

Romano Nanni and Maurizio Torrini, eds. *Leonardo "1952" e la cultura dell'Europa nel dopoguerra*.

Biblioteca Leonardiana: Studi e documenti 3. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2013. xviii + 474 pp. + 4 color pls. €49. ISBN: 978-88-222-6206-6.

Romano Nanni and Maurizio Torrini have brought together a stimulating collection of essays that offers a critical assessment of the historiography of Leonardo around 1952, the year of the fifth centenary of his birth. This postwar celebration of Leonardo's centenary generated not only a remarkable series of publications, exhibitions, and symposia across Europe, but also marked a crucial

moment in the reevaluation of Leonardo studies. Possibly the most ambitious, the Paris symposium on science (*Léonard de Vinci et l'expérience scientifique au XV^e siècle*) raised fundamental questions as to whether Leonardo should be viewed as part of the Middle Ages or part of the Renaissance. Overall, the centenary offered a unique opportunity to look at Leonardo's work, its sources, and its reception from different historical perspectives and methodological approaches.

The key to the collection of essays under review is its interdisciplinary nature. There are twenty-one essays (eighteen in Italian, two in English, and one in French) by international scholars, preceded by opening remarks by Carlo Pedretti. The volume has four sections: "Philosophy and Historiography," "Leonardo in the History of Science and of Technology," "Leonardo between Aesthetics and the History of Art," and "Language, Writing and Literature." Its aim is to conjure up the various contexts of postwar European scholarship, and, ultimately, their implications for us now. It opens with Romano Nanni's perceptive essay on Febvre, Garin, and Panofsky. While addressing their contrasting views on humanism, science, art, nature, and experience, Nanni also draws attention to the fact that all three scholars considered Leonardo in the broader framework of the history (and philosophy) of science. His essay sets up the interdisciplinary framework of the volume. In what follows, an overview of selected essays is offered in order to provide the reader with a sense of the breadth and relevance of the collection as a whole, as well as of the individual contributions.

Opening section 1, the powerful essay by Fabio Frosini sheds light on Luporini's understanding of Leonardo with respect to the notion of time (which Luporini sees as essentially dynamic), an issue that has attracted considerable interest in the modern literature and is still open to further research. Maurizio Torrini opens section 2 with a comprehensive historical analysis of the scientific debate around 1952 and of its players (implicit and explicit), from Duhem, Favaro, Marcolongo, and Cassirer, to Koyré, Febvre, and Garin. Sven Dupré centers his essay about optics on Ronchi, Argentieri, and Lindberg, while also placing it in the broader context of the discussions by Sarton, Cassirer, and Garin on Leonardo as precursor of Galileo. In section 3, underpinned by his comprehensive assessment of *Saggi e Ricerche*, Pietro Marani singles out three fundamentally new fields of inquiry and methodological approaches: the scientific analysis of Leonardo's paintings, the establishment of chronological criteria for the analysis of Leonardo's writings, and the specialized study of Leonardo's *Treatise on Painting* and its manuscript copies. Coming at the subject from a different angle, Frank Fehrenbach focuses on the changing interpretation of the *Deluge* drawings, with particular attention to Gantner's perception of them (and related texts) as evidence of Leonardo's open creative process (*in statu nascendi*). Martin Kemp undertakes a profound analysis of Gombrich's Leonardo, shedding light on the affinities between Gombrich's cognitive theory and his perception of Leonardo: visual knowledge and imagination are united in the service of the psychological power of art and of painting as illusion. In section 4, Carlo Vecce's thorough historiographic assessment of Leonardo as writer, from Solmi, Croce, Fumagalli, and Flora to Marinoni,

Brizio, and Gadda, praises Gadda as having best understood the essence of Leonardo's writings: "it has the limpidity of water springing from its source." Nadia Podzemskaia's essay on Leonardo in Russia informs us about not only the intellectual circle of Zubov, but also the existence of two so-far unpublished essays written in connection with Leonardo's treatise.

What is especially important about this volume is that it addresses a fundamental turning point in both Leonardo and Renaissance studies. By examining the historiography of the 1950s, it not only reviews a crucial moment of intellectual shift, but also judiciously revisits pioneering contributions of a generation of scholars that has had a fundamental impact on our own. This is a well-rounded historiographic contribution that brings new insights and encourages further questions.

JULIANA BARONE

Birkbeck, University of London