Francesca Fiorani

KENNETH CLARK AND LEONARDO: FROM CONNOISSEURSHIP TO BROADCASTING TO DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

ESTRATTO

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LEONARDO IN BRITAIN
Collections and Historical Reception
Proceedings of the International Conference, London 25-27 May 2016

Edited by Juliana Barone and Susanna Avery-Quash

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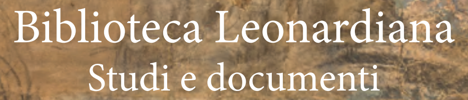

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Collections and Historical Reception

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Juliana Barone and Susanna Avery-Quash

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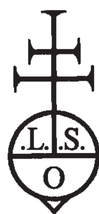

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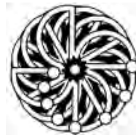

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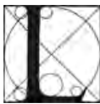

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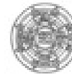

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GUIDE TO SHORT FORMS USED

Trattato della pittura or *Trattato* = 1651 Italian edition by R.T. du Fresne
Traitté de la peinture or *Traitté* = 1651 French edition by R.F. de Chambray
Traité de la peinture or *Traité* = 1716 French edition by P.-F. Giffart
Treatise of Painting or *Treatise* = 1721 English edition (Anonymous)
Treatise on Painting or *Treatise* = 1802 English edition by J.F. Rigaud

Also

'Vita' 1651 = 'Vita di Lionardo da Vinci' by R.T. du Fresne, in *Trattato* 1651
'Vie' 1716 = 'La Vie de Léonard de Vinci' by P.-F. Giffart, in *Traité* 1716
'Life' 1721 = 'The Life of Leonardo da Vinci' (Anonymous), in *Treatise* 1721
'Life' 1802 = 'The Life of Leonardo da Vinci' by J.S. Hawkins, in *Treatise* 1802

KENNETH CLARK AND LEONARDO: FROM CONNOISSEURSHIP TO BROADCASTING TO DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Francesca Fiorani

Kenneth Clark (1903–1983) studied Leonardo da Vinci throughout his entire life but he never saw himself as a Leonardo scholar. For him Leonardo was 'too heavy and weighty for any scholar to bear' and he claimed he had seen several Leonardo scholars showing 'uncomfortable signs of nervous tension' while two of them had 'gone mad'.[1] Arguably, though, his research on Leonardo informed his scholarly and public activities in the deepest way (Fig. 1).

Clark was keenly aware of his contributions to the study of art and unusually open to writing about them. But he never articulated fully his lifelong engagement with Leonardo nor explicitly acknowledged the large role it played in his professional life as a scholar, collector, writer, administrator and TV author. His numerous public roles – Director of the National Gallery in London for thirteen years, Surveyor of the King's Pictures for eleven, chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain for five, founder and chairman of the Independent Television Authority, and author of the BBC series *Civilization* – required him to share his thoughts with a wide public, and he rarely shied away from expressing his views, often controversial ones. He had strong convictions about what constituted great art and how it should be studied: for him great works of art were the figurative paintings and sculptures made by the great masters of western Europe and the best way to study them was through an eclectic method that combined aesthetic appreciation with research into iconography and technical aspects of art making. He often edited the writings of art historians who had shaped his method (Roger Fry's last lectures appeared in 1939 and John Ruskin's memoir in 1949) and wrote on the great masters of old times (Piero della Francesca, Sandro Botticelli, Michelangelo, Raphael, Titian, J.M.W. Turner, Rembrandt, Joshua Reynolds, John Ruskin,

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1 K. Clark: 'Leonardo's Notebooks', *New York Review of Books* (12 December 1974), p. 12. For a list of 'Kenneth Clark's Writings on Leonardo da Vinci', see Appendix.

J.-F. Millet) but also on some artists of his time he particularly appreciated, such as Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland, William Nicholson and Jack B. Yeats. No other artist, though, received the life-long, sustained study Clark dedicated to Leonardo da Vinci.

Today the field of art history has expanded so greatly beyond Clark's approach and its analytical, theoretical, scientific and digital tools have increased so critically that little can be salvaged of Clark's methodologies and theoretical underpinnings. But there is a lesson from what Clark did for art history that might still be worth considering today. It has to do with the public outreach of his scholarship as well as with his desire to capture artistic personalities holistically.

In the current phase of Leonardo studies, the way Kenneth Clark studied Leonardo da Vinci, the moment he chose to do so, and the outlets he selected to share his rigorous scholarship with a broad public are worthy of renewed consideration. The field of Leonardo studies has grown enormously since Clark's time in exciting and transdisciplinary ways that were simply unimaginable a few decades ago. Leonardo's thought and art have never been better understood within the contexts of both Leonardo's own life and work and his cultural, artistic and intellectual circles. Unsurpassed is also the understanding of the deep connections between his activities as an artist and his more speculative investigations of natural phenomena. But modern Leonardo studies have also grown increasingly specialized and fragmented, which means that the risk of losing sight of the artist's personality and contributions as a whole is real. Real is also the fact that this highly specialized and rigorous scholarship is hardly ever cast for a wider public, which continues to be steadily fascinated by Leonardo but to whom only the most sensational and often inaccurate and misleading aspects of his life and work seem to be addressed. How is rigorous scholarship shared with a broad public in the modern digital age? How is an artistic personality reconstructed holistically today? Can the mission Clark saw for himself, his ability, his craft indeed, to communicate rigorous scholarship to a broad public be a lesson – or at least a guide – for the next phase of Leonardo studies and perhaps of art historical and literary studies more generally?

A general renewed interest in Kenneth Clark and his multifaceted activities has re-emerged in the past couple of years. In 2014 Tate Britain organized the exhibition *Kenneth Clark: Looking for Civilization*. The following year the volume entitled *The Letters of Bernard Berenson and Kenneth Clark, 1925–1959* appeared, chronicling in over 500 pages Clark's correspondence with Bernard Berenson. In 2016 James Stourton published a biography entitled *Kenneth Clark: Life, Art and Civilization*.[2] These recent

[2] C. Stephens and J.P. Stonard: exh. cat. *Kenneth Clark: Looking for Civilization*, London

studies complement Clark's autobiographies, *Another Part of the Wood: A Self-Portrait*, which was published in 1974, and *The Other Half: A Self-Portrait*, which appeared in 1977, as well as Clark's correspondence with major art historians, which documents his methodological and theoretical debts and which is kept in the archives of numerous museums and public institutions.[3]

This abundance of materials, both old and new, encourages a fresh look at Clark's work on Leonardo da Vinci and at his position within the broader field of Leonardo studies as that field was emerging in the course of the twentieth century. Clark's interest in Leonardo dates back to 1928. He had just completed his first book, on the Gothic Revival, and 'instead of studying the kind of minor artist who is thought appropriate to a beginner', he recalled in his autobiography almost fifty years later, 'I plunged in at the deep end. I concentrated on Leonardo da Vinci.'[4] The move was bolder than it would seem today for a number of reasons.

