

*Crouching boy.* The wealth of contextual, historical and biographical detail in Acidini Luchinat's treatment of Michelangelo's sculpture is not matched by Zöllner, nor has he picked up on new-found details included in the earlier book, such as Francesco Caglioti's discovery that Michelangelo claimed back the now lost marble *Hercules* from the Medici collection after the family's fall in 1494, indicating that it was commissioned by Piero de' Medici.

The publication's strength is undoubtedly the size and quantity of illustrations in colour and black and white in the opening chapters. The high point is the coverage of the Sistine Chapel where the by now familiar photographs of the cleaned frescos include plates that fold out on both sides to give a page spread of more than 100 cm. The book's visual appeal is let down by the illustrations of the drawings which are frequently reproduced larger than actual size – in the case of one sheet from the British Museum (no.D224) more than twice as big. The standard of the diagrams in the publication is also uneven. The ground-plans and elevations included in the discussion of Michelangelo's architecture (unquestionably the aspect of the artist best covered in the publication) are an invaluable adjunct to the text. The same cannot be said for the diagram showing Daniele da Volterra's modifications to the *Last Judgment* which omits the most extensive of them – the alteration to the position of St Blaise's head and the covering up of St Catherine's torso. The omission of any diagrams to indicate the *giornate* of either Sistine Chapel fresco is symptomatic of the book's lack of interest in the artist's techniques and working methods. The inclusion of Anny Popp's discredited reconstruction of Michelangelo's intentions for the *Magnifici* tomb in the New Sacristy will, I suspect, baffle most readers, not least because it incorporates in the lunette above the tomb the composition of a *Resurrection* study at Windsor Castle that is omitted from the book's catalogue of drawings.

The Windsor drawing is one of many well-known Michelangelo drawings that are expunged, and this fierce winnowing of the number of figurative studies down to around two hundred sheets is undoubtedly the book's most controversial aspect. (The number of architectural studies is little changed from that in the fourth volume of Charles de Tolnay's *Corpus*.) In his preface Zöllner expresses the hope that the book's treatment of the drawings will be a starting point for further discussion, adding the hope that the 'stagnating debate surrounding the attribution of Michelangelo drawings may enter a new phase, one that is dictated neither by the interests of the art market nor by the desire to secure for the artist the most comprehensive possible graphic *œuvre* [...] the eye may be fallible, but it should never be corruptible'. As an ex-Christie's, now British Museum drawings curator – thus, it seems twice corrupted – I am well qualified to counter this absurd charge. The rarity of Michelangelo drawings on the market (during my ten years at Christie's just a single one was sold) hardly supports the notion that sinister

commercial forces are at work relentlessly expanding the corpus. Just as nonsensical is the idea that museums keep score of their Michelangelo holdings.

Before I set eyes on this book, I was telephoned by an excited journalist asking my opinion about the book's dismissal of so many Michelangelo drawings. I replied that such a restrictive view was a long-standing one in German scholarship, most recently articulated by Alexander Perrig, but that I looked forward to reading the arguments to support it. The dismal failure of the book's coverage of Michelangelo's drawings is that none is offered. Instead we have to accept that a 'lengthy process of review' went on, but with no attempt to explain the process which led to the demotion of so many of the artist's most famous drawings as copies or their omission altogether. Instead the drawings are illustrated with a caption grading them as Michelangelo; Michelangelo(?); Michelangelo (copy?); Michelangelo (partly); Michelangelo (workshop); after Michelangelo. The extent of the quantity of rejected drawings from Tolnay's four-volume *Corpus dei disegni di Michelangelo* is only appreciable from checking the concordance.

The excellent, often actual-size colour reproductions in Tolnay's *Corpus* are a unique tool for studying Michelangelo's drawings, the likes of which no other Renaissance draughtsman has yet been granted, but they are still no substitute for the sustained examination of the originals that brought about such a profound study of the artist's way of working as found in Johannes Wilde's writings. How much time Pöpper spent examining the drawings at first hand I cannot tell, but it is perhaps significant that the ownership of two block drawings (nos.D279 and D280) follows Tolnay's designation of ownership rather than placing them at the British Museum, where they have been for over a decade. At least with those drawings that are illustrated we are free to make up our own minds as to the merits of relegating the Metropolitan's luminous *Libyan sibyl* (no.D69) to the same status as the Uffizi copy after it (no.D70), or to judge the likelihood of the claim that Antonio Mini was able to ape his master's style and handwriting with such fidelity in the Windsor *Labours of Hercules* (no.D205). Only those familiar with Michelangelo will, however, be aware of the yawning gaps in the coverage that are passed over in silence. Perhaps the most notable of these is the absence of the black-chalk studies for the New Sacristy sculptures, principally related to *Day*, and those in the same medium for the *Last Judgment*. To take just one example, the non-appearance of the Haarlem *St Lawrence* implies that not only is it not by Michelangelo but that it is not even a copy after a lost drawing, even though it is clearly not drawn from the painted figure. To present such a contrary, irrational view with neither explanation nor any hint that it runs against the scholarly mainstream in a publication that is, in Pöpper's words, 'intended to introduce Michelangelo's graphic oeuvre to a wide audience', does both a disservice.

