



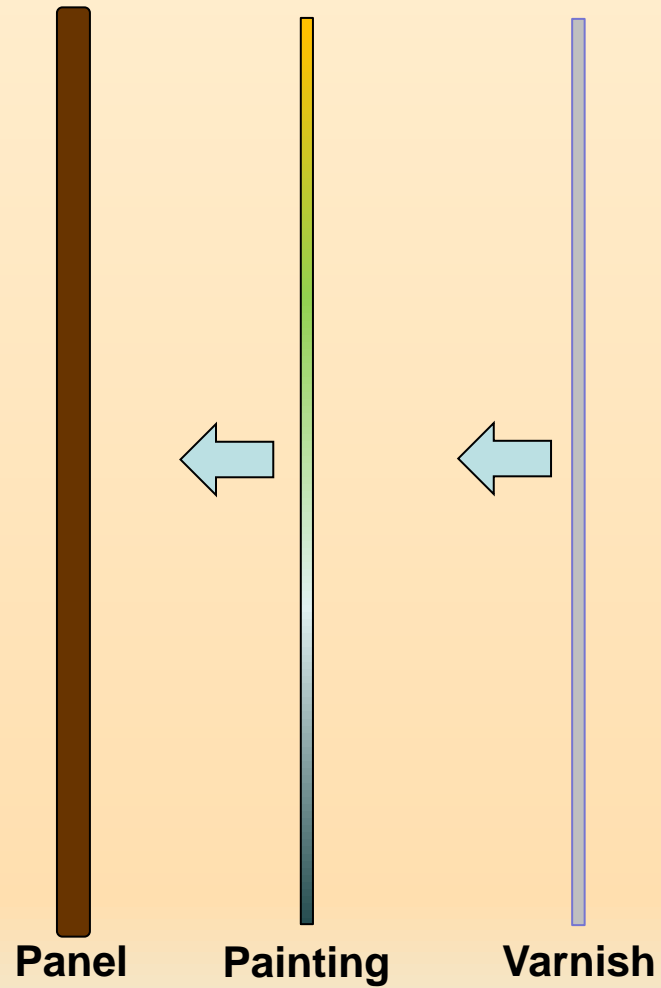
Uncovering Leonardo's Heresy in His *Virgin of the Rocks* with Andrew Linnell

jandrewlinnell@yahoo.com
www.thechristianmysteries.com

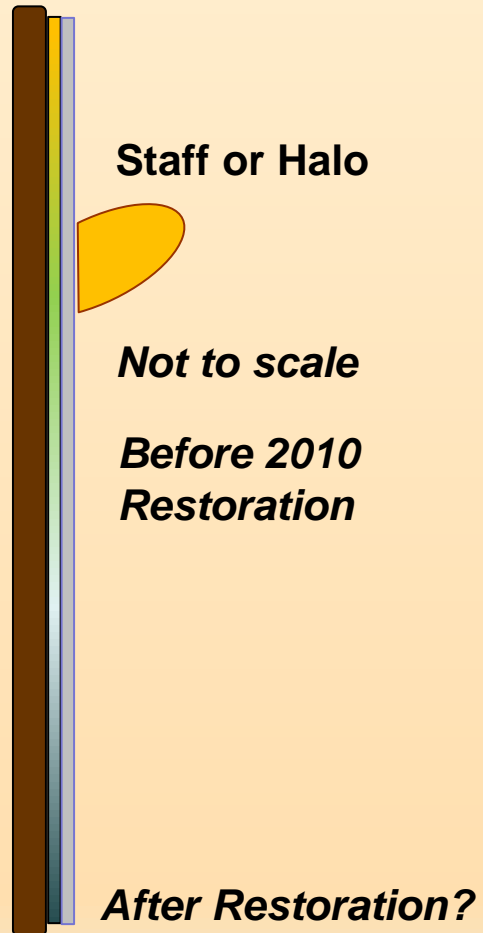
***Presented for Berkshire-Taconic
Branch 5/22/2020***



Side View



VoR NatGall, Side View



After



Before



What Did the Restoration Affect?



Lecture Questions

- Why was paint above the varnish?
 - Leads to many other questions
- Why two (or three) paintings?
 - Art historians
- Why did it take so long to paint the 2nd version?
- What did Leonardo learn at the Platonic Academy?
- Were Early Christian theological ideas depicted?
- Was this a 15th C heresy?

Virgin (or Madonna) of the Rocks

Two paintings!

No, 3!
Why?



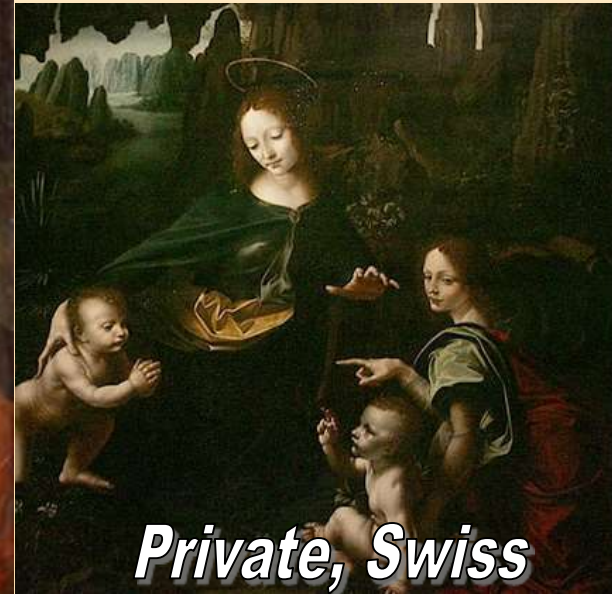
National Gallery, London

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Louvre, Paris

Virgin of the Rocks



Private, Swiss

*From Getty Images
Private collection*



What Art Historians Say

- **Original: The Louvre, Paris**
 - Copy: the National Gallery, London
- Both: oils and 2 meters
- Both: on wooden panel
 - The Louvre's transferred to canvas

Who is Depicted?