First, basic attributions were still hotly debated and works that are today considered fundamental paintings by Leonardo, such as the Uffizi *Annunciation* or the portrait of *Ginevra de' Benci,* were still attributed to others – the former to Verrocchio, the latter to an unspecified Northern artist. Secondly, no scholar had seriously attempted to connect Leonardo's writings with his paintings and drawings, not even Bernard Berenson, whose list of Leonardo's drawings in his foundational book *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters* (1903) Clark described as 'impeccable' but noted that it also made 'practically no reference to Leonardo's thought'.[5] Clark's comment on Berenson's list should be interpreted as conveying factual information not just on Berenson's discussion of Leonardo's drawings but also on the motivation for Clark's engagement with Leonardo, a facet

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(Tate Britain) 2014; R. Cumming, ed.: *The Letters of Bernard Berenson and Kenneth Clark, 1925–1959*, New Haven-London 2015; J. Stourton: *Kenneth Clark: Life, Art and Civilization*, New York 2016. To these recent volumes should be added M. Secrest: *Kenneth Clark: A Biography*, London 1984; E. Samuels: *Bernard Berenson: The Making of a Legend*, Cambridge, MA-London 1987. His correspondence with the directors of the Warburg Institute are kept in the archive of the Warburg Institute, London, but see also E. Sears: 'Kenneth Clark and Gertrude Bing: Letters on *The Nude*', *Burlington Magazine* CLIII (2011), pp. 530–31. His correspondence with other important art historians is kept in the archives of museums and institutions across Europe, including Tate Britain, London, and The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies at Villa I Tatti, Florence.

[3] Clark's autobiographies are *Another Part of the Wood: A Self-Portrait*, New York 1974, and *The Other Half: A Self-Portrait*, London 1977.

[4] Clark, 1974 (*Another Part*), p. 174.

[5] B. Berenson: *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters: Classified, Criticized and Studied as Documents in the History and Appreciation of Tuscan Art, with a Copious Catalogue Raisonné*, London 1903; Clark, 1974 (*Another Part*), p. 175. For a critical and historiographic evaluation of Berenson's book, see: C. Bambach: 'Art History Reviewed V', *Burlington Magazine* CLI (2009), pp. 692–96; republished in R. Stone and J.P. Stonard: *The Books That Shaped Art History: From Gombrich and Greenberg to Alpers and Krauss*, New York 2013, pp. 30–41.

of his professional life that emerges with even greater clarity from his recently published correspondence with Berenson. Reading through the Clark-Berenson correspondence reveals the role Leonardo played in the relationship between the two, in the mutual respect they built for each other over the years – and in the lifelong rivalry that was part and parcel of their relationship and respect.

The meeting between the two is an integral part of their respective legends. In 1925 Clark, who was then twenty-two, went to visit Berenson at I Tatti, Berenson's villa on the Tuscan hills outside Florence. According to Clark's recollection in his autobiography, after lunch Berenson and Clark had a one-to-one conversation. It was brief, 'about ten minutes', according to Clark, but it was sufficient for Berenson to establish that Clark was the right person to assist him on a revised edition of his *Drawings of the Florentine Painters*. 'I'm very impulsive, my dear boy,' Berenson told Clark, 'and I have only known you for a few minutes, but I would like you to come and work with me to help prepare a new edition of my *Florentine Drawings* [sic].'[6] Either young Clark was extremely brilliant in that brief exchange or Berenson showed exceptional foresight in grasping the abilities of the young scholar in this short space a time. The reality was quite different. Letters by Berenson's wife Mary and by Clark to his father document that they had met numerous times and had had multiple conversations over several meals before Berenson invited Clark to help him with the new edition of his book. Unquestionably, though, the version of the story Clark chose to recount reflects their enlarged personalities much better than the actual events. Clark took the job and went to I Tatti for a month in early 1926; in October of the same year he travelled with Berenson to northern Italy. In the summer of 1927 the two were in London and Oxford to look at Florentine drawings and reassess attributions. During their visits to the British Museum, the Ashmolean and the Royal Library at Windsor Castle that summer, they must have looked at some works by Leonardo together. In November they were in Paris looking at works in the Louvre and must have discussed the small *Annunciation* whose attribution was still oscillating between Leonardo and his pupil Lorenzo di Credi (Berenson considered it a work by Lorenzo di Credi but changed his mind when he saw it and changed it again after 1939, when Clark attributed it to Lorenzo di Credi).

In 1928 Clark was at I Tatti again but in a matter of months it became apparent that his interests did not align with Berenson's expectations. Clark's change of heart had to do with his own aspirations for an independent

6 On the meetings between Berenson and Clark in 1925, see Clark, 1974 (*Another Part*), p. 128; Stourton, 2016, pp. 40–41; and Samuels, 1987, pp. 337–40.

professional life and also with his personal life. He got engaged, married and had a child, all activities Berenson regarded as betrayals of their common project. But Clark's change of heart had a great deal to do also with a lecture by Aby Warburg that he heard at the Bibliotheca Hertziana on 19 January 1929. One of Warburg's last public presentations (he died in June 1929), the lecture was on the subject of Mnemosyne, the picture atlas of the collective memory that Warburg saw 'as a formative force for the emergence of styles using the civilization of pagan antiquity as a constant' and to which he dedicated the last years of his life.[7] Warburg delivered the lecture in front of a few panels of his memory atlas that he had brought from his room at the Eden Hotel, where he had set them up for study during his Roman sojourn (Fig. 2). He moved freely from Roman triumphal arches, Meleager sarcophagi and Medusa heads to Donatello, Agostino di Duccio, Ghirlandaio, Hugo van der Goes and Botticelli. He spoke in German, a language Clark did not fully master, and went on for a very long time. By his own admission Clark 'understood about two-thirds' of what Warburg was saying. But what he understood was sufficient for him to be fascinated by the depth of Warburg's approach to art history and spellbound by his delivery. Warburg 'could get inside a character, so that when he quoted from Savonarola, one seemed to hear the Frate's high, compelling voice; and when he read from Poliziano there was all the daintiness and the slight artificiality of the Medicean circle'. He found Warburg 'without doubt the most original thinker on art history of our time' and was struck by his method: 'Instead of thinking of works of art as life-enhancing representations he thought of them as symbols, and believed that the art historian should concern himself with the origin, meaning, and transmission of symbolic images'. From that moment onward, Clark admitted that 'connoisseurship became no more than a kind of habit, and my mind was occupied in trying to answer the kind of questions that had occupied Warburg'.[8]

Clark's new take on art history must have become known to Berenson. By May 1929 Berenson had reached the conclusion that 'our plan of collaborating on the new edition of the Florentine drawings' had ended because, as he put it, 'I shall need not a collaborator but an assistant who would be at my beck and call to fetch and carry, to look up texts, etc'.[9] What Berenson really needed was a 'Renaissance-style' apprentice who would show to him the same unconditional dedication artists in training

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[7] E. Gombrich: *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, London 1970, p. 270; see pp. 271–73 on Warburg's lecture at the Bibliotheca Hertziana in 1929. Warburg's notes from this lecture are in archive of the Warburg Institute (Folder: *Hertziana Lecture*).

[8] Clark, 1974 (*Another Part*), pp. 189–90. See also Stourton, 2016, pp. 73–74.

[9] Letter from Berenson to Clark, from Baalbek, Jordan, May 1929, transcribed in Cumming, ed., 2015, p. 47.

showed to their masters in Renaissance workshops. Clark had a different take on the job of correcting notes and numbers for Berenson's lists and in fact came to regard that work as 'pettifogging business'.[10] As usual the person who really understood what was going on between the pair was Mary Berenson. 'All that he [Clark] wants out of it,' she wrote, 'is whatever kudos he will get from the association. He has an ingenuous self-centered nature and BB needs devotion.'[11] And yet Clark's work on Leonardo would be unimaginable without that foundational, albeit brief, training on Berenson's lists of drawings of Florentine painters.

