

Ingo und Evelin
Bubenik

LEONARDO DA VINCI'S

Madonna Immaculata rediscovered



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Seite
Preface by Reinhard Müller-Mehlis	7
Main Theses	9
Table of Contents of the Summary	23
Summary	29
Appendix A “Three Technical Reports”, Prof. Dr. Hermann Kühn: 30. 8. 1984. - 2. 2.1985. – 17.12.1985 [In German language].	261
Appendix B Lomazzo-text 1584, p.17; the Haydocke translation into the English language 1598; F. W. Burton’s translation 1894.	303
Illustrations with accompanying texts	305
References to illustrations	365
Acknowledgements	367
Thanks	373
CD-Rom by Ingo Bubenik	
1 Chronological Documentation	1
2 Appendix C List of Names	1772
3 Appendix D The Medici Connection	2060
4 Appendix E Money	2063
5 Appendix F Approach of a systematic exposition of mistakes made with the exegeses of the sources which contain the historical wordings of the witnessed Virgins of the Rocks and of the observed Single Madonna Leonardo’s [In German language].	2067

The critical test of common dates and provenances, as well as of the mode of ascribing and locating remains a laborious, nonetheless imperative undertaking of art historical practice. In the case of Rembrandt this procedure is though irritating repeatedly matter of course because in this specific case research has long since adapted institutional character. With regard to Leonardo this is in general confined to the journalistic interpretation of the “Mona Lisa”, the codices of his technical-physical drafts, to ascribing individual drawings, to news about his murals “Last Supper” and “Anghiari Battle”, to illusions and mystifications.

What Ingo and Evelin Bubenik now bring out essentially relates to Leonardo’s “Madonna of the Rocks” (Louvre), to its copy (National Gallery London) as well as to the mostly ignored painting of a single Immaculata in German private property. Demonstrably in stock of the Royal Palace Fontainebleau the “Madonna of the Rocks” (Louvre) is first time mentioned in the Diary of Cassiano Dal Pozzo in August 1625. Without the naming of an artist’s name Girolamo Borsieri in 1619 praises a Madonna of the Rocks as part of the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception in the church San Francesco Grande in Milan.

Bubenik illustrates his thesis, that this painting came to Fontainebleau in between spring 1619 and August 1625. In the assumption that in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception at Milan there further was counted the single-figured Immaculata Bubenik followed Robert Eisler’s remark in the Burlington Magazine of 1948: As imparted visual evidence for this Madonna painting includes a copper engraving from 1499, a Raphael drawing and an oil painting by Lorenzo Costa from 1503/1505.

In detail Bubenik deals with the iconography of the Madonna of the Rocks (Louvre). The beginning of this official commission from Florence is January 1478. The London copy after Leonardo’s original was according to Bubenik produced from August 18th 1508 until the end of 1508 “in a room of the Monastery of the Milan church San Francesco Grande” and commissioned by the Brotherhood of the Immaculate Conception to the workshop of Ambrogio de’ Predis and to Leonardo. Yet, “Until today it is not known with certainty who actually executed the copy work”. A marketable copy “was permitted and was commissioned so that the artists could sell it. In this manner the Brotherhood could compensate for a debt it owed the artists”. The theologically delicate aspects of the original were avoided. As per inventory from 19.02.1781 there was no Madonna of the Rocks in aforesaid Chapel. The Scot and art dealer Gavin Hamilton purchased the version executed by hand of a copyist before Dec. 1785 and sold it in Jan. 1786 to the former British prime minister Lord Lansdowne.

The former assumption that this copy is an original by Leonardo can be traced back to an incorrect specification of provenance in context of the preceding offer, establishes Bubenik. It was equalled with the single-figured Immaculata which in fact the inventory of the church San Francesco Grande in Milan beard and which was

kept there until about actually 1783. A further reference of a Madonna of the Rocks, which painting Francesco d'Este bought at an auction in Milan in April 1635 was so far assigned to neither of the two extant Madonnas of the Rocks.