- Art historians have concluded:
 - Mary,
 - Christ child,
 - John the Baptist,
 - Angel

Annunciation
by LdV &
Verrocchio,
1475, Uffizi



Correct Depictions?

- Archangel
 - Nat'l Gallery: Uriel - archangel
 - Why not with JtB?
- If not JtBaptist, who else?
- Is the central figure Mary?
 - Why not with her child?



Why and How Are These Paintings Different?











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Virgin of the Rocks

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Remember These Two Gesturing Boys!

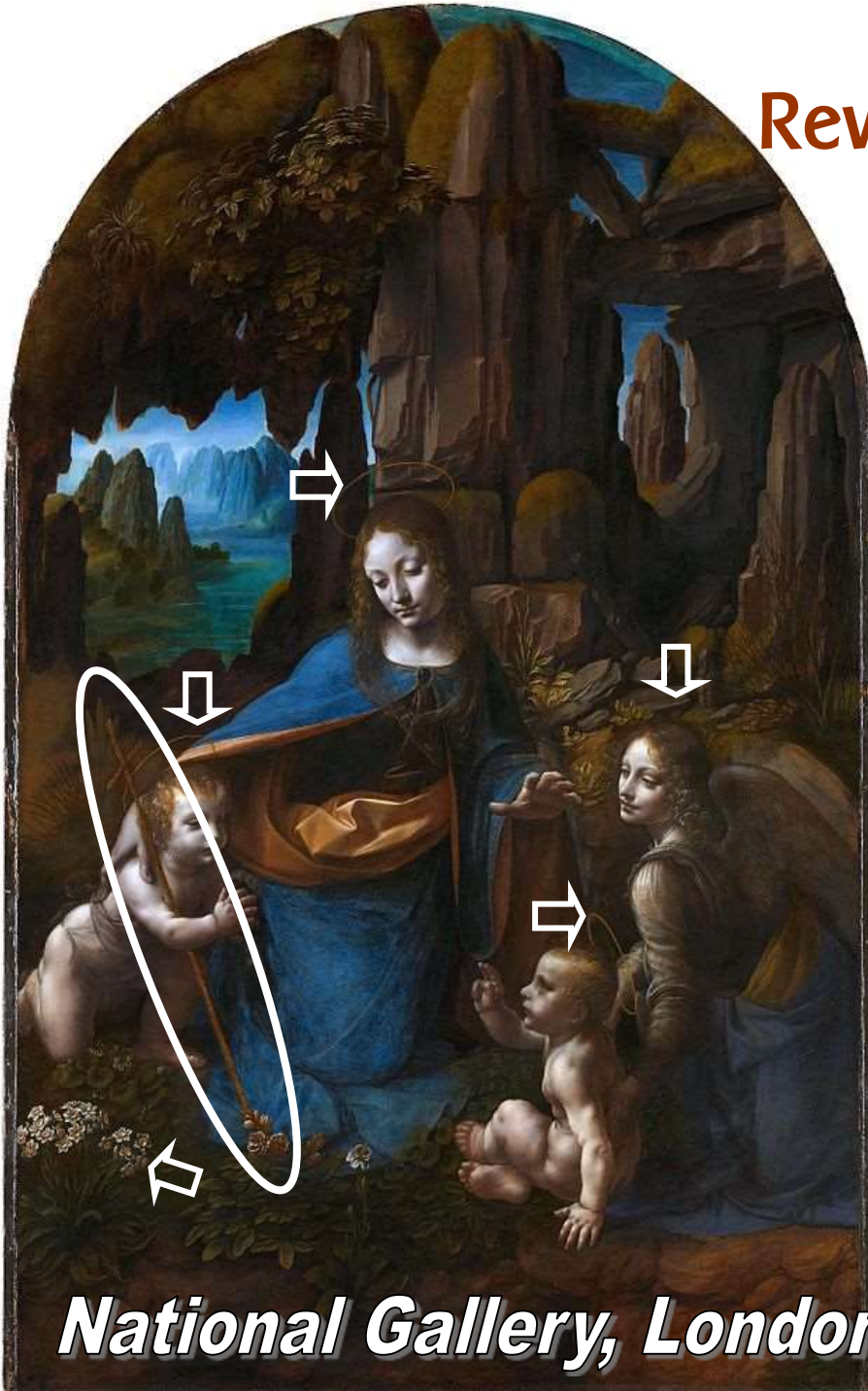


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Virgin of the Rocks

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Review





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Virgin of the Rocks



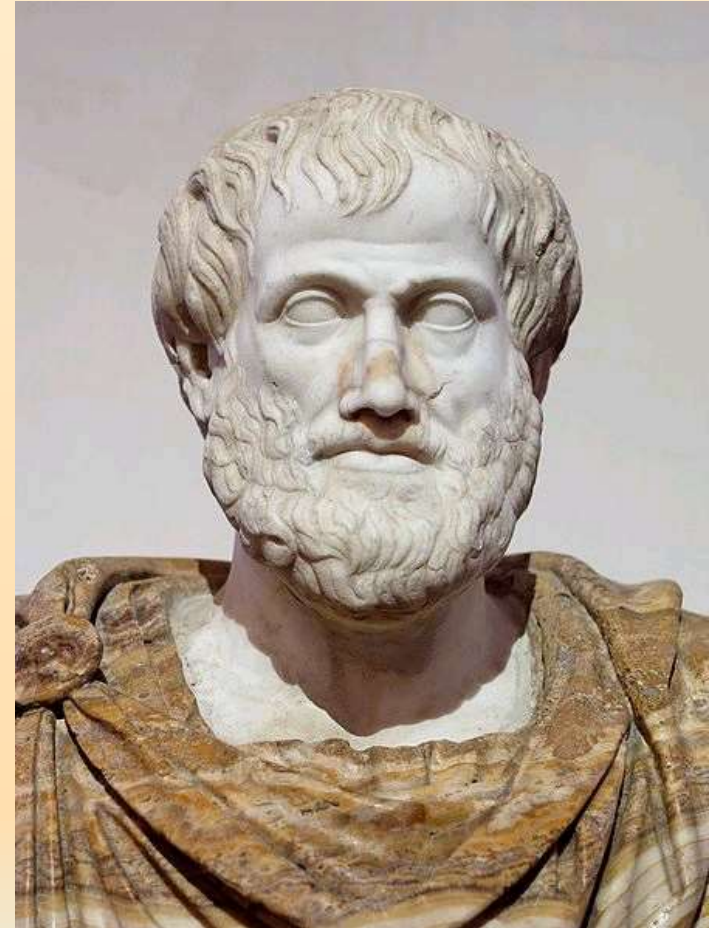
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FLORENCE, BIRTHPLACE OF THE RENAISSANCE



Renaissance: Rebirth of Greek Philosophy

- Greek (& Mystery) knowledge to Europe
- Florentine art revived Neoplatonism:
 - Christian + Greek



Multiple Christianities

- Arius and the Goths
 - Filioque
- Why secrecy about this?
 - All Ancient Mysteries considered heresies



Renaissance: Theological Background

- Arius and the Goths
- Deceit: Donation of C.
- Corruption: Saint Francis
- Templar Knights, Cathars
- King Philip IV of France
- The Black Plague
- Butcher of Cesena
- Three Popes: 1410-18
- Rise of Protestantism



Charlemagne holding up the Church

Eastern Christian Church

34 AD:12 Christianities

- Nestorius (386–451)
 - Thomas, Mani,
 - Montanus, Gnostics
- 424–427: break
 - Council of Ephesus in 431
- Dyophysite (vs monophysite)
- 9th - 14th C. largest Christian church
 - Mediterranean to China
- Co-existence with Islam
 - Until Hulagu destroyed Baghdad 1258



Manuel Chrysolorus (1355-1415)

- 1391: Envoy
 - Gave lectures
 - Greek philosophers
- 1396: Florence
 - **Preparer of the Renaissance**
- Inspires Florentine missions
 - 1258: Destruction of Baghdad, Gondhishapur and other centers of learning
 - 1423: Giovanni Aurispa: 238 texts
 - 1469: Basilios Bessarion: 800 volumes