At the most basic level, when in 1929, at the age of twenty-six, he was given the job of cataloguing the more than 600 drawings by Leonardo in the collections of the Royal Library at Windsor Castle, it was because the Royal librarian Owen Morshead had seen him at work with Berenson on the lists a couple of years earlier. Morshead had just been appointed to the position within the Royal Collection when Berenson and Clark visited Windsor in the summer of 1927. Morshead must have liked the way the aspiring scholar looked at drawings and indeed he continued to promote the career of the young Clark.[12]

Clark would later acknowledge that the work on Leonardo's drawings at Windsor was 'one of the most interesting and responsible jobs that any scholar could have been asked to undertake'. He worked on it for about three years, 'happy, excited, confident that I was gaining new ground'.[13] He thought the catalogue gave him 'the illusion that I was a scholar'[14] and he continued to regard it as his 'only claim to be considered a scholar'.[15]

Clark updated Berenson regularly about his cataloging work at Windsor. The letter he sent Berenson on 30 December 1930 was much more than a progress report, though. It was almost a manifesto of the different approach Clark intended to take on Leonardo's drawings, a methodological departure, even a rupture, from Berenson and his lists. It is worth quoting Clark's letter extensively and considering how Clark's words would have resonated with Berenson:

> ... I am really enthralled with the work I am doing. The work on the Leonardo's at Windsor has proved unexpectedly rewarding. I had thought, 'such a great name, such a famous collection, there will be nothing left to do but record other people's judgements.'

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10 Samuels, 1987, p. 363.

11 Samuels, 1987, p. 363.

12 On the relation between Clark and Morshead, see Stourton, 2016, pp. 1, 98–104.

13 Clark, 1974 (*Another Part*), p. 175.

14 Clark, 1974 (*Another Part*), p. 258.

15 Clark, 1974 (*Another Part*), p. 176.

But I find there is almost everything to do. I suppose no one has ever worked there quite long enough – or perhaps they have not been allowed to get the drawings out of order. From whatever reason I find no one has ever tried seriously to put them in chronological order & do the obvious things – for example no one seems to have tried putting together the sketch books which is quite easy as the watermarks are often clear. And if such gross mechanical criteria are neglected, you can imagine how neglected are the aesthetics.

As for the Florentine Drawings: of course you don't want anything like the detail I have to take. For example you have thirty or so horse drawings classed under one rubric, & I imagine that if this were expanded to three or four, according to period & intention, it would be detailed enough. Same with flower drawing & landscapes. With your permission I shall make out a scheme for these parts & send it to you, to accept or reject as you like (of course they are all drawings you have passed as genuine).

I really think that the catalogue when it is finished will be useful in a pedestrian way. I fear it won't be very popular as people like Malaguzzi Valeri, Venturi & co have made the wildest guesses at dating – but of course they'll never read it, so it doesn't matter.

I think the trouble is that Leonardo drawings are amongst the very few things that can't be studied from reproductions.

I have got about a dozen Windsor photographs & will send them off to the Tatti when I return to Richmond. I've also got some photos of the little figures on the tomb of Michelangelo, & some good details of the Bertoldo bronze battle relief. I wish I knew if anyone had ever written on the influence of that piece on high renaissance. But no Leonardo scholars seem to mention it in relation to Anghiari.[16]

While sharing his enthusiasm for his work, Clark is also pointedly sketching out his own approach against Berenson's. To Berenson, who was then at the peak of his career and who had dedicated dozens of pages to Leonardo's drawings in his book, he wrote that 'there is almost everything to do' on Leonardo's drawings and suggested a method to group and date the drawings based on techniques, watermarks and other physical characteristics of the paper on which the drawings were made, a method which Berenson had systematically avoided in his lists as irrelevant to aesthetic judgement. Technique did not interest Berenson, as Clark himself would recall in his obituary for him: '... if there is one thing that bored the young Berenson more than documents it was technique'.[17] Graciously, Clark conceded that he had considered only Leonardo's horse drawings 'you have passed as genuine' but he also proposed to reorganize Berenson's

[16] Letter from Clark to Berenson, 30 December 1930, transcribed in Cumming, ed., 2015, pp. 81–82.

[17] K. Clark: 'Bernard Berenson', *Burlington Magazine* CII (1960), pp. 381–86.

rubric 'according to period & intention' and to 'make out a scheme' that could be expanded to flowers and landscapes. Even an apparently innocent statement about the fact that 'Leonardo drawings are amongst the very few things that can't be studied from reproductions' must have read to Berenson as an open challenge to his method, if not as an insult, as his scholarship rested on the unique collection of photographs of works of art he had amassed at I Tatti. Clark's off-handed comment that 'no Leonardo scholars seem to mention [Bertoldo's bronze battle relief] in relation to Anghiari' was equally pointed to Berenson.

The letter must not have been an easy read for Berenson, who in his reply admitted that 'Windsor remains a difficulty' while asking specifically for the tools on which his method was based: 'a complete set of reproductions of all drawings save mere diagrams. Each reproduction should have attached the inventory number of the original, the technique and paper & the measurements.' This was the only way Clark could help Berenson, 'for whether liked or not', Berenson wrote in his reply, 'the new edition of the Flor. Drawings will be the ground in which further planting will be carried on for some decades to come'. He did not budge at young Clark's methodological challenges but he did assure him that he 'shall be happy to study all the classifications & chronology of the Windsor drawings that you will submit to me, & write ample acknowledgment about any of them that fit in with my schema'.[18]

Throughout 1931 Clark sent materials and updates, including photographs and 'a preliminary list of horses' which specified 'number, size, medium & reference to photo of anything *not* in your list, or included with some mistake, for you to look at or not, as to what I take to be approximate groupings'.[19] He eventually sent 'a first installment of notes' which included 'horses, landscapes & botany, & some of the anatomies'. He even suggested to Berenson that he tried to get missing photos from the Reale Commissione Vinciana as 'they have negatives of all the Windsor drawings taken by Enrico Carusi before the war, and are supplying us with prints at a very cheap rate'.[20] He warned him that perhaps 'they may be unwilling to give prints to any one as formidable as yourself (they suppose me to be perfectly harmless)'; under the disguise of a self-deprecating comparison between the 'formidable' Berenson and his 'harmless' self, Clark was actually revealing that he did see himself as comparable to Berenson.

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18 Letter from Berenson to Clark, 13 January 1931, transcribed in Cumming, ed., 2015, p. 84.

