

# review.

EXHIBITIONS // BOOKS // MEDIA



THE ART NEWSPAPER

U. ALLEMANDI & CO. PUBLISHING LTD. EST. 1983, VOL. XXIX NO. 318  
DECEMBER 2019 WWW.THEARTNEWSPAPER.COM



The year in review //  
Ethics protests go  
global, King Tut goes  
globe-trotting, and  
a gold toilet vanishes

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Friends and rivals:  
Haring and Basquiat,  
New York originals, are  
reunited down under

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Books //  
The theatre of Baroque:  
Bernini and Caravaggio  
make a revealing  
double act in Vienna

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**Leonardo 500** Carmen Bambach admires the Louvre blockbuster.  
Michael Landrus reviews a stack of anniversary books // p6 & p14



*A new way of thinking is addressed by Caroline Cocciaardi, who explores the many potential variants of knots drawn by Leonardo and his associates*

**Joost M. Keizer**  
**Leonardo's Paradox: Word and Image in the Making of Renaissance Culture**  
Reaktion Books, 208pp, £25 (hb)

**Laure Fagnart**  
**Léonard de Vinci à la cour de France**  
Presse Universitaires de Rennes, 275pp, £26 (hb)

**Jan Sammer**  
**Leonardo da Vinci: the Untold Story of his Final Years**  
Jan Sammer, 320pp, £32 (pb)

**Constance Moffatt and Sara Taglialagamba, eds**  
**Leonardo da Vinci: Nature and Architecture (Leonardo Studies 2)**  
Brill, 431pp, £130 (hb)

**Juliana Barone and Susana Avery Quash, eds**  
**Leonardo in Britain: Collections and Historical Reception**  
Olschki Editore, 456pp, £65 (pb)

**Martin Clayton**  
**Leonardo da Vinci: a Life in Drawing**  
Royal Collection Trust, 256pp, £18 (hb)

**Francesca Borgo, Rodolfo Maffei and Alessandro Nova, eds**  
**Leonardo in Dialogue. The Artist Amid his Contemporaries**  
Marsilio Editore, 472pp, £33 (pb)

**Alan Donnithorne**  
**Leonardo da Vinci: a Closer Look**  
Royal Collection Trust, 204pp, £50 (hb)

**Dietrich Lohrmann und Thomas Kreft, eds**

**Leonardo da Vinci: Codex Madrid I: Edition und Kommentar**  
Böhlau Verlag, 4 vols, 1,238pp, £250 (hb)

**Domenico Laurenza and Martin Kemp, eds**  
**Leonardo da Vinci's Codex Leicester: a New Edition: Volume I: The Codex**  
Oxford University Press, 88pp, £18 (hb)

**Pierluigi Panza**  
**L'ultimo Leonardo: storia, intrighi e misteri del quadro più costoso del Mondo**  
UTET, 220pp, £17 (hb)

**Ben Lewis**  
**The Last Leonardo**  
William Collins, 416pp, £20 (hb)

**Margaret Dalivalle, Martin Kemp and Robert Simon**

**Leonardo's Salvator Mundi and the Collecting of Leonardo in the Stuart Courts**  
Oxford University Press, 383pp, £35 (hb)

**Vincent Delieuvin and Louis Frank, eds**  
**Léonard de Vinci**  
Editions Hazan, 454pp, £30 (hb)

**Mathieu Deldicque, Vincent Delieuvin and Guillaume Kazerouni, eds**  
**La Joconde nue**  
In Fine, 215pp, £25 (hb)

**Piet Boncquet and Greet Verschatse**  
**Het Laatste Avondmaal naar Leonardo da Vinci: Een wonderlijke geschiedenis**  
Sterck & De Vreese, 160pp, £26 (pb)

**Leonardo da Vinci, Pascal Brioist, Paul Valéry, Edward MacCurdy, eds, and Louise Servicen translation**  
**Léonard de Vinci: Carnets**  
Editions Gallimard, 1,656pp, £28.40 (pb)