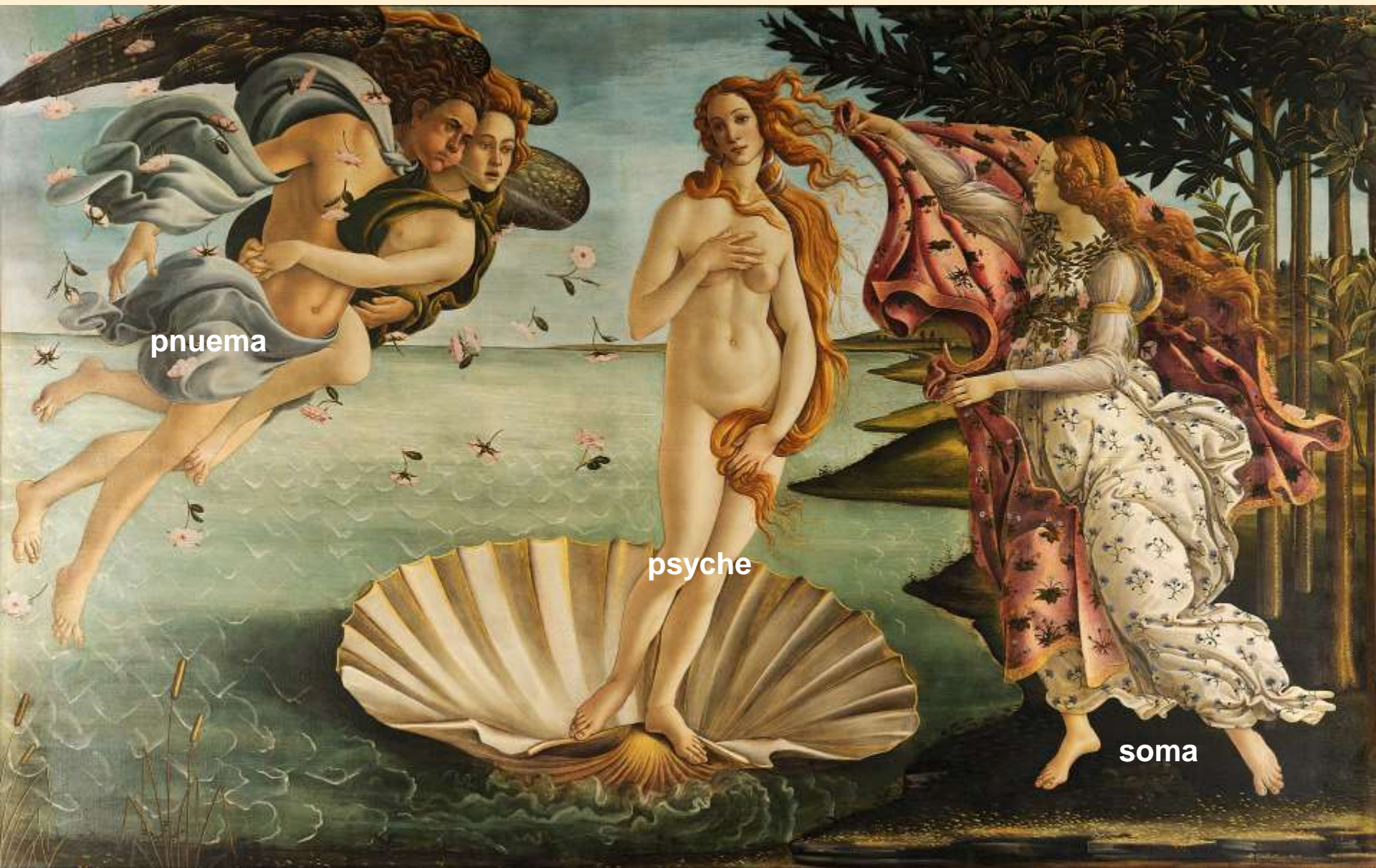


G. Gemístus Plethon

- b. Constantinople 1355, d. Mystra **1452**
- 1428: Byzantine Emperor John VIII asked Plethon
 - Unify split churches?
- **1438 - 39 Council of Florence** (age 83)
 - Invited to set up a school in Florence
- Becomes the **Catalyst for the Renaissance**
 - Cosimo de' Medici attended
 - Founded **Accademia Platonica**



For more see [paper](#)
by Shawn Gray



Who Was Plethon?

- A “Prince Among the Philosophers”
- Marsilio Ficino: **'the second Plato'**
- Cardinal Bessarion: Is Plato's soul in this body?
- Foremost Scholar
- Trunk full of books
 - **Hermes Trismegistus**

Siena Cathedral, 1480s
Mosaic floor



Plethon After Florence



LdV's Education

- Born 15 April 1452
- Early Education
 - At 8: Enrolled Florence
 - At 12: Verrocchio
 - Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, Perugino, Lorenzo di Credi
 - Michaelangelo and Raphael
- By 20: admitted to St. Luke Artist's Guild
- At 24: Arrested (for nudity, possibly sodomy)
 - Charges dropped
- By 28: de Medici household
 - Member of the Garden of San Marcos



Leonardo da Vinci and Greek Wisdom

"He alone uses each thing well who has learned of his own power and that of others, from wisdom"

-- Ficino

- Attended **Platonic Academy**
 - Marsilio Ficino (1433 – 1499), Academy Head 1462 – 1492
 - LdV was 10 YO – was he ever initiated?



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Virgin of the Rocks

