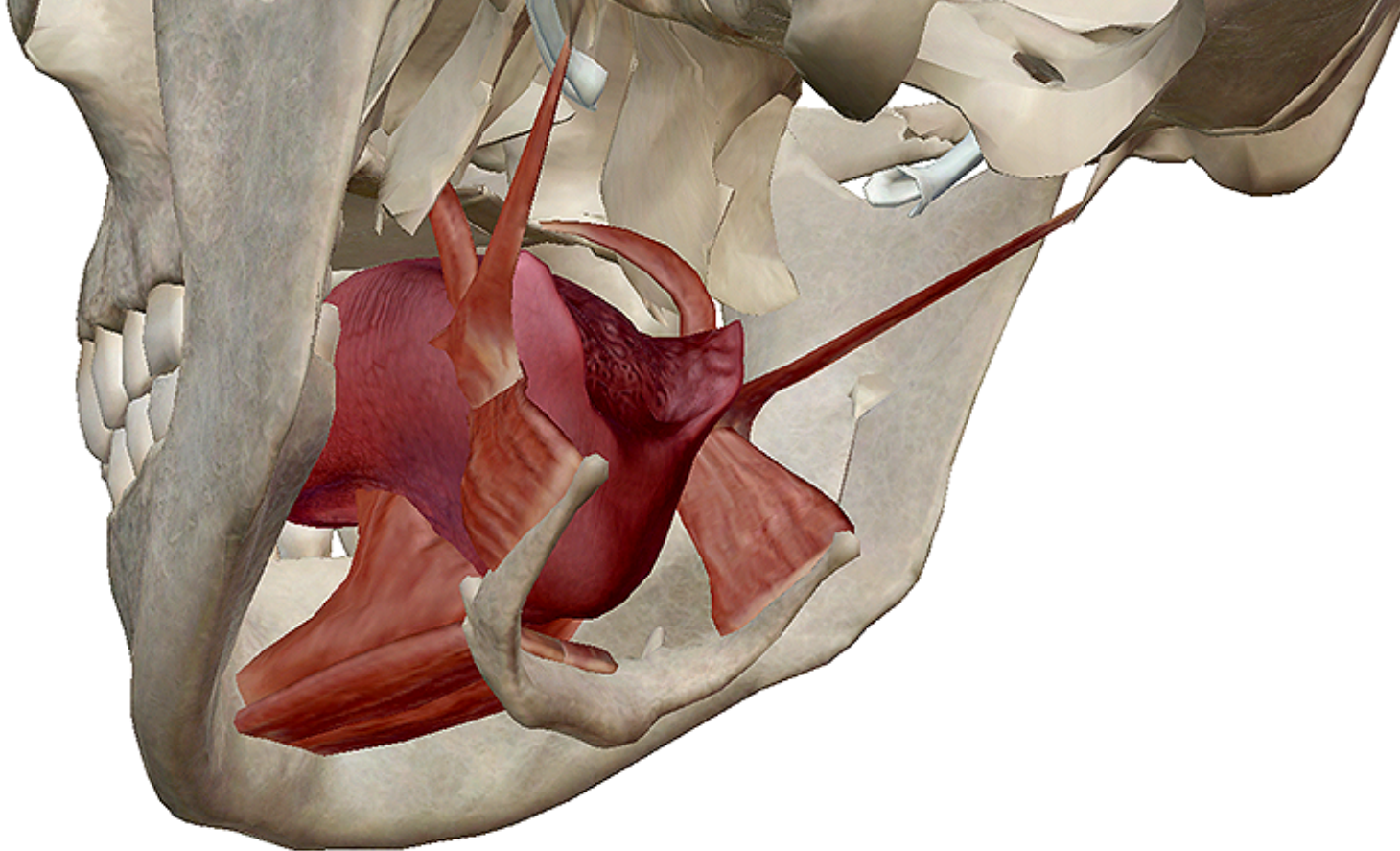


What's the **word**?

A look at the etymology of anatomy.



Etymology, or the study of word origins and their changes throughout history, can be like a very weird game of telephone. A word may start out as one thing and centuries later wind up becoming something completely different, or it may stay the course from the moment of its inception.

To really drive this point home, we've rounded up **18 anatomy terms**, their meanings, and their origins. Some of them may surprise you!

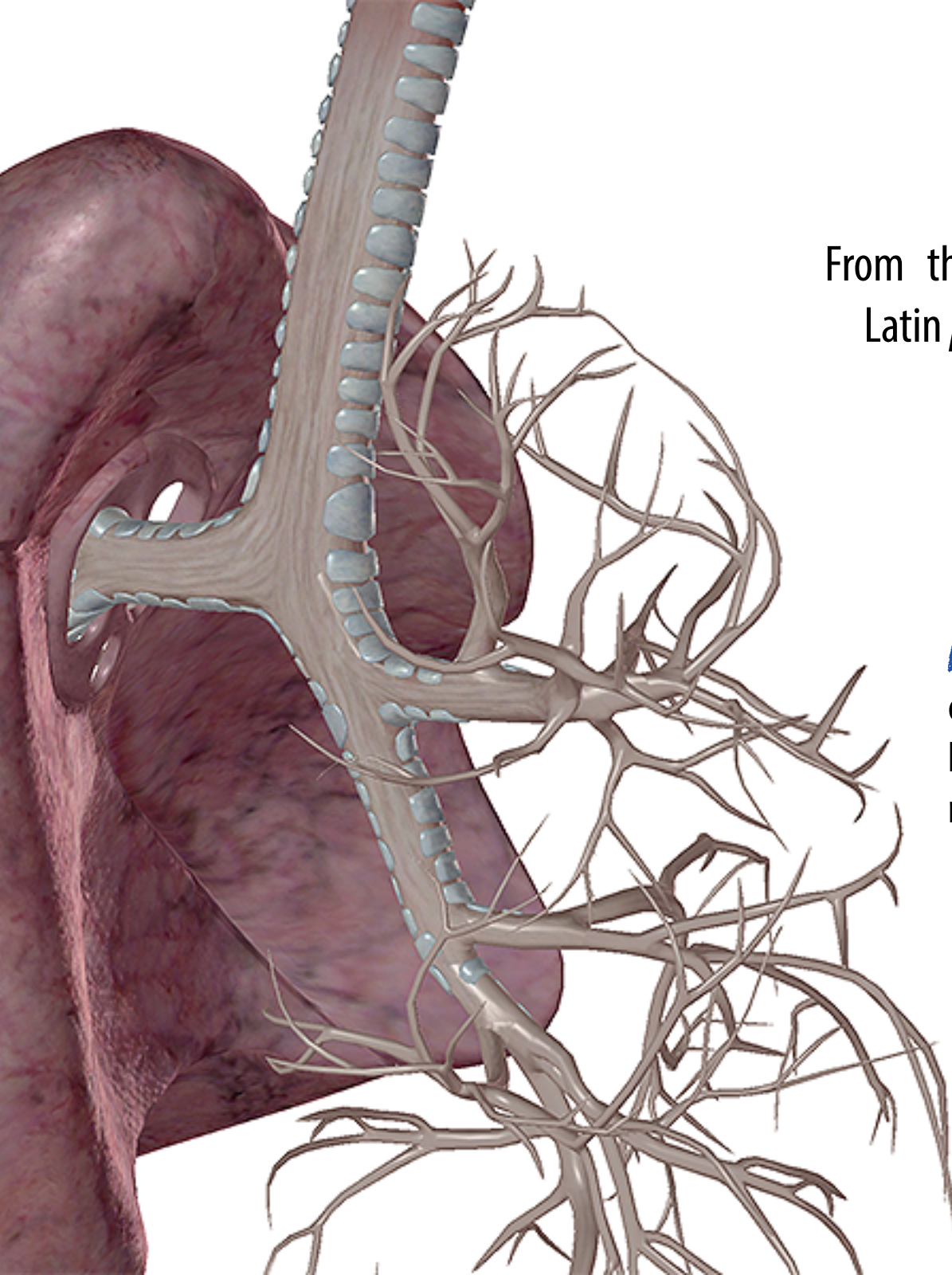
Key Terms and Symbols

Not everyone is in-the-know when it comes to etymology, so here are some things you may encounter in this eBook:

PIE: Many of these words have derived from Proto-Indo-European (PIE), the hypothetical reconstructed ancestral language of the Indo-European family. The most recent date proposed for it is about 5,500 years ago. Sorry to any sweets lovers who thought we were talking about actual pie.

