



LEONARDO DA VINCI (1452-1519)

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Ginevra de' Benci, c.1474–1480, oil and tempera on poplar panel, 38.8 cm × 36.7 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

- This is *Ginevra de' Benci* (pronounced 'dee benchy') described by the Venetian ambassador as the most beautiful girl in Florence with golden hair and dark eyes. It was rumoured they were having an affair but she doesn't look very happy about it.[1] In fact, this serious look was typical of portraits of the period.
- This painting like most I will be showing you today is by Leonardo da Vinci one of the greatest painters who ever lived although his output was remarkably small. This talk **covers all twenty-four of his generally, widely or universally accepted works** excluding the drawings in his notebooks and sixteen disputed works.
- Incidentally, Leonardo da Vinci is not his full name, it is Leonardo di **ser Piero da Vinci**. Ser Piero d'Antonio was his father who was a **wealthy notary from Vinci**, a town about 20 miles from Florence. Leonardo was illegitimate and the result of an affair

with **Caterina di Meo Lippi** (Meo pronounced 'mayo') an orphaned 15-year-old girl who lived on a farm nearby.[2]

- By the way, if you would like more detailed information and references then, as always, please see the PDF notes on my website which on YouTube you can access by clicking on the 'i' above my head. As you can see my website is www.shafe.uk.

NOTES

- There are twenty paintings generally, widely or universally accepted as by Leonardo, two drawings and two tempera on plaster works. In total, eight works are universally accepted, eleven works are widely accepted by a large majority of modern scholars although controversial in the past and five works are generally accepted by many modern scholars although they are still controversial.
- His father's family came from a long line of notaries but as Leonardo was illegitimate he did not have to follow in his father's footsteps by becoming a notary.
- Leonardo is described by Giorgio Vasari as well loved, a 'sparkling conversationalist', who can comfort a troubled soul, so persuasive he could bend other people to his will and so generous he fed all his friends, rich and poor. He was described as so endowed with beauty, grace and talent that he left all other men far behind.

LITTLE KNOWN FACTS ABOUT LEONARDO

- His name was not Leonardo but Leonardo di **ser Piero da Vinci** (15 April 1452 - 2 May 1519)
- He was illegitimate, the son of a wealthy Florentine notary

and an unmarried peasant woman called Caterina. As he was illegitimate he was not expected to become a notary like his father. He was the only child they had together but they had 12 other children.

- He received little formal education. He was self-taught and became an apprentice of Andrea del Verrocchio.
- He never completed his first commissions as he went to Milan where he would live for 17 years in total.
- He was an accomplished and noted musician. Georgio Vasari said, "he sang divinely without any preparation".
- His biggest project was destroyed. A 25 feet high equestrian statue it would have been the largest in the world.
- He was a chronic procrastinator.
- His ideas were not recognised as important in his lifetime.
- He was charged with sodomy in 1476, the charges were dismissed and he disappeared for two years.
- He spent his final three years in France.
- He was left-handed.
- He was an animal lover and a vegetarian.
- He was so strong he could bend a horseshoe as if it were lead.

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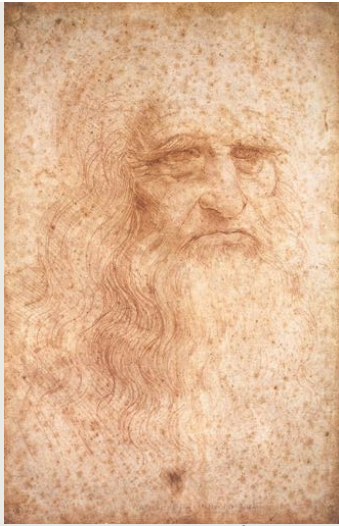
[1] David Bull , 'Two Portraits by Leonardo: "Ginevra de' Benci"'

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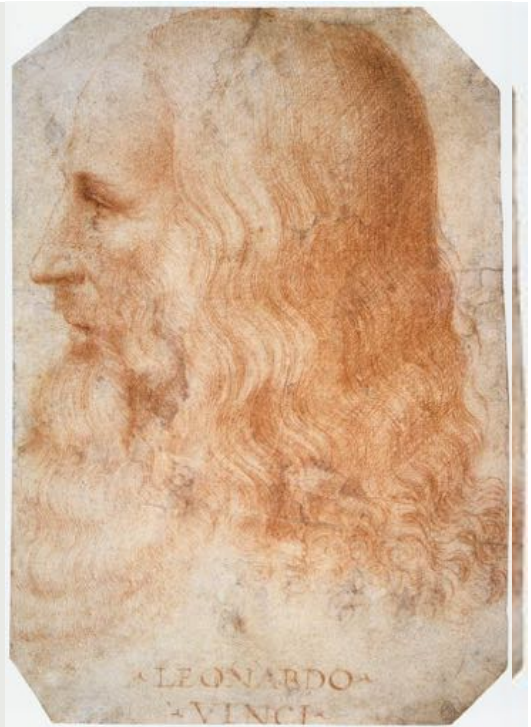
[2] <https://www.history.com/news/an-orphaned-teenager-was-mother-to-the-worlds-most-famous-artist>

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- Some analysis is based on conversations with OpenAI's ChatGPT (Jan 9, 2023).
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Previously presumed self-portrait, was c. 1512 now 1490s, red chalk on paper, 33.3 x 21.3 cm, Royal Library of Turin



Francesco Melzi (1491-1568), *Portrait of Leonardo* (1452-1519), after 1510, 27.5 x 19 cm, Royal Collection

Francesco Melzi (1491/3-c. 1570), *Portrait of Leonardo*, after 1510, red chalk, 27.5 x 19 cm, Royal Collection, bequeathed to Francesco Melzi; from whose heirs purchased by Pompeo Leoni, c.1582-90; Thomas Howard, 14th Earl of Arundel, by 1630; probably acquired by Charles II; Royal Collection by 1690 Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), presumed *Self-portrait*, 1490s, was c. 1512, red chalk on paper, 33.3 x 21.3 cm, Royal Library of Turin.

- **What did he look like?** We know **when he was young we know he was extremely handsome** with fine, curly hair down to his chest. We also know he was a **kind, generous, left-handed vegetarian** who could **sing and draw** from an early age and he was **so strong** he could bend a horseshoe straight. He wore clothes which made him stand out from other Italians, short tunics when the fashion was for long and coloured pink, purple and crimson.
- He received little formal education but taught himself and then when he became a teenager his father showed some of his sketches to the most famous artist in Florence, **Andrea del**

Verrocchio, who immediately took him on as an apprentice.

- This is the only reliable surviving portrait. It was most probably executed towards the end of his life by his pupil **Francesco Melzi** (pronounced 'MEL-tsi') perhaps with enlivening strokes by Leonardo himself in the lower part of the hair.
- There is no evidence of him having a beard until his final years and it would have been unusual on an Italian. The image of an old man with a long beard and hair and a distant gaze has become associated with Leonardo and through him any wise man or philosopher such as Aristotle.
- (CLICK) **This picture of an old man** in the Royal Collection in Turin was accepted as a self-portrait of Leonardo but **recently it has been dated on stylistic grounds to the 1490s** and so cannot be an accurate self-portrait as Leonardo was then in his mid-forties.

BIO:LEONARDO

BIO:DA VINCI

- **Leonardo di ser Piero da Vinci** (15 April 1452 – 2 May 1519), more commonly known as Leonardo da Vinci or Leonardo, was a polymath whose areas of interest included painting, sculpting, architecture, science, music, mathematics, engineering, literature, anatomy, geology, astronomy, botany, writing, history, and cartography. He has been called the father of palaeontology and architecture and is widely considered one of the greatest painters of all time. He is credited with the invention of the parachute, helicopter and military tank. He designed a 32-

mile waterway linking Milan and Lake Como and designed a double-helix staircase. No one has excelled in so many pursuits and fields of knowledge and made such important contributions in all of them.

- **He was born in Vinci in 1452**, a village about 25 km west of Medici-ruled Florence. He was the illegitimate son of a wealthy notary called Messer Piero Fruosino di Antonio da Vinci and a peasant called Catarina. His father married four times and had twelve children by his third and fourth wives. They were all much younger than Leonardo and he had few contacts with him. He had an informal education that included Latin, geometry and mathematics. There are various anecdotes associated with his childhood. For example, "... **the first memory of my childhood is that it seemed to me, when I was in my cradle, that a kite came to me, and opened my mouth with its tail, and struck me several times with its tail inside my lips**".[1] The exploration of a dark cave in the mountains and the design of a shield that so terrifying that it was sold to the Duke of Milan.
- **First Florentine Period (1472-82)**
- **In 1466, when he was 14 he was apprenticed to Andrea di Cione, known as Verrocchio**, one of the finest artists in Florence and himself an apprentice of the sculptor Donatello (c. 1386-1466). Other apprentices included Domenico Ghirlandaio, Pietro Perugino and Sandro Botticelli. Leonardo also visited the nearby workshop of Antonio Pollaiuolo.
- **In 1472 he qualified as a master of the Guild of Saint**

Luke when he was 20. His father set him up in his own studio but he continued to cooperate with Verrocchio for a further five years.

- **In 1476 he was charged with sodomy** but acquitted either because of his families powerful connections or because of a lack of evidence (his single accuser had posted a letter to the authorities). Between 1476 and 1478 there is no record of him leading to speculation that he was keeping a low profile.
- **In 1478 he received a commission and in 1481 another (*Adoration of the Magi*) but he completed neither and went to Milan** perhaps to escape the earlier sexual scandal, or because the austere, academic Milanese court suited him or because he was offered more exciting projects. He may by this period been in the employ of Lorenzo de'Medici.
- **First Milanese Period (1482-99)**
- **In 1482 he is recorded as a talented musician** who created a silver lyre shaped as a horse's head. Lorenzo de'Medici sent Leonardo to Ludovico Sforza (1452-1508, regent 1480-1494 then Duke of Milan 1494-1499) then Regent of Milan with the lyre as a gift. Leonardo wrote a letter explaining he could create engineering wonders and also paint.
- **He worked in Milan from 1482 to 1499 (from age 30 to 47)**. In this period he painted ***The Virgin of the Rocks*** and ***The Last Supper***. ***The Virgin of the Rocks*** led to a ten-year legal dispute which led to him painting a second version. During this period he invented his 'smoky' sfumato

technique.

- In 1485 he went on a diplomatic mission to Hungary on behalf of the Duke of Milan which led to a number of engineering and other projects.
- From 1495 to 1499 he was commissioned by the Duke to produce *The Last Supper* for the dining hall of the convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan.
- He studied anatomy and worked on many others projects such as floats and pageants and on a **five metre high equestrian monument** to Francesco Sforza, Ludovico's predecessor. In 1492 the clay model was completed and the bronze had been set aside. It was the largest Renaissance bronze statue and Leonardo wrote detailed plans about how it was to be cast. In November 1494, Ludovico gave the bronze to be used for cannon to defend the city from invasion by Charles VIII of France (1470-1498) and then Louis XII of France (1462-1515). In 1499 the invading French troops used the clay model for target practise.
- **In 1499, with Milan overthrown by the French, Leonardo fled to Venice** with his assistant and lifelong companion Salai (1480-1524). There he worked as a military designer devising new ways of defending the city from naval attacks by the Turkish.
- **Second Florentine Period (1500-1508)**
- **In 1500 he went to Florence** where he became an architectural advisor and studied mathematics.
- **In 1502 he entered the employ of Cesare Borgia** the son of Pope Alexander VI working as a military architect and

travelling throughout Italy. Maps were rare at this time and Leonardo helped Borgia defend his city and plan for a dam to provide drinking water by drawing detailed maps.

- **In 1503 he returned to Florence** created the cartoon of ***The Virgin and Child with St Anne*** (1503-19), a work that won such admiration that "men and women, young and old" flocked to see it "as if they were attending a great festival". He spent two years designing and painting a mural of ***The Battle of Anghiari*** (1503-5) for the Great Hall in the Palazzo Vecchio, with Michelangelo designing its companion piece, *The Battle of Cascina*. He started the ***Mona Lisa*** (1503-19) at this time.
- **In Florence in 1504, he was part of a committee** formed to relocate, against the artist's will, Michelangelo's statue of David.
- **In 1504 Michelangelo insulted Leonardo** by implying that he was unable to cast it.
- **In 1506 he returned to Milan** but did not stay long as **his father had died in 1504** and he had to return to Florence to sort of family arguments over the estate but **by 1508 he was back in Milan**.
- **Second Milanese Period (1508-1513)**
- By 1508 he was back in Milan where he stayed for five years under the patronage of the French Governor of Milan and Louis XII, King of France. He worked on a bridge building project and on a canal to link Milan to lake Como. He ran a successful studio with many apprentices including Salai, Bernardino Luini and his favourite, a young aristocrat called Francesco Melzi.

- He engaged in many scientific projects and the deep study of the human body. He studied mathematics, mechanics, geology, optics, and botany. He created plans for the creation of a flying machine and also devised military weapons such as an early example of the machine gun, and a large crossbow.
- In 1512 he was working on an equestrian monument but was prevented by an invasion that drove the French from Milan.
- **Rome and France (1513-19)**
- **From September 1513 to 1516 he lived in the Belvedere in the Vatican**, under Pope Leo X, where Raphael and Michelangelo were both active. He undertook a project to drain the Pontine Marshes but he was dissatisfied with the lack of substantial projects at a time when Bramante, Raphael and Michelangelo were all working on stunning projects.
- **In October 1515, King Francis I of France recaptured Milan.** On 19 December, Leonardo was present at the meeting of Francis I and Pope Leo X, which took place in Bologna. Leonardo was commissioned to make for Francis a mechanical lion that could walk forward then open its chest to reveal a cluster of lilies.
- **In 1516, he entered Francis's service**, being given the use of the manor house **Clos Lucé**, now a public museum, near the king's residence at the royal **Château d'Amboise**. He spent the **last three years of his life there**, accompanied by his friend and apprentice and supported by a pension totalling 10,000 scudi. ***St John the Baptist*** (1513) is

believed to have been painted at this time and he wrote scientific papers, produced a treatise on painting and drew *Visions of the End of the World*. He formed a close relationship with the King who frequently visited him. Leonardo designed the double-helix staircase of the King's Chateau de Chambord.