[Source: Ficino](#)



Leonardo
knew
Ficino
well – he
painted
him!

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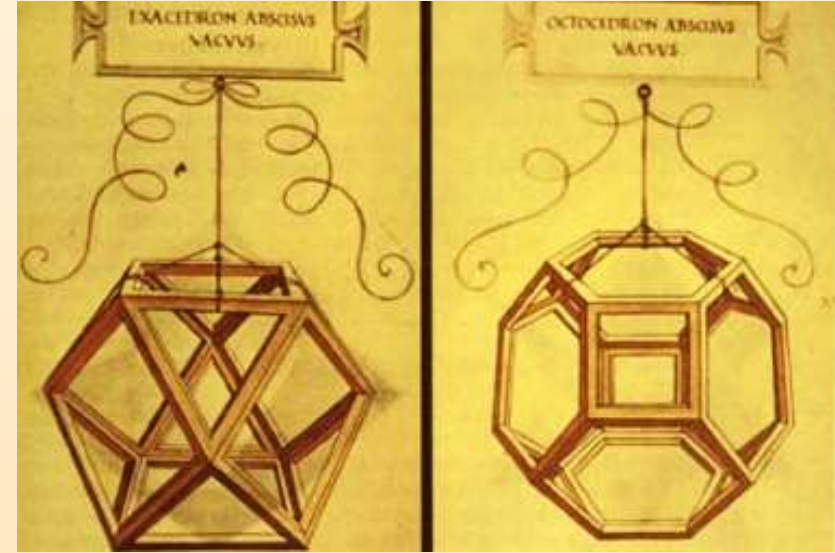
Leonardo da Vinci and Greek Wisdom

- Girolamo Savonarola
- Academy in Milan
 - Plato, geometry
- **Secret schools?**
 - Kabbalists
 - Cathars
 - Templar Knights



LdV After Florence

- 1482: Leonardo left Florence
 - Traveled with his paintings
 - Savonarola mobs
- 1485: Academy in Milan active
 - 1492: Mathematician Luca Pacioli invited
- 1499: Fled Milan at the start of the 2nd Italian War
- 1501: Working again in Florence (Mona Lisa, Raphael)
- **1506: Returned to Milan from Florence** (*to finish that painting!*)
- 1515: Moved to Rome
- 1516: Moved to France
 - Died at Clos Lucé, France, on May 2, 1519 at age 67



Early Christianity's Theology

Gnostic Story
Pistis Sophia



Pístis Sophía (Gnostic)

- <http://gnosis.org/library/pistis-sophia/ps063.htm>
- Refers to **two messiahs and two families!**
 - Two boys about age 12. One working vineyard.
 - Other spirit comes. Mary fetches 2nd. Become united.
- Chapter 59
 - "Thou also, **Mary**, ... **thou and the other Mary**"
- Chapter 61
 - "he embraced thee, he **kissed** thee. And thou also, thou didst kiss him and you **became one**."
- Chapter 62
 - "The **other Mary** came forward"
 - http://www.pseudepigrapha.com/PistisSophia/pistisSophia_Book1.html

Kissing Babes from Pístís Sophía?



