



[Home](#) > Leonardo

Leonardo

Books Reviewed:

[Leonardo](#) [1]

Issue:

[119](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Clive Barnes](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

This is more an introduction to the age than to the man; and mainly an introduction to the arts of the Italian Renaissance. It cleverly ties in economic and scientific development, and political and religious thought, and does not forget northern Europe (Leonardo died in France), but its strength is in its description of the hothouse of genius that was Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is the standard Eyewitness approach: the double page spread and the 'sound bite' text; whose deficiencies are perhaps less important here, because what matters are the works of art. Full marks to the team of art editors and consultants, map and modelmakers, designers and photographers, for selecting (and sumptuously reproducing and realising) the works on display. The book is put together with the eye of a film editor for the telling visual detail. Individual subjects like the painting and gilding of an altarpiece get extended and fascinating treatment. Suitable for anyone over the age of 14, this is not everyday Renaissance life, but it is a dazzling representation of some of the best of a remarkable time. It is a pity the index is short and pushed into a corner, and there is no further reading list to help you follow up such a stimulating book.

Running Order:

21

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[2] <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/119>

[3] <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/clive-barnes>