In detail Bubenik reports about the "at least ten mistakes", which rest on Gavin Hamilton's provenance falsification.

Not only in London this result of a long-standing exact investigation into allegedly remote yet explosive circumstances will be red with attention. Refuted are the previous statements about the would-be provenance of the Madonna of the Rocks (National Gallery) and with them its legendary genesis. Leonardo's hand was not involved on it. Similarly on the side the assumption of Vasari must be dropped that the left angel in Verrocchio's painting "The Baptism of Christ" is an early work of the Verrocchio scholar Leonardo. There remains a satisfactory number of authentic works by Leonardo.

This unusually intense work of research was compiled without a research assignment and is dedicated to Ernst Ullmann (1927-2008) from the University Leipzig, the former director of the Institute for History of Art, with whom Evelin and Ingo Bubenik maintained scientific exchange on this matter since spring 1986. His monographies on Leonardo da Vinci (1980) and Raphael (1983) were followed by publications about Medieval German Art especially concerning Cranach and Dürer as well as concerning the cathedrals of Magdeburg and Halberstadt. In the commemorative publication for the 80th birthday of Edgar Lehmann Prof. Ullmann in 1989 published an essay about "Leonardo da Vinci's Altar for SS. Annunziata in Florence". In the seating reports of the Saxonian Academy for Science in Leipzig his extensive contribution "The Munich Leonardo-Fragment and the Main Altar in SS. Annunziata in Florence" from 1990 came out which was verbalized in the Session from 13. 03. 1988.

01. 12. 2008

Reinhard Müller-Mehlis

MAIN THESES:

Translation by Max Bubenik

A. The *London Virgin of the Rocks* was never inside the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception in the Church San Francesco Grande at Milan.

B. Leonardo's *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* has not left Milan after Nov. 1493 [Marriage of Kaiser Maximilian] or in early sixteenth century [Purchase by Francis I of France] but the panel was brought from Milan to Fontainebleau between spring 1619 and August 1625.

C. The Milan Contract from April 25th 1483 between the Brotherhood of the Immaculate Conception on the one hand and the three painters Ambrogio de' Predis, Evangelista de' Predis and Leonardo da Vinci on the other hand did neither lead to the production of the *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* nor the *London Virgin of the Rocks* but instead put into being the *Single Immaculate Madonna* [*Single Madonna*] by Leonardo as well as the two *Musician Angels* [Both exhibited in the National Gallery London since 1898].

Only two further easel paintings by Leonardo which have come down to us are provided with the privilege to be documented by a contract: the *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* [Jan. 10th 1478] and *The Adoration of the Magi* [March 25th 1481].

The Contract of April 25th 1483 contains the only witnessed commission for an easel painting in Leonardo's life by a clerically moulded patron, who was not in personal union customer of his father, a notary.

D. Leonardo's *Single Immaculate Madonna* constituted the centre of the Altar in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception adjacent to resp. inside the Milan Church San Francesco Grande from Oct. 23rd 1508 until c. 1783 where it had a place between the two *Musician Angels*. This *Madonna*-panel was worshipped for centuries as a miraculous Madonna against the pest and provided with indulgence on the feast day of Maria's Immaculate Conception from Anne on Dec. 8th. In June/July 1785 the panel was acquired by Gavin Hamilton as

“quadro rappresentante la Beata Vergine..., da alcuni giudicato di Leonardo da Vinci, da altri del Luini”

who sold it, together with the Leonardo-attributed *Anguissola-Gabriel*, as “Luini”-*Annunciation* (See section N) in Sept. 1789 to Lord Breadalbane in Scotland.

