

# A HANGED MAN'S CLOTHES

## Leonardo da Vinci's fascination with dressing



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*The article discusses Florence, a place dear to Outi Merisalo and also one of her favourite colours, namely purple, by exploring Leonardo da Vinci's (1452-1519) notes on clothing. It demonstrates the crucial importance of dressing to the painter and reveals a part of his wardrobe and his preferred colours for fabrics. Special attention is paid to a spare sheet of paper on which Leonardo diligently documents a hanged man's clothes both in text and with a sketch. This is rare visual evidence of the Pazzi conspiracy (1478) in Florence and an extraordinary specimen among the very small number of notes written by Leonardo before 1480. The image and a transcription of the document (Musée Bonnat-Helleu, Bayonne, inv. 659) are provided in the article.\**

### Leonardo, an unconventional, but well-dressed painter

Besides his polymath interest in art, music, mathematics, anatomy, animals, science, engineering and building design, Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) was fascinated by beautiful, elaborate clothing. As an artist and portrait painter, he invested great effort in studying the textures, colours and reflections of fabrics on canvas,<sup>1</sup> while simultaneously paying attention to actual dressing, his own and that of others. As he himself states in his notes, it was even a necessity for a painter's refinement to be well and comfortably dressed:

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<sup>1</sup> *Trattato della pittura* (A Treatise on Painting) is a collection of Leonardo da Vinci's writings in his notebooks concerning painting and gathered together by Francesco Melzi (1491–1570), Leonardo's professional assistant and the holder of his papers after Leonardo's death. It contains numerous passages on the characteristics of various fabrics from the painter's point of view. An abridged version of the treatise was first published in France in 1651. After Melzi's manuscript was rediscovered in the Vatican Library (Ms. Urb. lat. 1270, 1r-329r), the treatise was re-published several times in the nineteenth century and thereafter.

Che 'l pittore con gra(n)d' aggio siede dinanzi alla sua opera ben vestito et move il levissimo penello con li vaghi colori et ornato di vestimenti come a lui piace.<sup>2</sup>

That the painter sits in front of his work at great ease, well-dressed, and wielding a very light brush with subdued colours. He adorns himself with the clothes he pleases.

In another compilation of his personal notes of the 1490's, he writes that the fine young men around him are elegantly dressed at his cost.<sup>3</sup> Leonardo's expenditure on clothing for his young apprentice Gian Giacomo Caprotti, known as Salaì (1480-1524) in the first year of his stay in the studio in 1490 included no less than twenty-four pairs of shoes, four pairs of hose (or stockings), six shirts, three jackets, a linen body shirt, a coat and a cap.<sup>4</sup> As for Leonardo's own clothing, contemporary evidence suggests that he was an elegant and handsome apparition, favouring roseate shades in his clothing when appearing in public. An anonymous description in a Florentine manuscript depicts him in a knee-length rose-pink tunic, whereas others used to wear long robes.<sup>5</sup> Short dresses were usually worn by children and youngsters and deplored by chroniclers, preachers and legislators if worn by other social groups,<sup>6</sup> but there is no kind of disapprobation in this account.

The perception of his preferred colours is confirmed in an inventory Leonardo made of his wardrobe when he was about to leave Florence on a military mission in the autumn of 1504. Leonardo wrote his clothing inventory in a notebook (known today as Madrid Codex II) which he carried around with him from 1503 to 1505. According to his notes, he stored his and Salaì's possessions at a monastery in two chests,<sup>7</sup> one of which contained his books. If his books provide a window on his intellectual and spare time interests (the books represent a vast array of knowledge and fiction, mostly in vernacular languages),<sup>8</sup> his handwritten description of the contents of the

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<sup>2</sup> Vatican Library, Ms. Urb. lat. 1270, f. 20v, [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Urb.lat.1270](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Urb.lat.1270) (accessed on 12 December 2023).

<sup>3</sup> The manuscripts taken by Napoleon in 1795 from the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan to Paris consist of twelve codices, designated by the letters A to M; see Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Ms. 2174 (C), f. 15v, <https://bibnum.institutdefrance.fr/ark:/61562/bi24201> (accessed on 2 April 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Richter vol. 2 1883, 439.