Leonardo da Vinci (1452 – 1519)



Joos van Cleve (1485-1540)
Called Leonardo of the North

Holy Infants Embracing (Kissing Babes)

Joos van
Cleve
1485 – 1541
Flemish
(Antwerp)





↑
JvC

Students



f th

Kissing Babes with Madonna

- ***Thuelin Madonna***
 - Marco d'Oggiono
 - Thuelin collection, Paris
- Note:
 - Kissing Babes
 - Hand gestures
 - Madonna left hand on wisdom
- Escaping the slaughter of the innocents?



Bernardíno Luíní

- 1480 - 1532
- ***Holy Family***
- Pupil of
 1. Ambrogio Bergognone
 2. Leonardo
- Note female's hand gestures
 - Same as VoR with *Kissing Babes* in between







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Virgin of the Rocks

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John the Baptist! – Protection?

Bernardino de Conti
from a private collection

Clues:

- **Staff**
- **Two ‘windows’**
(*impossible – clue?*)
- **Haloos!**
- Bird
- Students knew of each other's works



Bernardino de' Conti

- Private collection
- Appeared exhibition in Ancona, Italy, 2005.



Three Children by Bernardino de' Conti

- Who are these three?
- Exact VoR poses
 - Boys not reversed
- Halo
- Hands
- Why John? Baptism!
- Note the “*transfer*”
- https://elpais.com/diario/2005/10/09/cultura/1128808804_740215.html



Three Children by Bernardino de' Conti



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Virgin of the Rocks

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Madonna Terranuova

Raphael
1483-1520
Painted 1505
LdV in Milan
by 1483!
LdV in
Florence
1501-06



Digging Deeper into the Heresy: The Expectation of Two Messiahs

Dead Sea Scrolls

Essenes at
Qumran



Dead Sea Scrolls



- Discovered 1947
 - Essenes of Qumran
 - 11 caves (more recently)
 - 872 scrolls
- Synopsis: Two messiahs were expected
 - [see J. J. Collins, J. Starcky, M. Karnawalski, J. Tabor, & *livius.org*]
 - Qumranites expected the coming of not one, but **two Messiahs**
 - 'Messiah of Israel' and a 'Messiah of David'
 - **Priestly and kingly** descendants.”
- What is meant by “Messiah”? A human or a god?

DSS: Two Become One

- *Damascus Document*.
 - "The Messiah, which is the Son of Joseph **will be made one** with the Son of David, but he will be killed..."
- *11QMelchizedek*: "měbaśśēr": herald
 - First is a Davidic **royal** messiah, second is **priestly** like Aaron
- *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*
 - (version translated 13th C by Robert Grosseteste)
 - Available for Leonardo to read
 - Testament of Simeon 7.1-2: "For the Lord will raise up from Levi someone as a **high-priest** and from Judah someone as **king**."
 - "He will save all the gentiles and the tribe of Israel."



Kabbalah

- Kabbalistic Roots: Zohar

*"Another Messiah, the son of Joseph, will **unite** himself with the **Messiah**, the son of David. But the son of Joseph will not remain in life, **he will be killed and will become alive again**, when the little hill receives life upon the great hill."*



"Old" Testament

- "Old Testament": **Zechariah 4:14, Numbers 24:17, Ezekiel 37:15-17,**
 1. "These are the **two** anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth"
 2. "There shall come a **star** out of **Jacob**, and a **scepter** shall rise out of **Israel**"
 3. "They [sticks of Judah and Joseph] **shall become one** in thine hand"
- **Summary:** Expected **two births** (messiahs), a later **merging**



Births of Jesus

*Mark & John start at **Baptism***

Matthew 1:1-25

- From Abraham,..., David, **King Solomon** (father ...)
- Angel to Joseph
- **Middle-aged, royal lineage**
- Live in **Bethlehem**
- Comfortable setting
- **Magi** from the East
- *Kingly and wise*
- Family **flees to Egypt** – returns to Nazareth after Herod dies
- **Brothers and sisters**

Luke 3:23-38 (at baptism)

- **Priest Nathan** (son of ...), David ,..., Abraham,..., Adam
- Angel to Mary
- **Young and poor**
- Live in **Nazareth**
- In a stable in Bethlehem
- **Shepherds**
- *Pure and loving*
- **No threat.** Jesus grows up in Nazareth
- **Only child**

Luke & Matthew

- Christmas first celebrated 354 AD
- Historical inaccuracies:
 - King Herod's death
 - **Matthew**: slaughter of the innocents
 - **Luke**: no slaughter
- Different stories?



The Forgotten Early Christian Theology

- Focus: **Mystery** of Golgotha and Easter

Fra Angelico, 1442, San Marco Florence

- Origin: **Mystery wisdom and Hellenistic philosophies**
- St. Augustine: Christianity existed before Christ
- *Christmas* not important
- Christ entered Jesus *at 30*
 - Cosmic Christ – the Sun God
 - **Birth of Christ at baptism**
 - Christ (God) would experience death
 - Pnuema, psyche, & soma
 - **Gnostic** knowledge to understand Mystery of Golgotha



Greek Mythology - Helios

- Sun God





Gnostic and Early Christianity

- Image found in the Christian Tomb of Julii, in the Vatican necropolis located in Rome.
- Early Christian art
- Christ: Unconquered Sun God
 - Helios
 - Ahura Mazdao
 - Amun, Ra



Gnostic and Early Christianity



What Happened at the Baptism?

Arian Baptistry in Ravenna, Italy 5th Century



Right to left:

- John the Baptist
- Jesus receiving the Spirit (Dove)
- God of the Jordan River
- = Man + God

Circled by 12 Apostles

Built by Ostrogoth King Theodoric the Great, Arian Christian

Christian states in 495 AD



Arian rule



Catholic rule

| ARIAN RULERS AND THEIR DOMAINS | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| + | Gundobad | (Burgundians) |
| △ | Clovis I | (Franks) |
| ○ | Theodoric | (Ostrogoths) |
| ◇ | Theodemund ? | (Suebi) |
| × | Gunthamund | (Vandals) |
| ⋈ | Alaric II | (Visigoths) |

CATHOLIC RULER AND HIS DOMAIN



Anastasius I (Romans)

Problem with Our Conclusion

If it is two Jesus children, Luke: *Priest* & Matthew: *King*
then why is there just one Jesus later in life?