E. The *Paris Virgin of the Rocks*, the first and most important masterpiece of early Italian High Renaissance, was commenced and partly executed by Leonardo in Florence as a governmental order from January 10th 1478 for the official Reception

Room of the Florentine seat of government, the Palazzo della Signoria. The iconography of the painting is contrary to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Maria from Anne favoured by the reigning Pope Sixtus IV and alarmingly contains the magnificent figure of the Archangel Uriel (Assigned in the Apocrypha to the infant and youthful St. John the Baptist as his protector resp. educator). Uriel's representation for veneration purpose was forbidden by the Church since the Lateran Synode of Rome 745. Neither Uriel nor the infant St. John the Baptist or the meeting of the latter with the Christ Child and Maria are witnessed in the Bible. This iconography inherent in an official governmental painting destined for the political Reception Room of the government represented a heavy affront of the city-state Florence against the Vatican.

The so-called Pazzi-Conspiracy, in fact a military attack of Pope Sixtus IV and others against Florence, occurred on April 26th 1478, c. six weeks after the huge payment of 25 ducats to Leonardo by the Signoria for the first part of this governmental painting, forcingly its crucial figural part.

Leonardo himself witnesses in an Inventory List [Ambrosiana], drawn up with his own hand in c.1481, the existence of this painting. He further witnesses the title of this painting which is moulded, according to Leonardo's comprehension, by the Archangel Uriel. Understandably Leonardo avoids naming the forbidden Archangel. The line reads as follows:

“4 disegni della tavola di sancto angiole”.

Not any Leonardo book or Leonardo œuvre catalogue until 2008 ever recognized this witnessed painting as the *Paris Virgin of the Rocks*. Moreover, it was Giorgio Nicodemi 1955, p. 52 who obviously for the first time in history has recognized the painting witnessed in this line as an actually executed, not as a merely planned painting (See p. 81 of this Summary), succeeded by David Alan Brown 1998, p. 55.

The painting was finished by Leonardo in Milan until c. April 1483. It was placed in the Milan Court-Chapel San Gottardo from c. April 1483 until 1494. From there it was brought c. 1494 to the Lay Brotherhood of the Immaculate Conception housed in the Milan Church San Francesco Grande due to the expulsion of the Franciscans from the Sforza-Court in 1494. This was, possibly by pure chance, the same Brotherhood which had committed on April 25th 1483 from the Ambrogio de' Predis workshop and from the connected Leonardo the embellishment of the Immaculate Conception Chapel's ancona together with Leonardo's *Single Madonna* as part of that ancona. The final payments of both projects, namely the *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* and the Chapel's ancona, were fixed in the Arbitration on April 27th 1506 and in the Copy Commission on August 18th 1508.

The juridical stipulations of April 27th 1506 included six points: the final payment for the *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* (1), and moreover the payment for the embellishment of the ancona (2) together with Leonardo's *Single Immaculate Madonna* as part of that ancona (3), and also the order to complete that *Single Madonna* painting Leonardo's within two years (4) by Leonardo personally (5) expressly during his commanded presence at Milan (6).

That text of the Arbitration of April 27th 1506 contains the first linguistic witness in history of the *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* in terms of documentary enumeration of at least three figures of the painting: the Virgin, Christ and St. John the Baptist.

F. In between April 25th 1483 and July 1487 there is no document for the presence of Leonardo in Milan. The execution of the *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* as an alleged fulfilment of the Contract from April 25th 1483 by Leonardo cannot be evidence for Leonardo's stay in Milan during the four years after April 1483. Hence Leonardo's journey or escape to the Orient is likely for this period of time and cannot be excluded.

G. The wrong assignment of the *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* to the Milan Contract of April 25th 1483 brings forth two hitherto undiscovered historical and Church historical complexes:

1. The heretical *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* could not be conceived as official commission of the city-state of Florence on January 10th 1478.
2. The pretended execution of the *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* in the years subsequent to April 25th 1483 at Milan made appear unthinkable the travel resp. escape of Leonardo into the Orient during this period.