<sup>5</sup> "Portaua un *pitoccho rosato*, corto sino al ginocchio, che allora s'usauano i vestitj lunghi", Firenze, Biblioteca nazionale centrale, Codex Magliabechiano XVII, 17, fol. 121v, cited in Fabriezy 1893, 90.

<sup>6</sup> Taddei 2012, 1078.

<sup>7</sup> The monastery is most probably Santa Maria Novella of which the refectory served as his studio for the Battle of Anghiari project, Pedretti 1977, 342.

<sup>8</sup> Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Codex Madrid II fol. 2v-3r, <http://leonardo.bne.es/index.html> (accessed on 5 May 2023); Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana,

other chest offers a captivating glimpse into his everyday life. The list of clothing demonstrates Leonardo's taste for a delicate palette of rose-pink (it. *rosa secca* or *rosato*) and purple (it. *paonazzo*), such as one gown in dusty rose ("una gabanella di rosa secca"), one rose-pink Catalan cloak ("un catelano rosato"), one crimson overcoat, French style ("un giubone di raso chermisi, alla francese"), one purple overcoat ("un gubo di raso pagonaço"), a pair of dark purple hose ("un pa' di calçe pagonaçe scure") and two rose-pink berets ("due berette rosate"). For some reason, the colours of the clothing belonging to Salaì are not mentioned except for an overcoat of which the cuffs are reportedly of black velvet. Of the twenty items listed, more than half are specified as being rose, red, or purple, all marked as possessions of Leonardo.<sup>9</sup> Because these colours are not consistently defined, it is difficult to specify the hue precisely *ex post facto*. Their conceptualization was embedded in context and in experience. While the names of colours such as crimson (*chermisi*) designated as much by the way the colour was produced from kermes insects as by the shade, one may perhaps quite safely assume that Leonardo's fabric colours were in harmony with his taste for "subdued colours" described above. In fact, *chermisi* usually designated bright, scarlet red, but all in all, shades of red could range from orange to violet to brown. Despite the present-day strong association of reds, and especially pinks, with femininity, neither these colours nor colours in general were significantly used as gendered signifiers at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> Instead, the social significance of colours was primarily associated with profession and status.

By 1300 Florence had an established wool production and an unseen wealth was created through the manufacture of and trade in wool and silk textiles. The Florentine textile industry quickly specialized in luxury products.<sup>11</sup> Simultaneously, the so-called sumptuary laws emerged by various city governments with the official purpose of restraining excessive luxury at all social levels.<sup>12</sup> In practice, they attempted to restrict specific groups of people, mostly women and lower social groups, from spending on, wearing, and owning lavish clothing. Thus, this kind of legislation revealed the social and moral anxieties of Renaissance societies.

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Codex Atlanticus f. 210r, <http://codex-atlanticus.ambrosiana.it/#/> (accessed on 28 March 2023); on the Codices Madrid, see Reti 1968, 81–91; on the Codex Atlanticus, see Pedretti 1978 and Marinoni 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Codex Madrid II: 4r, <http://leonardo.bne.es/index.html> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

<sup>10</sup> Currie 2009, 33–52; Frick, 2002, *passim*.

<sup>11</sup> Goldthwaite 2005, 69–126.

<sup>12</sup> In Florence, sumptuary laws were passed in 1281, 1290, and 1299. New laws were added in 1301, 1307, 1318, 1322–25, 1326 and 1330. Revisions were made constantly throughout the Trecento and more than 30 times in the Quattrocento, Frick 2002, 250, fn. 59.

