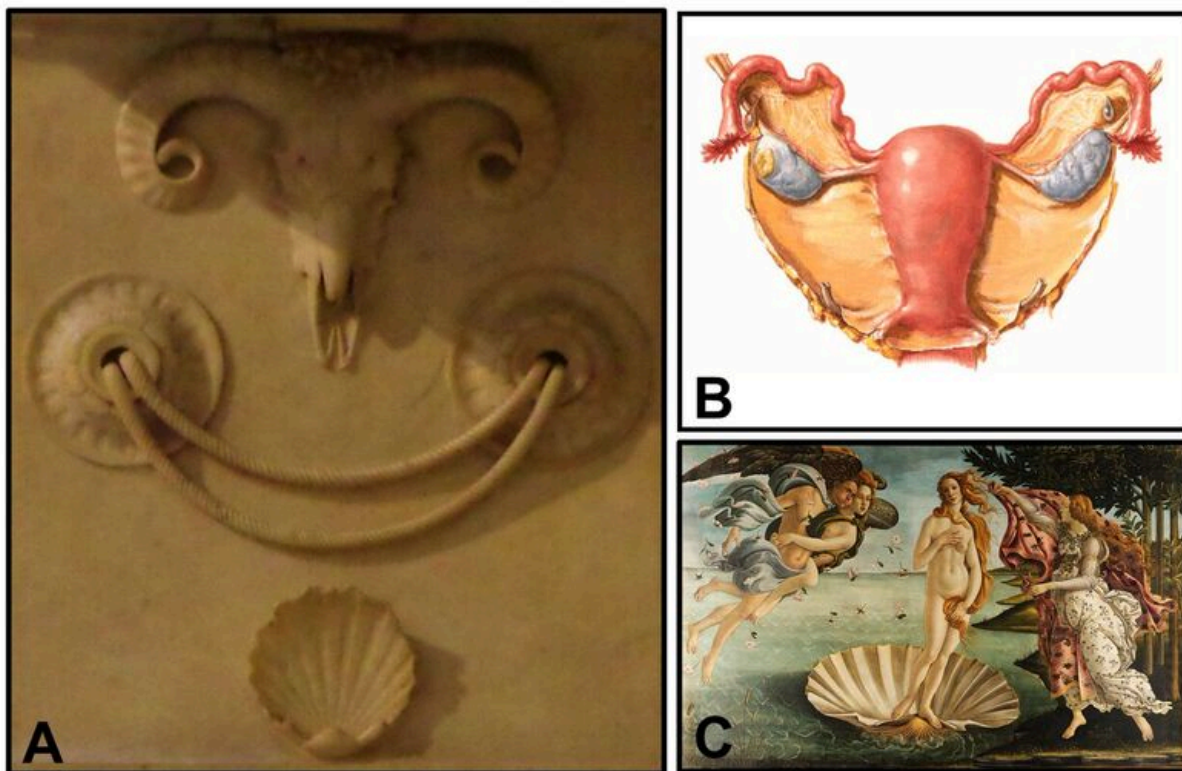


Michelangelo's Medici Chapel may contain hidden symbols of female anatomy

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Highlight showing the sides of the tombs containing the bull/ram skulls, spheres/circles linked by cords and the shell (A). Note the similarity of the skull and horns to the uterus and fallopian tubes, respectively (B). The shell contained in image A clearly resembles the shell contained in Sandro Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus" (1483), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy (C). Image B of the uterus and adnexa from Netter's Atlas of Human Anatomy with permission Philadelphia: Elsevier. Credit: Clinical Anatomy

Michelangelo often surreptitiously inserted pagan symbols into his works of art, many of them possibly associated with anatomical representations. A new analysis suggests that Michelangelo may have concealed symbols associated with female anatomy within his famous work in the Medici Chapel.

For example, the sides of tombs in the chapel depict bull/ram skulls and horns with similarity to the uterus and [fallopian tubes](#), respectively.

Numerous studies have offered interpretations of the link between anatomical figures and hidden symbols in works of art not only by Michelangelo but also by other Renaissance artists.

"This study provides a previously unavailable interpretation of one of Michelangelo's major works, and will certainly interest those who are passionate about the history of anatomy," said Dr. Devis de Campos, lead author of the *Clinical Anatomy* article. Another recent analysis by Dr. de Campos and his colleagues revealed similar hidden symbols in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel.

More information: Devis de Campos et al, Pagan symbols associated with the female anatomy in the Medici Chapel by Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Clinical Anatomy* (2017). [DOI: 10.1002/ca.22882](https://doi.org/10.1002/ca.22882)

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