In chapter 2, Gearhart turns her attention to the role of matter in the text. She argues that for Theophilus, art is the transformation of materials into useful objects, which serves to justify monastic art at a time when it could be treated with suspicion. For Theophilus, Gearhart shows, it is important that the reader know and understand the properties and origins of his various materials. Gearhart gives special attention to Theophilus's language in chapter 3, delineating how Theophilus moralizes the making of art by presenting it as a series of choices, comparable to the exercise of free will. It is the process—the good or bad decisions—rather than the finished product that concerns Theophilus, Gearhart argues, and art making is a way to practice virtue.

Chapter 4 is especially rich. Using an early manuscript of *On Diverse Arts*, now in Vienna, as her starting point, Gearhart explores the virtue of skill, which Theophilus describes as "the order, variety and measure (*quo ordine qua varietate, qua mensura*) with which to pursue your varied work (*diverso operi tuo*)" (106). Here she complements her textual analysis with detailed case studies of twelfth-century metalworks that display these qualities. In chapter 4 Gearhart also addresses the question of Theophilus's relationship to Roger of Helmarshausen, one of the few known artists of his time. Because an inscription in the Vienna manuscript announces that Theophilus's name is Roger, some scholars have argued that the two men were one and the same. This identification is controversial. Gearhart believes it to be likely, though she does not fully commit to it, and proving it is not her objective. More important, she argues, is that the inclusion of Roger's name was part of a larger effort to enhance the treatise's authority. Given the inscription's weight in the debate regarding Roger, however, some discussion of its paleography would have been helpful. Furthermore, despite her neutrality toward the identification of Theophilus as Roger, most of the objects she discusses have been attributed to him or his workshop, which ultimately promotes their co-identification.

Quibbles about Roger, however, do not diminish Gearhart's impressive contribution to our understanding of medieval artists, especially those in monastic contexts, and how they approached their work. Perhaps with a nod to Theophilus's own regard for diligence, the book itself has been designed with care, complete with beautiful color plates and crisp black-and-white images.

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Leonardo da Vinci. Walter Isaacson.

New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017. xx + 602 pp. $35.

If Giorgio Vasari extolled Leonardo da Vinci as a celestial genius, Walter Isaacson brings this most singular artist, engineer, and scientist back to earth. Author of best-selling biographies of Steve Jobs and Benjamin Franklin, Isaacson offers his readers a portrait of the artist as an avatar of passionate curiosity.

While Michelangelo has attracted numerous biographers—Vasari, Condivi, Symonds, Papini, Hirst, and Wallace, to name but some of the earlier and more recent chroniclers of the sculptor's life—Leonardo has not. This difference reflects the nature of the sources available for each. Michelangelo left a trove of letters, poems, and financial records, all of which have been reproduced in modern editions and translated into English. But there is no edition of the voluminous record of Leonardo's preoccupations contained in the 7,200 pages, many written in his famous mirror script, of his notebooks. Taking a different tack than earlier biographers, who tended to focus on the painter's works of art, Isaacson examines Leonardo's life through the notebooks. The result is a monument to "the greatest record of curiosity ever created." Ever intent on showcasing the way in which Leonardo's scientific and artistic interests intersect, Isaacson delves into Leonardo's *Wunderkammer* of interests—architectural pursuits, productions of plays and pageants, literary amusements, bird-watching activities, mathematical explorations, studies of water, vegetation, anatomy, perspective, and optics, and inventions of musical instruments, flying machines, and military weaponry. Isaacson breaks down each of these pursuits, all the while pointing out analogies Leonardo found between phenomena as disparate as hair curls and waves of water. In such instances the story often gives way to lists of phenomena, each section a testimony to Leonardo's restless mind, ingenuity, and relentless curiosity.

Describing innovations such as a needle-grinding machine or a water screw intended to illustrate the concept of perpetual motion, however, is a daunting task. The marvel is the intricacy of the drawing itself. Prose description, unless rendered by a writer possessed of an exceptionally dynamic style, has the effect of dulling the fascination of Leonardo's inventions. The biography is absorbing, but readers might prefer to read these sections in stints.

Isaacson seldom ventures aesthetic judgments of his own. In describing works such as the *The Annunciation*, *Madonna and Child with Flowers*, *Ginevra de' Benci*, and *The Adoration of the Magi*, he relies on Leonardo specialists, citing amply from studies by Kenneth Clark, Martin Kemp, Carmen Bambach, and other art historians. Leaving it to the experts, especially in this case, serves Isaacson well. Isaacson often expands their claims with citations from the notebooks on how to draw hair, a smile, water, lines, shadows, and other phenomena. These are some of the most engaging parts of the biography: the author deftly presents Leonardo's artistic virtuosity in the painter's own words. In discussing the luster of Ginevra de' Benci's curls, for example, Isaacson adds an elucidation from the notebooks that reveals that spots of luster will shift and "appear in as many different places on the surface as different positions are taken by the eye" (66). We have the glorious artifact and the observation or theory that informs it. Other lively sections include Isaacson's account of the diverse personages living in Florence when Leonardo arrived in the city, in 1472; the engrossing efforts to authenticate *La Bella Principessa*; the presence of Cesare Borgia, Machiavelli, and Leonardo in Imola, in the autumn of 1502; and the discussion of the range and depth of Leonardo's to-do lists (get the measurement of the sun promised me by Maestro Giovanni Francese, describe the tongue of the woodpecker).

Early modern specialists will find other sections less compelling—for example, Isaacson's account of the rivalry between Leonardo and Michelangelo, one social and handsome, the other unattractive and antisocial, and the contemporary observation that the realism of *The Lady with an Ermine* offers an example of a portrait that does all but speak. But such factors do not detract from Isaacson's splendid achievement, at once a magisterial biography and tribute to every aspect of Leonardo's observatory prowess. The book is magnificently produced, with ample reproductions, an illustrated timeline, and an uplifting conclusion on how we can all learn from Leonardo's omnivorous curiosity.

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Jacopo de' Barbari: Künstlerschaft und Hofkultur um 1500. Beate Böckem. Studien zur Kunst 32. Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2016. 516 pp. €65.

The name Jacopo de' Barbari resonates now only faintly among specialists in Northern Renaissance art, as the obscure Venetian artist who spent his career in the Holy Roman Empire (ca. 1500–16) and who may have reinforced Albrecht Dürer's reception of the Italian Renaissance. As Böckem's excellent study makes clear, Barbari's extant oeuvre may be small and somewhat mysterious, but he was also part of the transformative wave of Italian innovators that swept across the empire. Altogether, Böckem has assembled an extant corpus of possibly twelve paintings, two drawings, thirty engravings, and two woodcuts. (She is doubtful or uncertain about a few of the attributions.) Importantly, Barbari created art for major rulers of the empire, especially for those engaged in promoting humanism: Emperor Maximilian, Elector Friedrich the Wise of Saxony, Elector Albrecht of Brandenburg, and Archduchess Margaret of Austria, regent of the Hapsburg Netherlands. In her study, Böckem pursues two goals: she offers a comprehensive analysis of Barbari's "artistry" ("Künstlerschaft") in several media—his techniques, style, themes, and achievements—as well as a thorough historical reassessment of the artistic culture of the courts with which he was associated. Indeed, nearly half of the book is devoted to wide-ranging analyses of these courts, with especially insightful portrayals of the ambitions of Friedrich the Wise and Margaret of Austria. Moreover, Böckem expertly and vividly charts Barbari's connections to Venetian art from the late fifteenth century.