A shorter tunic may have reflected Leonardo's unconventional character, as has often been suggested, but it could also have been a practical choice. An artist's and a sculptor's work entailed a good deal of physical activity and was certainly easier in a knee-length tunic than in a longer garment. As for the colours, red-dyed fabrics have a long historical association with wealth. In Renaissance dressing, shades of red represented high social status and authority in both ecclesiastical and secular cultures. In Florence, red was typically worn by governors, doctors, jurists, and nobles, and thus distinguished visually and materially the privileged from the lower social groups. The typical local male garment, the Florentine civic dress, was the *lucco*, an over-gown, that fell unbelted straight to the feet. The Florentine *lucco* did not have sleeves, but lateral slits for the arms and it was used not only in red, but also in other colours, such as green, purple and black.<sup>13</sup> The sumptuary laws forbade those working on the land from wearing crimson.<sup>14</sup> According to the sumptuary law of 1497, children under 14 years were forbidden to use rose-coloured hose as well as rose and violet (*paonazzo*) overcoats, because these colours were associated with luxury.<sup>15</sup> Among Leonardo's notes, there is from 1503 one mention of Salaì's wish for rose-coloured hose, when Salaì was no longer a child, but 23 years old: "I [Leonardo] paid to Salaì three gold ducats which he said he wanted for a pair of rose-coloured hose with their trimming."<sup>16</sup> Thus, the master and his apprentice (later assistant and life time companion) apparently shared the same taste for sumptuous colours and clothing.

Both animal and plant-based pigments were used in dyeing red colour, called in Italian for instance *chermisi* (crimson), *grana* (kermes), *robbia* (madder), and *verzino* (brazilwood)<sup>17</sup>. The most expensive dyes were frequently fraudulently produced. Ingredients from various sources were also deliberately mixed. A Tuscan painter Cennino Cennini (c.1360–c.1427) wrote a manual on painting *Libro dell'Arte* that describes the processing of brazilwood alongside kermes.<sup>18</sup> Kermes is the generic term referring to various species of insects of the family *Coccoidea* in the Mediterranean

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<sup>13</sup> Meneghin 2015, 55.

<sup>14</sup> Greenfield 2005, 25; Monnas 2012, 157; Muzzarelli 1996, 114, 146–48.

<sup>15</sup> Taddei 2012, 1082.

<sup>16</sup> Richter vol. 2 1883, 457.

<sup>17</sup> In fact, "brazilwood" or *verzano* (in medieval Latin herbals called *braçillum* or *berçinum*) includes distinct species in Southeast Asia and South America. Before the increasing import from South America in the sixteenth century, the Asian species (sappanwood) was one of the important Southeast Asian commodities in the Middle Ages, used as a dye — for making paints and inks and for dyeing cloth — throughout the medieval world, from China to Europe, see e.g., Mozzato 2013, 177-186; Nabais *et al.* 2021 [s.p.].

<sup>18</sup> Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ms. Plutei 78.23, f. 53r.

region. Europeans routinely designated the desiccated bugs and dyes *grana* or “grain” because of their granular appearance.<sup>19</sup> Dyeing with “grain” continued in Europe for several centuries despite the discovery and import of the Mexican cochineal. In Leonardo’s inventory, there is a *capello di grana*, obviously meaning a red cap dyed with kermes.

In his notebooks, there are also numerous remarks on the textures, colours and reflections of fabrics on canvas as well as sketches and studies for the drapery. In Renaissance art, drapery had been firmly established as a standard pictorial device since Giotto (1267-1337) and Duccio di Buoninsegna, (c.1278-1318). Leonardo developed his own style with a “radical new way of modelling to enhance the suggestion of motion in a continuous space”.<sup>20</sup>

### **Macabre fashion – documenting a hanged man’s clothes**

All things considered Leonardo took a keen interest in clothing. This interest manifested in a somewhat macabre way in a drawing he made in Florence in 1479. The drawing depicts Bernardo Bandini Baroncelli (c. 1420-1479), hanged due to his participation in the Pazzi conspiracy and suspended from a window of the Palazzo del Podestà (later known as the Bargello) to remind that nobody could escape the dire consequences of crime and rebellion as well as to remind about the definite power of the public institutions. Furthermore, humiliation was the most effective punishment for an upper class that put a high value on good reputation. Apparently, the hanged man in the drawing is still dressed in the clothes in which he had been captured. The sketch was found among the notes, in which the 27-year-old Leonardo, who now had his own workshop after years as Verrocchio’s apprentice and assistant, describes in detail the clothing of the hanged man in words and pictures. The leadpoint sketch is reworked in pen and brown ink. The spare folio or rather the sheet of paper of height of 19.2 cm and width of 7.3 cm is currently at the Musée Bonnat-Helleu in Bayonne, France, inv. 659.

