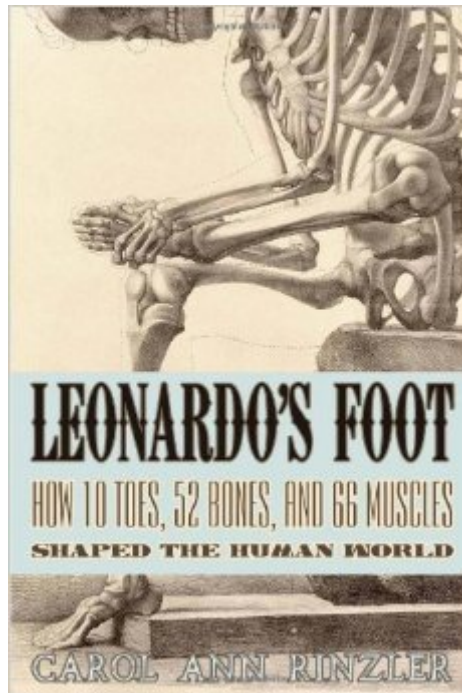


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# Leonardo's Foot: How 10 Toes, 52 Bones, And 66 Muscles Shaped The Human World



## Synopsis

A Selection of the Scientific American, History, BOMC2, Quality Paperback and Military Book Clubs Our reviewer declared that this book represents some of the best writing about science for the non-scientist that he has encountered in recent years. The focus, of course, is the foot and the author provides an impressive array of facts, figures and stories about it, along with a great deal of history, etymology and cultural perspective. --American Association for the Advancement of Science

"Rinzler clearly enjoyed researching her subject and can't stop herself from going on interesting digressions, often bringing up one or two mostly unrelated topics within the course of a paragraph. She's at her best when discussing medical history and etymology." --Library Journal

"Rinzler lifts the lowly human foot to new heights in this appealing book."

--Booklist (starred review)

"Stylish, informative, entertaining, and pleasantly personal . . . Whether Rinzler is exploring how our feet explain or illuminate such topics as evolution, disability, racism, diet, or desire, she maintains a fascinating perspective on the peculiarities of being human."

--Rain Taxi Review of Books

"This neat little book draws a clear picture of our feet, providing understanding that extends far beyond the obvious. Readers often like to walk away from a book feeling they learned something--that the author left them with a new way to look at an old idea, and this book fulfills that need."

--City Book Review/San Francisco & Sacramento (five stars)

"An in-depth look at the anatomy and history of feet reveals their often overlooked importance in human evolution, medicine and art."

--Science News

"Carol Ann Rinzler weaves together material from art, literature, science, and history to broaden our understanding of the human foot. Her book is by turns entertaining, enlightening, and altogether satisfying."

--Congresswoman CAROLYN B. MALONEY

"Among the many pleasures of this book are the intriguing subject, Carol Ann Rinzler's lively and accessible writing style, and the amazing array of information she has gathered from so many different fields, including art, anthropology, history, biology, linguistics, psychology, and literature. Who knew that the story of our own feet could be so fascinating?"

--SANDRA OPDYCKE, author of No One Was Turned Away and Jane Addams and Her Vision for America

"This book will amaze you as it walks you through evolution, history, mythology, and a good dose of anatomy, to enlighten you about the role of the Humble Human Foot in bringing human beings to where we are today. Thoroughly

enjoyable, informative, and well written, it is a must read for anyone involved in caring for our lower extremity--or interested in our evolution. In short, you will never view the foot the same again."

--GARY STONES, DPM, President, New York State Podiatric Medical AssociationÂ "Carol Ann Rinzler has written a surprising and delightful book about this 'underwhelming, underreported, and completely indispensable' part of the human body. It's amazing what you'll learn!"--RICHARD N. GOTTFRIED, Chair, New York State Assembly Health Committee

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

book purchase; A fairly detailed exposition on the foot as both an art object and an object of anatomical study and treatment. A number of peripheral considerations and anecdotes are included which liven things up. It cannot be considered a reference work.