Possible Merging of the Two Messiahs

Where in NT are two Jesus children united?

- Luke: story of Jesus at age 12 in the Temple
 - Not mentioned in Matthew (its Jesus is 13 or 14)
- Behind the Curtain of the Holy of the Holies
 - Jerusalem Temple

Based on Rudolf Steiner's insights.



6th Century Byzantine Art – Two at 12



The Bohdan And Varvara Khanenko Museum Of Arts, Kiev

Jesus Among the Doctors

- Bernardino di Betto
(**Pinturicchio**)
 - 1452-1513
 - Bergognone & LdV
- Painted 1501
- Fresco, Bagloioni Chapel, Santa Maria Maggiore, Spello, Italy



Jesus Among the Doctors

- Notice hands

<http://encyclopedia.farlex.com/Bernardino+Luini>

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Virgin of the Rocks

Jesus Among the Doctors

- Colors, socks, clothes



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Virgin of the Rocks

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Jesus Among the Doctors

- Clothing colors
 - Black, blue, gold, magenta
 - Royal purple
- Objects in hand
- Four plus one
 - Hierophant
 - Four bodies
- Wall off two children
- Socks:poor, shoes:rich



Jesus Among the Doctors

Ambrogio
Bergognone
b.1452–d. 1524

"And Jesus grew in
wisdom, age and
grace before God
and men" [Luke 2:52]



Jesus Among the Doctors Bernardino Luini

- Student of both Leonardo and Bergognone
- Painted 1515
- Leonardo's signature appears 3 times on the back



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Virgin of the Rocks

Defendente Ferrari (1490 – 1540)



Painted 1526
Staatsgalerie
Stuttgart

Apprentice to
Giovanni
Martino
Spanzotti
who studied
in Milan

The Abandoned Painting



- Stopped 1480
- 1481: Filippino Lippi was given the commission
- His *Adoration of the Magi* was completed 1496
- Substitute for Leonardo's
- Uffizi Gallery in Florence since 1670
- Why abandoned?
 - Initiation
 - No longer truthful

Secrets of the Background

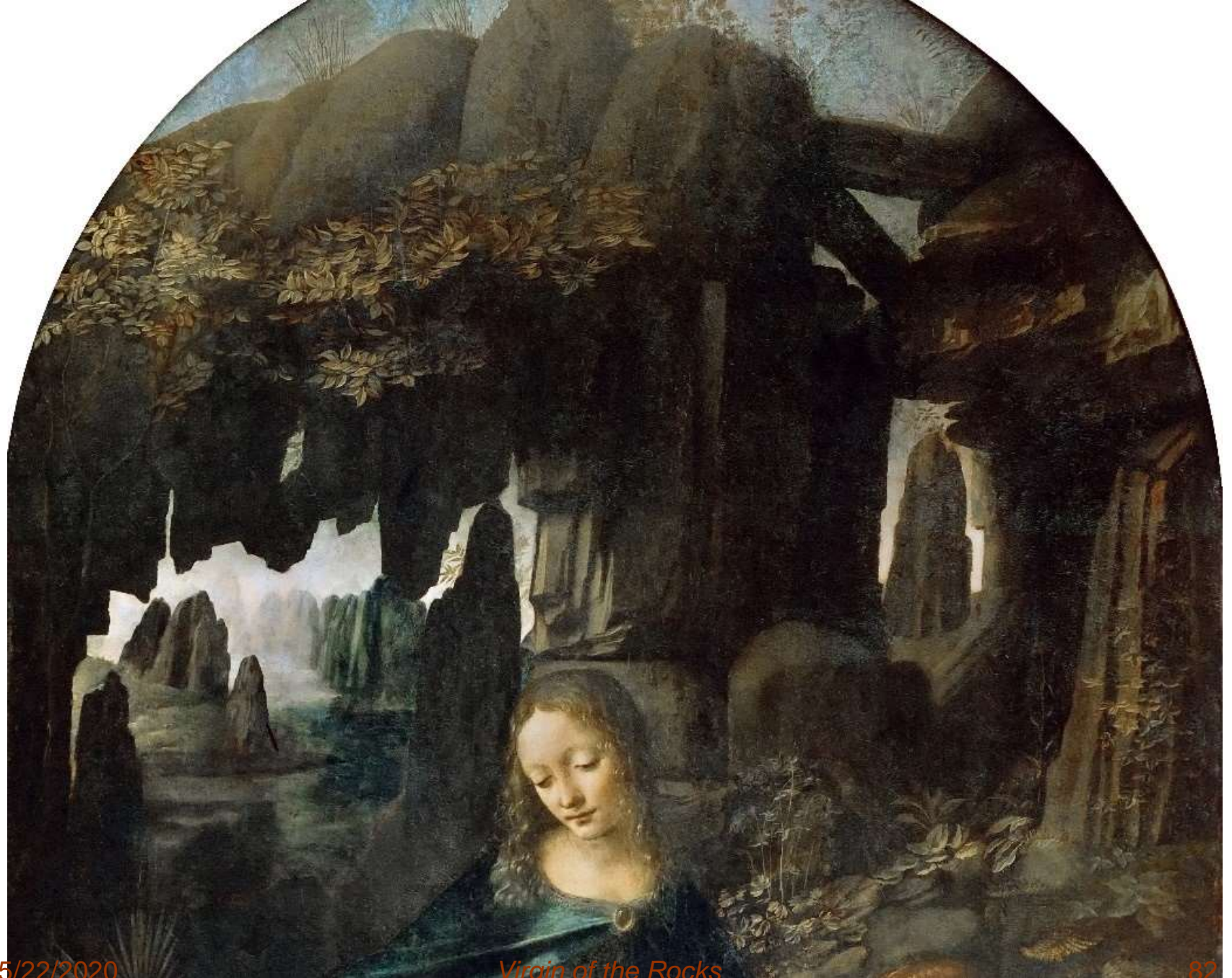
- Window
- Each child
- Past lives?