- **He died in 1519 at Clos Lucé aged 67** probably of a stroke and he lamented that '**he had offended against God and men by failing to practice his art as he should have done**'. It is said the King held his head in his arms as he died. His estate was administered by his pupil Francesco Melzi (1491-1570) an artist from a family of the Milanese nobility. Thanks to him Leonardo's notebooks and sketches were preserved and taken to Milan for safe keeping. It was here that Melzi met Giorgio Vasari and would have been able to pass on a great deal of information about Leonardo's life.

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Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), *Landscape Drawing for Santa Maria Della Nave*, 1473, Uffizi Gallery
From now on all works are by Leonardo unless otherwise stated

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), *Landscape Drawing for Santa Maria Della Nave*, 1473, Uffizi Gallery, earliest known drawing

- This drawing, created when Leonardo was 21, is his **earliest surviving work**. The date of 1473, in at the top left, written backwards, he was writing backwards even at this period possibly as it is easier if you are left-handed.
- It features the Arno river valley and Montelupo Castle which was built on the border of the city state of Florence where the Arno flows out between the hills onto the plain leading to Pisa and to the sea.
- It is one of the earliest known Italian landscapes and the fluency of this pen and ink sketch was also ahead of its time. It shows Leonardo's early interest in landscapes which often crop up in the background of his paintings.
- Leonardo was a polymath whose interests included **painting, sculpting, architecture, science, music, mathematics, engineering, literature, anatomy, geology, astronomy,**

botany, history, and cartography. He has been called the **father of palaeontology and architecture** and is widely considered one of the greatest painters of all time. He is credited with the invention of the **parachute, helicopter and military tank** among other things and **he hated violence and loved animals which is why he was a vegetarian.** He regarded humans as the **same species,** strictly speaking what we now call genus **as apes and monkeys,** an idea validated over three hundred years later by Charles Darwin.

- Having said all that he found it difficult to focus on one project for an extended period and he would often **procrastinate** as he was always moving on to his next project.



The Annunciation, c. 1472–1476, oil and tempera on poplar panel, 98 cm × 217 cm, Uffizi, Florence

The Annunciation, c. 1472–1476, oil and tempera on poplar panel, 98 cm × 217 cm, Uffizi, Florence

- This is *The Annunciation* his **earliest major work**. He painted it **after he had qualified as a master of the Guild of Saint Luke** and his father had set him up in **his own studio**. Leonardo continued to **cooperate with his master Verrocchio** and this painting was previously thought to be by Verrocchio (until 1869) but it is now widely accepted as **Leonardo's earliest painting**.
- It could have been his first and last painting as in 1476 (aged 24) **he could have been executed for sodomy**. He was arrested with **several male companions and charged but was acquitted as no witnesses came forward**. For the next two years there is no record of what he did or where he lived. There is no other record in his or other records of the time of his sexuality or his feelings for men or women. He never married and wrote **"Intellectual passion drives out sensuality. ... Whoso curbs not lustful desires puts himself on a level with the beasts."**[1]

- This painting dates from about this time (about 1472–1475) and is now in the Uffizi gallery in Florence. The angel is holding a Madonna lily, a symbol of Mary's virginity and of the city of Florence. It is thought that Leonardo copied the wings from those of a **bird in flight**, but they have **been lengthened by a later artist**.
- I mentioned his interest in landscape so let's look at the background in more detail (CLICK)...

NOTES

- *The Annunciation* dates from about 1472–1475 and is in the Uffizi gallery in Florence. The angel holds a Madonna lily, a symbol of Mary's virginity and of the city of Florence. It is supposed that Leonardo originally copied the wings from those of a **bird in flight**, but they have **since been lengthened by a later artist**. When *The Annunciation* came to the Uffizi in 1867, from the Olivetan monastery of San Bartolomeo, near Florence, it was ascribed to **Domenico Ghirlandaio**, who was, like Leonardo, **an apprentice in the workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio**. In 1869, Karl Eduard von Liphart, the central figure of the German expatriate art colony in Florence, recognized it as a youthful work by da Vinci, one of the first attributions of a surviving work to the youthful Leonardo.
- During the 15th century, Florence has a reputation abroad as "the capital of the sodomites" and the majority of men in the city are "at least once during their lifetimes officially incriminated for engaging in homosexual relations," according to historian Michael Rocke. In the year 1496, a total of 243 young Florentine boys confessed their

participation in homosexual intercourse in front of the Office of the Night and not a single one of the boys was executed, instead only receiving minor fines.

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The Annunciation, c. 1472–1476, oil and tempera on poplar panel, 98 cm × 217 cm, Uffizi, Florence

The Annunciation, c. 1472–1476, oil and tempera on poplar panel, 98 cm × 217 cm, Uffizi, Florence

- It is interesting to examine the **background** as we find so much detail in this tiny area. There is a city with towers like medieval Florence which had about 100 towers. There are classical buildings and a harbour with a jetty and what could be a lighthouse. (CLICK) All surrounded by hills and towering mountains.

*Madonna of the
Carnation*, c. 1472–1478,
oil on poplar panel, 62
cm × 47.5 cm, Alte
Pinakothek, Munich



Madonna of the Carnation, c. 1472–1478, oil on poplar panel, 62 cm × 47.5 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich

- Notice I am going through the paintings chronologically in so far as we know the dates.
- Here the **young Virgin Mary sits with Baby Jesus** on her lap and she is holding a **carnation**, its red colour suggesting **the blood and the Passion**.
- Again, this painting was originally thought to have been created by **Andrea del Verrocchio**, but subsequent art historians generally agree that it is **Leonardo's work** made while he was working in Verrocchio's workshop possibly with **some overpainting by a Flemish artist**.
- Again if we look at the background we see mountains and a lot of detail more typical of Northern Renaissance painting and one aspect of Leonardo's developing signature style. This is the only work by Leonardo permanently on display in Germany.

NOTES

- The painting has severely deteriorated due to previous poor restoration work.
- It is painted on a poplar panel. Poplar is a hardwood with a straight grain and a fine texture but it is nearly as easy to work as a softwood like pine.

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It is believed Leonardo painted the angel on the left

Andrea del Verrocchio (c. 1435–1488) and Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), *Baptism of Christ*, Uffizi, 1472-75, oil and tempera on poplar panel, 177 x 151 cm, oil on wood, Uffizi Gallery, Florence



Andrea del Verrocchio (c. 1435–1488) and Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), *Baptism of Christ*, Uffizi, 1472-75, oil and tempera on poplar panel, 177 x 151 cm, oil on wood, Uffizi Gallery, Florence

- A famous painting, the *Baptism of Christ*. This is widely accepted to be **by his master Verrocchio with some elements by Leonardo**. According to the artist **Giorgio Vasari** (1511-1574) who wrote about the lives of the artists 75 years later Leonardo's contributions includes the (CLICK) **angel on the left-hand side**, some of the background landscape and the torso of Christ.
- The picture depicts the Baptism of Christ by John the Baptist as recorded in the Biblical Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. According to **Vasari** Verrocchio was so impressed by Leonardo's angel that he gave up painting. Verrocchio painted very few pictures and the last was around the date of this painting so Vasari may have speculated that this was the reason. Some modern critics also attribute much of the landscape in the

background and the figure of Christ to Leonardo.

- Florentine artists at this time, like Verrocchio, used **tempera** and so it is unusual that it is **painted in oil**. Oils had been used in Italy to paint durable items such as shields but their use in painting **followed their introduction of imported works by Dutch and Flemish master at about this time**. In this painting the angel and parts of the background are in oils and the rest is in tempera, further evidence suggesting the parts painted by Leonardo.

NOTES

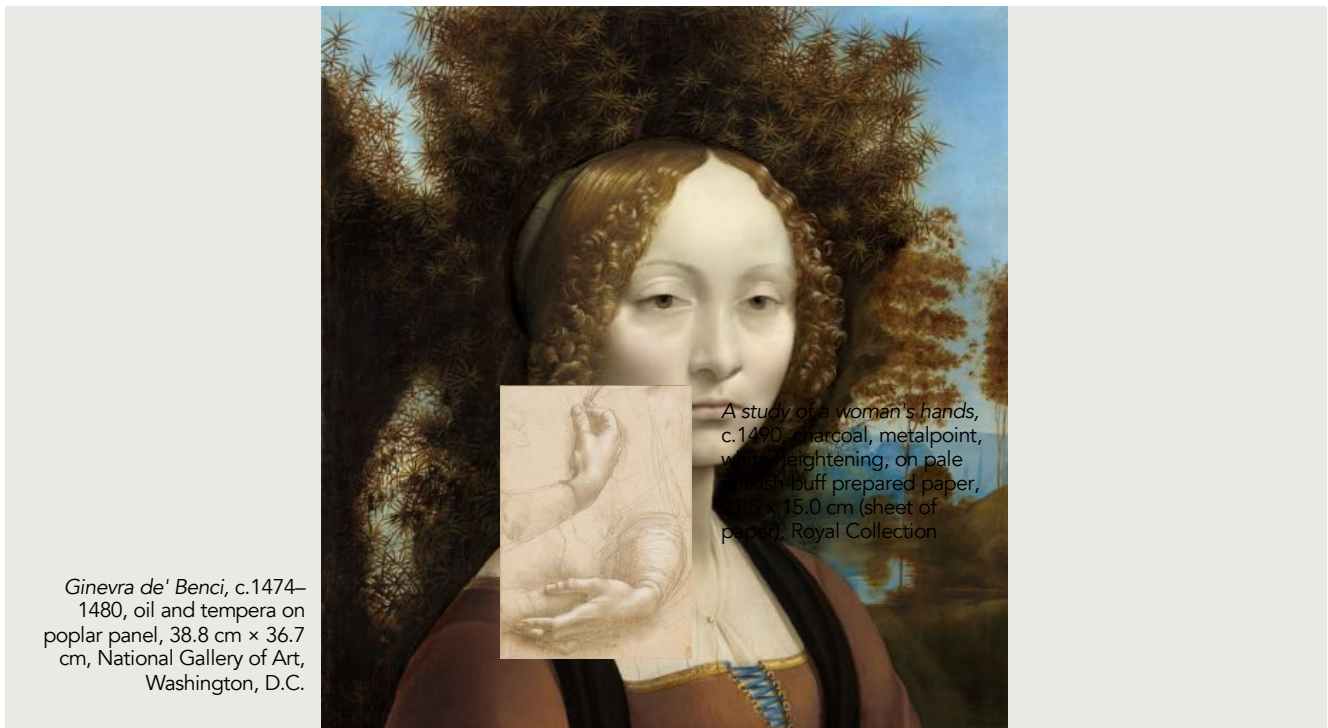
- St John the Baptist is holding a **scroll** on which we can read ECCE AGNUS DEI which continues [QUI TOLLIT PECCATA MUNDI] ("**Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.**" Gospel according to John 1, 29).
- Leonardo completed his apprenticeship with Andrea del Verrocchio between 1466 when he was 14 and 1472 when he qualified as a master of the Guild of Saint Luke aged 20.
- The panel comes from the church of the Vallombrosan monastery of San Salvi in Florence. In 1730 it was taken to another Vallombrosan monastery in Florence, Santa Verdiana, and from there, it joined the Florentine Galleries in 1810. It has been in the Uffizi since 1919.
- Gods hands descend from the top encircling a dove representing the Holy Ghost. The quality of the hands suggests they were painted by another artist. There is a raptor swooping over John the Baptist's head and entering a forest.

FIRST FLORENTINE PERIOD (1472-82)

- In 1466, when he was 14 he was apprenticed to Andrea di Cione, known as Verrocchio, one of the finest artists in Florence. Other apprentices included Domenico Ghirlandaio, Perugino and Botticelli.
- In 1472 he qualified as a master of the Guild of Saint Luke when he was 20. His father set him up in his own studio and he continued to cooperate with Verrocchio.
- In 1476 he was charged with sodomy but acquitted. Between 1476 and 1478 there is no record of him.
- In 1478 he received a commission and in 1481 another but he completed neither and went to Milan. He may by this period been in the employ of Lorenzo de' Medici.

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Ginevra de' Benci, c.1474–1480, oil and tempera on poplar panel, 38.8 cm × 36.7 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

A study of a woman's hands, c.1490, charcoal, metalpoint, white heightening, on pale pinkish-buff prepared paper, 21.5 x 15.0 cm (sheet of paper), Royal Collection

Ginevra de' Benci, c.1474–1480, oil and tempera on poplar panel, 38.8 cm × 36.7 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

A study of a woman's hands, c.1490, charcoal, metalpoint, white heightening, on pale pinkish-buff prepared paper, 21.5 x 15.0 cm (sheet of paper), Royal Collection

- While controversial in the past, **most modern scholars attribute the work to Leonardo.**
- The painting was revolutionary, one contemporary wrote that Leonardo, "**painted Ginevra d'Amerigo Benci with such perfection that it seemed to be not a portrait but Ginevra herself.**" It is one of the earliest three-quarters view portraits in Italian art, up till then portraits were all in profile.
- **The sitter** is generally considered to be a **Florentine aristocrat called Ginevra de' Benci** (pronounced 'gin-ay-vra dee benchy'). It was probably painted to celebrate **her marriage or more likely her engagement to Luigi di Bernardo Niccolini when she was 16.** Niccolini was a 32 year-old widower and they

married in 1474.

