



a Pelican Book 3/6

Leonardo

Sigmund Freud



SIGMUND FREUD
LEONARDO DA VINCI

AND A MEMORY OF HIS CHILDHOOD

TRANSLATED BY ALAN TYSON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY BRIAN FARRELL

PENGUIN BOOKS

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Leonardo

Freud's revolutionary study *Leonardo* first appeared in 1910. It is irresistible to contrast it with Sir Sidney Lee's monumental *Life of Shakespeare*, published in 1898.

Lee amassed every trivial detail that might seem to be relevant to a life of his hero, but at the end we know very little more about Shakespeare the man. Freud's approach to biography is totally different. From internal evidence he reconstructs, dramatically yet reasonably, the inner life of Leonardo da Vinci – that Prometheus of the Renaissance who has been compared to 'a man who awoke too early in the darkness, while everyone else was asleep'.

Like Prometheus, Leonardo was hounded by a bird of prey. With inspired insight the founder of psychoanalysis interprets this childhood memory, the enigma of the Gioconda smile, the meaning of the 'two-headed woman' of the sketch for the 'Madonn and Child with St. Anne' and the significance of that insatiable craving for knowledge which drove Leonardo to attain formidable results as engineer, anatomist, botanist, geologist, inventor, musician, and scientist.

A hundred years before Galileo, Leonardo wrote: 'The sun does not move.' A similar intellectual daring marks Freud's deep analysis of his character.

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