Cognate: These are words that have a common etymological origin as another word. For example, the English word *is* (German *ist*, Latin *est*, Indo-European *esti*).

***** : In etymology, an asterisk indicates that a word's existence is not attested to by any written source, and therefore is just conjecture. All words in PIE are written with an asterisk, as there aren't written examples of them.

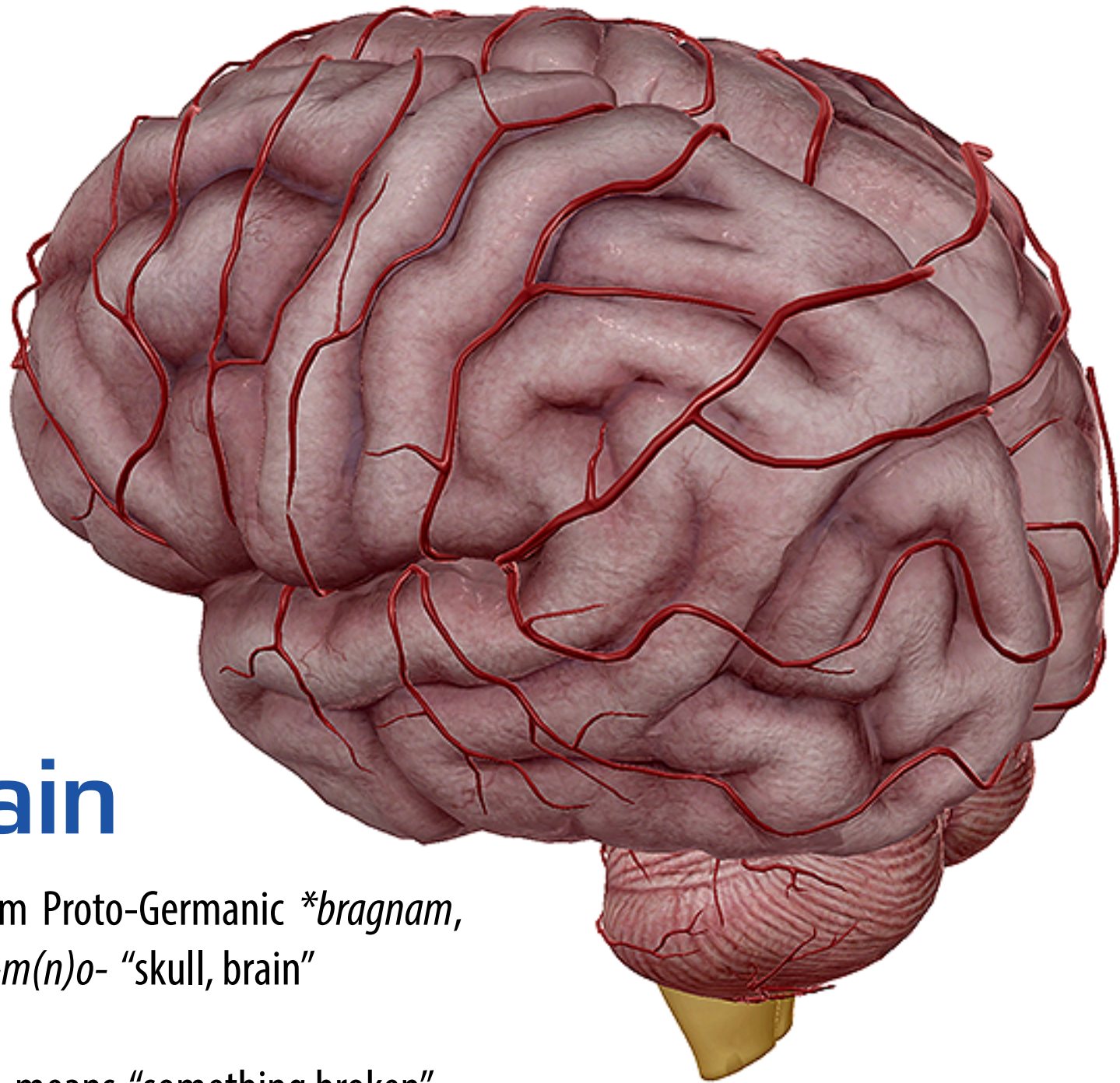


Pulmonary

From the French *pulmonaire*, derived from the Latin *pulmonarius* and Greek cognate *pleumon*

Derived from PIE **pleu-* “to float”

FUN FACT: Animal lungs float when cooked in a pot of water, whereas animal hearts do not. It is believed the original meaning “to float” comes from this notion.



Brain

Old English *brægen* "brain," from Proto-Germanic **bragnam*,
from PIE root **mregh-m(n)o-* "skull, brain"

An earlier PIE word, **bhragno*, means "something broken"