- Another possibility is it was commissioned by Bernardo Bembo, the Venetian ambassador, to celebrate her beauty following the conventions of courtly and platonic love affairs between well-mannered gentleman and ladies.
- The juniper bush behind her signifies chastity and female virtue and its Italian name *ginepro* (pronounced 'gin-né-pro') is a play on her name.
- At some stage the **bottom of the portrait has been lost** and there is a study (CLICK) that is now in the Royal Collection which may be, some suggest, a preliminary sketch for her arms. The style of the drawing by Leonardo is later however, as we can see from the dates. The hands are separate studies and may have been for *A Lady with an Ermine* which we will see later.
- Incidentally, it is in the National Gallery of Art in Washington and is the only painting by Leonardo on public display in the Americas.

NOTES

- Wedding portraits were usually painted in pairs and so this is more likely to be to celebrate her engagement.

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Benois Madonna, c.1478–1481, oil on wood panel, transferred to canvas, 49.5 cm × 33 cm, Hermitage, Saint Petersburg

Benois Madonna, c.1478–1481, oil on wood panel, transferred to canvas, 49.5 cm × 33 cm, Hermitage, Saint Petersburg

- This is the Benois Madonna (pronounced 'BEN-whar') **widely accepted to be by Leonardo** and is considered to be **the first work by him produced independently of his master Verrocchio**.
- For centuries it was **thought to have been lost** but it had been acquired by a Russian general and his son sold it to a fishing merchant. It remained in that family until his granddaughter married the architect Leon Benois when it became part of the large **Benois art collection** which was sensationally **exhibited in 1909**. From there it was **purchased by the Imperial Hermitage Museum** in 1914.
- At the time, its attribution was doubted by some and many still dislike the painting. The well-known American art historian Bernard Berenson (1865-1959) said, "**I found myself confronted by a young woman with a bald forehead and puffed cheeks, a**

toothless smile, bleary eyes, and a furrowed throat".

- But now it is widely accepted to be by Leonardo. Just to explain what that means. '**Universally accepted**' means **unanimously** accepted by modern scholars except perhaps by one or two, '**widely accepted**' means it was controversial in the past but is now accepted by a **large majority** of modern scholars and '**generally accepted**' means it is **still controversial** but is accepted by **most modern scholars**.

NOTES

- Saint Petersburg was Petrograd from August 1914 to the more Russian and less German Petrograd and then to Leningrad from 1924 to 1991 when it was renamed Saint Petersburg following a referendum.

REFERENCES

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benois_Madonna



The Adoration of the Magi (unfinished),
c. 1478–1482, oil
(underpainting) on wood
panel, 240 cm × 250 cm,
Uffizi, Florence

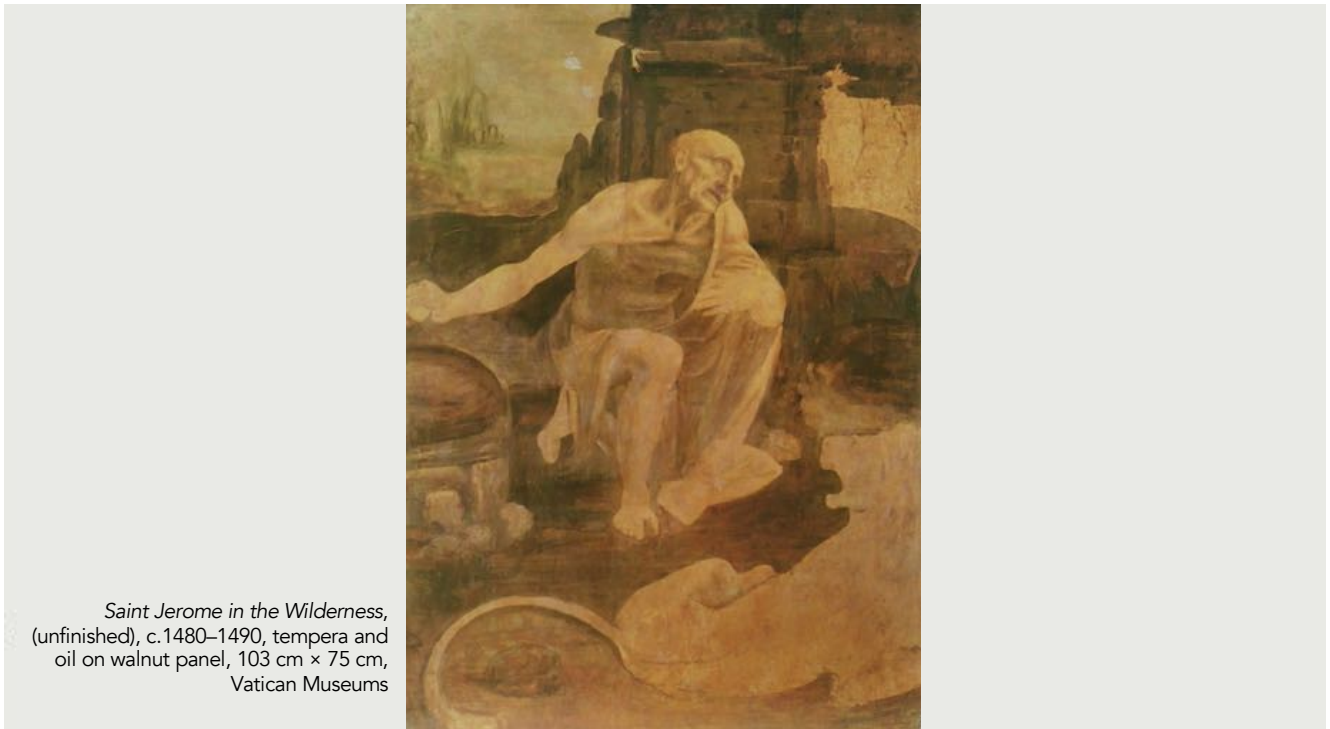
The Adoration of the Magi (unfinished), c. 1478–1482, oil
(underpainting) on wood panel, 240 cm × 250 cm, Uffizi, Florence

- This is *The Adoration of the Magi* and is **universally accepted to be by Leonardo**. It is an **unfinished early painting** commissioned by Augustinian monks in Florence but unfinished a year later when he left for Milan in 1482. The commission was given to Filippino Lippi who completed another *Adoration of the Magi* which is also now in the Uffizi.
- In general the symbolism represents the **pagan world in the background** being replaced by the Christian world. The ruins on the left may be the Basilica of Maxentius in the Roman Forum and Leonardo may be referring to a medieval legend that the **Romans claimed the Basilica would stand until a virgin gave birth** and the legend claims it **fell the night Christ was born**. A nice story but it was not built until 312 AD. By the way, some say it may be a self-portrait of Leonardo on the far right.
- Forensic and scientific analysis (by Maurizio Seracini) now shows

that at least two layers of varnish, mainly in the lower half of the painting, were applied in the 18th–19th centuries and only the underdrawing is by Leonardo, he concluded "**none of the paint we see on the *Adoration* today was put there by Leonardo.**" He speculated that the monks had rejected the work as too sensational and not in keeping with conventional representations of the Adoration. They put it in store rather than destroy it and later, as Leonardo's work became valuable someone painted it over to make it more saleable.

REFERENCES

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adoration_of_the_Magi_\(Leonardo\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adoration_of_the_Magi_(Leonardo))



Saint Jerome in the Wilderness, (unfinished), c.1480–1490, tempera and oil on walnut panel, 103 cm × 75 cm, Vatican Museums

Saint Jerome in the Wilderness, (unfinished), c.1480–1490, tempera and oil on walnut panel, 103 cm × 75 cm, Vatican Museums

- Another unfinished work, this time of *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness* and this is universally accepted to be by Leonardo.
- The saint holds a rock in his right hand and is beating his chest in penance. **The lion** at the lower right was his loyal companion after he **removed a thorn** from its paw. St. Jerome is best known as the **first person to translate the Bible into Latin**, a version known as the Vulgate.
- Note the representation of the muscles in his shoulders and neck. At this time Leonardo was dissecting cadavers ('kuh-da-vers', 'da' as in 'dash') and studying anatomy.
- You will be shocked to hear that at some stage the panel was **cut into five pieces**. There is a legend that Cardinal Fesch, the uncle of Napoleon Bonaparte, **discovered one of the pieces being sold as a box lid** and five years later found another piece being

used as a wedge for shoemaker's bench. He eventually assembled the whole panel except for a small triangle. It was sold by his descendants to Pope Pius IX (1792-1878, known for introducing the dogma that a Pope speaking on record, i.e. *ex cathedra*, is infallible).

REFERENCES

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Jerome_in_the_Wilderness_\(Leonardo\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Jerome_in_the_Wilderness_(Leonardo))



Virgin of the Rocks,
c. 1483–1493, oil
on wood panel,
transferred to
canvas,
199 × 122 cm,
Louvre, Paris

Virgin of the Rocks (Louvre version), c. 1483–1493, oil on wood panel, transferred to canvas, 199 cm × 122 cm, Louvre, Paris

- There are two similar versions of the *Virgin of the Rocks*, one at the National Gallery and one at the Louvre. This is the version in the Louvre which is **generally considered the earlier version** and is universally accepted to be by Leonardo.
- It was **painted when he went to Milan**. The way his trip came about was that Leonardo was known as a talented musician and the year before, in 1482, he created a silver lyre shaped as a horse's head. His patron in Florence **Lorenzo de' Medici** (1449-1492, pronounced 'MAY-di-chi') was so pleased he **sent Leonardo to Milan** with the lyre as a **gift for the ruler Ludovico Sforza**. Leonardo wrote a letter to Sforza explaining he could also create engineering wonders and paint. By engineering wonders he meant weapons of war, an important skill in this violent period.
- Sforza became his patron and **he stayed in Milan for 17 years**

(from 1482 to 1499, from age 30 to 47) and while he worked on this painting, ***The Last Supper*** and a **huge equestrian monument** to Francesco Sforza. It would have been the largest Renaissance equestrian statue but the bronze was used to make canons to defend against the invading French. In 1499, the French overthrew Sforza, Leonardo fled and the army used the clay model for target practice destroying it.

NOTES

- **Lorenzo di Piero de' Medici** (1449–1492) was *de facto* ruler of the Florentine Republic, and the most powerful and enthusiastic patron of Renaissance culture in Italy. He was known as **Lorenzo the Magnificent** by contemporary Florentines, he was a statesman, diplomat, politician and patron of scholars, artists, and poets. He helped secure commissions for Piero and Antonio del Pollaiuolo, Andrea del Verrocchio, **Leonardo da Vinci**, **Sandro Botticelli**, Domenico Ghirlandaio and **Michelangelo Buonarroti**.

FIRST MILANESE PERIOD (1482-99)

- In 1482 he is recorded as a talented musician who created a silver lyre shaped as a horse's head. Lorenzo de' Medici sent Leonardo to Milan with the lyre as a gift for the ruler Ludovico Sforza. Leonardo wrote a letter explaining he could create engineering wonders and also paint.
- He worked in Milan from 1482 to 1499 (from age 30 to 47). In this period he painted *Virgin of the Rocks* and *The Last Supper*. He worked on many projects such as floats and pageants and on a **huge equestrian monument** to Francesco Sforza, Ludovico's predecessor. In 1492 the clay model was completed and the bronze had been set aside. It

was the largest Renaissance bronze statue and Leonardo wrote detailed plans about how it was to be cast. In November 1494, Ludovico gave the bronze to be used for cannon to defend the city from invasion by Charles VIII. In 1499 the invading French troops used the clay model for target practise.

REFERENCES

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virgin_of_the_Rocks



The Virgin with the Infant Saint John the Baptist adoring the Christ Child accompanied by an Angel ('The Virgin of the Rocks'), c. 1491/2-99 and 1506-08, 189.5 x 120 cm, National Gallery, London



Virgin of the Rocks, c. 1483-1493, oil on wood panel, transferred to canvas, 199 x 122 cm, Louvre, Paris

The Virgin with the Infant Saint John the Baptist adoring the Christ Child accompanied by an Angel ('The Virgin of the Rocks'), c. 1491/2-99 and 1506-08, 189.5 x 120 cm, National Gallery, London

- The version on the left is in the National Gallery, London. It is generally accepted as **postdating the version in the Louvre**, and Leonardo is thought to have produced it in collaboration with Giovanni Ambrogio de Predis (c.1455-c.1508, active in Milan) and perhaps others. Some consider it the **work of Leonardo's workshop** under his direction but detailed examination during the recent restoration suggests **the greater part is by Leonardo**.
- One theory about why he painted two versions is that it was **commissioned in 1483** but he sold this earlier version privately and so had to paint another version to fulfil the commission.
- **How did it end up in England?** It was commissioned by the chapel of the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception, in the church of San Francesco Maggiore in **Milan**. It was **sold by the**

church, very likely in 1781, and certainly by 1785, when it was **bought by Gavin Hamilton**, who took it to England. After passing through various collections, it was **bought by the National Gallery in 1880**.

- There are various differences—in the Louvre version the angel is pointing at Christ, the faces and forms are **more delicate and subtly blurred by sfumato** and the flowers are **botanically correct**. In the London version the forms are more defined and the contrast greater and the flowers are fanciful creations. **The cruciform held by John the Baptist** and the haloes of the London version may have been added later and the **yellow cast of the Louvre version** may be discoloured varnish as the London version has been recently restored and before 2010 it had a yellow cast.
- I mentioned **sfumato**, just to explain, Leonardo was the most famous practitioner of this technique and he described it as **'in the manner of smoke'** and the word literally means 'turned to smoke'. It is a blending of the edges of the forms to avoid any distinct lines or borders.