The hanged man, Bernardo di Bandino Baroncelli, participated in a conspiracy against the Medici in Florence in 1478. The failed plot to overthrow the Medici is known as the Pazzi conspiracy. The conspiracy was led by members of the Florentine Pazzi family and Pope Sixtus IV’s nephew, Girolamo Riario. Bernardo Bandini Baroncelli was an impoverished member of an elite family and his ruined fortunes possibly induced him to join the Pazzi. The background was the power struggle between the Pope and the Medici. Pazzi’s bank had succeeded in taking over the Pope’s financial affairs from the Medici’s bank. Friction was also caused by the Medicis’ effort to

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<sup>19</sup> McCall 2017, 1451.

<sup>20</sup> Fiorani 2013, 267-273, (images 840-841).

curb the power of the Pope in Tuscany's neighbour, Romagna. In addition, Lorenzo de' Medici (1449-1492), who ruled Florence, had refused to recognize the Archbishop of Pisa, Francesco Salviati (1443-1478). Pope Sixtus IV (1414-1484), his nephew Girolamo Riario (1443-1448) and Archbishop Francesco Salviati of Pisa supported the Pazzi and eventually mounted a conspiracy against the Medici. The conspirators decided to assassinate the brothers Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici (1453-1478) in Florence Cathedral during the Easter Mass on 26 April 1478. Archbishop Salviati was to take over the Signoria. The planned coup experienced the first and fatal blow when the *condottiere* Giovambattista da Montesecco (1450-1478), an experienced mercenary appointed as Lorenzo's assassin, decided to withdraw from the project at the last minute. Two priests were hastily recruited to replace him.<sup>21</sup>

The Easter Mass began with due solemnity in the church of Santa Maria del Fiore. Bernardo Bandini Baroncelli and Francesco de' Pazzi (1444-1478) managed to surprise Giuliano de' Medici and killed him in front of the altar. The priests who attacked Lorenzo de' Medici were less skilled as assassins, so Lorenzo was only slightly wounded and managed to escape to the sacristy. Likewise, Archbishop Salviati's machinations were apparently transparent, for after approaching a high-ranking official of the Medici, the gonfalonier, he sensed danger. The roles changed when the gonfalonier captured the archbishop and imprisoned him. At the same time, other conspirators tried to gain control of the Florentine Republic. To their surprise, the citizens of Florence rushed to the Medicis' aid. The conspirators were chased mercilessly through the streets, and many were killed on the spot without trial. Francesco and Jacopo de' Pazzi (1423-1478) were hanged and the Pazzi family property was attained. The gonfalonier hanged Archbishop Salviati from the window of the top floor of the Palazzo della Signoria, where he was hanging in his episcopal garb for all the people to see.

Bernardo Baroncelli managed to escape on aboard a Neapolitan vessel to Constantinople, where he had friends and relatives. He was, however, found and arrested by Mehmed II (1432-1481), probably at the beginning of May 1479. On 18 June, a secretary of the Signoria wrote to Lorenzo Carducci (1427-?), the Florentine consul in Pera on the matter. The Sultan announced that he would detain the assassin until the middle of August. Therefore, there was some urgency for the Signoria to arrange for his extradition to Florence.<sup>22</sup> When back in Florence, he was sentenced to death. On 29 December 1479 he

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<sup>21</sup> Martines 2003; Daniels 2013; Simonetta 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Setton 1976, 336-337.

was ultimately hanged from the window of the Palazzo del Podestà in his hometown.

Leonardo may well have been on the street in front of the palace with his sketching equipment, capturing the ghastly spectacle (unfortunately not unique at the time) of the dead body, emaciated in captivity, hanging from the window. The sketch conveys that this time Leonardo's focus was not on human anatomy, but on the clothing of the hanged man. The clothes have been immortalized through the very realistically executed drawing, but since the colours and materials are not visible in the drawing, they have been clarified with a verbal clothing list.