Skull

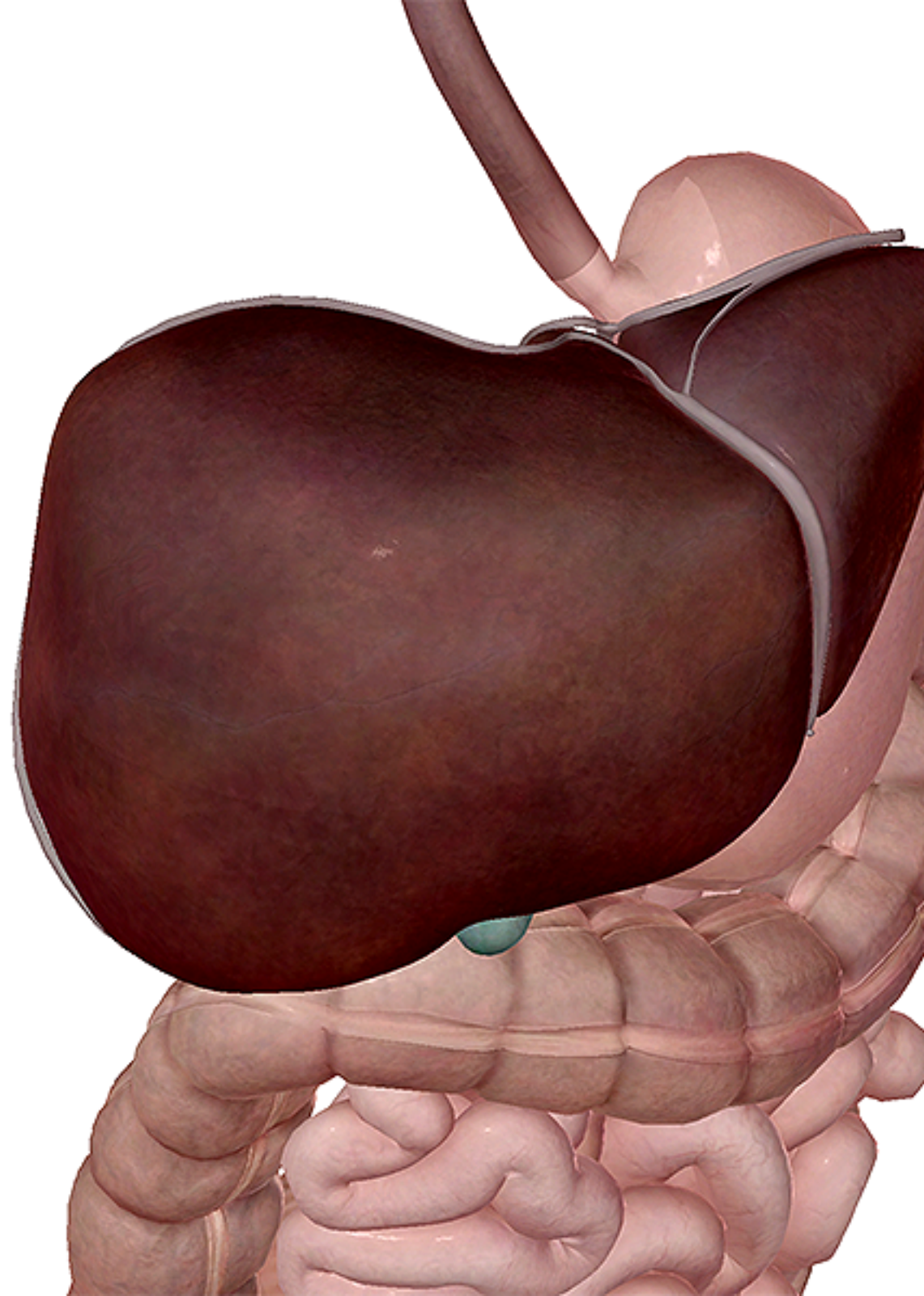
Most likely from Old Norse *skalli* “a bald head, skull,” a general Scandinavian word (compare to the Swedish *skulle*)

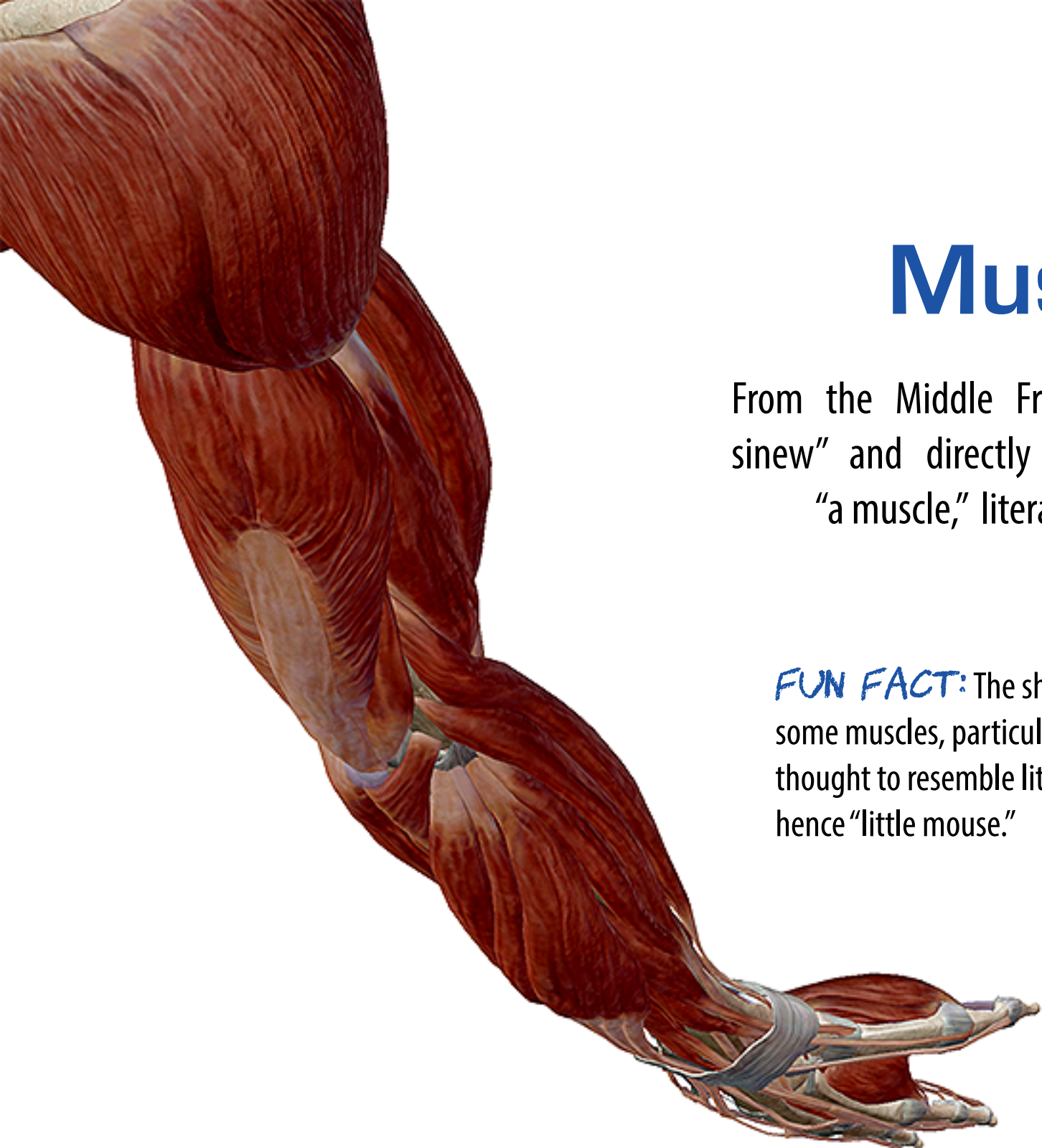
Probably also related to Old English *scealu*, “husk”

Liver

Old English *lifer*, from Proto-Germanic **librn*, perhaps from PIE **leip-* “to stick, adhere; fat”

FUN FACT: People used to believe the liver produced blood. In medieval times, it rivaled the heart as the supposed seat of love and passion. This is where the term “lily-livered” comes from!





