

# ITALIAN JOURNAL OF AEROSPACE MEDICINE

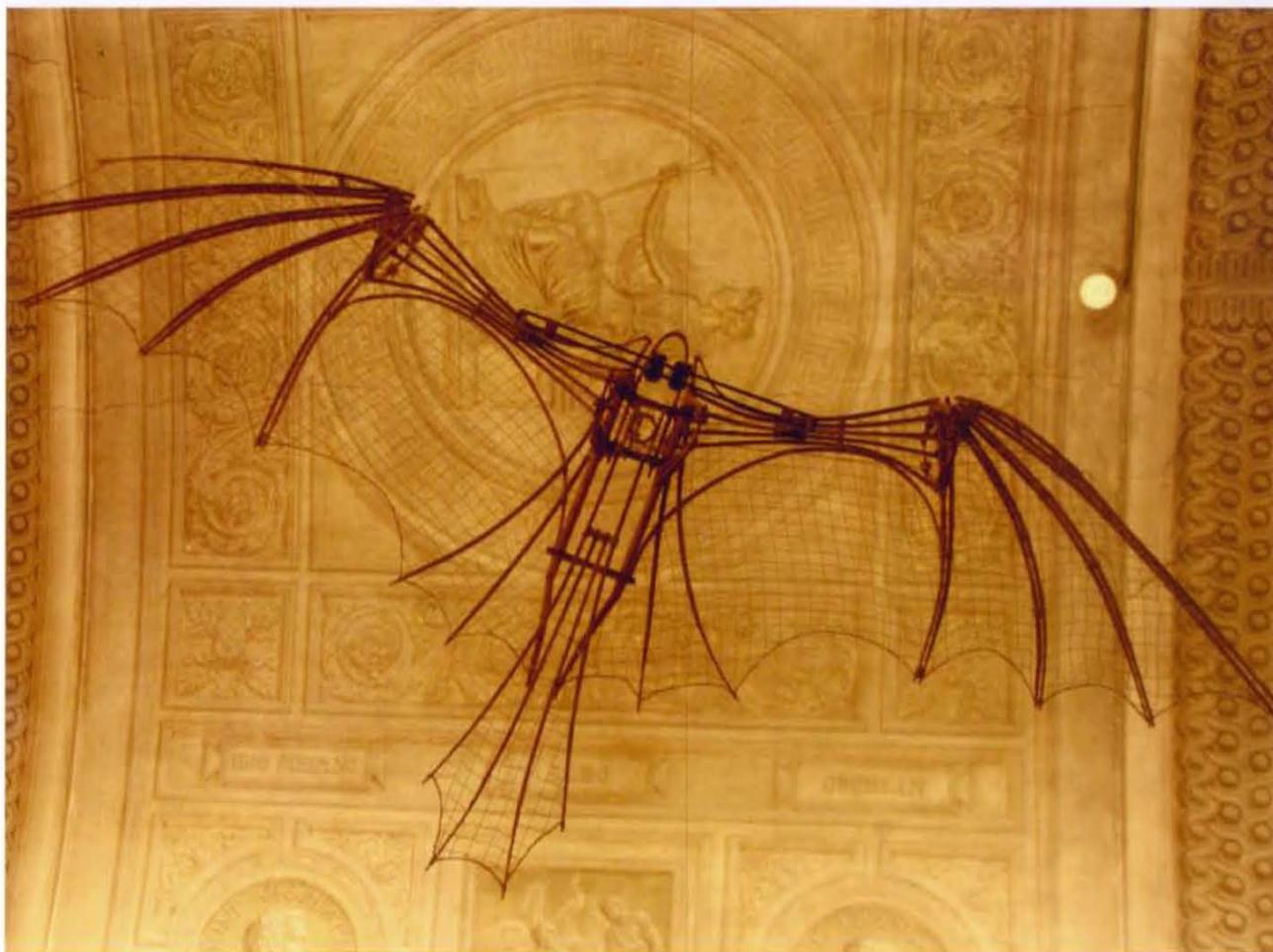


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# LEONARDO DA VINCI: THE DREAM OF FLYING THAT STILL CONTINUES AFTER 500 YEARS



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"Once you have learned to fly, you will walk on the earth looking at the sky, because it is there that you have been and it is there that you will want to return."  
(Leonardo da Vinci 1452-1519)

If, through an extraordinary fantasy game, we wanted to try to represent the adventure of the human flight from its origins imagining it as a long journey, and again, if with an equally bizarre game we wanted, as adults, to



try to do it with the same eyes and the visionary mind of a child, then we would see the unfolding of this fantastic adventure, which started only at the beginning of the last century with that prototype glider, driven by the two daring and visionary Wright brothers, and continued to evolve over more than a hundred years, and it is ideally still running along that same lawn, ready to take off from the ground once again to begin the amazing adventure that one day, not far away, will project it towards the most unexplored space.

