academic publishers, giving it a seal of approval and respectability it does not deserve.

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Leonardo's Salvator Mundi and the Collecting of Leonardo in the Stuart Courts, by Margaret Dalivalle, Martin Kemp and Robert B. Simon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019; pp. 382. £35).

Rarely has a Renaissance wooden panel hit the headlines with such impact: after being exhibited at the London National Gallery in 2011 as an original work by Leonardo da Vinci, the *Salvator Mundi* sold six years later for a staggering sum. Rarely, also, has a work of art stoked such heated debate—countless journalists and art historians have weighed in on it. A number of recent monographs have been dedicated to it, such as Pierluigi Panza, *L'ultimo Leonardo: Storia, intrighi e misterie del quadro più costoso del mondo* (2018), and Ben Lewis, *The Last Leonardo: The Secret Lives of the World's Most Expensive Painting* (2019). In light of this, the study by Margaret Dalivalle, Martin Kemp and Robert B. Simon has been eagerly awaited. The volume brings together three distinct studies. The first covers the discovery of the painting; the second situates the panel within the context of Leonardo's artistic and scientific endeavours; the third, longest section explores its early history and thus provides a valuable assessment of the critical *fortuna* of the Florentine artist's work in Britain during the seventeenth century.

The first part is written in narrative form, in the first person singular and interspersed with anecdotes. Simon describes his impressions when the *Salvator Mundi* first appeared on the American art market as a copy after Leonardo. The author proceeds, describing how the work was purchased with Alexander Parish for $1,175. He also outlines the steps taken to attribute the panel to the Florentine artist, and the discovery of the variations between the preparatory drawing and the painted panel (which confirm that the *Salvator Mundi* is not merely a reproduction directly after a prototype). Simon also describes the restoration works carried out by Dianne Modestini and the investigations into the recent provenance of the painting, known only since 1900, when the work entered into the collection of Francis Cook (1817–1901), grandfather of the art historian Herbert Cook.

In the second section of the study, Kemp defends the autography of the Cook *Salvator Mundi* and suggests that it was started in approximately 1503 or a little later. It would therefore have been produced in Florence, though the author offers no further explanation (contrary to his approach used previously in other publications). Instead, the art historian emphasises the emotional weight of this private devotional painting, a weight that is found in most of Leonardo's religious works. He continues by describing how the black emptiness that surrounds Christ is used as a sign of the ineffable, revealing the sacred nature of the painting. Kemp then evokes the traditional iconography of the *Salvator Mundi*, which developed in Byzantine art and was disseminated in Flemish and Italian painting during the fifteenth century. He also presents two preparatory studies for the right arm of Christ, who is

performing a blessing, and for his bust, which Kemp dates to approximately 1504–8. This aligns with the opinion of other eminent Leonardo scholars (Martin Clayton, *Leonardo da Vinci: A Life in Drawing* [2018], cat. 69 and 70). The pages concerning the knots that decorate the Saviour's clothes and the crystal globe are of particular interest, with the definition of the latter attesting to Leonardo's detailed knowledge of optics. The same is true for the copies and other versions of the *Salvator Mundi*, which must be taken into account in order to analyse Leonardo's creative processes, as well as those of his studio, in detail.

The third section of the book describes the reception of Leonardo in the seventeenth century in Britain, focusing in particular on the paintings attributed to him in the British Royal Collection from 1625–49, that is, under King Charles I. Dalivalle employs an admirable methodology to avoid drawing hasty conclusions: her hypotheses are tested by analysing sources and her reconstruction is proposed in a nuanced manner. Naturally, she considers 'A Peece of Christ done by Leonardo', in which the author attempts to retrace the pilgrimages. This was mentioned in an inventory taken of the Royal Collection in late 1649, after the execution of Charles I, locating it in one of the cabinets at the Queen's House in Greenwich (that is, among the possessions of Queen Henrietta Maria). The painting is again cited in sources that make it possible to trace the British Royal Collection in 1651, 1660 and 1666–7, then up until 1763 in the collection of the Dukes of Buckingham. In all probability, this is the painting that Wenceslaus Hollar copied in an engraving from 1650, which he stated was made from a Leonardo original. However, among all of the known versions of the *Salvator Mundi*, the painting from the Cook collection is among those which most closely resemble Hollar's engraving (along with the one from the Ganay collection and that in San Domenico Maggiore in Naples). The reconstruction is sound and constitutes an essential perspective, even though the history of the Cook panel between 1763 and 1900 remains unknown. Moreover, the study provides very useful evidence of the interest that the kings and queens of England, as well as other figures such as Thomas Howard, earl of Arundel, and George Villiers, duke of Buckingham, had in Leonardo's work. Obviously, there is not enough data to understand the exceptional contemporary fame of this master throughout the course of history and, as a result, to qualify it.

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Climate of Conquest: War, Environment, and Empire in Mughal North India, by Pratyay Nath (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2019; pp. 368. £37.99).

In this book, Pratyay Nath argues that the contiguity of the north Indian landmass belies the very different ecologies, landscapes and climates facing Indian conquerors and rulers, which he elucidates by focusing on the Mughal wars of expansion from the early sixteenth century until that process had been 'completed' (or reached its limit) by the mid-seventeenth century. The first chapter proceeds as a dialogue with Douglas Streusand's work of more than thirty years ago on the Mughal conquest, while the second builds upon Jos