

Leonardo da Vinci: Anatomist

Martin Clayton, Ron Philo

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Leonardo da Vinci was a pioneer in the study of the human body. Intent on exploring and explaining every aspect of anatomy and physiology, he performed over thirty dissections of humancadavers and many more of animals. He is also among the greatest draftsmen ever to have lived, and his studies of skeletons, musculature, and other visible structures remain to this day largely unsurpassed in their lucidity.

In addition to his anatomical drawings, Leonardo meticulously recorded his many findings on the pages of his notebooks with the hope of one day publishing a treatise on anatomy. Among the more than one thousand pages of these notebooks were a number of important discoveries that, had they been published, would have transformed Western understanding of biological sciences. But despite admiration by the likes of Benvenuto Cellini, Giorgio Vasari, and Albrecht Dürer—who made a number of drawings from Leonardo's anatomical studies—the work was never completed and the drawings remained largely unpublished and little known until around 1900.

Since the seventeenth century, the Royal Library at Windsor Castle has housed the world's most significant collection of Leonardo's surviving anatomical studies. Generously illustrated throughout, this volume presents ninety of the finest of these astonishing documents—the largest publication of Leonardo's anatomical drawings to date—accompanied by an informative discussion of their anatomical content and their significance in Leonardo's pioneering work.



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