



interiors throughout his career, starting with more of the former and ending with more of the latter. He sometimes reused a panel on which another work had been painted. He made underdrawings, which differ between the first stab at a composition and its variants.

The book itself is a peculiar item, a relic of COVID-19 as much as of its own peculiar subject. Begun with the intention of serving as the catalogue of an exhibition in Munich, The Hague, and Paris in 2020–21, it is now published as a standalone volume that includes a catalogue raisonné of Vrel's work rather than a catalogue of an exhibition. The exhibition will finally be held in 2023 at the Mauritshuis and the Fondation Custodia, and is sure to be well worth a visit.

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La biblioteca di Leonardo. Carlo Vecce, ed.
Florence: Giunti Editore; Museo Galileo, 2021. 552 pp. €90.

Throughout his career, Leonardo da Vinci assembled more than two hundred volumes devoted to a wide variety of areas of inquiry, such as anatomy, poetry, music, and theology. As a most engaged reader, Leonardo undertook a constant dialogue with his sources, attentively examining the statements of previous authors and providing sometimes extensive notes on their most distinctive ideas. Due to his frequent transferring from one place to another, the master used to compile lists and quick memoranda of his possessions, which included several printed books and manuscripts. On the basis of a systematic investigation and an intelligent reading of those notes and memoranda, the volume edited by Carlo Vecce offers an all-encompassing and well-contextualized study of Leonardo da Vinci's exposure to the literary culture of his time, analyzing the artist's repository of texts and providing for the first time—to scholars as well as to larger audiences of non-specialized readers—a critically conceived catalogue raisonné of what could be called Leonardo's library.

Edited with the analytical rigor, critical acumen, and incomparable familiarity with Leonardo-related facts, topics, and sources that have characterized past publications by Carlo Vecce, this volume marks a significant point in this field of study, for it provides many crucial philological clarifications, along with important historical comments and plausible interpretive hypotheses regarding the different modes, times, and places through which Leonardo accumulated such an interesting, revealing, and personal collection of written sources. It should come as no surprise, therefore, if Vecce emphasizes, in his brilliant, articulated introductory essay, the fact that Leonardo's interests and guiding principles as a scientist, humanist, and *omo sanza lettere*—in other words, his status as a reader—should be examined in association with his creative

goals and artistic aims, for they shape, according to Vecce, the very foundations of the master's intellectual dispositions as a universal man. For this reason, the volume analyzes—under the aegis of a multifaceted parameter of *ut pictura poesis*—the profound symbiosis that connects Leonardo's experience as a bibliophile with his ever attentive, self-reflective, and theoretically motivated explorations in art and other intertwined fields, such as optics and anatomy. In other words, the reader makes the artist as much as the artist orients the reader.

It is important to recall that this publication is not the first demonstration of Carlo Vecce's scholarly bravura devoted to the reconstruction of Leonardo's library. Just a few years ago, the author published a volume titled *La biblioteca perduta: I libri di Leonardo* (2017), which could be seen, therefore, as a foundational moment toward this more ambitious, detailed, and group-conducted enterprise. The volume now reviewed is, in fact, the result of a highly collaborative and well-planned project which counted with the participation of a remarkable ensemble of well-known experts in this area of study. Introduced by a rigorous, historically attentive, and beautifully written essay by Vecce, the volume is composed by a series of excellent analyses—presented like critical entries of an exhibition catalogue—in which all texts explicitly listed by Leonardo in his manuscripts are explored by various scholars not only in their original contexts of production but also in relation to Leonardo's specific aims as an intellectual, a scientist, and an artist, without suggesting, however, any rigid distinction among those three categories. Additionally, this section of the volume is conveniently arranged in an alphabetical order, following the names of the authors or, in their absence, the titles of the works taken into consideration. Moreover, all essays are enriched by useful bibliographical notes.

Another important step toward this team-made publication was the exhibition *Leonardo e i suoi libri: La biblioteca del Genio Universale*, organized at the Museo Galileo in the summer of 2019. Not by accident, the director of this institution, Paolo Galluzzi, argues in his preface to this extraordinary volume that it should be read and used in parallel with the digital library created by the Museo Galileo of books and manuscripts owned by Leonardo. In conclusion, this volume can surely be praised as one of the most significant achievements among the innumerable events, exhibitions, and publications promoted by the *Comitato Nazionale* during the celebration of the five hundredth anniversary of Leonardo's death.

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