The pretended donation of the *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* by Ludovico il Moro to Kaiser Maximilian in Innsbruck on the occasion of his marriage by proxy on November 30th 1493, and the freely presupposed transport of this panel to Innsbruck in Dec. 1493 led to another silently accepted and hence hitherto unnoticed historical and Church historical conclusion: namely that this panel could no longer have been exported on the responsibility of the Milan Archbishop Cardinal Federico Borromeo [Milan Archbishop 1595-1631] between spring 1619 [G. Borsieri at Milan] and August 1625 [Cassiano Dal Pozzo at Fontainebleau] from Milan to Fontainebleau within the context of his historically documented purge against clerically insubordinate art. This campaign was executed as result of the Council of Trent.

H. The *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* was never exhibited in the **Altar** of the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception in the Church San Francesco Grande but in a different hitherto undefined place inside this Chapel. As late as 2004-2005 were published two documents from Nov.23rd 1579 and Febr.19th 1781 which, related to each other, witness the location of the *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* inside this Chapel: this panel was placed above the Altar's ancona, probably hanging on the Chapel's wall.

The *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* was clearly identified in respect to its iconography and documented as extant in **Milan** eight times in **five** documents:

in the Arbitration of April 27th **1506** [GLASSER 1977, Doc. XII, pp. 373, 377,379] **three times**, only in the third place giving an iconographical description;

Leonardo da Vinci's *Single Immaculata Madonna*-panel from the Altar of the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception in the church San Francesco Grande at Milan.

Leonardo's *Annunciation*-lunette, destined as crown piece for the Main Altar of the church Santissima Annunziata in Florence and the *Virgins of the Rocks*-case.

SUMMARY by Ingo and Evelin Bubenik. Translation by Max Bubenik.

The research unveiled several main ideas, structured in 38 sections, all of which are severely intertwined. A "Table of Contents of the Summary" is added.

A chronological documentation, the main part of the work, may additionally be understood as kind of chronologically presented footnotes. The catchword is the respective historical date. For an explanation of the publication's structure see section 38.

Underlining in quoted texts by the compilers.

The introduced *Single Madonna* panel, dealt with in this present publication as authentic Leonardo painting, is named in this publication f. e. *Single Madonna, Single figure Madonna, Single Immaculate Madonna, Immaculate Madonna*.

Leonardo's *Madonna of the Rocks* in the Louvre is in this publication named f. e. *Louvre Virgin of the Rocks, Louvre painting, Paris painting, French painting, Louvre version, Paris version, French version*.

The *Virgin of the Rocks* in the London National Gallery is named f. e. *London Madonna of the Rocks, London Virgin of the Rocks, London painting, London version, English painting, English version, Lansdowne painting, Suffolk painting*.

1.) One theme is the **place of origin and provenance of the *Paris Madonna of the Rocks*** by Leonardo da Vinci [1452-1519]. It is exhibited in the Louvre and it represents what is now generally accepted as the “first great masterpiece of the High Renaissance” [Hannelore Glasser 1977, p.237]. It’s well known as thoroughly completed easel painting by this master. Moreover, it’s unquestioned that it was produced in his early years.

The first reliable document for this panel in France is from Aug. 1625 as extant in the royal Castle Fontainebleau. This can be taken from the Diary of Cassiano Dal Pozzo [1588-1657]. The Diary was first published in 1886.

Yet an Inventory of Fontainebleau drawn up by Rascas de Bagarris [1567-14.4.1620] between 1602 and 1611, that is to say during the archivist’s job in Fontainebleau, in a handwritten drawing up by Fabri de Peiresc [1580-1637] still does not mention the *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* among the Leonardo-panels in the stock of this castle. The dates about Rascas de Bagarris were published already 1889 in *LAROUSSE*. This circumstance should have led Leonardo research to the conclusion, that the *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* must have arrived at Fontainebleau between c. 1602/11 and August 1625, or between April 14th 1620 and Aug.1625. The *Paris painting* was likewise not witnessed as extant in one of the other French royal castles before its existence was obvious in Fontainebleau in August 1625. Both arguments, however, are missing in the complete Leonardo literature until to date. The Inventory by Rascas de Bagarris was published in 1899 and again in 1913 and has disappeared in the meantime inside or from the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. See section 37 u).