19 Letter from Clark to Berenson, 26 January 1931, transcribed in Cumming, ed., 2015, p. 85.

20 Letter from Clark to Berenson, 6 July 1931, transcribed in Cumming, ed., 2015, pp. 106–07.

Only when the Windsor catalogue of 1935 was out did Clark share with Berenson his wish that he 'could have made it into a festschrift & presented it to you on your birthday with a suitable dedication: but I was told that the dedication of a Royal Book to a private person was against the rules, and I had to leave it out altogether'.[21] Whether he really intended to dedicate the book to Berenson or not is unclear, but Berenson appreciated it nonetheless:

> It did me good to read yr. long letter, in which you say such nice things about our relations to one another. Of course it would have delighted me if you had dedicated your Leonardo to me, but it pleases me greatly that you thought of doing it, and would have had it been in your power.[22]

Words of affection notwithstanding, Clark's book was under scrutiny at I Tatti. Elisabetta (Nicky) Mariano, the librarian at I Tatti and Berenson's trusted assistant, 'checked every item with my catalogue', read the preface and reported 'some interesting and even entertaining tidbits' to Berenson, who could not refrain from comparing it to his own book on the drawings by Florentine painters. He wrote to Clark:

> I wish I could get out my Flor. Drawings as you have yr. book. I wish I could reproduce every drawing catalogued. I wish even that I could reproduce the finished work for which they were intended. Then and then only would my Flor. Draw. teach the student. As it is the publication may have to appear with no illustrations. In that case it will remain a dead letter except for those who have access to a library as well stocked as the Tattiana. And even those happy students will have to lose much time looking up the illustrations in books.[23]

It is in the context of this race of sorts on Leonardo's drawings that we have to understand Clark's 'real pang of emotion' when he opened Berenson's *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, which the Chicago University Press published in a revised edition in 1938. Clark found reasons to be pleased in Berenson's 'Introduction' to the volume, where the author acknowledged that Clark had 'spent two winters learning all a youthful, eager, and keen mind can learn in that time' at I Tatti and that during that time he had 'made not only corrections but observations which have been most serviceable on the drawings in the Uffizi'. Berenson even admitted that when Clark left the project he 'lost a partner who would have given

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21 K. Clark: *A Catalogue of the Drawings of Leonardo da Vinci in the Collections of His Majesty the King at Windsor Castle*, Cambridge 1935. See also letter from Clark to Berenson, 16 July 1935, transcribed in Cumming, ed., 2015, p. 168.

22 Letter from Berenson to Clark, 27 July 1935, transcribed in Cumming, ed., 2015, p. 169.

23 Letter from Berenson to Clark, 27 July 1935, transcribed in Cumming, ed., 2015, p. 169.

shape and finish to this work that I fear it sorely lacks'.[24] This was the first public acknowledgment of respect for the scholarship of his former assistant turned rival.

Clark's letter to Berenson about the revised edition of the *Florentine Drawings* is well known, as is his own acknowledgment of mutual respect and debt:

> They [the *Florentine Drawings*] are intimately connected with the whole of my life: with my early ambitions and my first apprenticeship, and also with the good many regrets at the later course of my career. For all of these reasons I needn't tell you how touched I am by your reference to me in the introduction; and I am almost equally delighted by what you say about my Windsor catalogue in your second volume. The work I did on the Leonardo's was the direct fulfillment of my apprentice work for you and so is my best contribution to your great book.[25]

As they exchange words of reciprocal appreciation via Leonardo, they also continued to chart their separate ways. In the same letter of 16 July 1935 in which he told Berenson about his wish to dedicate his Windsor catalogue to him, Clark also let him know about 'a short book on Leonardo' he intended to write based on lectures he had already delivered at Oxford University and at the Courtauld Institute in London and that he was planning to deliver again at the Royal Institution in the autumn of 1935 and as the Ryerson Lectures at Yale University in the autumn of 1936.[26] He shared with Berenson that he hoped the short book would 'serve as a reasonable up to date introduction to [Leonardo's] work'.[27] It was a synthetic approach to Leonardo's career the likes of which Berenson had never attempted, for Leonardo or for any other Renaissance artists he had written about.

By the time Clark's book appeared with the title *Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist* in 1939, Europe was at war and Clark was serving as Director of the National Gallery, London, a position he held from 1933 to 1946.

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24 Berenson, 'Introduction', *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, 2nd edn, Chicago 1938. See also the recent digital rendition of all the editions of Berenson's book on Florentine drawings at: http://florentinedrawings.itatti.harvard.edu (accessed 24 May 2017).

25 Letter from Clark to Berenson, 3 December 1938, transcribed in Cumming, ed., 2015, pp. 198–99.

26 Letter from Clark to Berenson, 16 July 1935, transcribed in Cumming, ed., 2015, p. 168. See also K. Clark: *Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of his Development as an Artist*, Cambridge 1939, p. xi.

27 Letter from Clark to Berenson, 1 January 1938, transcribed in Cumming, ed., 2015, p. 193.

As Clark himself admitted, this short, readable book 'turned out to be more my *metier* than scholarship'.[28] He kept 'the lecture form because it alone justifies my scale and style' and included lots of illustrations – all gathered at the end 'in order to please rather than to instruct'.[29] Some of his pairings have since become seminal, such as *The Benois Madonna* next to its Louvre preparatory drawing (Fig. 3), or the Louvre *St John the Baptist* next to a profile drawing of a *Seated Old Man with Water Studies* from Windsor datable 1515.[30] Decades later, in his autobiography, he admitted that 'in the end it was too short but, as a paperback, it slipped easily into a pocket or handbag, and until Civilization it remained the most widely read of all my books'.[31] Whether consciously or not, Clark's description of his pocket edition which 'slipped easily into a pocket or handbag' has an affinity with Leonardo's own notebooks which the artist carried in his pocket, albeit Clark's book was intended as much for a female as a male readership, hence his reference to handbags.

Perhaps the book was too short. Without a doubt, though, it was a success. A reprint came out in 1940, just a year after its first publication, a second edition with some revisions appeared in 1952, and then, in 1957, it was printed as a Pelican edition for which Clark updated the text slightly. This revised edition was reprinted numerous times, notably in 1988, when it was produced with an important introductory essay by Martin Kemp.[32]

In the opening pages of Chapter One, Clark explains that he wanted to attempt 'a new interpretation' of the artist because it was 'the first duty of criticism to clear away the parasitic growths which obscured the true scope of his genius'. After having 'reached some sort of general agreement as to which pictures and drawings are really by Leonardo' it was now time 'for criticism in a more humane sense'. Although issues of attribution persisted, Clark noted, 'we can no longer hope to settle them by comparison of morphological details. We must look at pictures as creations not simply of the human hand, but of the human spirit'.[33]

He was seeking to understand not just what Leonardo did but why he did what he did the way he did. For this task Berenson's formal analysis of 'morphological details' was not a sufficient tool. Unsurprisingly, the book was not dedicated to Berenson but to David Balniel, 28th Earl of

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[28] Clark, 1974 (*Another Part*), pp. 258–59.

[29] Clark, 1939, p. xi.

[30] Leonardo da Vinci, *Seated Old Man with Water Studies*, Windsor, RCIN 912579.

[31] Clark, 1974 (*Another Part*), p. 259.

[32] M. Kemp: 'Clark's Leonardo', in K. Clark: *Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of his Development as an Artist*, London-New York 1988, pp. 17–35.

[33] Clark, 1939, p. 1.