**Leonardo da Vinci, 1452–1519: the Complete Paintings and Drawings.** By Frank Zöllner. 696 pp. incl. over 600 col. ill. (Taschen, Cologne, 2003; anniversary edition with new introduction, 2007), £120. ISBN 978-3-8228-3827-3.

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REVIEWERS COMPLAIN WITH ritual weariness about the great size and weight of art books. Weighty tomes normally arise from the combination of an indulgent publisher and an author with a lot to say. Here, however, the production of an enormous – and enormously heavy – book seems to have been an end in itself, indeed the chief aspiration. Even in the slightly reduced format of the 'anniversary edition', this is a bizarrely extravagant picture book, a kind of trophy publication. Thus it first invites judgment as a collection of illustrations – and on that score it largely succeeds. The quality of reproduction is mostly high, though the *Benois Madonna* and the Louvre *Virgin of the rocks* prove themselves once again to be irreproducible. The value of some of the enormous details and blow-ups is nonetheless debatable. Magnification can be helpful in understanding the technique of many of the drawings (particularly where they are underdrawn), and there is no doubt that to see the texture of paint in many of the pictures allows the reader to assess Leonardo's technique, the damage that many of the works have suffered and their degree of finish. (Both condition and the unfinished state of many of the works are, however, issues skirted in the text, and the crinkled, knobbly surface of the dark tones in several of Leonardo's paintings was caused probably by the use of unorthodox or experimental oil media rather than by any shrinkage of the panels, as Frank Zöllner at one point implies.) But some details are so large as to become meaningless in relation to the size of the original work; do we really need, for example, to peer so intimately at Ginevra de' Benci's bosom? Moreover the book's size means that it can never be opened flat, so the gutter that runs down the middle of the many two-page spreads becomes a significant problem.

The book's scale also means that the text is very difficult to read comfortably; in particular, cross-references to illustrations become unwieldy. Indeed this obstacle to sustained reading is such as to suggest that its publishers are essentially uninterested in the text, an impression confirmed by the surprisingly small type-size used for the catalogue and the introductions to the drawings sections, and the lack of any proper scholarly apparatus (although bibliographical references can be found with some searching). The repetitive, random and large-print quotations from a crowd of modern worthies – from Nietzsche to Joseph Beuys – help no-one. This is a book apparently intended less for the reader than for the coffee table.

This is a pity, since Zöllner's text is eminently sensible (and very well translated),

and the book is valuable as an assessment of Leonardo the painter. Notwithstanding the important contributions in recent years of David Alan Brown and Pietro Marani, Leonardo's paintings have sometimes felt curiously marginalised in much recent scholarship, the focus of crackpot theorising rather than conventional art-historical analysis. It is sometimes forgotten – though not in this book – that almost all of his 'scientific' investigations have their roots in his activities as painter, sculptor and court artist, even if they, like the paintings themselves, could subsequently take on a life of their own. Zöllner's catalogue of paintings is boldly described as 'definitive', and his assessment of the chronology and authorship of the paintings, those that are certainly Leonardo's as well as those frequently ascribed to him, is largely reliable. His judicious use (and great command) of the vast secondary literature is impressive and what he has to add is often illuminating. I would quarrel only with his too early dating of the Vatican *St Jerome*, here placed before the Uffizi *Adoration of the Magi*. The two pictures were shown together recently at the Uffizi in Florence, where the *St Jerome* was revealed as a more monumental and more mature work in which Leonardo has begun to apply his investigation of ideal human proportion, a feature of his studies in the early 1490s. Their unfinished states are in fact the aspect they have most in common, hardly grounds for assuming that they were executed at the same time, particularly when dealing with such a notorious non-finisher. Zöllner's tentative proposal that the execution of the *Portrait of a musician* (Ambrosiana, Milan) might have involved Boltraffio in the lower part is also worrying. Another unfinished work, its stylistic differences from the two portraits of women Leonardo executed during his first period in Milan (*Cecilia Gallerani* and the *Belle ferronière*) may well be explicable by proposing a slightly later dating for the *Musician* than is usually supposed – closer to the second version of the *Virgin of the rocks* than to the first. Why, we might ask, would an assistant delegated to finish the portrait have left it incomplete?

In attempting to situate the pictures more broadly, Zöllner's stated aim is 'to examine questions relating in particular to the function of Leonardo's works, their significance within their respective genres, and their political iconography', and he does so on the whole very successfully. As if in reaction to the lunatic fringe, Zöllner attempts a kind of demystification. His arguments are therefore deliberately orthodox, and he makes shrewd use of conventional iconographical analysis. Occasionally he is too narrow in his readings – the carnation held by the *Virgin in the Munich Madonna*, for example, is not just a symbol of the Passion but also of love and marriage; the parapet cannot stand only for the altar. But in general his investigation of how the content of a work (or works) like the *Virgin of the rocks* might have been shaped to follow or convey established modes of Marian and Franciscan devotion is exemplary.