NOTES

- The date of the London version is not universally agreed.
- The side panels for the London version were painted by Evangelista and **Giovanni Ambrogio de Predis** (c.1455 - c.1508) which is why some maintain Giovanni collaborated with Leonardo on the central painting.
- "An elaborate sculpted altar was commissioned by the Milanese Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception for their oratory in San Francesco in 1480. A new contract was drawn up in 1483 with Leonardo and the de Predis brothers:

a central panel was to be painted by Leonardo alone, and there were to be two side panels showing angels singing and playing musical instruments. Two paintings of angels (An Angel in Green with a Vielle and An Angel in Red with a Lute) by artists influenced by Leonardo, are undoubtedly those for the altarpiece. *The Virgin of the Rocks* seems not to refer to the mystery of the Immaculate Conception but depicts the type of subject that Leonardo might have painted in his native Florence where legends concerning the young Saint John the Baptist were popular. Execution of the commission was protracted. Leonardo may only have put the finishing touches to it in 1508. The finished work was then sent to France, (now Paris, Louvre). Leonardo painted a replacement for San Francesco that was probably completed with some help from his studio in 1508, and which is now in the National Gallery Collection." (National Gallery website)

- Sfumato – Leonardo was the most famous practitioner and he described it as 'in the manner of smoke'. It is a blending of the edges of the forms to avoid any distinct lines or borders.
- In the earlier Louvre painting
 - ✦ the angel's hand is raised, the index finger pointing at John and his/her eyes are turned to gaze in the general direction of the viewer;
 - ✦ the forms of the background are all hazier;
 - ✦ the faces and forms are more delicately painted and subtly blurred by sfumato;
 - ✦ the lighting is softer and appears warmer, but this may

- be the result of the tone of the varnish on the surface as it has not undergone significant restoration or cleaning;
- ✦ the angel is robed in bright red and green, with the robes arranged differently;
- ✦ The flowers are botanically accurate.
- In the later National Gallery version
 - ✦ the figures are slightly larger;
 - ✦ the angel's right-hand rests on his/her knee, and his/her eyes are turned down in a contemplative manner;
 - ✦ all the forms are more defined, including the bodily forms of the clothed figures;
 - ✦ the rocks are painted in meticulous detail;
 - ✦ the contrast between light and shade on the figures and faces are all much sharper;
 - ✦ the painting contains no red,
 - ✦ there are haloes and John's traditional cruciform reed staff although it is possible they were added by a later artist;
 - ✦ The flowers are fanciful creations.
 - ✦ The underdrawing shows he attempted a different design but changed it to make it almost identical to the Louvre version.

REFERENCES

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virgin_of_the_Rocks

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/leonardo-da-vinci-the-virgin-of-the-rocks>



Madonna Litta, c.1481–1495, tempera (and oil) on poplar panel, 42 cm × 33 cm, Hermitage, Saint Petersburg

Head of a young woman in near profile, c. 1480, metalpoint heightened with white lead on grey prepared paper, 17.9 × 16.8 cm. Louvre, Paris

Madonna Litta, c.1481–1495, tempera (and oil) on poplar panel, 42 cm × 33 cm, Hermitage, Saint Petersburg
Head of a young woman in near profile, c. 1480, metalpoint heightened with white lead on grey prepared paper, 17.9 × 16.8 cm. Louvre, Paris

- *Madonna Litta* (pronounced 'litre') shows Mary breast feeding. In his left hand (CLICK) Christ is holding a goldfinch, a symbol of the future Passion. The goldfinch and the robin represent the Passion as they have spots of red on their plumage said to be Christ's blood that splashed onto them as the robin pulled out one of the thorns from his head.
- The name Litta comes from the Milanese family that owned the painting for much of the 19th century until it was purchased by Tsar Alexander II.
- (CLICK) In the Louvre is a drawing by Leonardo which might be a sketch for this painting.
- The painting is widely accepted to be Leonardo but the

Leonardo expert **Professor Martin Kemp claims** that it is by **Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio** (1466/7-1516) one of the two strongest artist who worked in Leonardo's studio. When it was loaned to the National Gallery, London, it was exhibited as an autograph work by Leonardo, that is solely by Leonardo, but Kemp claims the curator's did not think it was by him and said it was "presumably a condition of the loan" for it to be labelled this way.

NOTES

- Boltraffio worked in Leonardo's studio and with Bernardino Luini (1480/82-1532) the two strongest artistic talent to emerge from the studio. Boltraffio was from an aristocratic family and was born in Milan. His portraits have clean, hard edges and lack Leonardo's sfumato.

REFERENCES

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madonna_Litta



Portrait of a Musician, (unfinished),
c. 1483–1487, oil (and tempera?) on
walnut panel, 45 cm × 32 cm,
Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan

Portrait of a Musician, (unfinished), c. 1483–1487, oil (and tempera?) on walnut panel, 45 cm × 32 cm, Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan

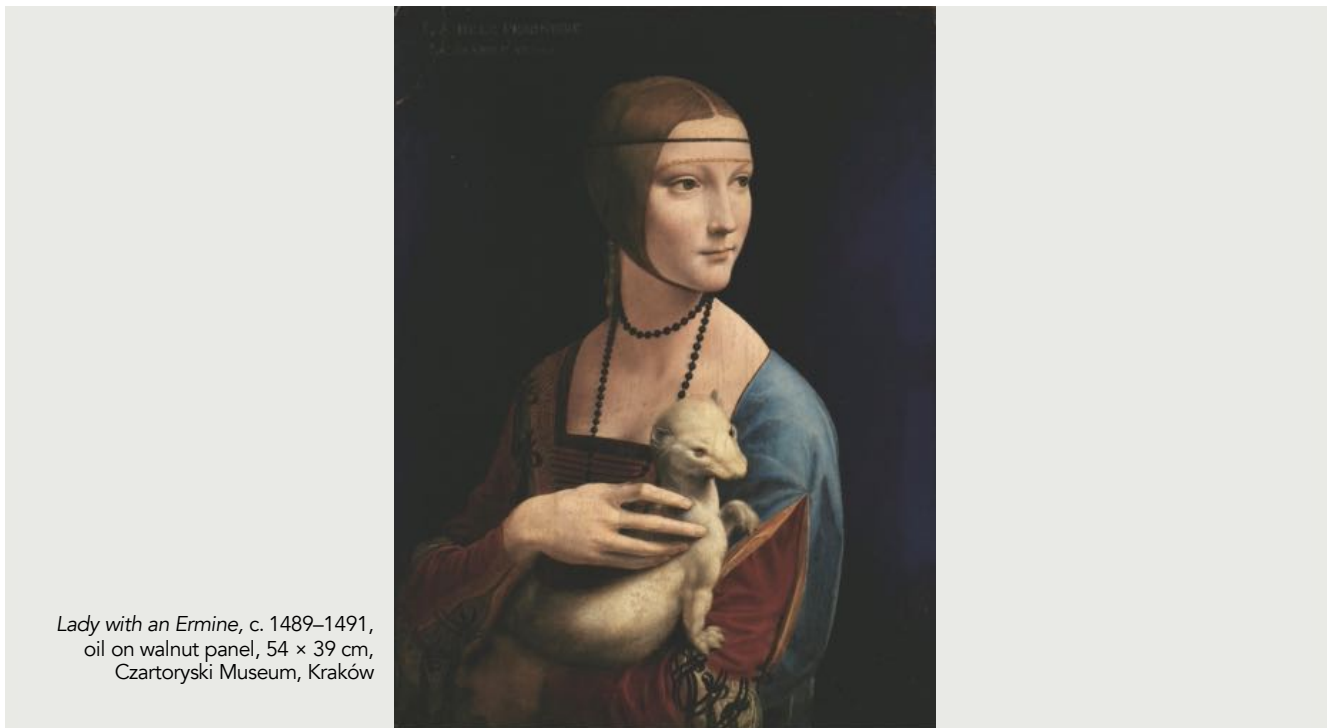
- This painting is **unfinished and was produced while he was in Milan and is his only known male portrait**. It is widely accepted that Leonardo painted the figure's face. Some scholars suggest the body to be the work of his pupils, **Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio** and **Giovanni Ambrogio de Predis** (c.1455 - c.1508, a famous painter in the court of Ludovico Sforza).
- Until the 20th century it was thought to be **Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan** but restoration in 1904-5 discovered he was **holding a sheet of music**. There were many famous musicians in Milan at the time and various names have been put forward with little evidence to decide between them.
- The Milanese court was conservative and would have expected a portrait to be in profile. **Leonardo has unusually chosen a three-quarters view** that was common among Netherlandish painters

after about 1420. Profiled portraits maintained popularity in Italy until about 1500 when they rapidly fell out of favour. Some other artists, such as Sandro Botticelli painted three-quarters and full face portraits.

- It was about this time, in 1485 he went on a **diplomatic mission to Hungary** on behalf of the Duke of Milan which led to a number of engineering and other projects.

REFERENCES

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portrait_of_a_Musician



Cecilia Gallerani, The Lady with an Ermine, 1489-91, oil on walnut panel, 54 x 39 cm, National Museum, Kraków, Poland

- **The sitter is Cecilia Gallerani** (1473–1536, pronounced 'chuchilia Gallerani'), a native of Siena and **favourite of Milanese duke Ludovico Sforza**.
- She is depicted in the new **three-quarter turn pose** popularised by Netherlandish painters such as Jan van Eyck and Hans Memling.
- Gallerani looks away but there is an **intensity to her gaze**, something noticeably absent from famous depictions of women in earlier Renaissance art.
- Leonardo experimented with different styles but we have a record of what he thought about portraits. He wrote that "**The first intention of the painter is to make a flat surface display a body as if modelled and separated from this plane, and he who surpasses others in this skill deserves most praise. This accomplishment, with which the science of painting is**

crowned, arises from light and shade, or we may say chiaroscuro."

- We know less about the symbolic meaning of his work. We know that the ermine **symbolised purity** as Leonardo wrote, **"The ermine ... would rather let itself be captured by hunters than take refuge in a dirty lair, in order not to stain its purity"**. Not true, but it was a common belief.
- Duke Ludovico Sforza had recently been awarded the **Order of the Ermine** by King Ferdinando I of Naples in 1488. So, it is likely, this is the reason Leonardo included the ermine and scientific examination has shown **the ermine was added in the second and third stages of the painting**.
- Note the expression has changed from the solemn expression of Ginevra de' Benci (pronounced 'gin-ay-vra dee benchy') to an enigmatic smile.

NOTES

- **"Cecelia Gallerani presided over intellectual discussions at the court of Ludovico Sforza**, serving a prominent role much like the salon hostesses of the Age of Enlightenment would centuries later. **She invited Leonardo da Vinci** to these meetings. Ludovico Sforza fell from power with a French invasion in 1499. After a brief attempt at retaking Milan from the French, he was captured and died eight years later in the Château de Loches as a prisoner. Cecelia Gallerani had become an increasingly distant figure in the duke's eye at the insistence of his wife Beatrice d'Este. Gallerani married a count in 1492. After her husband's death just over two decades later, she retired to San Giovanni in Croce and died in 1536." (Kevin Chau)

- **An ermine is the name of a stoat** (also called a weasel) with its pure white winter coat.
- This was a controversial work in the past, but modern scholarship widely attributes the work to Leonardo.


REFERENCES

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La Belle Ferronnière, c. 1490–1498, oil on walnut panel, 62 cm × 44 cm, Louvre, Paris



Portrait of Beatrice d'Este, circle of Leonardo da Vinci, Uffizi Gallery, Florence

La Belle Ferronnière, c. 1490–1498, oil on walnut panel, 62 cm × 44 cm, Louvre, Paris

Portrait of Beatrice d'Este, circle of Leonardo da Vinci, Uffizi Gallery, Florence

- This is *La Belle Ferronnière* ('**ironmonger's daughter**', pronounced 'la bell feron-yee-air') and it is **generally accepted** to be by Leonardo but modern scholars still debate the attribution and it is not as widely accepted as other portraits like *Ginevra de' Benci*, *Portrait of a Musician*, and *Lady with an Ermine*.
- It was called the **ironmonger's daughter** as a **joking reference to the reputed mistress of Francis I of France** (1494-1547, ruled 1515-1547) whose husband name was **Le Ferron**.
- Later the portrait sitter was **identified as Lucretia Crivelli** (lady-in-waiting to Ludovico Sforza's wife, Beatrice d'Este) who was also married and **became the King's mistress** but this attribution has also been challenged.

- Finally, there is a drawing that is possibly a copy of a Leonardo drawing which is said to be of Beatrice d'Este (pronounced 'bee-a-treech-ay dest-ay') and some think there is sufficient similarity for it to be a preliminary sketch.

REFERENCES

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Belle_Ferronnière



The Last Supper, c. 1492–1498, tempera on gesso, pitch and mastic, 460 × 880 cm, Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan

The Last Supper, c. 1492–1498, tempera on gesso, pitch and mastic, 460 × 880 cm, Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan

- **We now come on to one of Leonardo's best known works** *The Last Supper* in the Convent of Santa Maria Delle Grazie (pronounced 'della gra-tse-er'). The painting represents the moment during the last supper of Jesus and the twelve apostles when he announces that one of them will betray him.
- The work was commissioned by **Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, as part of the renovation of the church** and its buildings. **It is a technical failure** in so far as Leonardo used a novel technique for painting the work and it deteriorated to the extent that little remains of the original work despite many attempts at restoration. **A plaster wall is normally painted in daily sections into wet plaster that dries that day.** The pigments becomes embedded in the plaster and has a long life. However, this method **does not allow the work to be changed** which did not suit Leonardo's style. He painted in oil and

tempera after sealing the wall with gesso, pitch and mastic. He did this to enable him to make changes and to increase the luminosity but damp in the wall came through the sealant resulting in the paint flaking away.

- Jesus originally had feet but a door was knocked through the wall in 1652. Luckily a copy was made of the original...

NOTES

- This is universally accepted to be by Leonardo.

