



**CICERONI**  
T R A V E L

# THE UNIVERSAL ARTIST LEONARDO & THE COURT OF MILAN

TUESDAY 3 – SATURDAY 7 DECEMBER 2019 (5 DAYS)

LECTURER: TOM DUNCAN

£1990

- **Remarkable opportunity to focus on Leonardo da Vinci's Milan period**
- **Visits to all the sites & exhibitions associated with Leonardo in this five hundredth anniversary year**
- **Discover the world of Renaissance patronage & the ruling Visconti & Sforza dynasties**
- **Private historic piano recital & visits to the Lombard town of Vigevano & Pavia's Charterhouse**
- **Comfortable four-star hotel located in the heart of Milan**



Leonardo da Vinci, *The Last Supper* (detail)  
Santa Maria delle Grazie

## OVERVIEW

Leonardo da Vinci has always been regarded as the towering artist of the Renaissance. To his contemporaries he was THE innovator; original, inventive and ultra-curious. Yet few of them fully grasped the range of his questing intelligence, not surprisingly as some of them were beyond 'the law'. Our tour is designed to reveal this 'universal man' as we explore Milan, the city where he came to maturity, and its ducal hinterland, coinciding with the city's five hundredth anniversary celebrations, marking his death in 1519.

Fifteenth century Milan is inextricably linked to the two great princely families who ruled Lombardy successively as Imperial Dukes; the Visconti and Sforza dynasties. The Visconti family dominated affairs and became major patrons of the arts, creating in Milan a court of unrivalled wealth and beauty. However, in 1450 they were replaced by the Sforzas who continued these traditions until they were expelled by the French in 1498, returning intermittently until the Duchy was reabsorbed into the Imperial territories by the Habsburgs.

Throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries the Milanese Court employed an extraordinary range of architects, sculptors, painters, musicians and humanists. Above all, there was Leonardo di Ser Piero da Vinci, better known simply as 'Leonardo'. Born in 1452, the illegitimate son of a Florentine notary, it seems he was apprenticed to one of the leading Florentine workshops, run by Andrea Verrocchio, and his early works all date from the 1470s, many of them left unfinished - sadly anticipating what would become a typical working habit. By 1483 he was in Milan and a draft letter he wrote to Ludovico Sforza, 'Il Moro', Duke of Milan, gives us a remarkable insight into both the various talents he was offering and the priorities of courtly employment:

*'In peace I believe that I can give you as complete satisfaction as anyone in the construction of buildings, both public and private...I can further execute sculpture in marble, bronze or clay, and in painting I can do as much as anyone, whoever he may be. Moreover, I would undertake the commission of the bronze horse, which will endow with immortal glory and eternal honour the auspicious memory of your father and of the illustrious house of Sforza...'*

This is the world which we shall explore as we trace his career across both the city and Duchy, working as a painter, architect, engineer, sculptor and musician. Many of his greatest works will be seen such as *The Last Supper*, some of his most influential portraits and religious paintings, and above all his remarkable drawings. His contemporaries such as Bramante and assistants will be encountered and we shall also visit the nearby Lombard town of Vigevano and the extraordinary Charterhouse close to Pavia.

We shall stay in the very well-placed 4\* **Superior Hotel De La Ville** close to the Duomo, Teatro La Scala and the main shopping districts and within easy reach of all that we shall see in Milan. We shall also visit privately one of Milan's most important music patrons who will host a recital on instruments contemporary with Leonardo which are in her collection, followed by dinner.

## ITINERARY OUTLINE

**Day 1:** Tuesday 3 December – We fly from Heathrow to **Milan Linate**, arriving mid-afternoon. We transfer to our hotel, the **4\* Hotel de La Ville**. After some time to settle in, we walk to the church of **Santa Maria presso San Satiro**, where Leonardo's contemporary Bramante, was involved as a modifying architect, his contribution an extraordinary choir which is a triumph of illusionism. We return to our hotel and we later have a group dinner in a local restaurant – water, wine and coffee are included with our group lunch and two dinners.