Crawford and 11th Earl of Balcarres, an art connoisseur who grew up around his family collections of incunabula and old masters from Duccio to Rembrandt, who, as Clark put it, 'had entered his bloodstream'. Clark and Balniel were both members, with several others, of the selection committee for the 1930 Royal Academy's exhibition of Italian art. This episode sealed their life-long friendship. Balniel was a busy public figure – a British conservative politician, a member of the board of trustees of the Tate Gallery and the National Gallery, among others, but he found time to help his friend Clark. He 'read the book in manuscript and made many useful corrections'.[34]

Clark's book is positioned at a critical moment in Leonardo studies as he himself acknowledged retrospectively in a lecture he delivered at the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence in 1960. When he started his work on Leonardo, not much was reliable for consultation beside Berenson's lists. He wrote:

> Pater's famous essay on Leonardo da Vinci not only includes the Medusa of the Uffizi as one of the most famous and certain of Leonardo's works: but in a long paragraph devoted to his drawings contrives not to mention a single one which is by Leonardo himself. And do not let it be thought that this is because Pater was a dilettante. His Leonardo essay was written in 1868. Thirty years later the critic Müntz published a heavy volume which was supposed to be the authoritative study of Leonardo, and of the drawings illustrated not a single one was authentic. And in this same year – 1889 – Mr. Berenson was writing the *Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, in which the list of Leonardo's drawings is absolutely accurate and almost complete.[35]

In the bibliography of the book he is more generous in acknowledging the contributions of earlier scholars, mentioning Richter, Müntz, MacCurdy and in particular Solmi,[36] whose work Clark praised as 'the first systematic attempt to find how Leonardo's manuscripts are transcribed from other sources'. He is less impressed by Solmi's biography of the artist, which is 'one of the best accounts of Leonardo's life, but wholly inadequate as an account of his art'. Anny Popp, an art historian who had written on Michelangelo and with whom Clark visited the Cappella Paolina in Rome in 1929, had written the 'best short study of the drawings and the

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[34] Clark, 1939, p. xii; and Clark, 1974 (*Another Part*), pp. 184–86.

[35] Samuels, 1987, p. 498. The *Head of Medusa* referred to in the Galleria degli Uffizi is now attributed to a Flemish artist working at the end of the sixteenth century.

[36] Leonardo da Vinci: *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci Compiled and Edited from the Original Manuscripts by John-Paul Richter*, London 1883; E. Müntz: *Leonardo da Vinci: Artist, Thinker and Man of Science*, London 1898; E. MacCurdy, *The Mind of Leonardo da Vinci*, London 1928; and E. Solmi, *Le fonti dei manoscritti di Leonardo*, Turin 1908.

only one to understand the importance of chronology',[37] while Lionello Venturi's *La critica e l'arte di Leonardo* (1919) was, in Clark's opinion, 'an interesting attempt to relate Leonardo's art to the theories of the Trattato'. Gabriel Séailles's *Léonard de Vinci: l'artiste et le savant* (1892) was 'the best introduction to Leonardo's thought',[38] and indeed Séailles had written it as 'an essay of psychological biography' which, Clark recalled, 'formed the basis of Paul Valéry's well known *Introduction à la methode de Leonard de Vinci*, which, however misinterprets Seallies' conclusions'. Interestingly, however, Clark fails to mention that Seailles had been highly criticized by the historian of science Pierre Duhem, who had written extensively on Leonardo but whose work Clark did not mention.

Clark's approach is eclectic at best. The iconographic method promoted by Aby Warburg, Fritz Saxl and Edgar Wind influenced Clark's search for symbolism in Leonardo's work, from pointing fingers to smiles, but the Romantic approach exemplified by Paul Valéry and Walter Pater is also present, especially in the hints about Leonardo being a magus who had access to the mysteries of the creation and nature. Clark was averse to psychoanalytical explanation, but some of his comments can only be explained in relation to psychoanalysis. A classic example is the explanation of why Leonardo incessantly drew profiles of young men next to profiles of old men. For Clark they are inseparable from each other because they are parts of the same self-projecting image and represented a deep-seated dichotomy in his own personality. From a similar standpoint, Leonardo's love of twisting movement, which the artist derived from his master Verrocchio, was likewise explained: 'We must suppose', Clark wrote, 'that Leonardo's love of curves was instinctive, born of his earliest unconscious memories, but that his master showed him the forms in which his innate sense of rhythm could most easily find expression'.[39] Berenson's aestheticism is also present everywhere and Clark's comments on *The Benois Madonna* demonstrate this indebtedness most clearly (Fig. 4). This work, Clark wrote, is 'wholly characteristic' in its surviving parts. It is 'a perfect composition ... the rhythmic relations of the two heads is [*sic*] as spontaneous and as inevitable as the relations between two bars of Mozart', its preparatory drawing showed 'as nothing else in his work, a direct and happy approach to life ... his quickness of vision'. But 'the central window itself, a central transom, lacking a landscape is ugly enough, and without a landscape it is

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37 In 1974, Clark stated that Anny Popp had written the 'only tolerable book on Leonardo's drawing' (Clark, 1974 [*Another Part*], p. 189). See A.E. Popp: *Leonardo da Vinci: Zeichnungen*, Munich 1928.

38 Clark, 1939, p. 188.

39 Clark, 1939, p. 45.

really painful'.[40] Hardly could he have been more Berensonian than he was in this last comment.

In spite of this methodological eclecticism, the image of Leonardo that emerges from Clark's book is a uniquely compelling and unified one. In line with the biographical mode, Clark organized the book chronologically, even employing time-spans as the majority of the chapter headings: Chapter One: 1452–1482; Chapter Two: 1481–1490; Chapter Three: The Notebooks; Chapter Four: The *Trattato della pittura*; Chapter Five: 1485–1496; Chapter Six: 1497–1503; Chapter Seven: 1503–1508; Chapter Eight: 1508–1513; Chapter Nine: 1513–1519. Even the chapters on the notebooks are inserted in this chronological sequence as the only notebooks by Leonardo that Clark discussed were the manuscripts known as Manuscript A and Manuscript C, which the artist compiled between 1489 and 1492 and which between them contain the bulk of his thoughts for an art treatise. But the apparent simplicity of employing a chronological ordering for his book hid Clark's originality in reorganizing Leonardo's artistic production. Instead of basing it on geography or patronage or function, he based it exclusively on the evolution of Leonardo's thought processes as an artist, just as he promised he would do in the book's subtitle, *An Account of His Development as an Artist*. Clark's chronological division of Leonardo's art made it possible for him to discuss the Uffizi *Adoration of the Magi*, which Leonardo painted in Florence in the early 1480s, alongside the Paris *Virgin of the Rocks*, which the artist painted in Milan in the mid 1480s, unveiling the deep compositional, spiritual and pictorial connections between these two works which were routinely kept separate – and still largely are.

This chronological sequence also made it possible for Clark to explain how the artist merged symbol and vision, a quest that, according to Clark, Leonardo achieved in his late series of the *Deluge* drawings, or to show how young Leonardo had selected some fundamental themes of his art by 1480, that is, by the end of his Florentine years, and how he continued to work on them for the rest of his life. One such recurring theme is the leg of a seated figure that protrudes diagonally from the picture plane towards the viewer and that Leonardo used to connect more closely the fictional space of the painted figures with the real space of the viewer as well as to infuse motion into his figures. That same motif appears in the early *Benois Madonna* and in the late *Virgin with St Anne* (Fig. 5). Another leitmotif is the battle scene with riders, which Leonardo explored to visualize human and animal motions at their height and which appeared in the background of *The Adoration of the Magi* in the early 1480s and in *The Battle of Anghiari* twenty years later (Figs. 5–6).

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[40] Clark, 1939, p. 63.

Clark's novel observations on these themes that Leonardo explored throughout his life may actually be some of the most valuable and enduring lessons of his Leonardo studies, as they capture the core of Leonardo's non-linear mind. They also encapsulate one of the fundamental challenges that Leonardo scholars are still wrestling with: are iconographic motifs sufficient evidence to document Leonardo's lifelong engagement with recurrent themes across the decades when no other evidence survives?