REFERENCES

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Supper_\(Leonardo\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Supper_(Leonardo))



Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), *Last Supper*, 1498, Milan, fresco-secco, 460 × 880 cm, Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan
 Giampietrino (1495–1549) after Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), *The Last Supper*, c. 1520, 298 x 770 cm, currently in the collection of The Royal Academy, usually on exhibit at Magdalen College, Oxford, purchased 1821

- (CLICK) **The full-scale copy by Giampietrino** (active 1495-1549, pronounced 'jiam-pia-trino') **that was the main source for the twenty-year restoration of the original** (1978-1998). It includes several lost details such as Christ's feet, the transparent glass decanters on the table, and the floral motifs of the tapestries that decorate the room's interior. At some point later, **the upper third of the picture was cut off, and the width was reduced. Giampietrino is thought to have worked closely with Leonardo** when he was in Milan.
- **Jesus has just said one of them will betray him** and the painting shows their reaction. There are four groups of three

apostles. **The first group on the left show surprise** (Bartholomew, James, son of Alphaeus, and Andrew), **the second group is Judas Iscariot in the shadow clutching a small bag** and spilling the salt (symbolic of betraying your master) and he shows surprise, **Peter shows anger and holds a knife** and **John, the youngest apostle, swoons and leans towards Peter**, then Jesus, in the third group Thomas is upset, James the Greater looks stunned, and Philip is asking for an explanation. In the final group on the right Matthew and Jude Thaddeus turn towards Simon the Zealot perhaps to find out if he has an answer but his gesture seems to say "don't ask me".

- *The Last Supper* has been the **target of much speculation** by writers and historical revisionists alike, usually centred on **purported hidden messages** or hints found within the painting, especially since the publication of **the novel *The Da Vinci Code*** by Dan Brown in 2003.
- (CLICK) It is a work of fiction in which one of Dan Brown's characters suggests that the person to **Jesus' right** (left of Jesus from the viewer's perspective) **is actually Mary Magdalene disguised as or in the place of the apostle John**. (CLICK) It is a bit clearer in the copy of the painting.

NOTES

- A full-size copy of the Giampietrino painting, before it was cut down, is installed at Tongerlo Abbey in Westerlo, near Antwerp, Belgium.
- Wikipedia: *The Last Supper* is a late 15th-century mural painting by Leonardo da Vinci housed by the refectory of the Convent of *Santa Maria delle Grazie* in Milan. It is one of

the world's most recognizable paintings. The work is presumed to have been started around 1495–96 and was commissioned as part of a plan of renovations to the church and its convent buildings by Leonardo's patron Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan. The painting represents the scene of the Last Supper of Jesus with his apostles, as it is told in the Gospel of John, 13:21. Leonardo has depicted the consternation that occurred among the Twelve Disciples when Jesus announced that one of them would betray him. Due to the methods used, a variety of environmental factors, and intentional damage, very little of the original painting remains today despite numerous restoration attempts, the last being completed in 1999.

GOSPEL OF JOHN, 13:21

21 After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me."

22 His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. 23 One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. 24 Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means."

25 Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

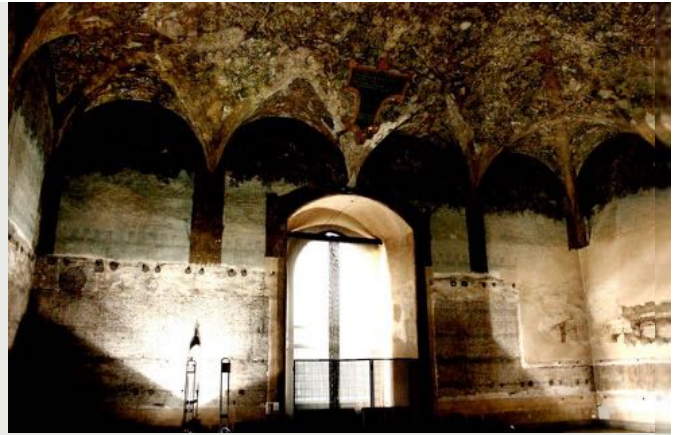
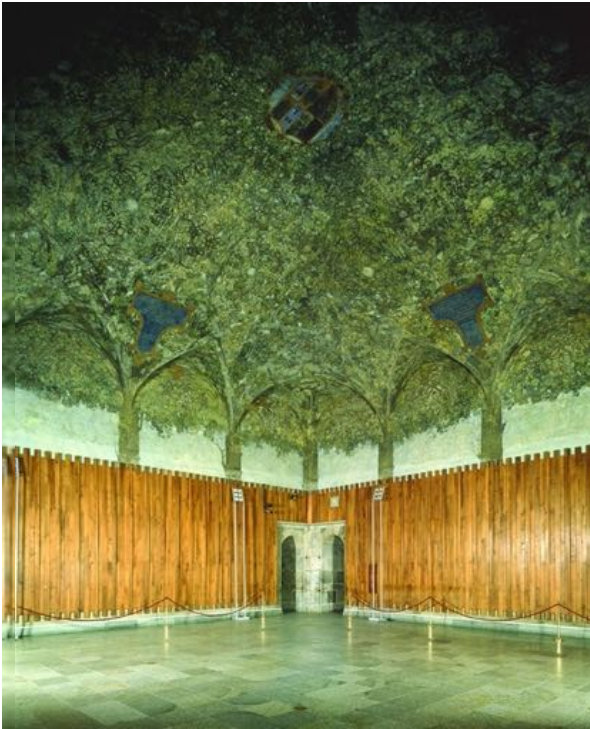
26 Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. 27 As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

So Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do

quickly." 28 But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. 29 Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. 30 As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

ALONG THE TABLE

- On the left, Bartholomew, James Minor, and Andrew are all astonished, Andrew holds up his hands up in a "stop!" gesture.
- Next are Judas, Peter, and John. Judas's face is in shadow and he is clutching a small bag, perhaps containing the 30 pieces of silver he received for betraying Christ. Peter is asking John to ask Jesus which one he means, and John is listening carefully.
- Christ is in the centre.
- Next, we see Philip seeking clarification, James Major stunned and Thomas clearly worried.
- Finally, on the far-right Matthew and Thaddeus turned away to Simon for an explanation, but their arms are stretched towards Christ.



Sala delle Asse ('Room of the Planks'), c. 1498, tempera on plaster, Castello Sforzesco, Milan

Sala delle Asse ('Room of the Planks', pronounced 'sala dell-ay ass-say'), c. 1497–1499, tempera on plaster, Castello Sforzesco, Milan

- This is a **less well-known work** in Milan that is universally accepted as being by Leonardo.
- It is a room in the Castello Sforzesco (pronounced 'sfor-ses-co') in Milan. Its walls and vaulted ceiling are decorated with "intertwining plants with fruits and monochromes of roots and rocks" and a canopy created by sixteen trees.
- The name is a puzzle. The word 'Asse' (pronounced 'ass-say') means plank in Italian or tree. Some believe it was the **name of the room before Leonardo started** and others believe it is based on a **misunderstanding of a letter** to the Duke of Milan from his chancellor in which he informs him that the **planks used as scaffolding have now been removed** ("the large chamber is free from the planks"). The most recent theory is that during the Sforza period the room was panelled with planks to make it less cold and the recent restoration has installed planks around the

room.

- A number of restorations have been undertaken. The restoration in the early part of the twentieth century resulted in **bright colours** that critics thought did not fit Leonardo's style. A second restoration in the 1950s toned down the colours which we see today. In **third restoration was started in 2012** and still continues today whose objective is to stop the deterioration and stabilise the surface.

NOTES

- It is a grove of sixteen mulberry trees in a 15 × 15 metre room.
- The Duke of Milan was nicknamed Il Moro and the local name for mulberries was 'Moroni' so the type of tree may be a reference to the Duke.

REFERENCES

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The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and Saint John the Baptist, c. 1499–1508, charcoal, black and white chalk on tinted paper, mounted on canvas, 142 cm × 105 cm, National Gallery



The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and Saint John the Baptist (the Burlington House cartoon), c. 1499–1508, charcoal, black and white chalk on tinted paper, mounted on canvas, 142 cm × 105 cm, National Gallery

- **We have reached 1500.** The year before the **French army overthrew Ludovico Sforza**, the Duke of Milan, and **Leonardo fled Milan for Venice**. There he worked on military defences to defend against naval attack. **The same year he continued on to Florence** where a monastery provided him with a workshop where he created this cartoon of *The Virgin and Child with St Anne and St John the Baptist*, a work that won such admiration that "**men and women, young and old**" **flocked to see it "as if they were attending a great festival"**.

NOTES

- This is universally accepted as by Leonardo.
- Louis XII reached a secret alliance with Venice in 1499 to overthrow Milan. Ludovico fled Milan for Innsbruck later that year

and the citizens opened the gates to the Venetian army and the French army entered the city in October 1499. In 1500 Sforza retook the city but the French reconquered it two months later. The French went on to conquer Naples and then Spain.

SECOND FLORENTINE PERIOD (1500-1508)

- In 1500 he went to Florence created the cartoon of *The Virgin and Child with St Anne and St John the Baptist*, a work that won such admiration that "men and women, young and old" flocked to see it "as if they were attending a great festival".
- In 1502 he entered the employ of Cesare Borgia the son of Pope Alexander VI working as a military architect and travelling throughout Italy. Maps were rare at this time and Leonardo helped Borgia defend his city and plan for a dam to provide drinking water by drawing detailed maps.
- In 1503 he returned to Florence spent two years designing and painting a mural of *The Battle of Anghiari* for the Great Hall in the Palazzo Vecchio, with Michelangelo designing its companion piece, *The Battle of Cascina*.
- In Florence in 1504, he was part of a committee formed to relocate, against the artist's will, Michelangelo's statue of David.
- In 1504 Michelangelo insulted Leonardo by implying that he was unable to cast it.
- In 1506 he returned to Milan but did not stay long as his father died in 1504 and he had to return to Florence to sort of family arguments over the estate but by 1508 he was back in Milan.

REFERENCES

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Virgin_and_Child_with_Saint_Anne_and_Saint_John_the_Baptist



Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), *The Virgin and Child with St Anne and St John the Baptist*, c. 1499–1500 or c. 1506–8, cartoon drawing, 141.5 x 104.6 cm, National Gallery

Bernardino Luini (–1532), *Holy Family with Saints Anne and John the Baptist*, 1503–06, 118 × 92 cm, Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan

- It is also known as **The Burlington House Cartoon** if it had been used as a cartoon it would have pin pricks all over it which it does not and there is no known painting by Leonardo based on this cartoon.
- It was either executed in around 1499–1500, at the end of the artist's first Milanese period, or around 1506–1508, when he was shuttling between Florence and Milan. The majority of scholars prefer the latter date, although the National Gallery and others prefer the former. I have shown the range of dates here.
- (CLICK) The head of Mary is particularly fine. She is looking at Christ and her face is in the same position as the Christ child and opposed to St Anne and John the Baptist who look in the same

direction with St Anne looking at her daughter adoringly. We can see how he has used sfumato at the corners of her mouth to create an enigmatic smile. (CLICK)

- **In 1962 it was put on sale for £800,000 and a quarter of a million people saw it** in four months and the money raised from donations and the National Art Collections Fund **purchased it for the United Kingdom**. In my opinion one of the greatest works of art in the country. When you sit in front of it for ten minutes something starts to change in the air around you, I can't explain it but I urge you to try it.
- **In 1987 it was attacked by a mentally deranged man with a shotgun**. The glass covering was shattered and the artwork seriously damaged, but it has since been restored. The shotgun pellets did not penetrate the glass but the glass damaged the drawing and hundreds of tiny paper shreds had to be carefully glued back onto the drawing.
- (CLICK) Although the cartoon was not used as the basis of a painting by Leonardo **a painting based on the cartoon was made by Bernardino Luini** (c.1480/2-1532), a pupil of Leonardo. It is different from the cartoon in that he includes St. Joseph on the far right.

REFERENCES

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Virgin_and_Child_with_Saint_Anne_and_Saint_John_the_Baptist



Unknown,
Portrait of
Isabella D'Este,
1450-1650,
Switzerland

Portrait of Isabella
d'Este, c.1499–
1500, black and red
chalk, yellow pastel
chalk on paper, 61
cm × 46.5 cm,
Louvre



Portrait of Isabella d'Este, c.1499–1500, black and red chalk, yellow pastel chalk on paper, 61 cm × 46.5 cm, Louvre, Paris

- For about a year (1502-3) **Leonardo travelled round Italy** with his patron Cesare Borgia (pronounced 'chay-ser-ay borja', son of the Pope) acting as a military architect and engineer.
- When they stopped at Mantua he drew this portrait of **Isabella d'Este** (1474-1539) who was Marchioness of Mantua and she commissioned a portrait from him. Note that it is in profile just as this style was going out of fashion. **We do not know if he finished** but there is evidence in letters that he completed the portrait. A version was found in Switzerland in 2015 which has been dated to between 1450 and 1650 but many scholars **dismiss any attribution to Leonardo**.
- Letters document at least two portrait drawings of Isabella d'Este and, in 1501-1506, her requests to execute the promised portrait in colour. Isabella d'Este was keen to push Leonardo into producing a picture for her but she received a letter saying **he**

was otherwise occupied on mathematical pursuits.

- Isabella d'Este was one of the leading women of the Italian Renaissance, a major cultural and political figure. A patron of the arts and a leader of fashion. She was described as '**supreme among women**' and as '**The First Lady of the world**'. **She even acted as regent of Mantua during her husband's absence and her son's minority.** She received a fine classical education and wrote numerous letters throughout her life so her life story, family and friends are extremely well documented.

NOTES

- This is widely but not universally accepted as by Leonardo.
- Mantua is about 30 miles south of Verona and about 100 miles east of Milan.

REFERENCES

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portrait_of_Isabella_d'Este_\(Leonardo\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portrait_of_Isabella_d'Este_(Leonardo))

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Palazzo Spini,
Florence

Palazzo Spini, Florence, where an anonymous Florentine writer described an argument between Leonardo (1452–1519) and Michelangelo that may have been the beginning of the feud between them.