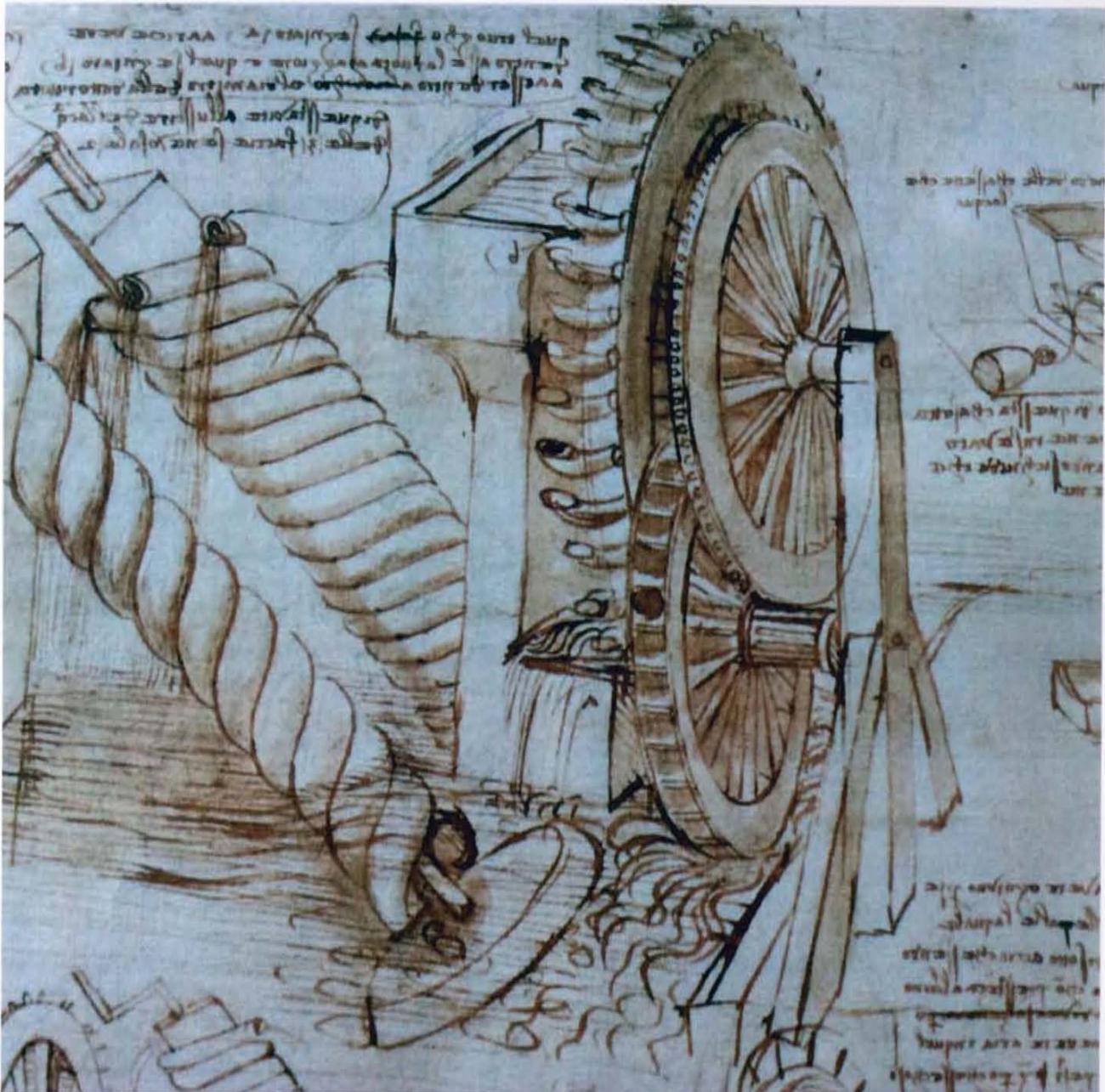
Already in 1505, in his "Codice del Volo (Flight Code)", Leonardo da Vinci, with his incredibly real intuitions linked to the future conquests of humanity, stated: "Once you have learned to fly, you will walk on the earth looking at the sky, because it is there that you have been and it

is there that you will want to return."