**Caroline Cocciaardi**  
**Leonardo's Knots**  
Mona Lisa Knot, 130pp, £35 (hb)

**Leonardo Da Vinci—The Language Of Faces**  
Michael Kwakkelstein and Michiel Plomp  
Thoth, 224pp, £29 (pb)

Polish government's *Lady with an Ermine* (1489-90), the Louvre *Mona Lisa* (1503), the New York *Madonna of the Yarnwinder*, the London *Virgin of the Rocks* (around 1491/92-99 and 1506-08), the Louvre *Virgin and Child with St Anne* and the Prado *Mona Lisa* (1503-19). These updates, and many unusual approaches, are in Alessandro Vezzosi's *Leonardo da Vinci: the Complete Paintings in Detail*, where he offers his assessments of painting details with relatively minimal footnotes. Scholars may not be in general agreement about some of his propositions, such as attributions of *La Bella Principessa* to Leonardo and the *Battle of Anghiari* (*Tavola Doria*) copy potentially to Leonardo's workshop, or that Leonardo's mother was a slave from the eastern Mediterranean, but Vezzosi's book succeeds as a relatively concise and knowledgeable catalogue raisonné of an extensive body of work on Leonardo's painting.

For an assessment of the state of the research, look first to the most thorough catalogue raisonné to date: Carmen Bambach's *Leonardo da Vinci Rediscovered*, which assesses all aspects of Leonardo's work in three substantial volumes, along with a fourth volume of footnotes, an exhaustive bibliography and a substantial, detailed index. Whereas most Leonardo biographies are insufficient in scope and/or research for university courses that address Leonardo, Bambach's work solves both traditional problems, thereby providing the best available Leonardo biography. One may, however, wish to read each volume with the volume of footnotes at one side, to see the updates to previous scholarship as well as the dialogue with other scholars in the footnotes about new dates, attributions and interpretations, much of which should spark additional discussions for years to come.

**M**ost biographies are, however, easier to carry and read while travelling, numerous examples of which were published this year. Several new translations of Vasari's mid-16th-century biography of Leonardo offer new interpretations in several European languages. For example, Louis Frank's and Stefania Tullio Cataldo's translation and commentary, *Giorgio Vasari: Vie de Léonard de Vinci*, helps locate Vasari's resources on Leonardo as primarily focused on the theory and practice of painting, and that Leonardo's approaches to other disciplines were often in the service of this primary interest. More informative of Vasari than of Leonardo, this approach was nonetheless developed with the help of Francesco Melzi, Leonardo's former student, who allowed Vasari to see before the 1556 edition of the Lives an important selection of Leonardo's drawings and notes. The recent translation by Martin Kemp and Lucy Russell of *The Life of Leonardo da Vinci* by Giorgio Vasari shows



**Leonardo's Star of Bethlehem (1506-08)** is in the Louvre's current show; the unfinished *Adoration of the Magi* (San Donato a Scopeto altarpiece, around 1481) is in the Uffizi's collection

with brown-coloured text the significant additions by Vasari to the 1556 edition of his *Lives*, apparently after the advice of Melzi.

Among the new biographies, those by Pascal Brioist (*Les audaces de Léonard de Vinci*), François Quiviger (*Leonardo da Vinci: Self, Art and Nature*) and Bernd Roeck (*Leonardo: Der Mann, der alles wissen wollte*) offer new ways of thinking about Leonardo. Brioist develops a historical trajectory of Leonardo's heroic and courageous way of quickly adapting to difficult projects and requirements of self-promotion while working for the most powerful people of the time. Also addressing Leonardo's rapid professional development as a courtier and intellectual contributor, Quiviger focuses instead on Leonardo's successful methodology at court for developing a diverse range of projects in the visual and technical arts, along with studies of nature. Roeck's approach to "the man who wanted to know everything" addresses with substantial original research Leonardo's search for improvements and innovation in his many projects. All three biographies are about the usefulness of Leonardo's way of thinking, for his professional work and, by implication (and as partially indicated in the books), for ours.