Muscle

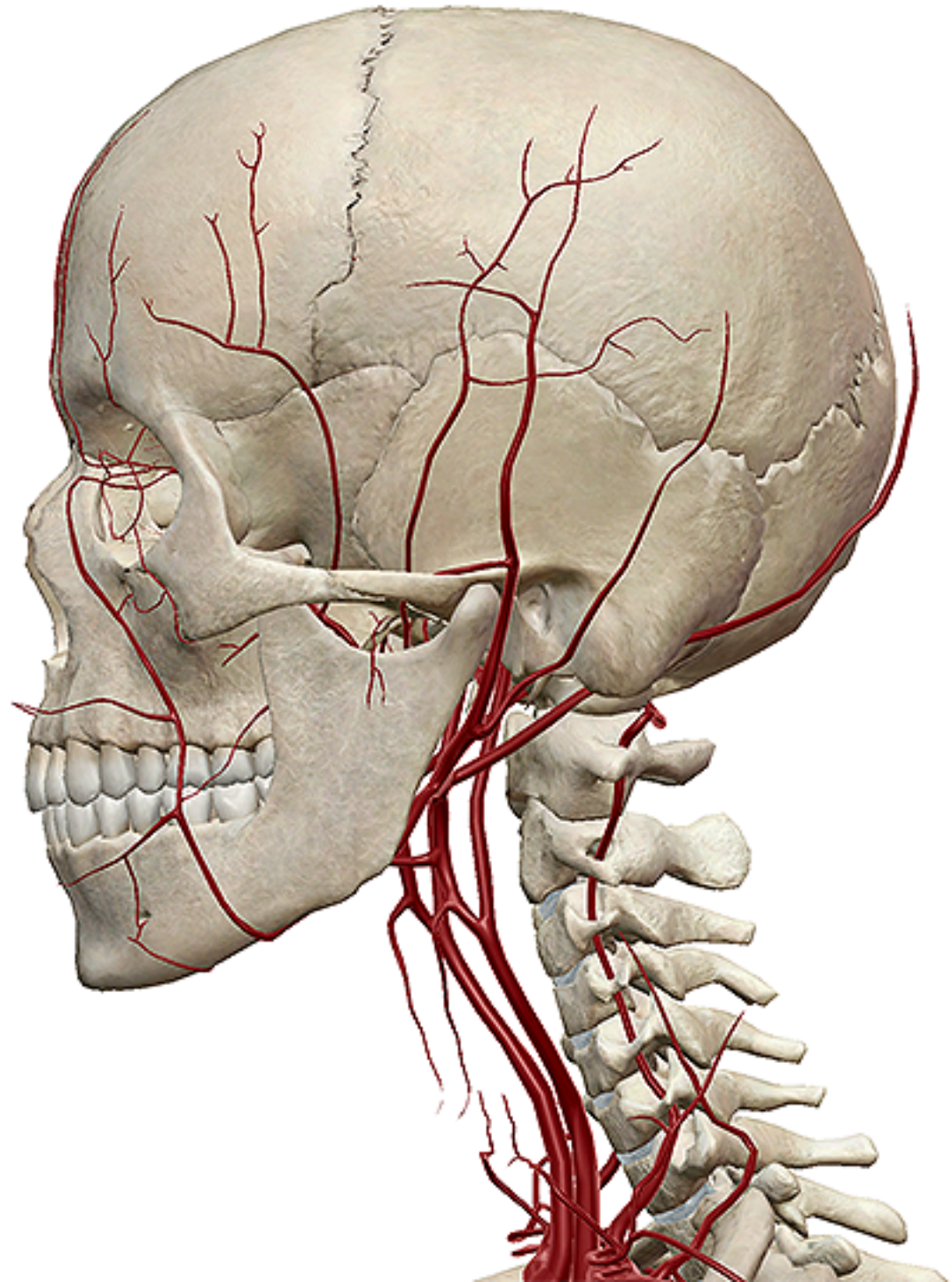
From the Middle French *muscle* “muscle, sinew” and directly from Latin *musculus* “a muscle,” literally “little mouse”

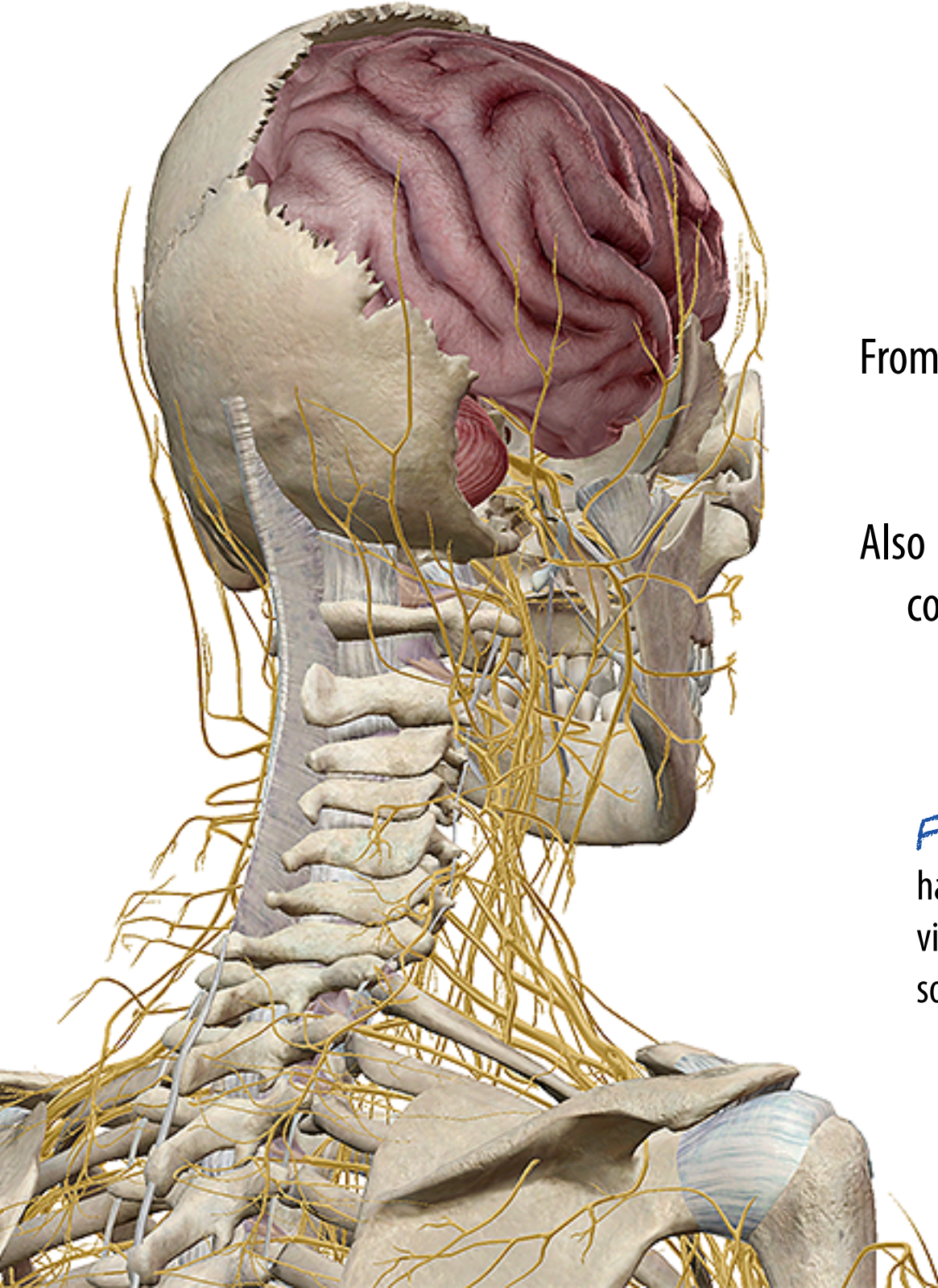
FUN FACT: The shape and movement of some muscles, particularly the biceps, were thought to resemble little mice under the skin, hence “little mouse.”