'Conjecture is unavoidable,' Clark wrote, and he applied lots of it in his work on Leonardo, especially when he dealt with the first thirty years of the artist's life, when Leonardo did not paint much – just a handful of pictures – and when he did not write at all or, if he did, none of his writings survive. As Clark noted, in later periods of Leonardo's life when he did not paint much, intense scientific work compensated for his painterly inactivity, but he wondered what Leonardo was doing in the first thirty years of his life, during his first Florentine period, a question still in search of a satisfactory answer eighty years after Clark posed it.

Berenson liked Clark's book and felt compelled to let him know 'how much it has impressed, stirred, and delighted me ... It is informing, illuminating and serene, and beautifully written. Not overwritten, no purple patches but where the subject demanded, imposed it.' But then he could not refrain from adding disparaging asides on the genre of the artist's biography, a genre that he had deliberately ignored and that was fundamentally alien to his way of looking at the genesis of an artist. 'The book as the biography of an artist,' Berenson wrote, 'is at once the plainest and the most rational yet sensitive interpretation of a great genius that I have come across in a very long time'.[41]

Others criticized Clark's book because it ignored Leonardo's scientific studies, especially those on machines and engineering, and because of its indifference to Leonardo's broader cultural context. The critiques were based largely on two books that were published the year before Clark's biography. One was the two-volume edition of Edward MacCurdy's *Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, which focused extensively on Leonardo's scientific writings with an emphasis on machines and engineering.[42] The other was the catalogue of a Leonardo exhibition held at the Palazzo dell'Arte in Milan, one of the exhibitions of Fascist cultural propaganda to promote Italy as the cradle of civilization.[43] Eleven notebooks by Leonardo

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[41] Letter from Berenson to Clark, 12 August 1939, transcribed in Cumming, ed., 2015, p. 215.

[42] Leonardo da Vinci, *Leonardo da Vinci's Note-Books Arranged and Rendered into English, with Introductions by Edward MacCurdy* [1906], edn London 1938.

[43] Anon., *Mostra di Leonardo da Vinci e delle invenzioni italiane*, exh. cat. Milan (Palazzo dell'Arte) 1938.

that Napoleon had taken from Milan to Paris were brought back for the exhibition. Modern reconstructions of machines based on Leonardo's drawings had been built. Thematic areas had been organized to address Leonardo's scientific interests in optics, astronomy, hydraulics, botany and flight. To broaden the message of the exhibition and expose Leonardo's works to the general public, the exhibition included such initiatives as 'After-work field trips' or 'Popular trains from all over Italy' or 'Special entry tickets for entertainment'. The part that Berenson and Clark cared the most about and the one they found most wanting was the section on painting. Here numerous works by Leonardo and his followers had been gathered, seemingly with a rationale that favoured quantity over quality. Clark considered it 'appalling' while Berenson reported that 'all and sundry who have seen it scream with derision and disgust'.[44]

In the thirty years following Clark's book, Leonardo studies exploded and topics Clark had treated only marginally developed into specialized fields that tried to do what Clark had not attempted, that is, combine systematically Leonardo writings with his art. Ludwig Heydenreich wrote on Leonardo's architecture, Ernst Gombrich on caricatures and the movement of water and air, Kenneth Keele on physiology and the senses, Ladislao Reti on machines and Charles O'Malley on anatomy. The volume *Leonardo's Legacy*, based on a conference organized at the University of California, Berkeley and edited by O'Malley in 1969, contained between its covers the trajectory of Leonardo's studies from Clark to the next generation of Leonardo scholars.[45] The opening essay was Clark's 'Leonardo and the Antique', an essay that is deeply indebted to Warburg's Mnemosyne Atlas and that has since become seminal in our understanding of the classical roots of Leonardo's figures, including their movement, but the concluding remarks of the conference, as recorded in the ensuing publication, focused on art and science and were delivered by James Ackerman, a recently-promoted professor who had just moved from Berkeley to Harvard.

Clark himself responded favourably to new approaches to Leonardo that tried to integrate Leonardo's works of art with his writings. In the new introduction for the second edition of his book, which was published in 1957 and which contains some of his most poetic, indeed Pater-inspired pages, Clark courageously rejected his previous scholarly approach to

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[44] Letter from Berenson to Clark, 11 July 1939; and letter from Clark to Berenson, 12 August 1939, transcribed in Cumming, ed., 2015, pp. 213 and 216, respectively.

[45] C. O'Malley, ed., *Leonardo's Legacy: An International Symposium*, Berkeley CA 1969. In this volume the essays by Ludwig Heydenreich, Ernst Gombrich, Kenneth Keele, Ladislao Reti and Charles O'Malley provide a good overview of Leonardo studies in the fields of architecture, caricatures, movement of water and air, physiology, psychology of perception, machines and anatomy.

Leonardo. He did not change the subtitle of the book, which continued to point to an exclusive focus on Leonardo's activities as an artist – *An Account of His Development as an Artist* – but he did acknowledge that 'notes and diagrams and drawings and paintings are two forms of record that are really inseparable and react to one another at every stage of his life'.[46]

A few years later, in 1968, the second edition of Clark's catalogue of Leonardo's drawings at Windsor appeared, co-authored by Carlo Pedretti, an emerging scholar who had developed a unique ability to decipher, date and interpret Leonardo's writing. Not everybody praised this second edition but Pedretti's sections on geometrical drawings and on caricatures were undoubtedly a gesture toward the expanded view of Leonardo studies that had emerged in the previous decade.[47]

More generally, though, Clark embraced the growing scholarship that saw the deep connection between Leonardo's work as an artist and his scientific observations; his response is seen in the more topical books of his late years. Already in *Landscape into Art*, the seminal Warburg-inspired essay he had written in 1949, Clark had discussed Leonardo's panoramic views of rock formations, mountains, great plains, hills and valleys as prominent examples of what he called 'landscape of fantasy' and famously had described the trees in the artist's Tuscan view of 1473 as 'impressionistic scribbles'.[48] He also singled out the *Deluge* drawings because while on the one side they 'take their point of departure in experience and observation' they also record 'Leonardo's deepest intuitions that the forces of nature are totally out of control, and may easily destroy our fragile civilization'.[49]

In *Moments of Vision*, a collection of essays which was published in 1983 and which he dedicated to Roger Fry, those same *Deluge* drawings are regarded as examples of the artist's 'heightened perception'. 'What gives such disturbing power to his drawing', Clark wrote, 'is that the "something within him", call it rhythmic organization or what one will, was analogous to an objective truth of nature, the continuum of energy and growth as photography has revealed it to us. His moments of vision are not only emotionally true, as Samuel Palmer's are, but scientifically true as well.'[50] The deep understanding that Clark achieved over the years on the important role that the force of nature played in Leonardo's thought is behind his apparently unorthodox comments on Leonardo's gestures,

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46 Clark, 1957, p. xii. For a comparison between the two editions, see Kemp in Clark, 1988, pp. 17–35.

47 On the second edition of the Windsor catalogue, see the review by A.M. Brizio, *Art Bulletin* LIII (December 1971) pp. 528–32.

