

Biographical Encyclopedia of Astronomers

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Vinci, Leonardo da

Born Florence, (Italy), 15 April 1452

Died Cloux, near Amboise, (Indre-et-Loire), France, 2 May 1519

Artist Leonardo da Vinci, of Florence and Milan, produced three naked-eye renderings of the Moon. He thought of the Earth's satellite as a non-uniform mirror (likely watery with some land) reflecting the light of the Sun. Knowing that a smooth sea would result in a specular reflection, da Vinci imagined white-capped waves breaking on lunar shores. He also correctly identified "earthshine" as being produced by sunlight reflected from the Earth to the Moon

Selected Reference

Reaves, Gibson and Carlo Pedretti (1987). "Leonardo Da Vinci's Drawings of the Surface Features of the Moon." *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 18: 55-58