Artery

From 14th century Anglo-French *arterie*, Old French *artaire* (Modern French *artère*), and directly from Greek *arteria* "windpipe"

FUN FACT: Because arteries do not contain blood after death, in ancient times they were believed to be filled with air.





Nerve

From Old French *nerf* and from Latin *nervus* “sinew, tendon; cord, bowstring”

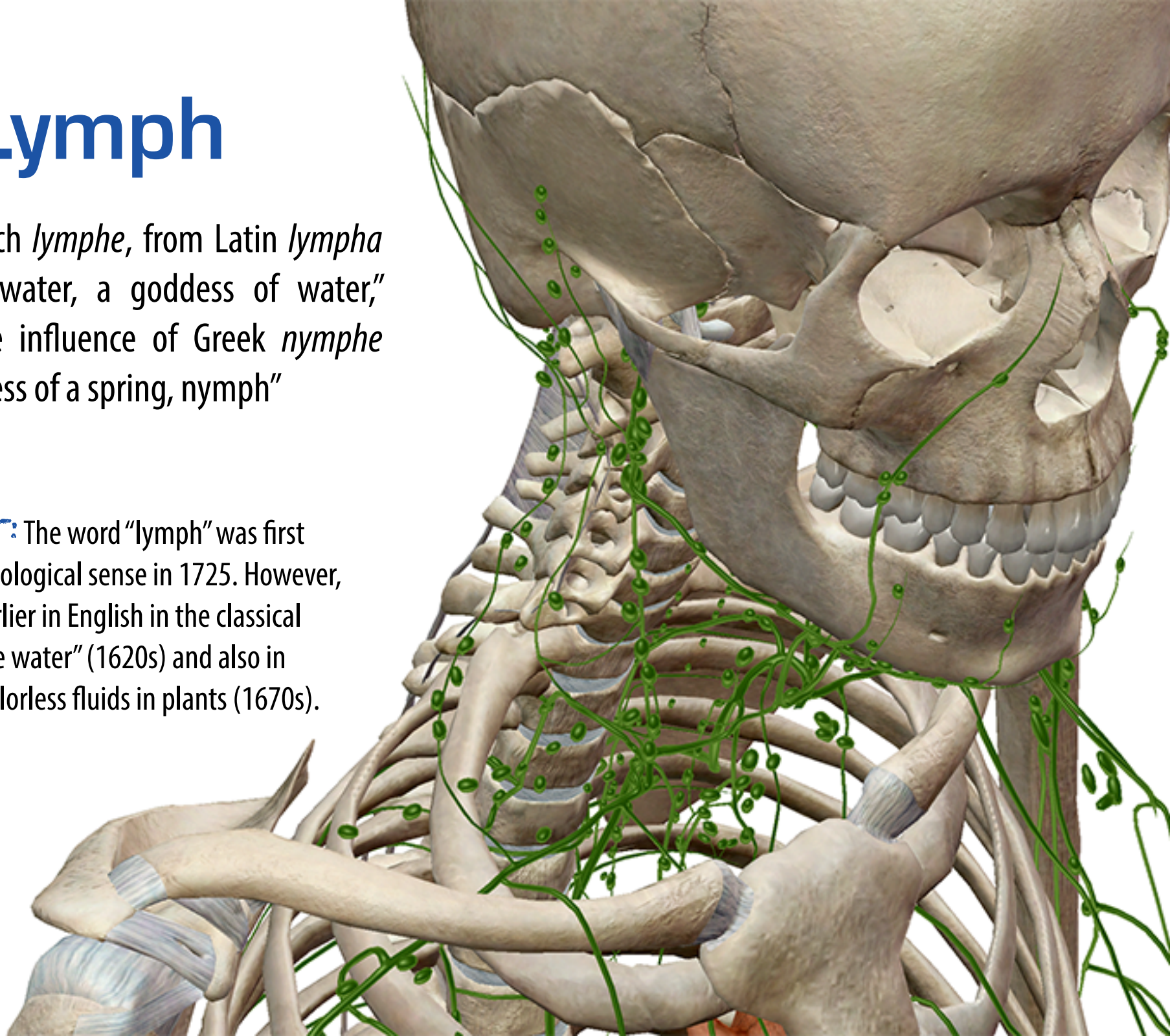
Also from PIE **(s)neu-* “tendon, sinew” and cognate Greek *neuron* “sinew, tendon”

FUN FACT: The meaning of “sinew” also has a secondary notion: that of strength or vigor. This is where having the “nerve” to do something comes from.

Lymph

From the French *lymphe*, from Latin *lympha* “water, clear water, a goddess of water,” altered by the influence of Greek *nymphē* “goddess of a spring, nymph”

FUN FACT: The word “lymph” was first used in a physiological sense in 1725. However, it was used earlier in English in the classical sense for “pure water” (1620s) and also in reference to colorless fluids in plants (1670s).