Berettino di tane  
farsetto di raso nero  
cioppa nera foderata  
giupba turchina foderata  
di ghole di gholpe  
e'l chollare della givbba  
soppannato di velluto appicci[-]  
lato nero errosso  
Bernardo di Bandino  
Baroncigli  
chalçe nere

A small brown cap  
lined with black satin  
black, lined jacket  
turquoise coat, lined  
with fox breast fur  
and collar  
surrounded by black and red spotted velvet  
Bernardino di Bandino  
Baroncigli  
black hose

The writing is done with mirror writing, typical of Leonardo and quite unproblematic to read when turned to the usual reading direction. It is not typical humanistic writing that became the everyday script for scholars and for those with an adequate education and significant political and economic positions in the 15th century, but practical *mercantesca*, favoured by the Italian mercantile elite copying vernacular texts for themselves or their own families. The style is characterized by a cursive ductus, an absence of shading, round and compact letters, but short strokes and wide loops. Leonardo's writing is in concordance with the fact that he had no university background. He shared many ideas with learned humanists, but besides the (good) basic education in his youth and the artistic apprenticeship he was

mostly self-taught. On the bottom left corner Leonardo does another drawing of the head, adjusting slightly its angle and giving more personality to the facial features of the victim. On the reverse side, there is a sketch of feet.<sup>23</sup>

Without further doubt, one may safely assume that the most interesting item on the list is *la giubba turchina foderata* that is the long overgarment in turquoise, lined with fox breast fur and the collar trimmed with black and red spotted velvet. The dress is certainly not that in which the murder was committed. A long, furred coat might very well be worn at Constantinople or at Florence in winter, but hardly in April. It is often suggested that Bernardo had acquired it from Constantinople. The Florentine silk merchant, art collector and chronicler Leonardo Morelli wrote that the bright blue (in his account “azzurro”, not *turchino* as on Leonardo da Vinci's list) coat was specifically in the Turkish style (“alla Turchesca”),<sup>24</sup> but since the chronicler was only four years old at the time of the event, this must be treated with caution. The coat drawn by Leonardo da Vinci looks handsome, but not very different from the long, cape-like heavy coats with sleeves and fur lining worn by Florentine dignitaries of the late 15th century, but perhaps the colours, materials and the trimming of the clothing were more interesting than usual to the artist's eye. Moreover, *turchino* does not indicate the origin, but the colour, although the word is derived from medieval Latin (*lapis*) *turkesius* or *turchesius* originally meaning ‘Turkish stone’.<sup>25</sup> According to Michel Pastoureau, *turchino* and *azzurro* were in use and distinguished as different hues in Italian literature in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, instead of the word *blu*.<sup>26</sup> However, the form *biavo* (< Lat. *blavus*) was equally in use from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>27</sup>

Obviously, it is quite possible that Bernardo had obtained the garments from Constantinople, where he spent a year before his arrest. A kind of orientalism, inspired by Ottoman culture, had already become popular during the Renaissance. For the Italians, oriental cultural influences were brought especially via Venice, which with its harbour and merchants was the gateway

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<sup>23</sup> Bayonne, Musée Bonnat-Helleu, Drawing of the hanged Bernardo di Bandino Baroncelli (1479), inv. 659, r-v; see verso on the museum website, <https://webmuseo.com/ws/musee-bonnathelleu/app/collection/record/268?vc=ePKH4LF7w6iejEDVE9wfyKkwNzUIMxFaFRKZaPSJToVodWtyfmmBS6pzfmp pkRL2Ag4lq-OPTgCOWE-R> (accessed on 5 June 2023); cf. transcriptions, Richter 1883 vol. I, no 664, 345; Centanni 2017, 305; Cardini & Frale 2018, 233, etc.

<sup>24</sup> “Una vesta alla Turchesca indosso azzurra, come ne venne preso di Turchia”, di San Luigi 1785, 195-196.

<sup>25</sup> E.g. *Lapides Turkesii*, “Turkesius”, du Cange, et al., 1883-1887, t. 8, col. 213a. <http://ducange.enc.sorbonne.fr/TURKESIUS> (accessed on 29 May 2023).

