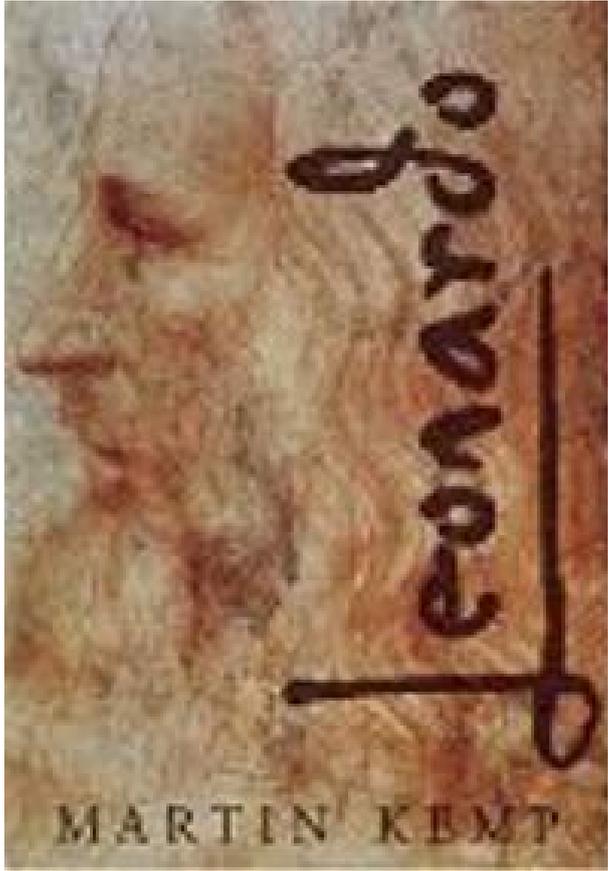


# Leonardo



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A true genius whose talents embraced painting, engineering, anatomy, and flight, Leonardo da Vinci was--and remains--an extraordinary human being, indeed one of the most intriguing figures in world history, as the recent success of *The Da Vinci Code* attests. Now, in this new biography, Martin Kemp explores the essential nature of this forever fascinating artist-engineer, both as an individual and as a historical phenomenon. How can we best understand Leonardo? How did his mind work--was he prolific but scattered in his thinking, or is there a method in what often seems to be his madness? Was he basically an artist who also pursued science and technology, or was "science"--his understanding of the physical world--central to his artistic vision? In *Leonardo*, Martin Kemp offers a vivid portrait of the Renaissance giant that answers these questions and more. The book takes us on an absorbing journey through the life and work of Leonardo, looking first at the historical man, portraying an impressive and cultivated figure, an artist who in truth completed few paintings, rarely satisfied a commission, and yet lived in style and ended his career with a massive salary. More important, the author examines the ideas underlying Leonardo's investigations of nature, illuminating his vision of the artist-engineer as matching nature itself in his creativity. Kemp argues that Leonardo's apparent diversities reveal a desire to find an inner unity in the functioning of everything in the observable world. For Leonardo, writes Kemp, every act of looking and drawing was an act of analysis, and he used these analyses to re-make and re-interpret his surroundings. In a final chapter, Kemp also comments on the *Da Vinci Code* and "the continuing public appetite for Leonardo and his doings." Beautifully illustrated with a unique "thumbnail

museum" that offers a tour of all Leonardo's paintings, plus 30 additional illustrations and life-size reproductions of pages from his famous notebooks, Leonardo is a powerful portrait of one of the towering geniuses of world history.