- I would like to tell you a short story before we continue.
- **In 1503, Leonardo returned to Florence where he rejoined the Guild of St Luke** and he began work on a **portrait of Lisa del Giocondo** the model for the *Mona Lisa* and he continued working on it for the rest of his life.
- **In 1504 Leonardo was invited to join a committee** that was created to decide where **Michelangelo's statue of David should be placed**. It was then that a **legendary encounter took place** between Leonardo and Michelangelo which has been described as the **greatest artistic feud ever**.
- Leonardo was elegant and sophisticated with long golden ringlets cascading down his chest and we know from an inventory of his clothes taken at this time that they were all pink,

purple and crimson so he could have been wearing his pink Catalan gown and dark purple cape with a velvet hood.

Michelangelo was 23 years younger and built like a bear and he had a wide face and a broken nose.

- A group of people were sitting on benches **outside this building**, the Palazzo Spini (literally 'the Palace of Thorns') in Florence discussing **Dante Alighieri's** (pronounced 'ali-ghi-airy') **poetry**. **Leonardo was passing** and they asked him his opinion. At the same time **Michelangelo came by** and Leonardo suggested they ask Michelangelo as Leonardo knew he loved the Florentine poet. Michelangelo took offence as he thought Leonardo was trying to trap him into saying something stupid and said, "**Explain it yourself! You who designed a horse to be cast in bronze, which you could not cast and shamefully gave up.**" On saying this Michelangelo turned and left while Leonardo remained, his face turning red with anger.
- This was no minor matter as an insult was a **matter of honour** which meant **a life or death vendetta**.

NOTES

- **Leonardo** di ser Piero da Vinci (15 April 1452 – 2 May 1519) was an Italian polymath of the High Renaissance who was active as a painter, draughtsman, engineer, scientist, theorist, sculptor, and architect was born in Vinci 20 miles from Florence.
- **Michelangelo** di Ludovico Buonarroti Simoni (6 March 1475 – 18 February 1564), known as Michelangelo), was an Italian sculptor, painter, architect, and poet of the High Renaissance was born in the Republic of Florence.

- The Palazzo Spini Feroni was built in 1289 and was the largest privately owned palazzo in Florence at that time. In the nineteenth century it was a hotel and then state offices when Florence was the capital of Italy. It is now a fashion museum dedicated to the shoe designer Salvatore Ferragamo.
- **We do not know if this incident is true, but it is reported by multiple sources** as well as other insults by Michelangelo towards Leonardo. Also, in the above anonymous report the writer mentions Leonardo's 'pink [rosato] cloak' and we do know from an inventory of his clothing that his wardrobe was mostly pink and purple.
- **Leonardo was more subtle in his insult.** In his *The Book of Painting* (Il Libro della Pittura, written by Francesco Melzi about 1540 based on texts by Leonardo) he compares sculpture and painting and goes into great detail describing the physicality, mess and noise created by the sculptor compared with the quiet, thoughtful elegance of the painter. It was seen as a brutal description of Michelangelo.
- Their strained relationship could better be described as a **vendetta, a life and death matter in Italy.** Giorgio Vasari in *The Lives of the Artists* writes "There was very great disdain between Michelangelo Buonarroti and him [Leonardo], on account of which Michelangelo departed from Florence, with the excuse of Duke Giuliano, having been summoned by the Pope to the competition for the façade of S. Lorenzo. Leonardo, understanding this, departed and went into France, where the King, having had works by his hand, bore him great affection; and he desired that he should colour the cartoon of S. Anne, but Leonardo, according to his

custom, put him off for a long time with words.”

- **Paragone.** “In an art-historical context, the Italian word paragone (“comparison”, pl. paragoni) can refer to any of a number of theoretical discussions that informed the development of artistic theory in 16th-century Italy. These include the comparison between the differing aesthetic qualities of central Italian and Venetian schools of painting (the so-called disegno/colore paragone) and whether painting or literature was the more convincing and descriptive medium. But the term paragone most often refers to debate about the relative merits of painting and sculpture during the Renaissance period. This debate unfolded primarily in Italy but also in the Low Countries (Flanders and the Netherlands)” (Oxford Art Online)
- In 1543 humanist and theorist Benedetto Varchi polled a number of artists about their views on the paragone and got eight responses, which he published. To no great surprise, painters generally thought painting superior, and sculptors thought sculpture was.
- Sculptors argued that their work was more permanent and that a sculpted object was necessarily more “real” than a painted imitation of an object (a picture), no matter how excellently made. Painters pointed out that they had the advantage of showing colours and the effects of light and shade. Sculptors countered that only a statue could offer the viewer differing points of view. Painters responded with ingenious compositions that used mirrors and reflections to prove that argument false. Many of these claims and counterclaims appeared in the writings of Leonardo, who sided with painters over sculptors.

- **This was a very violent age.** One diarist of every day events records how in 1501 two murders were being taken to be executed along a street just north of this one. They were being tortured on route as was normal by having their flesh torn from their bodies with red-hot pincers. The fire used to heat the pincers went out and the crowd yelled out and wanted to execute the executioner if he failed to torture the prisoners. So he went into a local charcoal burner and built a large, scorching fire in order to heat the pincers red-hot so that the prisoners suffering could be intensified to satisfy the crowd.



Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), after Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), *The Battle of Anghiari*, c. 1603, black chalk, pen in brown ink, brush in brown and gray ink, gray wash, heightened in white and gray-blue, 45. × 63.6 cm, Louvre Museum



Bastiano da Sangallo (1481–1551), after Michelangelo (1475–1564), *Battle of Cascina*, c. 1542, oil on panel, grisaille, 77 × 130 cm, Holkham Hall, England

Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), after Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), *The Battle of Anghiari*, copy after a fresco in the Palazzo della Signoria in Florence, executed in 1504-1505 and destroyed around 1560, c. 1603, black chalk, pen in brown ink, brush in brown and gray ink, gray wash, heightened in white and gray-blue, 45. × 63.6 cm, Louvre Museum

Bastiano da Sangallo (1481–1551), after Michelangelo (1475–1564), *Battle of Cascina*, c. 1542, oil on panel, grisaille, 77 × 130 cm, Holkham Hall, England

- That same year (1504) Leonardo had been commissioned to paint **The Battle of Anghiari** (pronounced 'angi-are-ee') in the **council chamber** of the **Palazzo Vecchio**, Florence's Town Hall, depicting the battle between Florence and Milan in 1440. Michelangelo was then commissioned to paint the **Battle of Cascina** (pronounced 'cash-eena') in the same room.
- **It was an intense competition.** The two paintings are very different: Leonardo depicts soldiers fighting on horseback, while Michelangelo has soldiers being ambushed as they bathe in the

river. **Neither work was completed and both were lost forever when the chamber was refurbished.** Both works were much admired, and copies remain of them, Leonardo's work having been copied by Rubens (1577-1640) and Michelangelo's by Bastiano da Sangallo (1481-1551) as we see here.



Madonna of the Yarnwinder, (**The Lansdowne Madonna**), c. 1501–1508, oil on wood panel (transferred to canvas and later re-laid on panel), 50.2 × 36.4 cm, private collection, New York City



Madonna of the Yarnwinder, (**The Buccleugh Madonna**), c. 1499–1508, oil on walnut panel, 48.9 cm × 36.8 cm, Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh

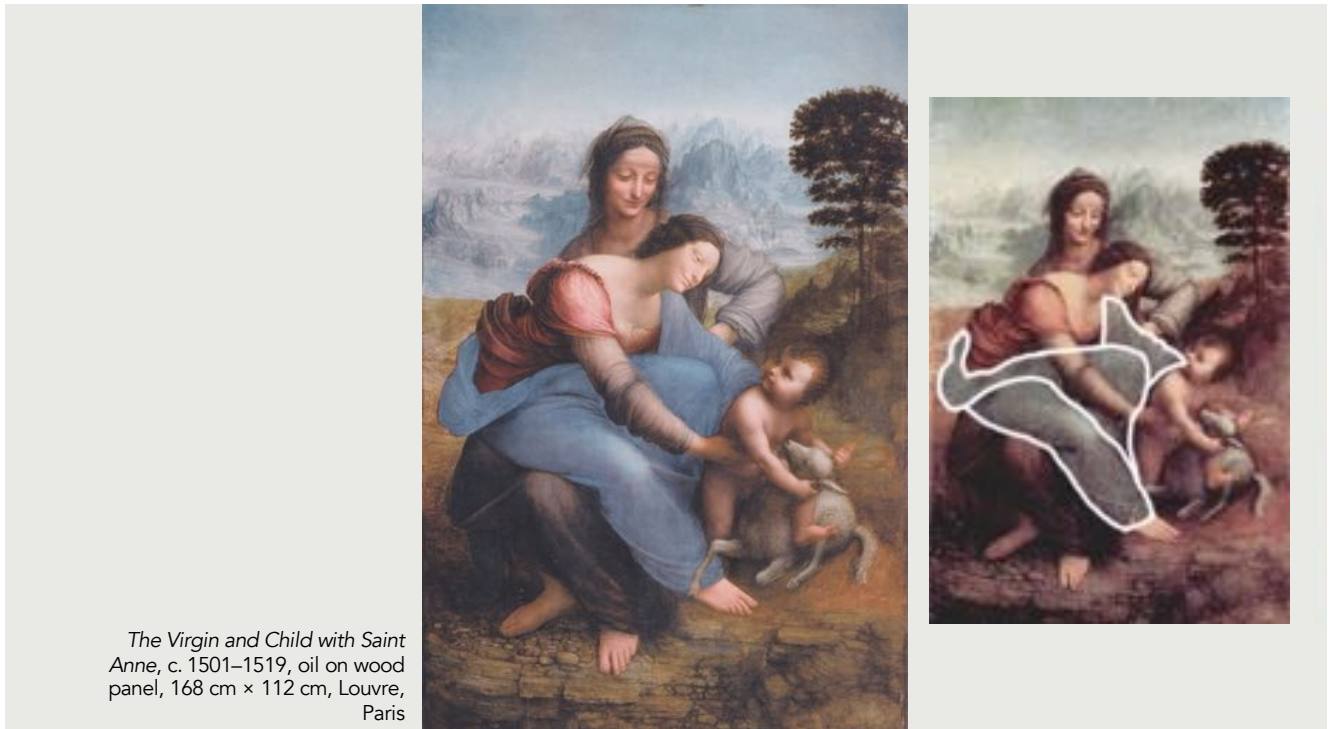
Madonna of the Yarnwinder, (The Lansdowne Madonna), c. 1501–1508, oil on wood panel (transferred to canvas and later re-laid on panel), 50.2 × 36.4 cm, private collection, New York City
Madonna of the Yarnwinder, (The Buccleugh Madonna), c. 1499–1508, oil on walnut panel, 48.9 cm × 36.8 cm, Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh

- Leonardo was documented as working on a painting of this subject in Florence in 1501; it appears to have been delivered to its patron in 1507.
- There are two main candidates for the version produced by Leonardo, **The Buccleugh Madonna** (pronounced 'buck-loo') and **The Lansdowne Madonna**. Neither is considered to be wholly autograph, that is, entirely painted by Leonardo. Scientific examination has revealed "**strikingly complex and similar**" **underdrawings in both versions**, suggesting that Leonardo was involved in the making of both. They are both generally accepted as by Leonardo and another artist.

- Christ is holding a yarnwinder or niddy-noddy used to help wind a skein of yarn. The device is symbol of Mary's domesticity and it foreshadows the cross of which Christ was crucified. The symbolism and the dynamic postures were very influential on later artists.
- We have a letter from the head of the Carmelites in Florence to Isabella d'Este in Milan describing a painting **Leonardo was working on a painting in which Christ is holding a yarn-winder**. However, it was probably **commissioned by the secretary to King Louis XII for the French court**. It is not clear what happened to it next. It may have been sent to the secretary or retained by Leonardo.
- There are now **nearly forty versions made by pupils and followers of Leonardo**.

REFERENCES

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madonna_of_the_Yarnwinder



The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne, c. 1501–1519, oil on wood panel, 168 cm × 112 cm, Louvre, Paris

- This is *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* and is universally accepted to be by Leonardo. The Virgin Mary is seen trying to restrain Christ as **he grapples with a sacrificial lamb symbolising his Passion**. We believe it was commissioned by King Louis XII of France but never delivered to him.
- It is a **complex and unusual composition** as showing Mary sitting on her mother's lap was not a traditional pose. It is **unclear what Leonardo was trying to symbolise** other than a close connection between the mother and daughter and mother and son. It clearly relates to the cartoon in the National Gallery in which Mary sits on her mother's lap but in a different pose and with John the Baptist excluded.
- (CLICK) Sigmund Freud wrote a strange explanation of the structure of the painting. (CLICK) He thought Mary's garment had the shape of a vulture turned sideways and that this related

to a childhood incident described by Leonardo as follows.

"It seems that I was always destined to be so deeply concerned with vultures – for I recall as one of my very earliest memories that while I was in my cradle a vulture came down to me, and opened my mouth with its tail, and struck me many times with its tail against my lips."

Freud interprets this as a sign of what he calls his 'passive homosexuality' others describe it as an early memory of being breast fed. However, the word 'vulture' was a mistranslation of the word 'kite', a different looking bird which seems to undermine Freud's theory. It is remotely possible something similar did happen as kite's are raptors that scavenge from humans and often swoop down to steal food. (CLICK)

- Freud's interpretation of **why he shows two women of uncertain and similar age is that Leonardo's own blood mother raised him before he was 'adopted' by the wife of his father Ser Piero** so, in a way, he had two mothers and he is showing Christ with the same family arrangement.