Leonardo da Vinci had a vision that can be traced back to the concept of wisdom of certain ancient oriental cultures that identifies wisdom with a dowry, or the ability of men to be perpetually amazed by what surrounds them. Amazement without which, as Plato said, there is no knowledge and therefore exploration, whatever it may be.

Amazement and curiosity give the child and also the man of science, a "state of grace" that will let them day-dream and see the world in a new and creative way and then will enable to drive all mankind towards new goals, even those rationally considered as impossible.

Today, following the spirit of Leonardo, the same adult continues to see that first flying object with children's



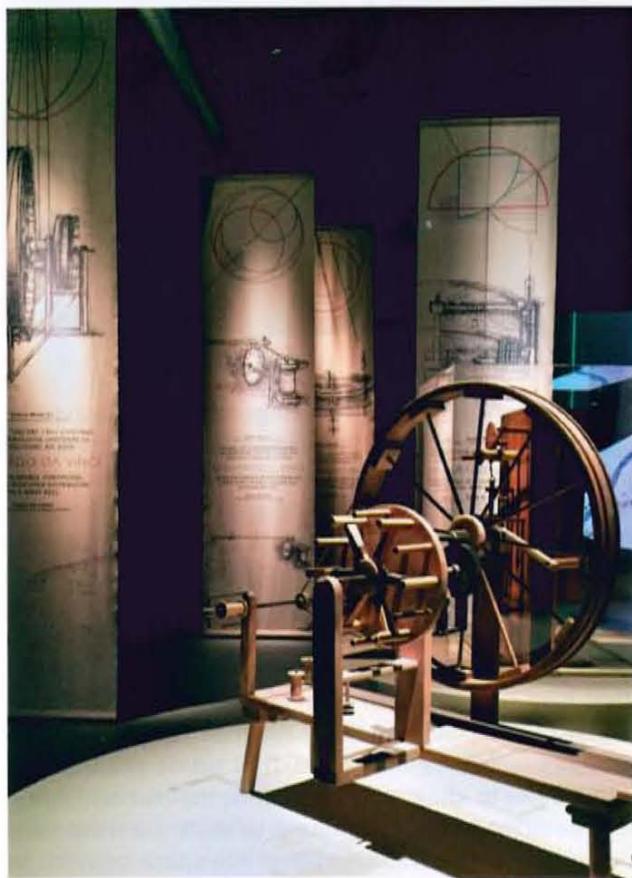
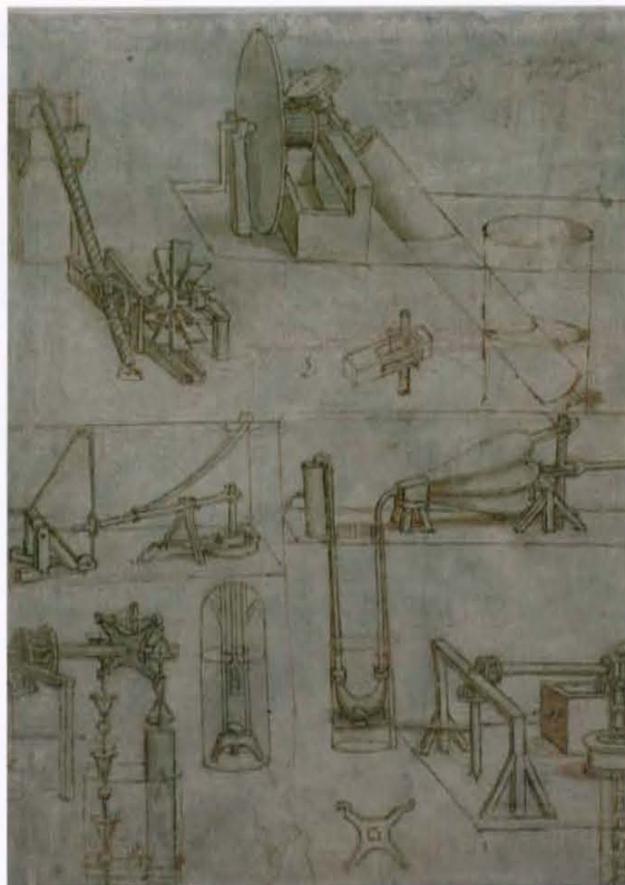
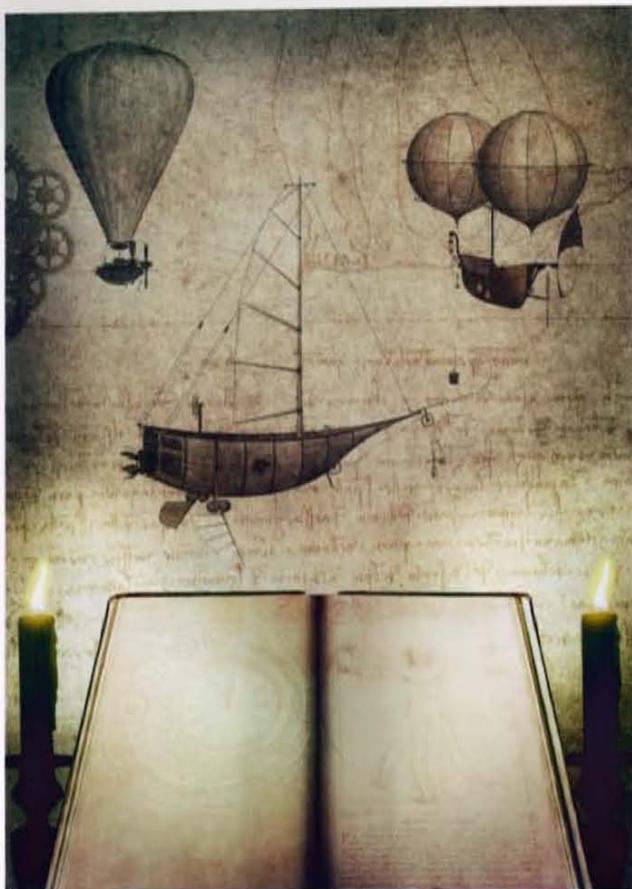
eyes and imagines that it is still running on that immense lawn, from where it has made the first jump just over a hundred years ago and it is still in continuous transformation to be ready to detach from the ground to make space his home for ever.

