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***Leonardo, The Man Who Saved Science***

 **Reveals the Original Renaissance Man’s Many Talents on THIRTEEN’s *Secrets of the Dead***

**Wednesday, April 5, 10 p.m. on PBS**

Leonardo da Vinci is, of course, best known as one of the world’s greatest artists. At his death in 1519, he was famous for such masterpieces as the *Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper*. But he was more than a painter, he was also a musician, writer, and showman. In the pages of his notebooks, written in a secretive reverse script, and unpublished for more than 400 years, we discover yet another Leonardo, the man of science.

His notebooks contain plans for hundreds of inventions that would be created hundreds of years later including the machine guns, diving suits, construction cranes, robots, flying machines, and more. Was Leonardo a genius? A prophet who anticipated the modern age by 500 years? Or was there another explanation?

***Secrets of the Dead: Leonardo, The Man Who Saved Science*** goes in search of the answer to these questions***.*** The programpremieres Wednesday, April 5, 10-11 p.m. ET on PBS (Check local listings.), and will be available for online streaming at [pbs.org/secrets](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/) at that time.

One of the many inventions attributed to Leonardo is the parachute. But did he actually invent it? In 1968, researchers discovered sketches from the studio of 15th-century Italian inventor Mariano do Jacopa, known as Taccola, which were similar to Leonardo’s study for such a device.

“This drawing, the design for a parachute, is the oldest known to us and it is very similar to Leonardo’s,” says Andrea Bernardoni, historian at the Galileo Museum. “It was found in a manuscript conserved at the British Library in London. Leonardo knew manuscripts from the Sienese engineering tradition and he even refers to Taccola’s drawings in his manuscripts.”

 Taccola, who was 70 years older than Leonardo and died the year before Leonardo was born, was an engineer of the early Renaissance and among the first to use drawings as a design tool. But just as Leonardo copied from him, Taccola’s idea is copied from a Muslim inventor, Abbas Ibn Firnas.

Knowing the parachute was not Leonardo’s original idea, why is he still considered the inventor? “The incredible thing is that Leonardo is the first to write about the material needed to make this object: cloth made of waxed flax, so that the air doesn't come through and it becomes waterproof, like the feathers of the birds,” notes Mario Taddei, technical director, Leonardo3. “For the first time, he describes how this object has to be built; he’s the only one to think about the dimensions.”

***Leonardo, The Man Who Saved Science***, features drawings of his most famous ideas and inventions, some of which trace their original creation to ancient Greece while others were a product of the scientific inventions of the golden age of Islamic learning. Leonardo never affirmed that his projects came from his original ideas.

Is Leonardo just a copycat? Or, as the program suggests, did he, in reinventing ancient technology, spark a renewed interest in scientific experimentation lost in Europe during the Dark Ages until the Renaissance. “Dealing with a problem or understanding a phenomenon for him meant to see how it is related to other phenomena,” says Fritjof Capra, historian of science. “In this way, I think, he generated what we now call the scientific method, and he singlehandedly created the scientific method*.”*

***Secrets of the Dead: Leonardo, The Man Who Saved Science*** is produced by GA&A Productions and THIRTEEN Productions LLC for WNET in coproduction with Program33 and SAS-TV Australia in association with France Televisions. Narrator is Jay O. Sanders. Writer and director is Mark Daniels. Producer is Gioia Avvantaggiato. Executive Producer for GA&A Productions is Gioia Avvantaggiato. Executive Producers for Program33 are Fabrice Coat and Michel Spavone. Executive-in-Charge for WNET is Stephen Segaller. Executive Producer for WNET is Steve Burns. Supervising Producer for WNET is Stephanie Carter.

As one of PBS's ongoing limited primetime series, ***Secrets of the Dead***is a perennial favorite among viewers, routinely ranking among the 10 most-watched series on public television. Currently in its 16th season, ***Secrets of the Dead***continues its unique brand of archaeological sleuthing and employing advances in investigative techniques, forensic science and historical scholarship to offer new evidence about forgotten mysteries. ***Secrets of the Dead*** has received 10 CINE Golden Eagle Awards and six Emmy nominations, among numerous other awards.

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