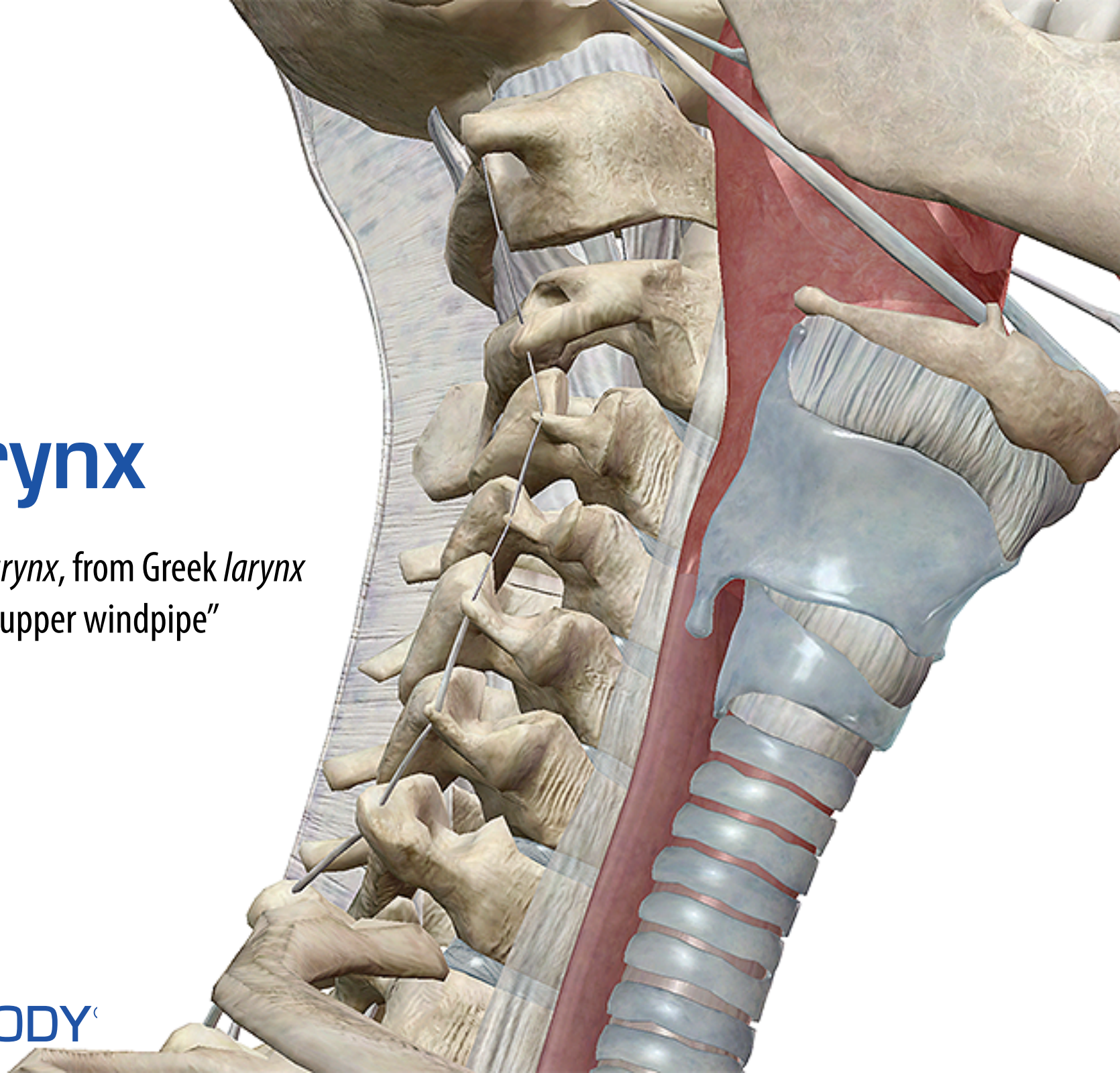
Sacrum

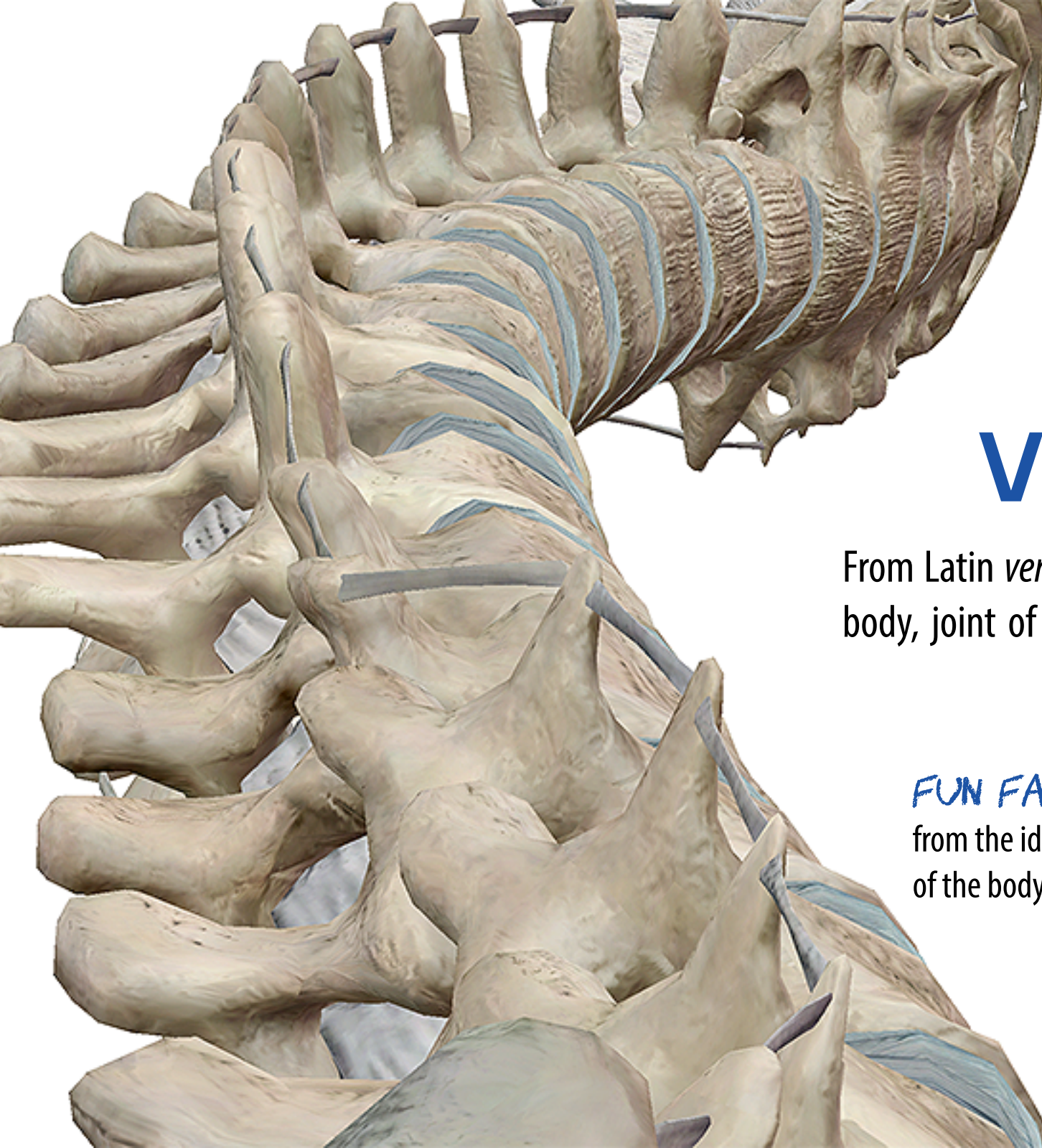
From the late Latin *os sacrum* "sacred bone,"
from Latin *os* "bone" and *sacrum* "sacred"

FUN FACT: The sacrum was often the
bone offered in animal sacrifices, hence "sacred."

Larynx

From Middle French *larynx*, from Greek *larynx*
(*laryngos*) "the upper windpipe"