48 K. Clark: *Landscape into Art*, New York 1949; new edn, London 1976, p. 87.

49 Clark, 1949 (1976), p. 93.

50 K. Clark: *Moments of Vision*, London 1981, p. 14.

particularly the position of hands, which has always been regarded as one of the artist's distinctive means to express the emotions of his painted figures. But for Clark hands were not at the centre of Leonardo's thoughts. 'To him,' he wrote, perhaps responding critically to Leo Steinberg, who in a famous essay of 1973 had made much of hands and feet in Leonardo's *Last Supper*, 'they were feeble and finite compared to the force of nature'.[51]

In 1973 he wrote an essay on the *Mona Lisa* to inaugurate a series of lectures on portraiture promoted by the *Burlington Magazine*. His scope was 'to narrow the gap between fact and theory' and show that 'this mysterious *object de cult*, even though it may have originated in the contemplation of a real person, has none of the qualities that move us in the works of Velázquez and Rembrandt'.[52] He meticulously developed his argument via an overview of the documentary evidence and a reading of the stylistic qualities of the painting. But the really exceptional outcome of the essay were Clark's memorable descriptions of Leonardo's works: the *Mona Lisa* is 'the submarine goddess of the Louvre' with a 'smooth white egg-shell face'. The painting is 'a dark green object that hangs almost invisibly in the Louvre' in which Leonardo expressed 'some of his obsession with Salai's smile in the smile of the *Mona Lisa*'. Her drapery 'has a classic sharpness' very different from the disturbing drapery of St Anne in *The Virgin and Child with St Anne*, which is instead 'umbilical, intestinal, pancreatic'. He also addressed the issues of the many copies of the *Mona Lisa* and commented on the recurrent claims of authenticity from people who owned copies of the *Mona Lisa*, calling these claims a sort of an epidemic and describing a state of affairs in Leonardo studies that has changed very little from his times to today: these collectors 'will discover the most bizarre evidence, they will work out theories of substitution, they will have books privately printed, and they will even go to the expense of lawsuit'.

What Clark never warmed to were Leonardo's writings, which he called a 'vast accumulation of words' that 'hardly contain a single moral judgment except in some proverb copied from sources like the *Acerba*'.[53] In 1974 Clark wrote a review of the newly discovered Madrid Codices for *The New York Review of Books* and, while he admired Leonardo's 'unerring sense of design' in combining figures of machines and columns of text, he commented that his writings seem 'to illustrate the almost insane industry with which Leonardo would concentrate on his obsessions', especially the sheets on the squaring of the circle. He regarded it 'a tragedy' that after *The*

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51 L. Steinberg: 'Leonardo's *Last Supper*', *Art Quarterly* XXXVI/4 (1973), pp. 297–410.

52 K. Clark: '*Mona Lisa*', *Burlington Magazine* CXV (1973), p. 144.

53 Clark, 1981, p. 97.

Battle of Anghiari Leonardo recorded his interest in life and movement 'no longer through drawings of life but through machines and mathematics' and considered it 'a depressing task' to read Leonardo's original manuscripts. He wished the artist 'had drawn more and written less'.[54]

A similar nonchalant approach to Leonardo's writing permeates *Civilisation*, the BBC series that made Clark a household name and that created the genre and style of the art documentary. Leonardo featured prominently in it. A series with this title, 'Civilization' in the singular and with no geographical, temporal or ethnic qualifier is unthinkable today, as is Clark's assumption that civilization equates with Western civilization and that its analysis is exclusively self-contained, requiring no consideration of its place in broader world perspectives and networks of interactions. There is nothing to retain of that approach today. Nor is there much to save of Clark's oversimplifications on Leonardo in the television series. His casual remark that Leonardo thought of women 'solely as reproductive mechanisms' is based on Sigmund Freud's interpretation of Leonardo's famous anatomical drawing representing sexual intercourse, which he had made the focus of his essay on the artist in 1910.[55] Leonardo's notebooks and scientific writings feature in *Civilisation*, which is a welcome expansion on the contents of earlier works by Clark on the artist, but their treatment is cursory at best, certainly not at the level of scholarly care that is reserved for Clark's discussion of the artist's paintings or figurative drawings. For instance, Clark analysed the digestive system of human beings while the *Great Lady* appeared on the screen,[56] a famous drawing of female anatomy that does show the digestive system but that is most celebrated as being one of the earliest and most accurate representations of the female reproductive system. Similarly, Clark explained Leonardo's optical diagrams in relation to his art, which was another welcome addition to his view of the artist, but he did not scrutinize them with equal philological attention: he commented on Manuscript A while holding it in his hands, although what he actually held was Manuscript C (Fig. 6). The *faux pas* is understandable as both manuscripts include optical diagrams and both were compiled by Leonardo between 1489 and 1492 and it was perhaps dictated by the exigencies of TV production – the larger Manuscript C made for a much more effective visual prompt than the smaller Manuscript A. But such a basic mistake would be unforgivable for a Leonardo scholar today.

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54 Clark, 1974 ('Leonardo's Notebooks'), pp. 12–18.

55 Leonardo da Vinci, 'The hemisection of a man and woman in the act of coition', Windsor, RCIN 919097v. See S. Freud: *Leonardo da Vinci: A Memory of His Childhood*, New York 1990.

56 The *Great Lady* refers to the drawing at Windsor, RCIN 912281.

Clark's last essay on Leonardo, entitled *Leonardo e le curve della vita*, was initially delivered as the *Lettura Vinciana* at the Biblioteca Leonardiana in Vinci in 1977. It is a short excursus in which Clark returns to Leonardo's lifelong fascination with curved forms, tracing the connections among hair tresses and curls, water swirls, plant leaves, flowers' petals and the direction of the wind in a deluge.

An important appraisal of Clark's contributions to Leonardo studies is Martin Kemp's introductory essay for the 1988 Viking edition of Clark's book on Leonardo.[57] Kemp himself had written a few years earlier a monograph 'about Leonardo's intellectual and artistic life as a whole' aiming 'to capture the unity of his creative intellect ... to characterize the shape of his vision of the world, to assess the relationship between the vision and his works of art'.[58] He had organized his book topically with chapters on 'Leonardo da Firenze', 'The Microcosm', 'The Exercise of Fantasia', 'The Republic: New Battles and Old Problems', 'The Prime Mover', and conceived it as a sharp departure from Clark's not just because he abandoned Clark's chronological order but also because it intended to do what Clark had refused to do, 'to show how each major facet of his activity relates to the whole and how his outlook developed during the full span of his career'. But Kemp did find a way to pay homage to his predecessor in ways both small and large. To describe an old man with a very pronounced jaw that Leonardo drew in a folio now at the Uffizi, he resorted to Clark's unforgettable definition, the 'nutcracker man' (Fig. 7). Kemp's full assessment of Clark's contribution comes in the introductory essay, in which he placed him in relation to Bernard Berenson, Aby Warburg, Roger Fry and Clive Bell, but also John Ruskin, Walter Pater and Sigmund Freud. He acknowledged that 'not a few of Clark's hints have been richly confirmed by later research',[59] from the meaning of mountains, clouds and rocks in the artist's painting, which were all based on his understanding of how nature works, to his perceptive comments on the need to understand how Leonardo's scientific method improved as his life went on. Acutely, Kemp also pointed out where Clark's book fell short, not least '[h]is failure to appreciate how the geometric temper of Leonardo's science is intimately related to his feelings for the vitality of organic life'.[60] Clark's book, however, in Kemp's final verdict, 'remains

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[57] M. Kemp, 'Clark's Leonardo', in K. Clark, *Leonardo da Vinci: Revised and Introduced by Martin Kemp*, London 1988, pp. 17–35.

[58] M. Kemp: *Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man*, London 1981; Oxford 2006, p. xvii.

[59] Kemp in Clark, 1988, p. 27.

