Yarnwinder*, are treated in similar fashion. Finally, the *Lady with an Ermine* is discussed in terms of its iconic place in Polish national identity, an afterlife that can hardly have been anticipated by either painter or sitter.

Marina Wallace, *The Lives of Paintings: Seven Masterpieces by Leonardo da Vinci*, London (Artakt & Zidane Press) 2011. ISBN 978-0-9562678-8-7. £8.99

The *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* volume 32, London (National Gallery Company) 2011. ISBN 978 1 85709 530 2; ISSN 0140 7430 1032030. £40.00

The National Gallery has recently issued volume 32 (2011) of the *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, which is devoted entirely to the scientific and technical examination and analysis of works by, and closely associated with, Leonardo da Vinci. The contents comprise four articles, lavishly illustrated in colour and black-and-white, including many pigment cross-sections, X-rays and infrared reflectograms. The issue opens with an article by Jill Dunkerton on 'Leonardo in Verrocchio's Workshop: Re-examining the Technical Evidence'. The second article, written jointly by Larry Keith, Ashok Roy, Rachel Morrison and Peter Schade, considers 'Leonardo da Vinci's *Virgin of the Rocks*: Treatment, Technique and Display'. The third, by Rachel Billinge, Luke Syson and Marika Spring, is entitled 'Altered Angels: Two Panels from the Immaculate Conception Altarpiece once in San Francesco Grande, Milan'. Finally, Marika Spring, Antonio Mazzotta, Ashok Roy and Rachel Billinge write on 'Painting Practice in Milan in the 1490s: The Influence of Leonardo'. The publisher's summaries read:

'Recent studies of Verrocchio's painting technique and workshop practice have implications for our understanding of Leonardo's. Many aspects of Leonardo's technique, including his underdrawing procedure and use of monochrome undermodelling, appear to originate with his master. However, since Verrocchio seems to have remained primarily a tempera painter, it is proposed that Leonardo may also have spent time with the Pollaiuolo brothers in order to learn to paint in oils. This article discusses the technique of Leonardo's earliest works, and also the extent of his contribution to *The Baptism of Christ* (Uffizi, Florence), which he finished many years after it was begun by Verrocchio. The proposal that Leonardo executed parts of *Tobias and the Angel* (NG 781) is also considered.

'After several years of research into the feasibility and safety of a possible conservation treatment, in 2008-9 Leonardo's *Virgin of the Rocks* (NG 1093) was cleaned and restored. The treatment was undertaken primarily for aesthetic reasons, since the picture had become increasingly difficult to 'read' as the result of the severe degradation of the oil and mastic varnish applied in 1949. Analytical study of the picture was carried out before treatment was begun, and at various times during cleaning, to clarify the status of surface layers, to provide information on layer structure and materials and to help interpret condition. As a result our knowledge of Leonardo's painting practice has been greatly enlarged. The details of the treatment are documented here with a full description of the materials and method used in making the picture. The article concludes with an account of the painting's reframing and redisplay.

'It has never been doubted that the National Gallery's two panels depicting musician angels, *An Angel in Green with a Vielle* (NG 1661) and *An Angel in Red with a Lute* (NG 1662) were part of the carved altarpiece created for the chapel of the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception abutting the church of San Francesco Grande in Milan, for which Leonardo da Vinci was commissioned to work on the gilding and painting in partnership with the brothers Ambrogio and Evangelista de Predis. Yet the story of this commission and the subsequent history of the altarpiece (including the angels' place in it) are extremely complicated. Both panels have undergone significant alterations in the five centuries since they were painted. The results of technical examination are described in detail, and ideas about what the panels might have looked like before they were overpainted and cut down are also presented.

'The fourth article considers the practice of painters working in Milan in the 1490s, through technical examination of nine works of the period in the National Gallery by artists including the Master of the Pala Sforzesca, Ambrogio de Predis, Marco d'Oggiono, Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio and a follower known as "Pseudo-Boltraffio". They are all connected by an association with Leonardo's sphere, either as the products of direct pupils, or as cases showing some clear contemporary Leonardesque style. The panels, preparatory layers, underdrawing, painting technique and materials are described, placed in the art-historical context of each work, and compared to what is known about the technique of paintings by Leonardo himself.'

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.

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 in this *Newsletter* or on the webpage, which can be visited at the following address:
< http://www.bbk.ac.uk/hosted/leonardo/ >

Officers:

President: Dr J.V. Field, School of History of Art, Film and Visual Media, Birkbeck College, 43 Gordon Square, London WC1H.0PD; e-mail: jv.field@hart.bbk.ac.uk

Vice-President: Emeritus Professor Francis Ames-Lewis, 52, Prebend Gardens, London W6 0XU; tel: 020.8748.1259; e-mail: f.ames-lewis@bbk.ac.uk

Secretary and Treasurer: Tony Mann, School of Computing and Mathematical Sciences, University of Greenwich, Old Royal Naval College, Park Row, London SE10 9LS; 020.8331.8709; e-mail: a.mann@gre.ac.uk

Committee members:

Dr Monica Azzolini, Department of History, University of Edinburgh; e-mail: m.azzolini@ed.ac.uk

Dr Juliana Barone, School of History of Art, Film and Visual Media, Birkbeck College, 43 Gordon Square, London WC1H.0PD; e-mail: juliana.barone@btinternet.com

Nöel-Ann Bradshaw, School of Computing and Mathematical Sciences, University of Greenwich, Old Royal Naval College, Park Row, London SE10 9LS; 020.8331.8484; e-mail: n.bradshaw@gre.ac.uk

Dr Jill Burke, Department of History of Art, University of Edinburg; e-mail: j.burke@ed.ac.uk

Professor Frank A.J.L. James, Royal Institution Centre for the History of Science and Technology, Royal Institution of Great Britain, 21 Albemarle Street, London W1X.4BS; e-mail: fjames@ri.ac.uk

Dr Matthew Landrus, Rhode Island School of Design; e-mail: mlandrus@mac.com

Please send items for publication to the editor of the *Leonardo da Vinci Society Newsletter*, Emeritus Professor Francis Ames-Lewis, 52, Prebend Gardens, London W6 0XU; tel: 020.8748.1259; e-mail: f.ames-lewis@bbk.ac.uk, who apologises for the belated circulation of this issue.