Who sits down and decides to write about feet? Who wants to read about them? Personally I find them kind of icky. It takes an exceptional writer to make this subject palatable to other than a foot fetishist, let alone compelling reading. Bravo to Rinzler for taking us on a truly fascinating walk.

I found this book to be rambling and disjointed. The author goes off on long tangents that have nothing to do with feet and when she does manage to toe the line (hah) it becomes tedious - a way to show off her research rather than illuminate the influence of this structure on humanity. You'll slog through 29 pages of intermittent clubfoot, a long section about how flat feet don't actually seem to

cause problems (but no significant accompanying description of the maladies induced by high arches) and finally jump the shark by learning that differences in big toe and index toe length \_aren't\_ influenced by exposure to prenatal testosterone - but that finger length is. No mention of Morton's toe at all. Jammed onto the end of this are bits and bobs about Chinese foot binding and foot and shoe fetishes that almost feel like the author was thinking, 'I had to learn about this so damn it, you will too.' Throw in some discredited nonsense about the Romans suffering from mass lead poisoning and an aside about the origins of various measurement systems and I was ready to take this one back to the library and glad that I picked it up on a whim there rather than at the bookstore.

The book shares some off mainstream information about the foot. It's less about anatomy and more about historical thought on fetishes, deformities (club foot) and how society evolved regarding these matters. In general, it's information that is not commonly compiled into one source. It's entertaining

This is a remarkable book about a crucial part of our bodies about which we all complain but know next to nothing. Carol Ann Rinzler provides a great deal of information about the anatomy and physiological importance of our feet, particularly how by standing and walking, early humanoids had the opportunity to see and experience more, so our brains have more knowledge and operating sophistication than other primates. She also explains how different cultures and societal traditions have related to the function and dysfunction of the foot, and what it has meant for people of those beliefs. From binding feet in China to the obsessive practice of running on hard surfaces with little support, this book relates to all of us. It's also funny and smart, so the entertainment level is another plus.

A witty, clever nonfiction book. It is well researched and informative. Rinzler reaches out to different philosophical aspects of the human race, in general, and then ties it back to the foot. It is not difficult to read and covers from man's earliest writings to references to 2013 documentations. I also learned more about clubfoot, gout and corns/bunions. I enjoyed this book and recommend it to any person interested in reading fun nonfiction.

I'm always amazed to find authors who take the time and trouble to allow their research to extend outwards, grabbing every aspect of a subject until she captures a complete tableau. This neat, little book draws a clear picture of our feet, providing understanding that extends way beyond

the obvious. Readers like to walk away from a book feeling that they learned something that the author left them with a new way to look at an old idea. She deciphers everything related to the humble foot, from destiny to diet. As she considers her research infrastructure she reaches out to culture and situations far a field. The benefit, of course, is to compare and contrast the different ways we do things so that we get a better view of the subject. Whenever we see fingers or toes dangling in a picture, it's hard not to think of Leonardo DaVinci. For here is the grand designer of the human situation "one of the four original geniuses. And Carol Ann Rinzler has captured him in a unique twist.

If you are wondering how it is possible to write a book - even one this short - all about feet, this book is proof that you cannot. I would estimate (giving the benefit to the author) that all of 20% of the book is about feet. The first chapter is devoted to evolution. There were probably more words devoted to the evolution of the human chin to the foot. There were anecdotes about the Ephesians, the apostles, DNA, other animals and even more than three pages devoted solely to different versions of the "Cinderella" story throughout different cultures. This book is filled with information, which is why I give it two stars. Unfortunately, most of the information had nothing to do with the foot. The title of "Leonardo's Foot" is reference to DaVinci's Vitruvian Man who the author referred to about a dozen times throughout the book. I'm not quite sure what I was expecting. Perhaps a good part of me was rapt in the anticipation of how the author could get a book out our feet. I've enjoyed such books on cod, salt, the screw, and the like. Unfortunately, this book did not pass muster.

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