[60] Kemp in Clark, 1988, p. 27.

a model of a short, unified study of a creative personality in any field of endeavour'.[61]

Indeed what can be saved of Clark's work on Leonardo is not so much his content or his methodology but his courageous attempt to write a comprehensive account of the artist, to wrestle with how we balance the details of scholarship, the fragmentary state of Leonardo's legacy and the wish to reconstruct a whole. Little of the whole Leonardo that Clark pieced together remains acceptable today but his engagement and mastery of diverse vehicles through which to publish his work is worthy of consideration. From learned scholarly journals to more popular ones, from catalogues of drawings filled with detailed research to beautifully written books aimed at the general public and translated in numerous languages, to radio and broadcasting, Clark did not dismiss any of the tools that old and advanced technology offered him. He was enthusiastic about the advancement in the technique of facsimile reproduction in the span of a century from the dismal old plates of Leonardo's notebooks published by Ravaisson-Mollien in the 1880s and early 1890s to the entirely different class of reproductions used in the edition of the Madrid Codices published in the 1970s.[62] One wonders what he would have done with digital technology and, while there is no way to know for sure, it is hard to imagine he would have ignored the potential that digital technology offers for a holistic view of Leonardo.

Studies of the past few decades have clarified many aspects of Leonardo's thought. Technical analysis of his paintings and drawings have added knowledge concerning the materials he used and the way he manipulated them, while philological, philosophical and scientific interpretations of his writings have clarified both the meaning of his words and his place in the intellectual world of early modern Europe. But this enhanced understanding of many facets of his personality has brought such fragmentation that modern scholars seem to have given up an attempt to reconstruct Leonardo as a whole, let alone communicate the fruits of their rigorous and intricate scholarship beyond the restricted circle of experts.

And yet, the modern digital age presents unique opportunities to gather, analyse and integrate Leonardo's complex legacy, bringing together not just the writings and the notebooks, but also the drawings, the paintings, the evidence documenting his life, the technical analysis explaining his works, the scholarship illuminating his art and thought. The digital environment also makes it possible to imagine devising ways to communicate with

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[61] Kemp in Clark, 1988, p. 28.

[62] *Les manuscripts de Leonard de Vinci*, transc. and transl. C. Ravaisson-Mollien, Paris 1881–91; and *The Madrid Codices of Leonardo da Vinci*, transc. and transl. L. Reti, New York 1974.

rigour and accuracy the artist's intricate thought and art beyond the select group of experts to the widest possible range of publics worldwide.

APPENDIX

Kenneth Clark's writings on Leonardo da Vinci

1929: 'A Note on Leonardo da Vinci', in *Life and Letters*, London, pp. 122–32

1932: Review of Heinrich Bodmer's book on Leonardo, *Burlington Magazine* LX (1932), pp. 212–13

1933: 'Leonardo's *Adoration of the Shepherds* and the *Dragon Fight*', *Burlington Magazine* LXII (1933), pp. 21–25

1933: 'The Madonna in Profile: Studies by Leonardo for the Madonna', *Burlington Magazine* LXII (1933), pp. 136–40

1937: 'Leonardo da Vinci: Study of a Bear Walking, from the Collection of Herr Ludwig Rosenthal', *Old Master Drawings* XI, pp. 66–67

1935: *A Catalogue of the Drawings of Leonardo da Vinci in the Collections of His Majesty the King at Windsor Castle*, Cambridge

1939: *Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of his Development as an Artist*, Cambridge

1939: 'Dessins de Leonardo da Vinci', in *Cahiers d'Art*, Paris, pp. 40–46

1949: *Landscape into Art*, New York, pp. 87–93

1952: 'The demoniac genius of Leonardo da Vinci', *The Listener*, London, pp. 664–66

1957: *Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist*, 2nd edn, with new introduction, London

1960: *Looking at Pictures*, New York 1960 (chapter on *The Virgin and Child with St Anne*), pp. 155–65

1964: Introduction to Carlo Pedretti's *Leonardo da Vinci on Painting: A Lost Book (Libro A)*, Berkeley, pp. vii–ix

1967: 'Francesco Melzi as Preserver of Leonardo da Vinci's Drawings', in *Studies in Renaissance and Baroque Art presented to Anthony Blunt on His 60th Birthday*, London, pp. 24–25

1968: *A Catalogue of the Drawings of Leonardo da Vinci in the Collections of His Majesty the King at Windsor Castle*, London, 2nd edn, revised with assistance from Carlo Pedretti

1969: 'Leonardo and the Antique', in *Leonardo's Legacy*, ed. C. O'Malley, Berkeley, pp. 1–34

1969: *Civilisation*, BBC television documentary

1969: Introduction to *An Exhibition of Drawings by Leonardo da Vinci from the Royal Collection*, The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace

1973: '*Mona Lisa*', *Burlington Magazine* CXV (1973), pp. 144–51

1973: *Moments of Vision*, London

1974: 'Leonardo's Notebooks' (reviews of *The Madrid Codices*, edited by L. Reti and *The Unknown Leonardo* by L. Reti), *New York Review of Books* (12 December)

1974: 'Una donna fatale', in *Bolaffiarte* V, pp. 32–39

1977: 'La Sant'Anna', in *Leonardo, La Pittura*, Milan, pp. 69–74

1977: *Leonardo e le curve della vita*, *Lettura Vinciana XVII*, Florence 1979

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Fig. 1. Kenneth Clark holding a facsimile of Leonardo's notebooks. Still from the BBC television documentary *Civilization*, 1969. Fig. 2. Aby Warburg in his room at the Eden Hotel in Rome during the winter of 1928–29 (some of the panels of Mnemosyne in the background were brought to the Bibliotheca Hertziana for Warburg's lecture on 19 January 1929). Photograph. Warburg Institute Archive.

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Fig. 3. Kenneth Clark, *Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939, figs. 8 and 9. Fig. 4. Details of *Legs* from three works by Leonardo da Vinci (left to right): *The Benois Madonna* (Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg); *The Virgin and Child with St Anne* (Musée du Louvre, Paris); *The Virgin and Child with St Anne* (Musée du Louvre, Paris), a sequence showing Leonardo's lifelong study of the protruding leg of a seated figure.

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Fig. 5. Leonardo da Vinci, *The Adoration of the Magi* (detail), 1483. Charcoal, watercolour ink and oil on wood, 244 × 240 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Fig. 6. Leonardo da Vinci, Study of a *Horse* for *The Battle of Anghiari*, c. 1503–04. Pen and ink, wash, touches of red chalk, 19.6 × 30.8 cm. Royal Library, Windsor, RCIN 912326.

Fig. 7. Leonardo da Vinci, *Heads of an Old Man ('The Nutcracker') and of a Youth*, c. 1495–1500. Red chalk, 21 × 15 cm. Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, 423E.

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The study of the legacy of Leonardo da Vinci in Britain has remained largely overshadowed by that of other Italian Renaissance artists. What was actually known of Leonardo's work? Were particular aspects of his legacy favoured? This volume investigates how Leonardo's artistic, theoretical and scientific work has been received in Britain from the seventeenth century onwards. It offers new information concerning the provenance of certain key works and considers their significance for the formation of important British private and public collections. It also addresses the crucial issue of what was considered to be an original work by Leonardo, encompassing related discussions on the roles of versions and copies. In addition, it investigates the shaping of early academic discourse and the appearance of the first English editions of the 'Treatise on Painting', as well as considers the publication of English anthologies of his writings and methodological approaches to Leonardo studies. At the same that this volume focuses on the historical reception of Leonardo and his followers' works in Britain, it makes a wider contribution to studies concerning cultural and intellectual exchanges between Italy and Britain.

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