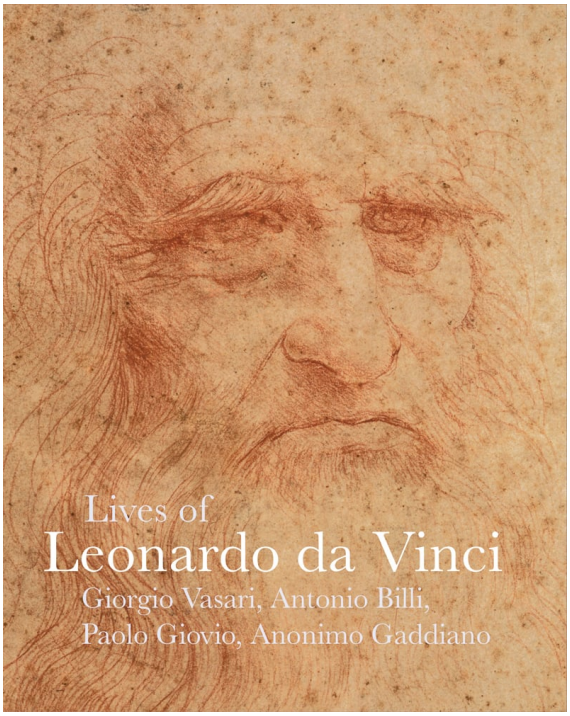
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Lives of Leonardo da Vinci

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Sabba da Castiglione

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- Leonardo was arguably the greatest artist in history, and the quintessential Renaissance man. This book includes all the major contemporary writings about him

For many people the greatest artist, and the quintessential Renaissance man, Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) was a painter, architect, theatre designer, engineer, sculptor, anatomist, geometer, naturalist, poet and musician. His *Last Supper* in Milan has been called the greatest painting in Western art. Illegitimate, left-handed and homosexual, Leonardo never made a straightforward career. But from his earliest apprenticeship with the Florentine painter and sculptor Andrea Verrochio, his astonishing gifts were recognised. His life led him from Florence to militaristic Milan and back, to Rome and eventually to France, where he died in the arms of the King, Francis I. As one of the greatest exponents of painting of his time, Leonardo was celebrated by his fellow Florentine Vasari (who was nevertheless responsible for covering over the great fresco of the Battle of Anghiari with his own painting). Vasari's carefully researched life of Leonardo remains one of the main sources of our knowledge, and is printed here together with the three other early biographies, and the major account by his French editor Du Fresne. Personal reminiscences by the novelist Bandello, and humanist Saba di Castiglione, round out the picture, and for the first time the extremely revealing imagined dialogue between Leonardo and the Greek sculptor Phidias, by the painter and theorist Lomazzo, is published in English. An introduction by the scholar Charles Robertson places these writings and the career of Leonardo in context. Approximately 50 pages of colour illustrations, including the major paintings and many of the astonishing drawings, give a rich overview of Leonardo's work and mind.

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