**Day 2:** Wednesday 4 December – On our first morning we visit the Dominican **Basilica di Sant'Eustorgio**. This imposing romanesque complex features the **Portinari Chapel**, attributed to Michelozzo and one of the finest renaissance spaces in Lombardy. We continue to the museum and picture gallery housed within **Castello Sforzesco**, a magnificent fortress which incorporates military and palatial quarters including the *Sala delle Asse* designed and decorated by Leonardo. After a group lunch we visit **Santa Maria della Grazie**, Milan's finest renaissance church, modified by Bramante. In its former refectory we shall also see Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*, justly regarded as the first work of the High Renaissance. We end our day at the **Casa dei Attelani** and **Vigna di Leonardo**. This newly restored house museum and small vineyard are all that remain of Ludovico il Moro's gift to Leonardo in a district the Duke built in 1498. We return to our hotel where the evening will be free.

**Day 3:** Thursday 5 December – We drive into the south-west of Lombardy to spend the morning in **Vigevano**, a handsome town regularly frequented by Leonardo and the ducal court. His ducal stable still exists, complimented by a new Leonardo-dedicated **Museum** in the town's **Castello Sforzesco** which we shall visit. Following our group lunch in Vigevano we continue the short distance to **Pavia** where we visit its most important monument, located in the surrounding countryside, the famous **Charterhouse**, or *Certosa di Pavia*, one of the most famous buildings in Italy. Founded by the Visconti in 1396, it is both a great Carthusian monastery and also the mausoleum church of both the Visconti and Sforza families, whose splendid tombs are truly princely in their magnificence. Architecturally, the monastery church and its associated cloistral buildings offer a wonderful palimpsest of late medieval and early renaissance designs. We return to Milan, and the evening will be free.

**Day 4:** Friday 6 November – We begin at Milan's **Palazzo Reale**, once the sixteenth century Habsburg centre of government and some-time residence of various Dukes of Milan. The palace was later rebuilt in the eighteenth century and now hosts temporary exhibitions. We shall see a display dedicated to the restoration and public showing of the first tapestry copy of Leonardo's *Last Supper* commissioned in 1505 by Luisa di Savoia and her son, Duke Francois du Valois, later King Francois I. We continue to the distinguished **Ambrosiana**, which is both library and picture gallery; it has a remarkable collection of paintings, including Leonardo's *Portrait of a Musician* and his *Codex Atlanticus*. Lunch (not included) and the remainder of the afternoon will be free for private explorations. In the evening we shall be the guests of Signora Fernanda Giuliani at her home to view her astonishing collection of art and historic psalteries, spinets, harpsichords and *pianoforti*. Whilst admiring this remarkable collection, there will be a private recital of fifteenth and sixteenth century renaissance music! We end this memorable evening with dinner in Fernanda's home.

**Day 5:** Saturday 7 December – We begin our final morning at the nearby **Poldi Pezzoli Museum**, the most important individual art collection in the city, housed in a fine nineteenth century house. Following our visit, we continue to Milan's **Brera Picture Gallery** with fine works from the Venetian and Lombard schools of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Following lunch (not included) and some free time, we leave from our hotel mid-afternoon and make our way to Linate and our return flight to London Heathrow.

## PRACTICALITIES

**Price** £1990

**Price without flights** £1845

**Deposit** £275

**Single Supplement** £295 (Double for Sole Use)

**Hotel** 4 nights with breakfast at 4\* Hotel De La Ville, Milan

**Flights** British Airways

Outward: **BA562** Depart London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1145** arrive Milan Linate **1445**

Return: **BA569** Milan Linate **1845** arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1950**

**Price includes** 2 dinners & 1 lunch with wine, water & coffee, all local transfers, entry fees & gratuities, City tax, services of Tom Duncan & our local tour manager, James Hill

**Not included** Travel to / from Heathrow, 2 dinners & 3 lunches



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