His boundless curiosity makes him imagine the extraordinary future of Man in space, the future he had seen in that glider that hesitantly moved with the thrust of his arms and then, immediately afterwards, accelerated by a crackling engine, got the driving force of a propeller that, very soon and magically, had become two, three ... many.

From then on, the extraordinary challenge of internal combustion engines began. They quite immediately were replaced by thunderous powerful tongues of fire

able to push that plane, no longer made of wood but light and very resistant. This allowed that man to exceed the speed of sound, of the plane's own roar, and then even change the geometry of flight; no longer horizontal trajectories but rather vertical, pointing the plane's sharp nose upward, towards a remote and still unknown space, winning the tenacious determination of a mother Earth, that stubborn and thoughtful, try to keep it embraced and never let it go.

That long run, begun in Leonardo's mind and became reality in the plains of North America from where two brothers took their first flight. That run is not over yet and we like to imagine that glider at the moment when it is detaching from the ground to start the most exciting phase of its adventure: travel into space beyond the



goals already reached, beyond the Moon, in a day not far away, when Man will be able to address a quick and affectionate greeting to the Moon, while darting nearby and then continue beyond their still long journey.

The imagination of that curious and dreamer-adult child will only stop for a while on the planet Mars and then who knows ... it will continue towards what today still appears as unknown, but that in the vision of a child it is not.

Precisely: "... and that's where you'll want to come back". Oh yes ..., we will all be with our heads up high towards the sky, waiting optimistically for the fulfillment of that adventure.

Let's start now, then, to think of the future with those same children eyes, curious to make a leap of imagination and run beyond the space and see that the plane became a spaceship in an unknown place that already existed in the dreams of that child.

Our dreams and our visions are therefore the propulsion for that small plane born from the imagination of a child who has now grown up; just like his biggest dream.

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