Vertebra

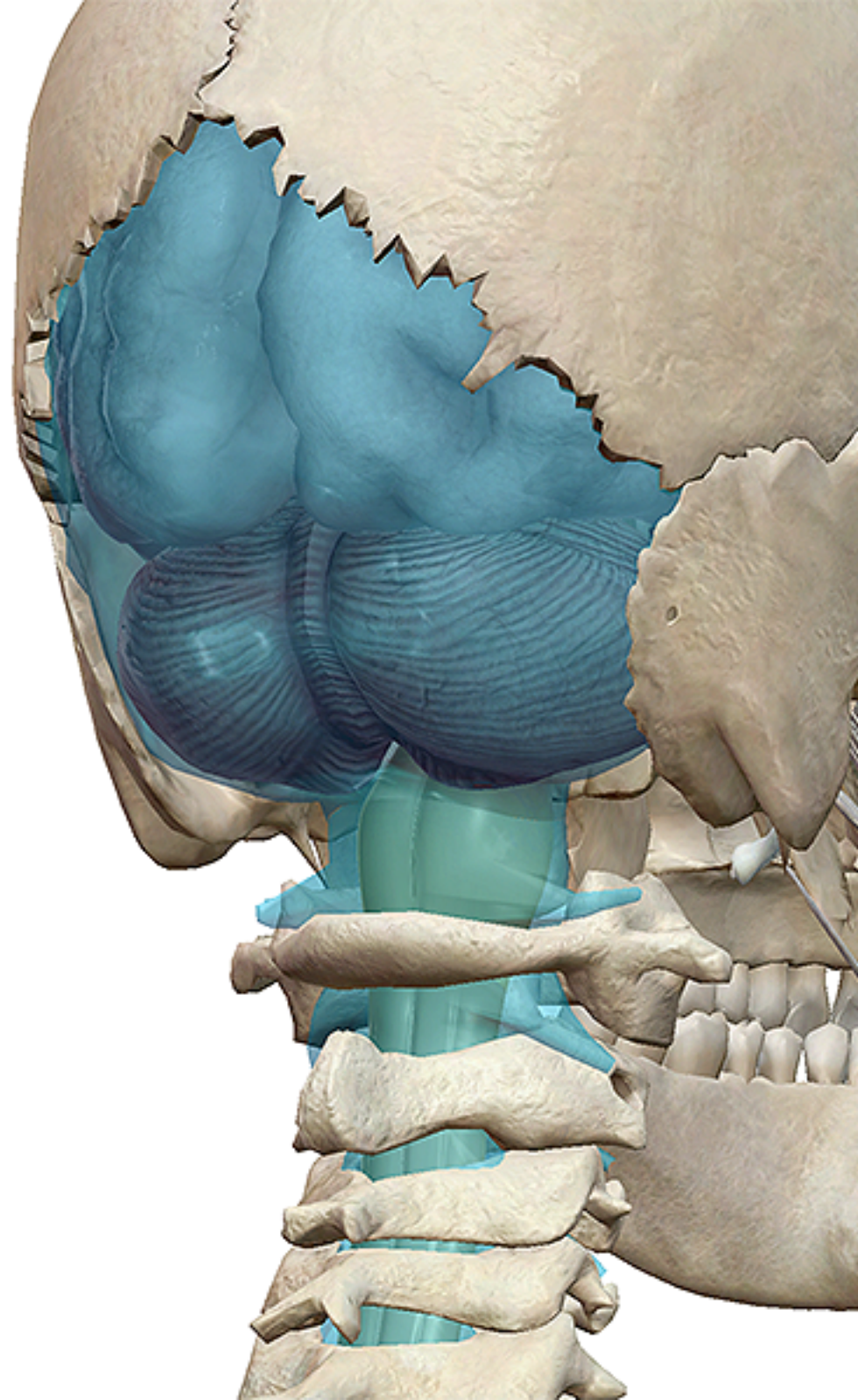
From Latin *vertebra* “joint or articulation of the body, joint of the spine,” perhaps from *vertere* “to turn”

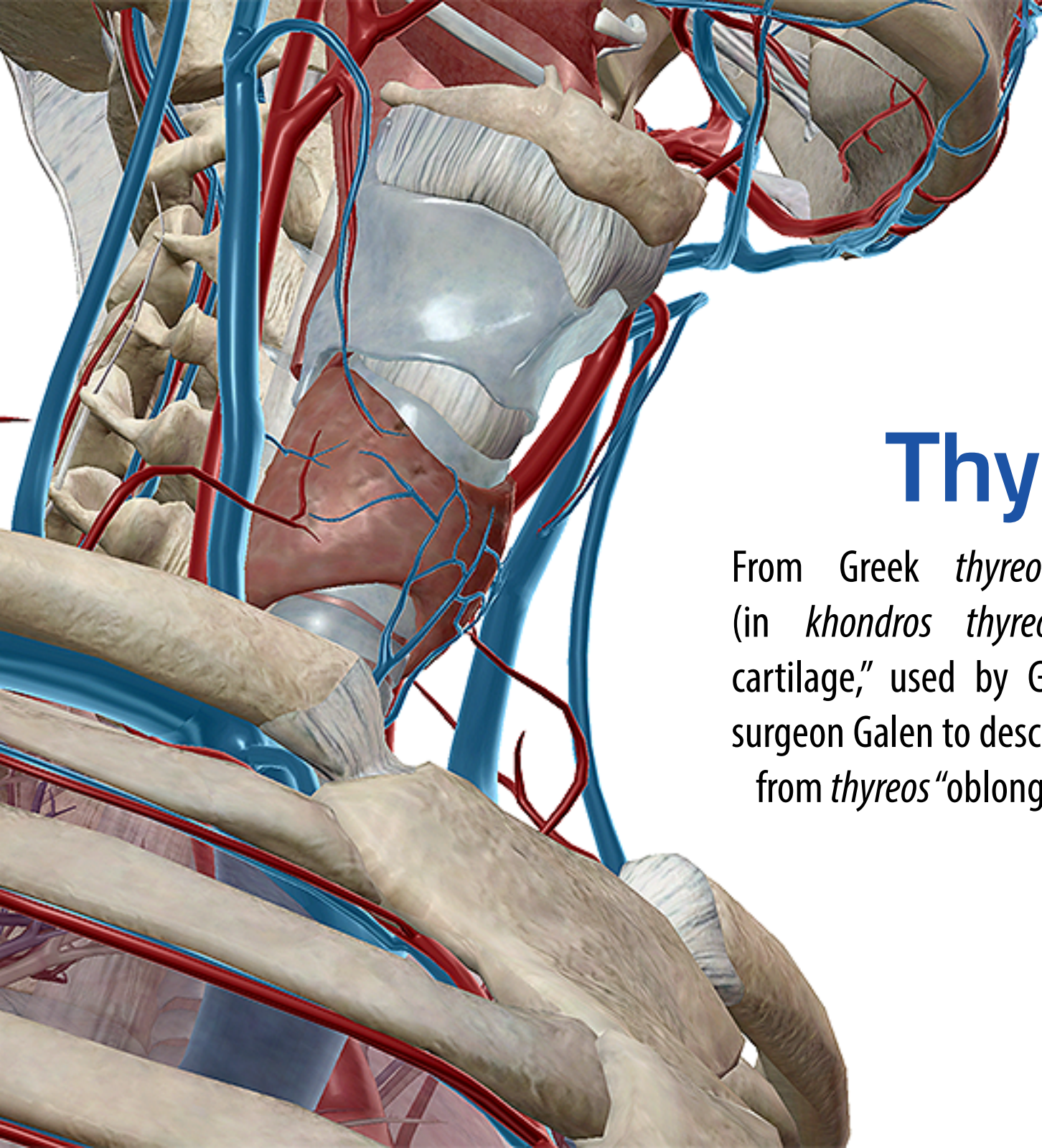
FUN FACT: The notion of “to turn” came from the idea that the spine was the “hinge” of the body.

Dura mater

From Medieval Latin *dura mater cerebri* “hard mother of the brain,” a loan-translation of Arabic *umm al-dimagh as-safiqā* “thick mother of the brain”

FUN FACT: The words “father,” “mother,” and “son” are often used to denote relationships between things in Arabic.