In sharp contrast to this evidence the Leonardo scholars of the Louvre and worldwide moreover pretend, the *Louvre painting* already has come from Milan to France in c. 1493 or in early 16th century. See 1493 [Dec. 7 Milan].

This present publication is concerned with the way of the mentioned painting from Italy to France before August 1625 as well as with the circumstances which led to its creation in Italy at a specific time. These concerned revelations were always obscured by Leonardo scholarship and will now be clarified.

Leonardo research has unanimously faded out Girolamo Borsieri 1619 [Il Svplimento], p.71 where the author still praises a *Virgin of the Rocks* in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception in the Milan church San Francesco Grande. This panel, corresponding to the author’s iconographic description and especially idiosyncratic characterization, although without providing it with Leonardo’s name, must be identical with Leonardo’s *Paris Virgin of the Rocks*. Yet it was for the last time that Leonardo’s *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* was documented in this Chapel. See sections 5-7; 9-11; 13; 15; 17; 29; 35.

2.) This present publication is heavily concerned with the ***London Madonna of the Rocks*** [National Gallery/London] and in particular with the discussion of which artist(s) painted it. Leonardo research makes the church San Francesco Grande in Milan a main **provenance**. See sections 4; 28.

This makes sense since the Altar of the church's Chapel of the Immaculate Conception did contain a perfectly authentic Leonardo *Madonna painting*. It was kept from 1506/ 1508 until 1783/85 for roughly 280 years. This treasure is documented many times, yet in fact refers to a *single figure-Madonna*, in not any document is there any reference to a *four figure landscape Madonna* panel in the Altar of this Chapel.

Only in ignoring this absolutely essential distinction the four-figure *London Madonna of the Rocks* is pretended by research to be identical with the famous *Single figure Madonna* by Leonardo from San Francesco Grande. Leonardo's authorship of the *London painting* merely could be maintained if simultaneously the San Francesco provenance of the *London painting* is certified. This provenance, however, does not exist. The *London Virgin of the Rocks* never was placed in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception in San Francesco Grande, Milan. The actual existing San Francesco provenance of Leonardo's *Single Madonna* is posed as the provenance of the *London Virgin of the Rocks*. This has not been recognized by Leonardo research until to date. Yet see 1948 [London. Robert Eisler, *The Burlington Magazine*].

The faked provenance of the *London Virgin of the Rocks* comes to light as late as in this present publication. The hitherto pretended story concerning the creation of the *London painting* which goes with it will once and for all fall. The produced authorship of Leonardo definitely falls insofar as Leonardo's authorship is derived from sources belonging to the provenance.

The San Francesco provenance and the documents of creation of a *Leonardo Madonna* are then free for the *single-figure Leonardo-Madonna* which in fact still exists and is documented many times since 1506/08 until 1783/85 in the Altar of the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception adjacent to or inside the Milan church San Francesco Grande.

The process of clarification is of impact since according to opinions just thirteen easel paintings by Leonardo da Vinci survived up to our present time. Six states possess easel paintings:

Italy (Has four of which one is partly by Leonardo, two have no more than underpainting and one is uncompleted: *The Annunciation* (From the period of the Verrocchio workshop. Parts of it by Leonardo) in the Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence; *The Adoration of the Magi* (Remained in under-painting) likewise in the Galleria degli Uffizi; *St. Jerome* (Remained in under-painting), Pinacoteca Vaticana, Rome; *The Musician* (Unfinished), Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan).

France (Has five, all in the Musée du Louvre: the *Paris Virgin of the Rocks*; the female portrait named *Mona Lisa* and also named *La Gioconda*; the *Portrait of a Lady from the Milan Court*, named presently *La Ferronière* [Inv.778], although this painting is not provided with the special kind of austere visual abstraction and the degree of consequent economy in building forms, what is featured roughly by the wording "stylistic rationalism" [Jack Wasserman, 1971, p.314], which quality appears to feature all other genuine Leonardo panels and drawings; the *Nocturnal St. John the Baptist with raised forefinger* and the *St. Anne*).