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*Matthew story:
King
Zarathustra*

*Luke story:
Priest
Adam-Kadmon*

Conclusion: A Christian Mystery Revealed!



Hand Gestures



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Virgin of the Rocks



Model of Dionysius the Areopagite



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Virgin of the Rocks



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Lingering Questions:

**WHY WERE THERE
TWO PAINTINGS?**

History of *The Virgin of the Rocks*

- 1482: Unfinished original travels with LdV to Milan
- 1499: Legal dispute (after 16 years): Ambrogio de Predis claimed to have completed the work, wanted payment
- **1506:** April 27: Dispute settled with the requirement that LvD return to Milan within two years “to complete” the painting
- 1507: Artists paid for copy
- 1508: Copy installed
- 1516: Goes to France with LdV
- After LdV’s death → royal property
- 1625: Found with *Mona Lisa*
 - French Royal collection – donated to Louvre



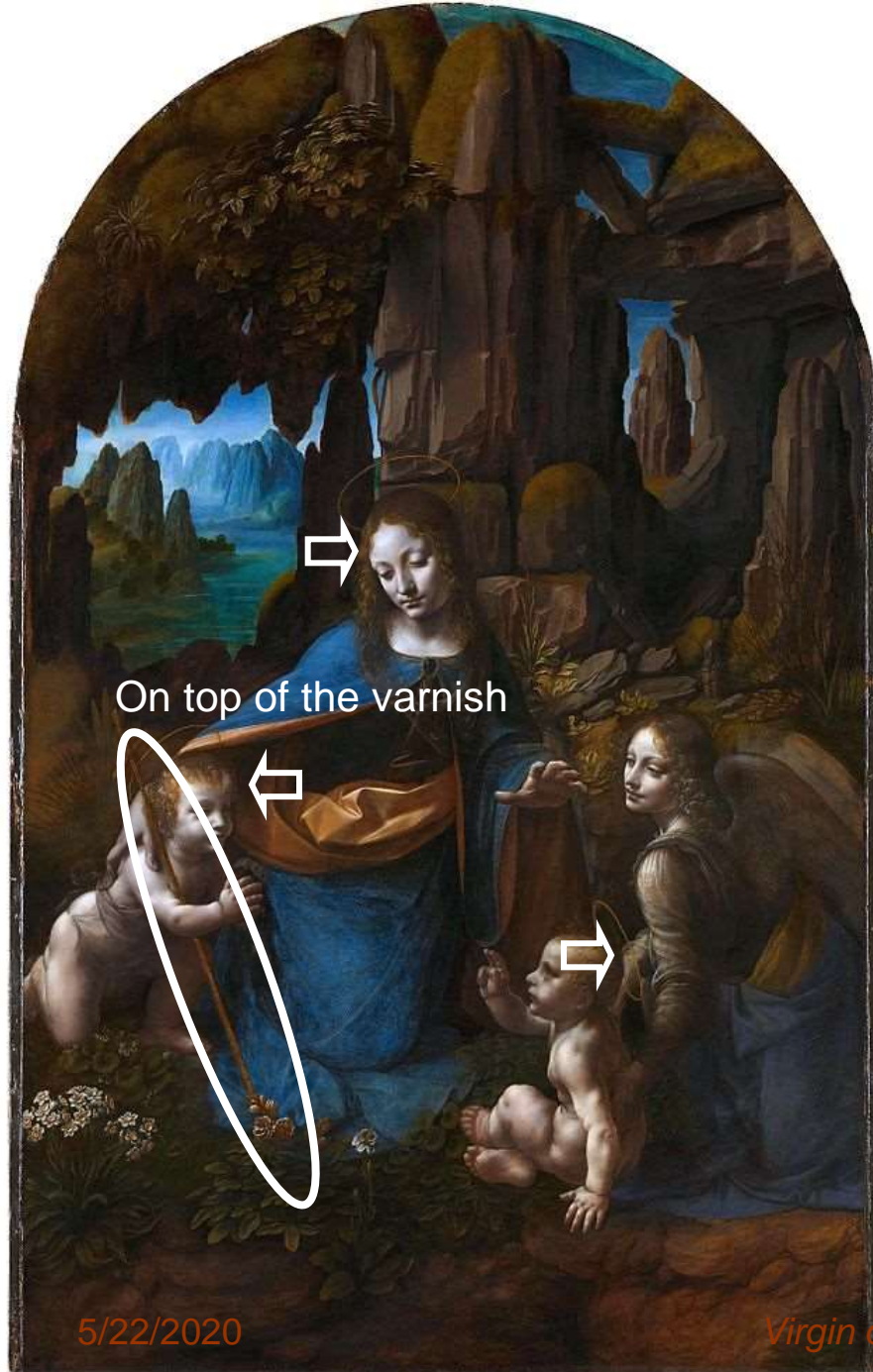
Why Was This 2nd Painting Made?



