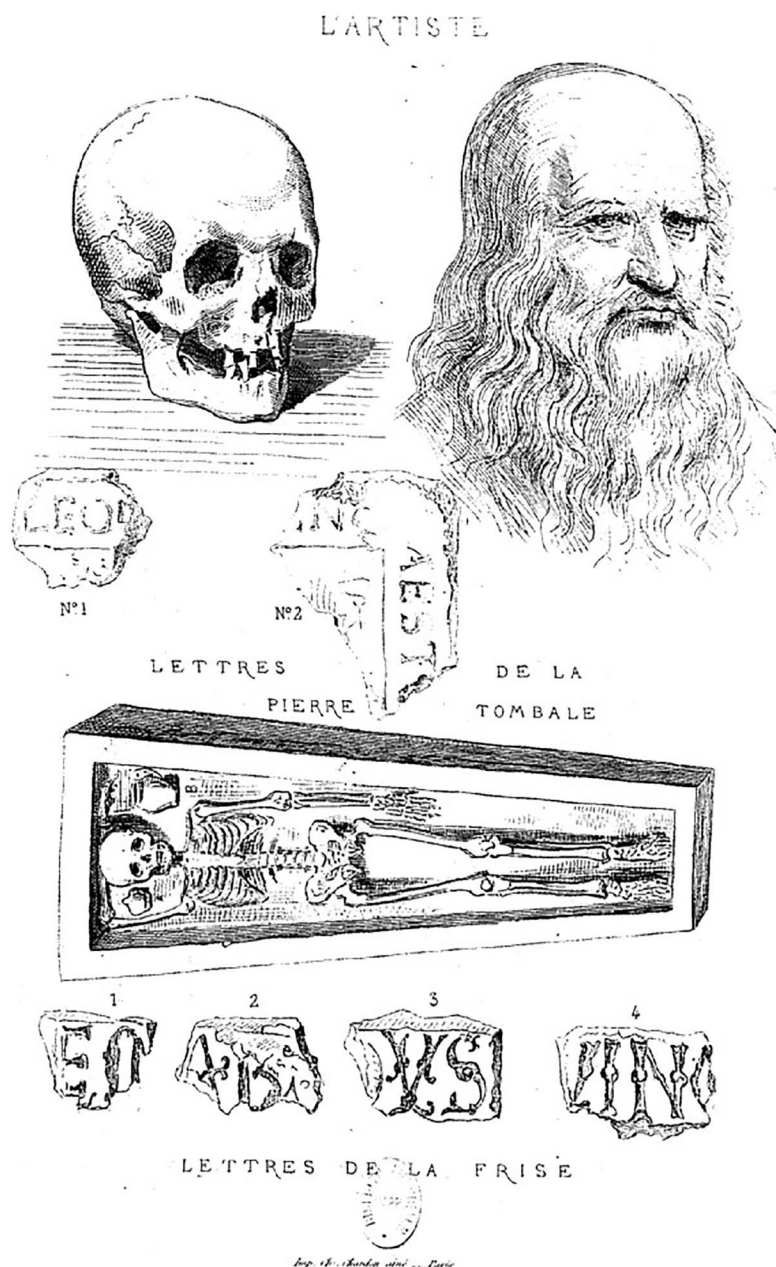


# A physical sign of stroke sequel on the skeleton of Leonardo da Vinci?

**Figure** General view of the sarcophagus of Leonardo da Vinci, with the skeleton in situ, and details of the skull and associated archaeological artifacts



Engraving from L'Artiste (Paris), March 1, 1864, from a drawing by Frans Verhas.

Scholars generally state that Leonardo da Vinci died in 1519 at age 67 of recurrent stroke. One finding may confirm this medical hypothesis: in 1863, the grave of Leonardo was discovered in the Saint-Florentin chapel of Amboise (France), with the skeleton of an old man, tiny fragments of white hair, 8 remaining teeth, and the upper right arm blocked over the skull<sup>1</sup> (figure).

The main explication for this atypical position is the presence of a local or regional handicap. Stroke is a possible cause of such anomaly, causing muscular retraction or shoulder dislocation (whose reduction may be difficult or impossible, even postmortem).<sup>2</sup> A direct examination of the skeleton could complete this anthropologic analysis.

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