As a critical approach that also addresses Leonardo's way of thinking, Joost Keizer's *Leonardo's Paradox: Word and Image in the Making of Renaissance*

*Culture*, examines the interplay of word and image in Leonardo's work. He sees paradoxes as central: for example, a painting can lead to a better understanding of nature, or the meaning of an image can depend on its association with certain words. Though not necessarily part of Leonardo's vocabulary for inventive processes, paradoxes are part of his work.

Important critical approaches to Leonardo's biography include Laure Fagnart's *Léonard de Vinci à la cour de France* and Jan Sammer's *Leonardo da Vinci: the Untold Story of his Final Years*. A specialist on Leonardo's work for French patrons and his reception in France, Fagnart provides a thoroughly researched assessment of the legacy of Leonardo's work in French Milan and France, from Louis XII to Louis XIV (around 1500-1695). Ten years ago, Sammer presented his research on the discovery of a letter from Francis I on 14 March 1516 that invited Leonardo to France. Additional archival research since then has resulted in his biography of the final 15 years of Leonardo's life, and thus a substantial contribution to Leonardo scholarship.

Conferences in 2015 and 2016 resulted in three important volumes of collected essays this year. *Leonardo in Dialogue: the Artist Amid his Contemporaries* is part of a series of meetings and publications at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz. It offers an unusual approach whereby most of the writers



are not Leonardo specialists and their essays address especially the work of his contemporaries. *Leonardo da Vinci: Nature and Architecture*, edited by Constance Moffatt and Sara Taglialagamba, is the second volume of their *Leonardo Studies* series, with essays written mainly by specialists on his approaches to natural properties and nature, and in part two, architecture. As the seventh volume of the important *Biblioteca Leonardiana, Studi e Documenti* series, *Leonardo in Britain: Collections and Historical Reception*, edited by Julia Barone and Susana Avery Quash, provides new research. It includes essays by 19 Leonardo specialists, many of whom are also curators of collections that have works by him. One of these – Martin Clayton – organised this year's blockbuster exhibition at The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, and helped with several additional exhibitions in the UK. Clayton's *Leonardo da Vinci: a Life in Drawing* discusses 195 drawings, most of which were lent to museums and galleries in batches of 12 each during late 2018 and early 2019, after which they were returned to The Queen's Gallery to exhibit together.

Not since 1952 had the best drawings of the Royal Collection Trust – arguably the finest group of presentation drawings of Leonardo's oeuvre – been on display in one place. Addressing the latest research on Leonardo's work, the catalogue also discusses the scientific scans by Alan Donnithorne of the surfaces

of the drawings and their preparatory marks. Donnithorne discusses this ground-breaking work in more detail in *Leonardo da Vinci: a Closer Look*.

Another group of Leonardo's best presentation drawings is in his *Codex Madrid I*, which appears to be a portion of his *Book on the Science of Mechanics*, which Luca Pacioli praised in 1496. Dietrich Lohrmann and Thomas Kreft have produced an exceptional three-volume translation and analysis of this volume in *Leonardo da Vinci: Codex Madrid I: Edition und Kommentar*, and have included a facsimile volume with blue numbers printed next to the drawing sections that are translated in volumes two and three. This is a ten-year project, in German, much of which the authors will also make available online.

Although not expected to go online, another four-volume, ten-year project on one of Leonardo's notebooks – his *Codex Leicester* – is currently in press, and should be available soon. The first volume of *Leonardo da Vinci's Codex Leicester: a New Edition* by Domenico Laurenza and Martin Kemp is available and contains a facsimile of the *Codex*. Soon to join are volumes with interpretive essays (vol. 2), transcription and translation (vol. 3), and paraphrase and commentary (vol. 4). This work should make more easily accessible the state of the research on the *Codex Leicester*.