- Confraternity rejected original
- February 1485: 800 lire paid
- Work continued
- 1490: Ambrogio and Leonardo asked for more
- + 1,200 Lire
- The Confraternity: + 100 Lire
- Duke Sforza asked to intervene

Solving the Dispute

- March 1503: Louis XII intervened
- June 1503: Confraternity contested
- Requested 'expert evaluation or return of the painting'
- April 1506: judge ruled the work incomplete – Leonardo obliged to complete it
- 1508 Leonardo travels to Milan
- Leonardo performed 'touch-ups'
- August 1508: painting installed



Our Original Questions

- Why was paint above the varnish?
 - Leads to many other questions
- Why two (or three) paintings?
 - Art historians
- Why did it take so long to paint the 2nd version?
- What did Leonardo learn at the Platonic Academy?
- Were Early Christian theological ideas depicted?
- Was this a 15th C heresy?

Lecture Conclusions

- Answered why paint was above the varnish on copy
- Original painting revealed a 15th C heresy
 - Two Messiahs in Ancient texts
 - Matthew and Luke of New Testament texts
 - Early Christianity theological ideas depicted
 - Two boys both named Jesus – merged in Temple at puberty
 - Cosmic Christ born at baptism of Jesus
 - Role of Plethon → Platonic Academy/Renaissance → Leonardo
- Proof from student's paintings
 - Depicted: Two Jesus boys, arch-angel, and Elohim-Madonna
- Leonardo's Call for Renaissance 2.0
 - Human being: spirit, soul, and body

Conclusion: Warding off the Inquisition!



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The "Smoking Gun"



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Jesus Among the Doctors



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Virgin of the Rocks

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John the Baptist

- Gospels of Mark and John
 - Begin with baptism
 - Jesus of Nazareth becomes Jesus-Christ
- Gestures
 - Right hand
 - Left hand
- Staff and fingers
- Smirk
 - Mocking the Church?
 - Christian Mysteries?

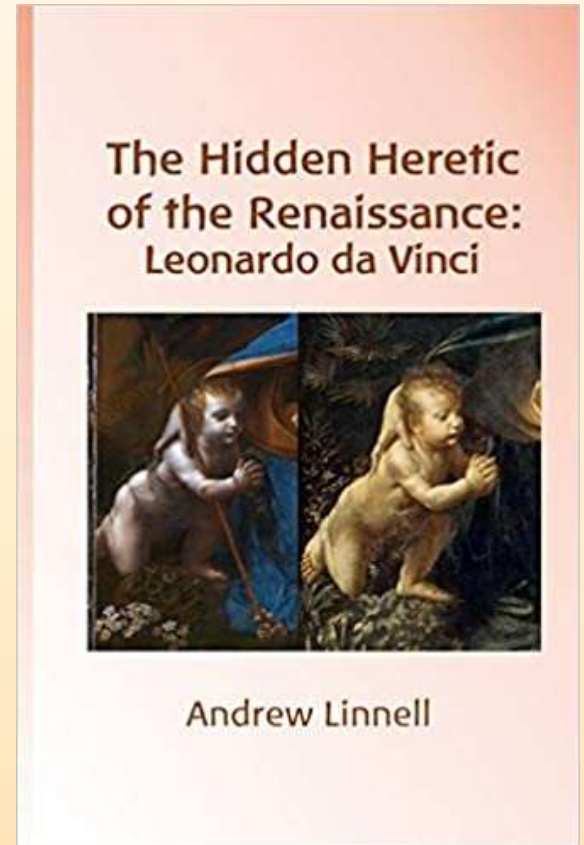




Discussion Time

What Questions Arise for You?
Why might Leonardo risk this?

Slides are available at
www.thechristianmysteries.com



Book available on Amazon at
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/0578663872>

Leda and the Swan

- Cesare da Sesto
- 1515-1520



Summary: The Two Jesus Stories

| | Matthew | Luke |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Theme | Kings, Magi - Star | Poor Shepherds, Heavenly hosts |
| Lineage | Through King Solomon | Through Priest Nathan |
| Generations | 42 (14x3) from Abraham | 77 (7x11) from Adam |
| Angel speaks to | Joseph | Mary |
| Original home | Bethlehem | Nazareth |
| Slaughter of the innocents | Yes | Not mentioned |
| Escape to Egypt | Yes | No |
| John the Baptist's birth | Not mentioned | Mary visits Elizabeth |
| History at birth | Many lives, wisdom - Zarathustra | Purity, no karma – Adam Kadmon |

Dead Sea Scrolls Recap

- 'Messiah of Israel' and a 'Messiah of David' expected
- Priestly and Kingly descendants
- References:
 - http://www.livius.org/men-mh/messiah/messiah_14.html
 - Millar Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls: New Scrolls and New Interpretations*, Viking Press, 1958
 - Jona Lendering, ***Qumran's dual Messianism***
<http://www.livius.org/articles/religion/messiah/messiah-9-two-messiahs/>
 - http://www.livius.org/men-mh/messiah/messiah_14.html
 - John Allegro, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Reappraisal*, Penguin Books, 1956; see also <http://www.blackelectorate.com/articles.asp?ID=857>

Associations Made by Edward R. Smith

Kingly

- Solomon / Hiram Abiff
- **Cain** stream
- Perfection of “the 3 loaves” from **Abraham*** (14x3)
- **Tree of Knowledge** *forward*
- Magi imply Zoroaster aka **Zarathustra** stream

Priestly

- Nathan (Aaron)
- **Abel** stream
- No karma, **Adam Kadmon**
- Redemption is to find way *back* to **Tree of Life**
- Heavenly hosts surrounding

* For more see E. R. Smith's *The Burning Bush*, pg. 411

Bacchus

- St. John the Baptist
 - *Note the Staff of John*
- 1515
- Louvre, Paris
- The painting originally depicted John the Baptist.
- In the late 17th century, between the years 1683 and 1693, it was overpainted and altered to serve as *Bacchus*.

