

the Ottoman threat, Nelson is able to demonstrate that his commitment to registering geodetic difference strongly aligns with an interest in representing geopolitical and cultural difference.

Third, she turns to the various editions of Erasmus's *Adages*, treating their distinctive textual mode as an alternative to the humanist philology that by castigating a text attempts to see through it to an authoritative textual source. By contrast, Erasmus states in his readings of the proverb "The Labors of Hercules" as it pertains to his task of editing this and other adages, that textual variants, though they may be more or less *emendatius* (more corrected), can do nothing more than bring one closer to "whatever would be true or genuine" (96). He is acknowledging, as Nelson felicitously puts it, that with regard to human knowledge, any definitive assessment sits on a continuum, hedged before and after by contingencies of interpretation. Many of the entries in the *Adagiorum Chiliades*, therefore, consist of multiple variants read in multifarious ways, with the published entries reading like *multorum collationes* (collations of multitudes) having the character of a work in progress.

In her closing chapter, Nelson deftly ties these three case studies to *The Ambassadors*, suggesting that Holbein's picture, if it signifies *vanitas*, does so to underscore the speculative nature of mathematics and measurement, in a manner reminiscent of what Mitchell Merback has called the diagnostic/therapeutic mode of Albrecht Dürer's *Melencolia I*.

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Leonardo's "Salvator Mundi" and the Collecting of Leonardo in the Stuart Courts. Margaret Dalivalle, Martin Kemp, and Robert B. Simon.
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. xviii + 382 pp. \$40.

The subject of this book is a bust-length portrait of *Christ as Savior of the World* derived from schematized Greek Orthodox representations of Christ Pantocrator, a standard icon with a fixed iconography since early Christian times. The powerful image attributed here solely to Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) exploits the interface between miraculous images (*acheiropoieta*) made without human intervention and those made by human art: the otherworldly Savior emerges from darkness, his body enveloped in Leonardo's signature *sfumato* modeling that catches the light flickering across the surface, clad in a precious embroidered tunic with an ornately decorated crossed stole, lustrous and transparent jewels, his right hand raised in what appears to be the Greek gesture of teaching standard in Orthodox representations of the Pantocrator (not simply blessing as most scholars report), while holding a diaphanous celestial

globe with the other. Leonardo's *Salvator Mundi* offers the entire Ptolemaic heavens to the beholder.

The complete effacement of all signs that the image was made by human hands produces an uncanny sense of lifelikeness—a speaking picture that defies its material condition is perfectly aligned with Leonardo's defense of painting as superior to words. The “visual magic” is powerful despite its damaged condition (Martin Kemp, 91–120). Existence of a final product seems to be confirmed by an etching signed by the London-based Bohemian artist Wenceslas Hollar, dated 1650, which states in Latin that it was made directly from Leonardo's original painting. More than twenty painted copies of this specific design have been identified to date. Why is this one Leonardo's original, as the authors claim?

The publication does not include the long anticipated detailed visual record of the painting's conservation treatment and scientific analysis. The quality of the photographs is poor. Fortunately, the visual evidence beginning with the stripped-down state of the painting and treatment are available on the excellent website (<https://salvatormundirevisited.com>) created by Dianne Dwyer Modestini, director of the Kress Program in Painting Conservation at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York, who worked on the panel from its initial acquisition in 2005 until 2011 and varnished it in 2017, when the fully restored painting fetched the unprecedented sum of \$450 million dollars at auction (Christie's New York, 17 November 2017). Then the painting unexpectedly disappeared from view. The *Salvator Mundi* is now believed to reside in a freeport storage facility in Switzerland.

How did this sensational discovery and the world's most expensive painting end up in storage? To say that the artistic identity and conservation treatment of the *Salvator Mundi* (our modern title) have been the subject of major controversy is an understatement. This book, coauthored by three art historians intimately involved in the authentication process, tries to set the record straight. Per Margaret Dalivalle, whose provenance research is fully published here for the first time, the earliest record of a possible *Salvator Mundi* by Leonardo in the English royal collection is the inventory of the Commonwealth sale of 8 November 1649, held to pay off the Crown's creditors after the execution of Charles I nine months earlier.

How it entered the royal collection is unresolved, but it is first recorded in the residence of Hollar's patron, Charles I's French queen, Henrietta Maria. Dalivalle's nuanced account is a model of methodology documenting her thought process and articulating the multiple possibilities awaiting further research. The painting arrived to the twentieth century as an overpainted and badly damaged copy of a copy of a lost Leonardo. Its provenance to and from the famous Cook collection since the late nineteenth century is documented by Robert Simon, who partnered with Alexander Parish to purchase the painting from a New Orleans estate for \$1,175 in 2005. Kemp evaluates the changes recorded on the panel. Infrared reflectography (IRR) confirms delicate pentimenti (changes) throughout the surface: the general effect of the IRR

is of “a fresh and spontaneous execution within the parameters of a design that was largely resolved in advance” (94). The style and expression of the painting as a whole points to the Cook *Salvator Mundi* as Leonardo’s original.

The argument is convincing because it shows that many changes made during the execution of the painting can be explained as belonging to the artist’s continuous process of inventing directly on the panel to integrate the composition. I find the complex painting technique and coloristic chiaroscuro in keeping with Leonardo’s late style and theoretical interests, when he created subtle sfumato transitions by superimposing many fine, translucent layers, a technique he developed over many years. The raised hand (with pentimento of a second thumb) that survives intact without abrasion suggests a work after 1507, a dating proposed by, among others, Frank Zöllner, which Kemp supports in the epilogue. Other questions remain. Does the painting’s ruinous condition stem solely from a vertical crack in the defective walnut panel, or could its planed surface indicate an iconoclastic attack, as suggested by Ben Lewis (*The Last Leonardo* [2019], 162)? What was the role of copies? Was the painting possibly unfinished at Leonardo’s death? Before its sale in 2017, Modestini restored the *Salvator Mundi* to the point that the extensive damage is invisible. Her reconstruction, though controversial (like *The Last Supper*), gives all viewers something tangible and new to think with regarding Leonardo’s career.

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Mary of Mercy in Medieval and Renaissance Italian Art: Devotional Image and Civic Emblem. Katherine T. Brown.

Abingdon: Routledge, 2017. xx + 212 pp. \$150.

Drawing on a wide range of visual examples and textual sources, *Mary of Mercy in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* provides the first truly comprehensive study of this subject as a devotional image and secular symbol for civic lay organizations. The focus is primarily on lesser-known versions from Central Italy produced from the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries, but some consideration is given to the image as it appeared elsewhere in Italy and further afield in diaspora.

The first chapter delves deeply into the Mary of Mercy’s iconographic origins and meaning. Consideration of individual aspects of the image (pose, gesture, clothing, accompanying figures and objects) provides the framework for understanding “how the idea of mercy can be communicated effectively through the language of the visual arts” (17). The discussion of four formal elements (hieratic scale, architectonic space, light, and shape of the support) that reinforce iconographic readings will be of particular interest to art historians. Among the volume’s most important contributions is the