<sup>26</sup> Pastoureau 2000, 57-88; see also Mario Equicola's (c. 1470-1525) use of the term *azzurro*, Equicola 1536, 172.

<sup>27</sup> *Lessico etimologico italiano*, vol. VI, fasc. 56, 1997, 267-268



to the Mediterranean to the east. Turkey was politically and commercially so important that Italian city-states such as Venice and Florence had their own ambassadors there. The Ottoman court in Constantinople recognised the quality of Florentine craftsmanship and the Ottomans were important consumers of Italian luxury textiles. In addition to merchants, rulers, diplomats and soldiers, artists acted as important documenters and mediators of cultural traits. The Venetian painter Gentile Bellini (1429-1507), for instance, painted a portrait of Sultan Mehmet II in 1480 (National Gallery, London).<sup>28</sup>

Yet the question arises whether Leonardo described Bernardo's dress so meticulously because it struck him as remarkable, or whether the sketch was in fact made from nature with the intention of using it as a study for a future painting. It is known that important painters such as Andrea del Castagno (1421-1457), Sandro Botticelli (1444-1510), and Andrea del Sarto (1486-1531) were commissioned by Florentine authorities to paint the town traitors on the Palazzo del Podestà walls, but only some drawings remain of these.<sup>29</sup> Although assassinations were not unheard of in Renaissance Florence, the entire series of events related to the conspiracy was quite extraordinary and shocked the local populace. Public executions were a part of city life at the end of the 15th century and the condemned were kept on display as a deterrent to potential wrongdoers. Leonardo was certainly not the most squeamish of men; he performed postmortem examinations on dead people and animals for his anatomical studies and drawings. And as said before, the event itself does not seem to be the reason for the documentation. Apart from the name of the victim there are no references to the conspiracy nor to politics on the drawing. The mention of black hose has been added after the name as if this important detail might have initially been forgotten and as if to complete the documentation of every single item of Bernardo Baroncelli's clothing.

The whole conspiracy eventually turned in the Medicis' favour. Giuliano was dead, but Lorenzo de' Medici's position only strengthened. He was rid of his most dangerous opponents and had gained the support of the Florentines. The downside was the two-year war against the Pope and the church state that weakened Florence. Pope Sixtus IV was particularly enraged by the execution of Archbishop Salviati, which took place without a trial approved by the Church. Consequently, the Pope excommunicated Lorenzo and the entire the Florentine government and placed all of Florence and its dominions under papal interdict for two years. It should perhaps be born in mind that since his time at Verrocchio's workshop, Leonardo had been

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<sup>28</sup> Mack 2002, 175; Spallanzani 2007, 1.

<sup>29</sup> Ortalli 2015, 84, 114 – 115.

nurtured by the Medici. To Leonardo, the Medici family patronage was invaluable. Not only did they provide him with commissions in Florence, but they even connected him to Milan. Without the help and interest of Lorenzo de' Medici, Leonardo's career would have been very different.

### **The later history of the manuscript**

In his will Leonardo left all his manuscripts to his faithful pupil Francesco Melzi. Melzi transferred his precious inheritance to his villa at Vaprio d'Adda near Milan. After Francesco's death in 1570, his son and heir, Orazio, failed to see the significance of the manuscripts of which many were neglected and later split up and dispersed. Some of the Leonardo material owned by Pompeo Leoni (1533-1608), for instance, was sold in Spain after his death. During the Italian campaign in 1796-1797, Napoleon was ordered by the Directory to confiscate Italian art treasures and send them to Paris.<sup>30</sup> The Codex Atlanticus and the manuscripts housed in the Ambrosian Library were among the major works which thus found their way to the French capital. In 1815, the Codex Atlanticus was returned to the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, but the Institut de France held on to the other Leonardo manuscripts.