Mary's cavern is not here Leonardo's cave of discovery but alludes to passages in the Canticles. The author convincingly explains how different audiences for art, using set criteria, might have read Leonardo's pictures, and his approach is fully justified by his citation of Fra Pietro da Novellara's famous description of the lost cartoon of the *Virgin and Child with St Anne* in which the saint is tentatively identified as standing for the Church.

Also helpful in this context is Zöllner's exploration of Leonardo's links with earlier painters, more often in Florence than in Milan, which fits his paintings into a larger visual tradition rather than assuming that they are in all aspects necessarily exceptional. This approach leads to a normalisation of Leonardo, a useful corrective to general trends in the literature but unavoidably somewhat reductive. Zöllner, it is true, acknowledges – how could he fail to? – that many of these paintings, however conventional their beginnings, diverged from the norm as Leonardo used them as the vehicles for explorations of larger ideas about art, nature and the divine. He points out, for example, that the sale of the first version of the *Virgin of the rocks* to someone who had not commissioned the painting says something about the way Leonardo's artistic and intellectual originality was beginning to be appreciated. In particular, Zöllner's account of the *Last Supper* as it plays out Leonardo's notions of the soul, the '*senso comune*' and the way in which they determine human action and appearance, although not new, is admirably clear. But this kind of reading remains exceptional. In general, biographical and 'philosophical' readings are eschewed. Thus the genesis of the *Mona Lisa*, for example, is associated rather prosaically with the moment when Lisa Gherardini and Francesco del Giocondo moved house. Zöllner's analysis of the picture itself is formalist and used to examine Leonardo's theories of how light falls on bodies. Leonardo thus becomes a little unremarkable.

Somehow, what has gone missing is Leonardo's mode of thought, and especially the larger reasons behind his investigations of the natural world and their connections with finished – or unfinished – pictures. This deficiency is partly caused by the decision to divorce the paintings from the drawings; the latter are actually thoughtfully selected, rather than 'complete'. This means that drawing, Leonardo's chief method of both artistic and scientific investigation, is not adequately explored to elucidate his thinking as a painter. This problem might have been rectified by the fact that the drawings, following a model of Popham's, are arranged thematically, but the groupings are sometimes confusing and the chronology impossible to follow. Is it not clear, for instance, why certain drawings are included with 'drawings and sketches for surviving and documented paintings' while others are not. Two Windsor studies of drapery (cat. nos. 40 and 41) for a seemingly lost *Salvator Mundi* (a work that was later recorded as by Leonardo but is not 'documented') are placed in this section without explanation.

Others (nos. 150, 151 and 182), for the Christ and drapery of the angel in the London *Virgin of the rocks*, are subsumed within the baggy group 'Drawings of human figures, animals and monsters'. It is also odd, if chronology was considered to be of secondary importance, that rather tight date ranges are given for many works, again with no explanation, when their precise datings are often open to dispute. No. 155, the celebrated metalpoint drawing of hands at Windsor, is, for example, dated c.1478, presumably on account of its traditional association with the portrait of Ginevra de' Benci, but the putative link<sup>4</sup> is nowhere elucidated, and the drawing may well have been executed a decade later. Zöllner and his collaborator on this part of the book, Johannes Nathan, give courageously concise introductions to each group, but the physical challenge of chasing references to the images themselves makes their texts difficult to follow, and the captions to each drawing are laconic. This lack of scope given to the authors and the choice of this structure make the primary purpose of the project – to produce a glamorous picture book – all too apparent. It is all the more miraculous that Zöllner's account of the paintings was allowed to be so scholarly and serious.

**Grace and Grandeur: The Portraiture of Paolo Veronese.** By John Garton. 268 pp. incl. 49 col. + 122 b. & w. ills. (Harvey Miller Publishers, London and Turnhout, 2008), €110. ISBN 978-1-905375-23-3.

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IN FEBRUARY 1575 Sir Philip Sidney wrote from Venice to his friend Hubert Languet that, planning to be portrayed, he was undecided between Tintoretto and Veronese, as it was then thought that both artists 'hold by far the highest place in the art'.<sup>1</sup> A few days later Sidney reported that 'this day Paolo Veronese has begun my portrait, for which I must stay here two or three days longer'. The English poet's choice appears somewhat eccentric when portraits by Titian and Tintoretto are still considered the quintessence of Venetian art. Veronese painted few independent portraits; Ridolfi, for example, in his biography mentions only a small number. While essays and books on Titian's and Tintoretto's portraits abound, Veronese's portraiture has been little studied, and no monographic work on the subject exists. Garton's book, based on his doctoral thesis, is therefore welcome.

Unfortunately the author decided to focus exclusively on the artist's independent portraits, thereby ignoring the effigies of patrons included in so many of Veronese's other paintings. Arguably Veronese's most successful portraits are those that appear in his religious and historical works. Donors are often present in altarpieces: from the portraits of Giovanni Bevilacqua and his wife, Lucrezia, in one of Veronese's earliest paintings, the