REFERENCES

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Virgin_and_Child_with_Saint_Anne_\(Leonardo\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Virgin_and_Child_with_Saint_Anne_(Leonardo))

Salvator Mundi, c. 1499–1510, oil on wood panel, 65.6 cm × 45.4 cm, private collection



Salvator Mundi, c. 1499–1510, oil on wood panel, 65.6 cm × 45.4 cm, private collection

- **A controversial work, although this is now generally accepted** although it is certainly not universally accepted.
- Previously presumed to be a later copy of the lost original painting. **Purchased in 2005 and restored**, it has gained acceptance as Leonardo's original. Pentimenti (changes to the composition) were found in the thumb of Christ's right hand and elsewhere which are indicators of the painting's status as an "original". However, the restoration has been criticised for repainting parts of the picture.
- It set a new record in 2017, reaching a record **\$450 million** when auctioned by Christie's.
- As an aside, the forger Robert Driessen said in the interview, **"It's absolutely not da Vinci"**. As a former art forger, he says he can spot fakes a mile away. **"Have you seen the before restoration and after restoration? It's a totally different painting now. It's unbelievable**

how people can fall for that." That is Driessen's opinion.

Experts are divided. One of the world's leading experts on da Vinci, Martin Kemp, announced it was genuine.

- There are **at least thirty copies and variations of the painting executed by Leonardo's pupils and followers** and this is an important part of the pedigree of the painting and suggests that there must have been an original by Leonardo from which they were copied. Some experts say it is partly by Leonardo and others, such as British art historian Charles Hope, **dismiss the attribution to Leonardo entirely.**

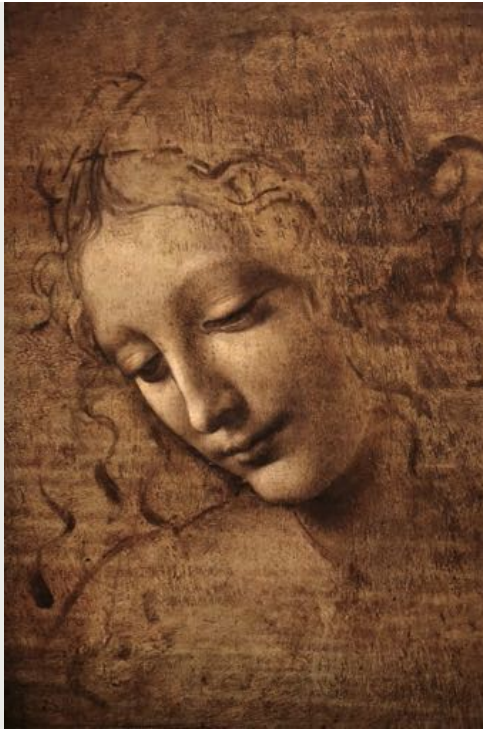
NOTES

- Matthew Landrus considers it to be primarily the work of **Bernardino Luini.**

REFERENCES

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvator_Mundi_\(Leonardo\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvator_Mundi_(Leonardo))

La Scapigliata (unfinished), c. 1506–1508, earth, amber and white lead on wood panel, 24.7 × 21 cm, Galleria Nazionale, Parma



La Scapigliata (unfinished, "The Lady with Dishevelled Hair", pronounced 'la scapi-li-ata'), c. 1506–1508, earth, amber and white lead on wood panel, 24.7 × 21 cm, Galleria Nazionale, Parma

- This is a **small panel painting generally attributed to Leonardo** or some think, a pupil. The subject is unknown, (CLICK) it is possibly a sketch for an uncompleted painting or a study for the head of the Virgin from the London version of the *Virgin of the Rocks*.(CLICK)
- One widely accepted theory is that it was **commissioned by Isabella d'Este**, a member of the Gonzaga family of Mantua, and it may be a painting of the Madonna **for her private study** which another letter tells us she gave to her son on his marriage and was seen hanging in his bedroom. It stayed in the Gonzaga family and is recorded in 1627 as "A painting depicts the head of a dishevelled woman... by Leonardo da Vinci".

SECOND MILANESE PERIOD (1508-1513)

- By 1508 he was back in Milan

- In 1512 he was working on an equestrian monument but was prevented by an invasion that drove the French from Milan.

REFERENCES

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Scapigliata



Mona Lisa, (Italian *Gioconda*, unfinished), c. 1502–1516, oil on cottonwood (poplar) panel, 76.8 cm × 53 cm, Louvre, Paris
Apprentice of Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*, 1503-1516, oil on panel, 76.3 × 57 cm, Museo del Prado

- This painting has been written about so often it probably needs a talk about it on its own. However, I will keep it short today.
- Some believe it is a self-portrait of Leonardo but it has now been definitively identified **Lisa del Giocondo** (née Gherardini, pronounced 'ghera-dini'), an Italian noblewoman. She was born in 1479 and lived in Florence. Her husband, **Francesco del Giocondo**, a rich silk merchant, asked Leonardo to paint her portrait around 1503 but it was never finished and never given to him. In Italy, the *Mona Lisa* is known as *La Gioconda*, from *Mona Lisa*'s married name.
- An expression is indicated by the corners of the mouth and eyes and by the use of *sfumato* Leonardo has cleverly made her expression ambiguous.

- Down the centuries, it has always been considered a masterpiece but it achieved **worldwide lasting fame only after it was stolen in 1911**. When it was returned two years later the whole world breathed a sigh of relief and it has remained the **world's most treasured painting ever since**. Police suspects included the poet **Guillaume Apollinaire and Pablo Picasso** as they had been involved in buying stolen art from the Louvre previously, but not the Mona Lisa. The thief was Vincenzo Peruggia an Italian petty criminal who worked as a handyman in the Louvre. Two years later he tried to sell it in Florence to an art dealer but the dealer called the police. The painting was returned to the Louvre and the thief, Peruggia, claimed he wanted to restore the painting to Italy and so he briefly became an Italian national hero.
- **The Louvre receives fan mail**, love letters and flowers from all over the world addressed simply to 'Mona Lisa'. It has been frequently attacked but the bulletproof glass now in front of it has repelled the latest attacks.
- The painting may be unfinished as there is some evidence that Leonardo became partly paralysed in 1517 before he could finish it. Her lack of eyebrows is not evidence it is unfinished as careful examination shows she did have eyebrows but the pigment has faded over the years.
- There are numerous excellent copies around the world including one displayed in the Prado in Madrid. As the perspective is slightly different it gave rise to a theory that Leonardo painted the first three dimensional pair of paintings. Leonardo did discuss stereoscopic vision in his notebooks. However, more recent attempts to create a

three-dimension image have failed.

- **We now are getting towards the end of Leonardo's life.** From 1513 to 1516 he lived in the Vatican where he studied botany, produced plans to drain the Pontine Marshes, developed a new kind of varnish dissected cadavers and made notes for a treatise of the vocal chords.
- When King Francis I of France recaptured Milan he met Pope Leo X and Leonardo was present. Afterwards, Leonardo was commissioned to make a mechanical lion for the French King which walked forward and then opened its chest to reveal a bunch of lilies.
- Shortly afterwards, **he entered the King of France's service and moved to a manor house near the King's chateau** and it was there that he took the Mona Lisa.

NOTES

- This is universally accepted. A drawing by Giovanni Ambrogio Figino depicting an elderly Leonardo with his right arm assuaged by cloth and a record of an October 1517 visit by Louis d'Aragon, confirm an account of Leonardo's right hand being paralytic at the age of 65, which may indicate why he left works such as the Mona Lisa unfinished.

ROME AND FRANCE (1513-19)

- **From September 1513 to 1516 he lived in the Belvedere in the Vatican**, under Pope Leo X, where Raphael and Michelangelo were both active.
- **In October 1515, King Francis I of France recaptured Milan.** On 19 December, Leonardo was present at the

meeting of Francis I and Pope Leo X, which took place in Bologna. Leonardo was commissioned to make for Francis a mechanical lion that could walk forward then open its chest to reveal a cluster of lilies.

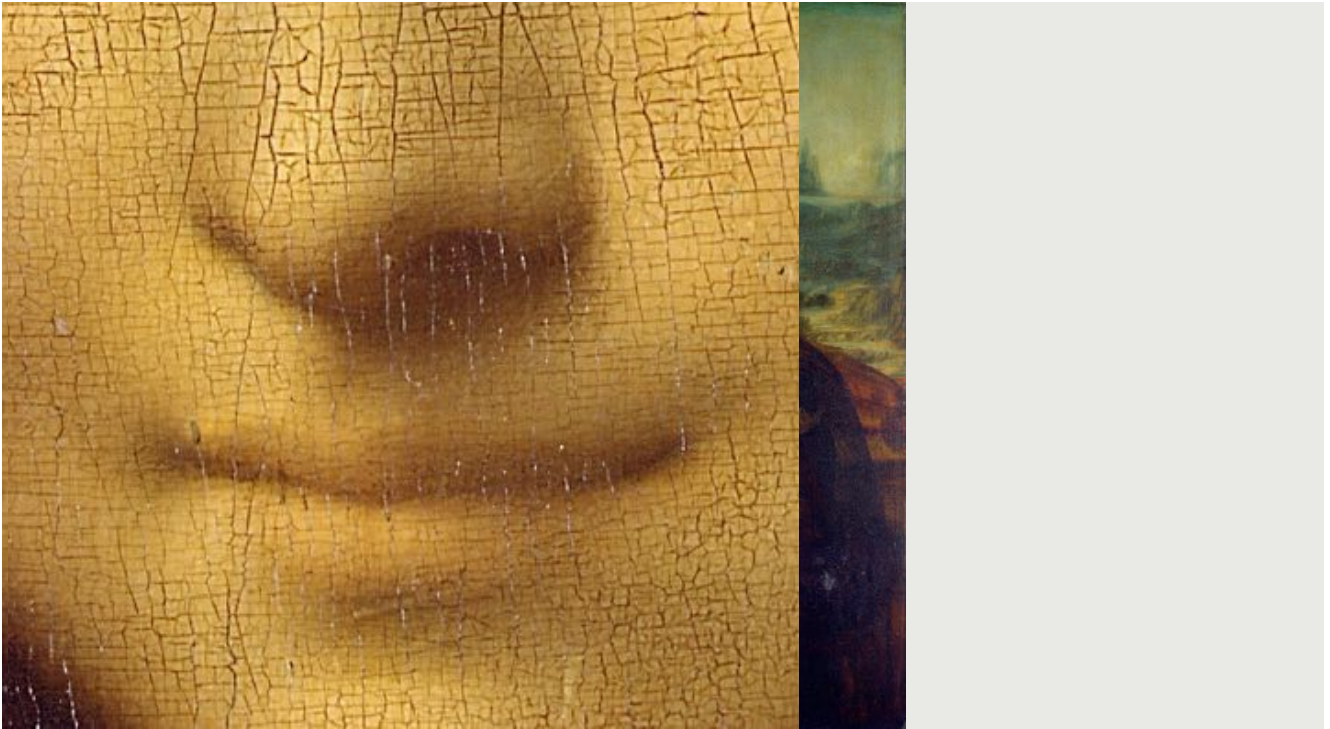
- **In 1516, he entered Francis's service**, being given the use of the manor house **Clos Lucé**, now a public museum, near the king's residence at the royal **Château d'Amboise**. He spent the **last three years of his life there**, accompanied by his friend and apprentice and supported by a pension totalling 10,000 scudi.
- **He died in 1519 at Clos Lucé aged 67** probably of a stroke and he lamented that 'he had offended against God and men by failing to practice his art as he should have done'. It is said the King held his head in his arms as he died.

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https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Speculations_about_Mona_Lisa

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mona_Lisa_\(Prado\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mona_Lisa_(Prado))




• THIS SLIDE WAS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TALK

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Mona Lisa, c. 1503-05/07, perhaps until 1517, 77 x 53 cm, Louvre

- It has been described as “**the best known, the most visited, the most written about, the most sung about, the most parodied work of art in the world**”. It is also the most valuable painting in the world.
- The painting is thought to be a portrait of Lisa Gherardini (her maiden name), the wife of Francesco del Giocondo, and is in oil on a white Lombardy poplar panel. It had been believed to have been painted between 1503 and 1506; however, Leonardo may have continued working on it as late as 1517. Recent academic work suggests that it would not have been started before 1513. It was acquired by King Francis I of France and is now the property of the French Republic, on permanent display at the Louvre Museum in Paris since 1797.
- Notice the use of sfumato in this closeup of the famous smile.

- Mona in Italian is a polite form of address originating as "ma donna" – similar to "Ma'am", "Madam", or "my lady" in English. This became "madonna", and its contraction "mona". The title of the painting, though traditionally spelled "Mona" (as used by Vasari, pronounced 'moan-a'), is also commonly spelled in modern Italian as Monna (pronounced as in the English 'mon-a') Lisa as in north-east Italy and particularly the Veneto 'mona' now refers to the female genitals.
- The eyebrows or the lack of them has been debated. Some say it was a fashion at the time others say it is proof the work is unfinished. Ultra-detailed scans reveal the eyebrows and eyelashes were painted on originally but have faded over time.
- There are more than one million artworks in the Louvre but Mona Lisa is alone in receiving her own mail. The painting has its own mailbox because of all the love letters its subject receives. Men have died for her. In 1852, an artist named Luc Maspero threw himself from the fourth floor of a Parisian hotel, leaving a suicide note that read: "For years I have grappled desperately with her smile. I prefer to die." Then in 1910, one 'lover' came before her solely to shoot himself as he looked upon her.
- In 1911 it was stolen, and Picasso was implicated but later found innocent. The thief was an Italian patriot taking the painting back to Italy. He was discovered two years later when he tried to sell it. A Marquis on his death told an American reporter that he organised the theft so he could sell multiple forgeries to collectors for exorbitant sums each believing they had the original Mona Lisa.

- In 2000, a Harvard neuroscientist analysed why Mona Lisa's smile seems to shift and change. It seems it is all about where your focus is, and how your brain responds.