Unfortunately, within the scope of this article – if at all - it was not possible to trace the ownership of the sheet of paper back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but it ended up in the possession of a Parisian collector of art and antiquities Narcisse Révil (1779-1844), who had amassed a fortune as a mercer. In the auction catalogue of his collection after his death in 1845, the sketch was attributed to Leonardo da Vinci with another drawing: “Un supplicié. Croquis à la plume; dans le haut, onze lignes d'écriture italienne écrite à rebours. Dessin à la plume et au bistre. H. 19 c., l. 7 c. 5m” (A tortured man. Pen sketch; at the top, eleven lines of Italian script written backwards. Pen and bistre drawing).<sup>31</sup> After a couple of more sales in Paris (J. Thorel 1853<sup>32</sup>; Evans-Lombe 1863<sup>33</sup>) it was exhibited in 1879 at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. The information provided in the exhibition catalogue is astonishingly inaccurate. The drawing is attributed to Leonardo, but for the first item in the clothing list, for instance, the French translation gives “petit bonnet de laine” (a small woollen cap) instead of “brown cap”. The turquoise coat is more accurately “robe bleue doublée en peau de renard” (a blue robe lined with fox fur) while the name of the hanged person is misspelled “Bernardo di Bendino Barontigni” and his identification - quite surprisingly - “marchand de pantalons” (seller of pantaloons). The collection Evans-Lombe and the

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<sup>30</sup> Gilks 2012, 53-78.

<sup>31</sup> Roussel & Defer 1845, 67, n:o 33.

<sup>32</sup> Thorel is mentioned in Viatte & Forcione 2004, 15.

<sup>33</sup> Roussel & Mannheim, 1863, 92; Viatte & Forcione 2004, 15.

owner, the marquis de Chennevières are mentioned.<sup>34</sup> Marquis Philippe de Chennevières (1820-1899) was among the most important collectors of drawings in France in the nineteenth century and among several thousand items in his possession were works by Sandro Botticelli, Raphael (1483-1520), Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) and Leonardo da Vinci. Financial difficulties forced him to put the best items up for sale and the rest of the collection was sold posthumously in 1900.<sup>35</sup>

The drawing of a hanged man was finally acquired by Léon Bonnat (1833-1922), a French painter, art collector and professor at the École des Beaux-Arts for a price of 3000 francs in 1884. With the assistance of Antonin Personnaz (1854-1933), Bonnat built an art museum in his native city of Bayonne, the Musée Bonnat nowadays known as the Musée Bonnat-Helleu. Most of the exhibits in the museum are from the personal collections of Bonnat, Personnaz and Paul César Helleu (1859–1927) including the drawing of a hanged man by Leonardo da Vinci. The Museum has been closed to the public for extensive renovation since April 2011, with the objective of reopening 2025.<sup>36</sup>

### Conclusion

Leonardo's drawing reminds us of the dark side of the Renaissance. Magnificent works of art, urban architecture and a luxurious lifestyle were made possible by the prosperity of the Italian city-states, especially by the wool trade and textile production in Florence. However, in the leadership and behind the scenes of the prosperous city-states, there was a constant and ruthless struggle for power. Leonardo's sketched proof of the outcome of a brutal power struggle remains one of the rare extant visual proofs of the Pazzi conspiracy. In its macabre fashion, it provides detailed information on the materiality and vocabulary of Renaissance upper-class clothing and Leonardo's working methods but is also one valuable specimen among the very small number of Leonardo's notes proven to have been written between 1470 and 1480. Tracing its ownership makes visible the role of individual collectors, antiquaries and art enthusiasts – on the one hand, in preserving and on the other, dispersing valuable spare sheets of the past.

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<sup>34</sup> Ephrussi & Dreyfus, 1879, 9-10, nr. 33).

<sup>35</sup> Mishin 2017, 479.

<sup>36</sup> On these artists and art collectors, see Luxenberg 1991; James 1994, 147-150; Trotignon & Cambreling 2018, 23-24; the website of the musée Bonnat-Helleu, <https://webmuseo.com/ws/musee-bonnat-helleu/app/report/index.html> (accessed on 22 May 2023).



Leonardo da Vinci, Drawing of the hanged Bernardo di Bandino Baroncelli (1479). Leadpoint reworked in pen and brown ink. Inv. 659, height: 19.2 cm; width: 7.3 cm. (c) Bayonne, musée Bonnat-Helleu / cliché: A. Vaquero.

## Bibliografia

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