The painting 'John the Baptist' by Leonardo da Vinci, depicting a young, androgynous figure with long, dark, wavy hair, looking slightly to the right with a subtle smile. The figure's right arm is raised, with the index finger pointing upwards. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the figure's face and arm against a dark, shadowy background.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519),
John the Baptist, c. 1513-16,
69 × 57 cm, Louvre

Saint John the Baptist, c. 1507–1516, oil on walnut panel, 69 cm × 57 cm, Louvre, Paris

- Believed to be Leonardo's last painting. **While controversial in the past, modern scholarship now widely attributes it to Leonardo.** Scientific evidence in the second half of the 20th century has furthered this attribution.
- John the Baptist is conventionally shown as an ascetic wearing a camel hair coat, who lived in the desert on honey and locusts. Here the **figure's haunting beauty comes from the ambiguity of its sexual identity.** His soft round arm flows across his breast and his luminous, **androgynous face has a similar smile to the Mona Lisa.** The face seems arise out of the darkness that completely envelops it. Leonardo sfumato technique has reached its highest point with this painting. The figure seems to dissolve before us into softness and ambiguity
- **The mysterious gesture of the raised arm with upward-pointing finger** may be a sign of salvation through baptism or

refer to the coming of Christ or have some esoteric significance.

- Leonardo retains just enough illumination on the body to distinguish it from the background to prevent it disappearing into the background.

NOTES

- For the **art historian Kenneth Clark** John the Baptist is **Leonardo's double** and represents his complex, probing mind and speaks to our modern fascination with uncertainty. Clark regards the saint as a messenger with a direct connection to God who confronts the viewer with his direct gaze. The gospel of Saint John says "**the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness overcame it not**" and goes on to refer to Saint John the Baptist as a messenger, "There was a man sent by God, whose name was John," who came "to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe". John was not that Light himself as "the true Light" comes from God which is what we see here. (Paul Barolsky, 'The Mysterious meaning of Leonardo's Saint John the Baptist').
- The work is often referred to by later painters, especially those in the late Renaissance and Mannerist schools.

ROME AND FRANCE (1513-19)

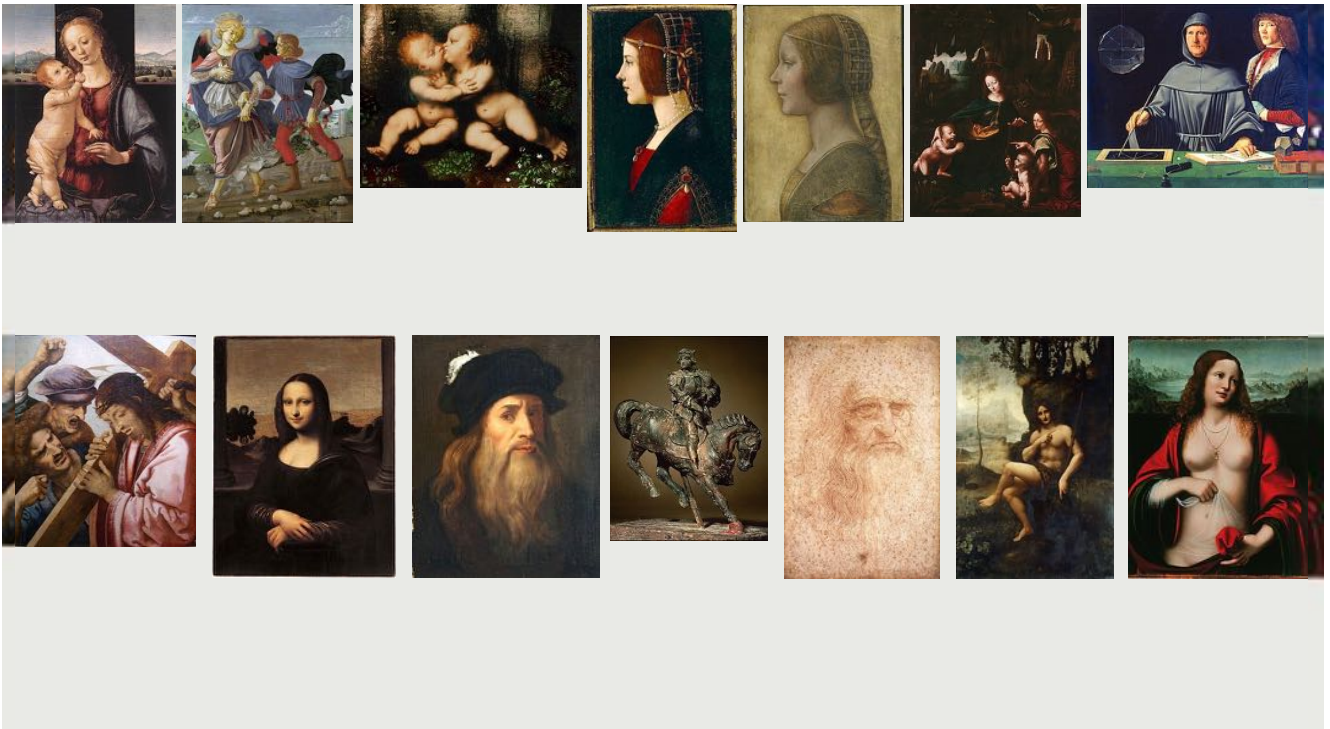
- From September 1513 to 1516 he lived in the Belvedere in the Vatican, under Pope Leo X, where Raphael and Michelangelo were both active.
- In October 1515, King Francis I of France recaptured Milan. On 19 December, Leonardo was present at the meeting of Francis I and Pope Leo X, which took place in Bologna.

Leonardo was commissioned to make for Francis a mechanical lion that could walk forward then open its chest to reveal a cluster of lilies.

- In 1516, he entered Francis's service, being given the use of the manor house Clos Lucé, now a public museum, near the king's residence at the royal Château d'Amboise. He spent the last three years of his life there, accompanied by his friend and apprentice and supported by a pension totalling 10,000 scudi.
- He died in 1519 at Clos Lucé aged 67 probably of a stroke and he lamented that 'he had offended against God and men by failing to practice his art as he should have done'. It is said the King held his head in his arms as he died.

REFERENCES

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_John_the_Baptist_\(Leonardo\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_John_the_Baptist_(Leonardo))



- THIS SLIDE WAS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TALK
- There are **manuscripts with drawings by Leonardo, lost works and many disputed works**. As I have mentioned there are dozens of copies of most of the works I have shown you thought to be by Leonardo's pupils or later followers.
- These are fourteen disputed works in which some believe Leonardo may have had a role.

SOME DISPUTED WORKS

Madonna and Child with a Pomegranate (The Dreyfus Madonna) probably c. 1469 Oil on wood 15.7 cm × 12.8 cm National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Previously attributed to Verrocchio or Lorenzo di Credi. Most critics have considered the anatomy of the Christ Child to be so poor as to discourage firm attribution to Leonardo, but some believe that it is a work of his youth. This attribution was made by Suida in 1929. Other art historians such as Shearman and Morelli attribute the work to Verrocchio. Daniel Arasse discusses this painting as a youthful work by Leonardo in his monograph of 1997.

Tobias and the Angel c. 1473 Egg tempera on poplar 83.6 cm × 66 cm National Gallery, London

Workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio. Tobias and the Angel. 33x26cm. 1470-75. NG London.jpg

Workshop of Verrocchio, with a possible contribution by Leonardo. Martin Kemp suggests that Leonardo may have painted some part of this work, most likely the fish. David Alan Brown, of the National Gallery in Washington, attributes the painting of the dog to him as well.

The Holy Infants Embracing c. 1486–1490

Leonardo da Vinci (attrib)

Several versions in private collections.

Portrait of a Lady in Profile c. 1493–1495 Tempera and oil on panel 51 cm × 34 cm Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan

Ambrogio de Predis - Ritratto di una dama.jpg

Generally attributed to Ambrogio de Predis. According to Martin Kemp, Leonardo may have been responsible for "laying down the basis of the image", based on "[t]he quality of drawing in the head".

La Bella Principessa 1495–1496 (Kemp) Bodycolour (pastel) on vellum 33 cm × 22 cm Private collection, Switzerland

Profile of a Young Fiancee

Identified as a Leonardo by Martin Kemp on stylistic grounds, and confirmed using the evidence of a fingerprint. Other

experts have not agreed with this attribution. As of 2010 the methods used to analyse the fingerprint have come into question. The presence of holes in the page shows that it was once part of the Sforziada, a manuscript kept in Warsaw; this fact points to its originality.

Virgin of the Rocks Chéramy c. 1495–1497 (Pedretti) Oil on wood panel, transferred to canvas 154.5 cm × 122 cm Private collection, Switzerland

Vergine delle Rocce cheramy.jpg

Attributed to Leonardo and his workshop by Carlo Pedretti; believed by others to be a copy of the Virgin of the Rocks by Leonardo's student Giampietrino. Mentioned by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres in 1845 and by Pierre Puvis de Chavannes; both were convinced that it was an original work by Leonardo.

Madonna and Child with St Joseph or Adoration of the Christ Child between 1495 and 1500 Tempera on panel
Diam. 87 cm Galleria Borghese, Rome

Young Christ c. 1496 Terracotta Private collection

The bust is said by Kemp to be the most likely candidate for a surviving sculpture by Leonardo.

Portrait of Luca Pacioli c. 1495–1500 Tempera on panel 99 cm × 120 cm Museo di Capodimonte, Naples

The painting has been generally attributed to Jacopo de' Barbari due to the presence of a cartouche with a cryptic

inscription resembling his name, but some attribute the painting (at least partially) to Leonardo, who began collaborating with Pacioli when the latter moved to Milan in 1496. Leonardo illustrated Archimedean solids, including the rhombicuboctahedron (pictured in the portrait), in Pacioli's *Divina proportione* (1509). According to one scholar, in the rhombicuboctahedron "we surely see the ineffable left hand of Leonardo da Vinci, who drew the superb pictures for *De divina proportione*, which, moreover, hang from a string ..."

Christ Carrying the Cross c. 1500 Oil on poplar Private collection, San Francisco

Leonardo da Vinci (attrib)

Previously attributed by Sotheby's to Gian Francesco Maineri. Attributed to Leonardo by its former owner. Attribution based on the similarity of the tormentors of Christ to drawings made by Rubens of the Battle of Anghiari. According to *Forbes* magazine, Carlo Pedretti said that he knew of three similar paintings and "[a]ll four paintings, he believed, were likely the work of Leonardo's studio assistants and perhaps even the master himself."

Isleworth Mona Lisa Oil on canvas 84.5 cm × 64.5 cm Private collection, Switzerland

* **The Isleworth Mona Lisa**

Its proponents claim that this is the earlier of two versions of the Mona Lisa, painted for Francesco del Giocondo (husband of Lisa) in 1503, and that the Louvre version was painted for Giuliano de' Medici in 1517.

Lucan portrait of Leonardo da Vinci c. 1505–1510 Tempera grassa on poplar 40 cm × 60 cm Museo delle Antiche Genti di Lucania, Vaglio Basilicata

A painting discovered in 2008 near Naples, which closely resembles the Uffizi's 17th-century copy of the "Self-portrait of Leonardo da Vinci", is currently undergoing restoration and investigation. A date in the late 15th or 16th centuries has been confirmed by scientific testing. Fingerprints match those found on the Lady with an Ermine. Alternatively attributed to Cristofano dell'Altissimo.

Portrait of a Man in Red Chalk c. 1512 Red chalk on paper 33.3 cm × 21.6 cm Biblioteca Reale, Turin

Leonardo da Vinci - presumed self-portrait

Accepted by some scholars, but not universally accepted.

Bacchus

c. 1513–1516, c. 1510–1515, later repainted and altered
Oil on walnut panel transferred to canvas 177 cm × 115 cm
Louvre, Paris

Disputed

Generally considered to be a workshop copy of a drawing. According to Kemp, it may have been begun by Leonardo as a figure of John the Baptist.

Mary Magdalene 1515 58 cm × 45 cm Private collection, Switzerland

Described as a potential Leonardo by Carlo Pedretti.
Previously attributed to Giampietrino, who painted a number of similar Magdalenes. Pedretti's attribution is not accepted by other scholars, e.g. Carlo Bertelli (former director of the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan), who said that the subject could be a Lucretia with the knife removed.



The Isleworth
Mona Lisa

La Bella
Principessa, 1495-
6 (Kemp),
bodycolour (pastel)
on vellum,
33 cm × 22 cm
private collection,
Switzerland



- THIS SLIDE WAS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TALK

Isleworth Mona Lisa oil on canvas 84.5 cm × 64.5 cm Private collection, Switzerland

La Bella Principessa, 1495–1496 (Kemp) Bodycolour (pastel) on vellum 33 cm × 22 cm Private collection, Switzerland

I have picked out just two of the disputed works.

- The **Isleworth Mona Lisa's** proponents claim that this is the earlier of two versions of the Mona Lisa, painted for Francesco del Giocondo (husband of Lisa) in 1503, and that the Louvre version was painted for Giuliano de' Medici in 1517.
- **La Bella Principessa** was identified as a Leonardo by Martin Kemp on stylistic grounds, and confirmed using the evidence of a fingerprint. Other experts have not agreed with this attribution. By 2010 the methods used to analyse the partial fingerprint came into question. The presence of holes in the page suggests it may have been part of a manuscript kept in Warsaw (the Sforziada).



LEONARDO DA VINCI (1452-1519)

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Saint John the Baptist, c. 1507–1516, oil on walnut panel, 69 cm × 57 cm, Louvre, Paris

- Leonardo died in 1519 at Clos Lucé (pronounced 'klo loo-say') aged 67 probably of a stroke and he lamented that '**he had offended against God and men by failing to practice his art as he should have done**'. It is said the King held his head in his arms as he died.
- That brings me to the end of today's talk, thank you for your time and attention.
- In future I will be recording the talks for YouTube rather than giving them to an Zoom audience and I will aim to give shorter talks.
- Finally, I would like to thank my loyal class for staying with from our lecture room to Zoom and in future on YouTube.

NOTES

- Clos Lucé is a large château 500 metres from the royal Château

d'Amboise, to which it is connected by an underground passageway.

REFERENCES

Attribution based on

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_works_by_Leonardo_da_Vinci