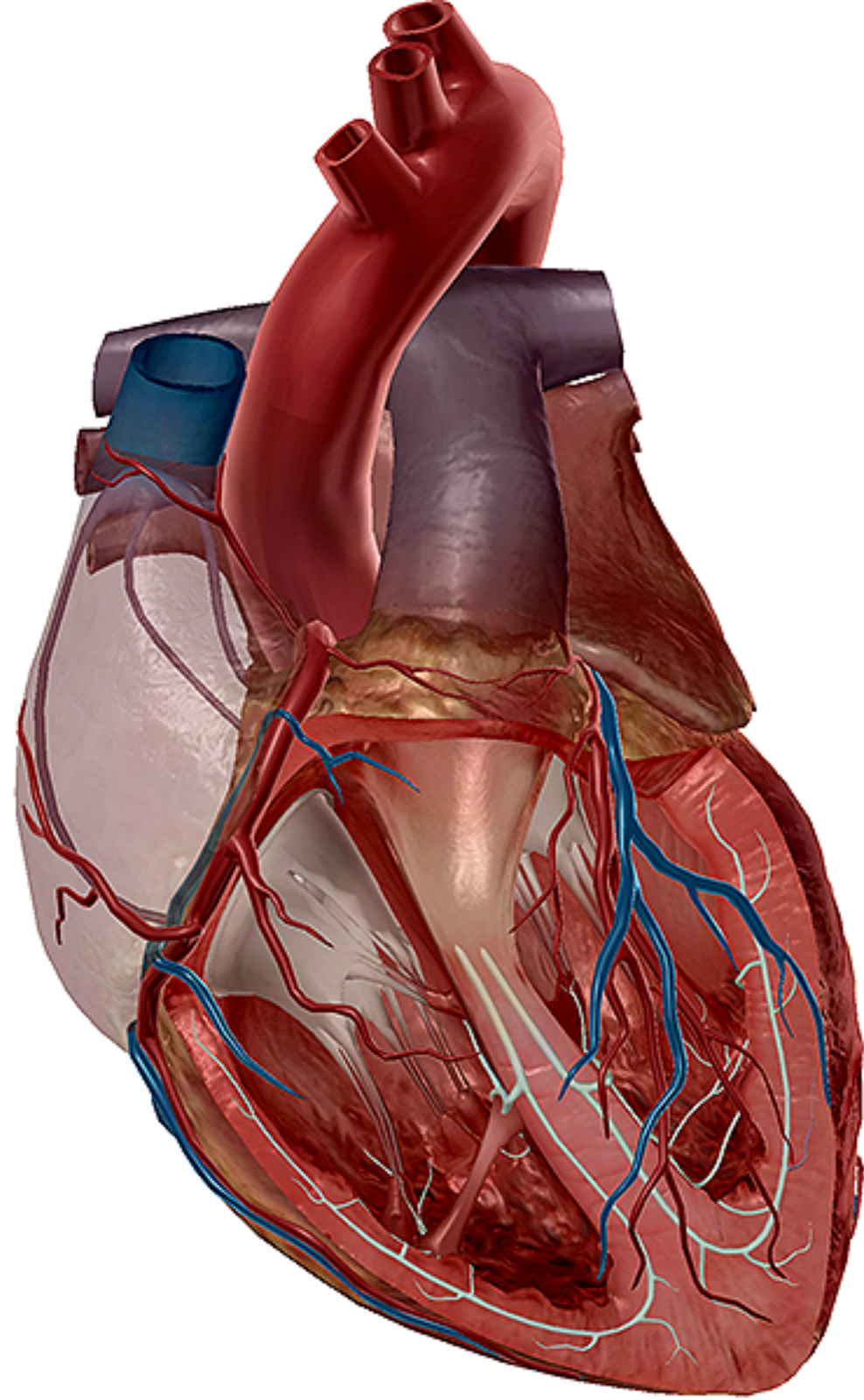
Thyroid

From Greek *thyreoiedes* "shield-shaped" (in *khondros thyreoiedes* "shield-shaped cartilage," used by Greek philosopher and surgeon Galen to describe the Adam's apple), from *thyreos* "oblong, door-shaped shield"

Heart

Old English *heorte* “heart; breast, soul, spirit, will, desire; courage; intellect,” from Proto-Germanic **herton-*, from PIE **kerd-* “heart”

FUN FACT: The Greek cognate of **kerd-* is *kardia*, which is where the root word *cardio-* originates.

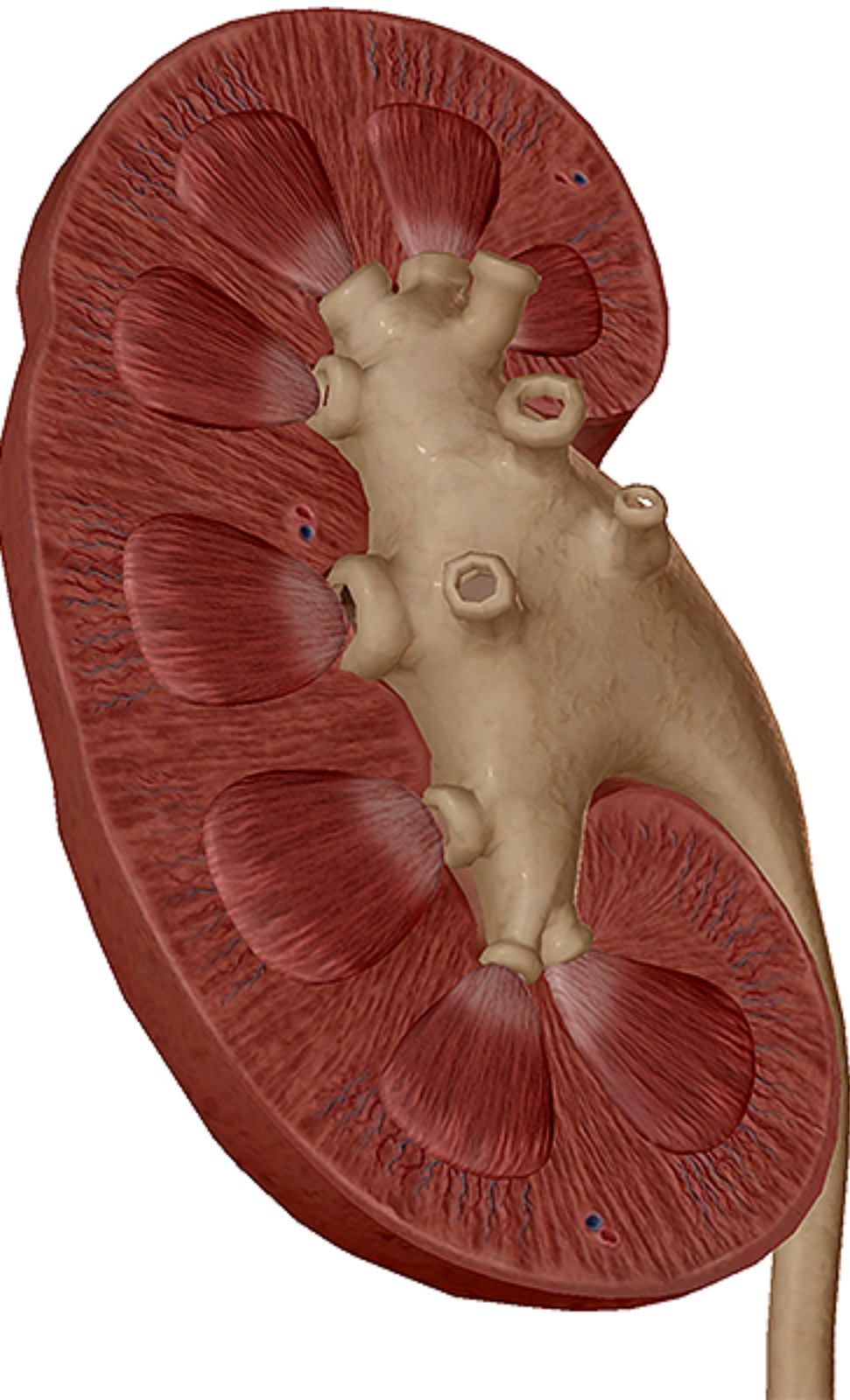


Tooth

Old English *toð*, from Proto-Germanic **tan-thuz*, from PIE **dent-* "tooth" (cognates include Greek *odontos*, Latin *dens*)

FUN FACT: The Greek and Latin cognates of **dent-* can be found in such words as "orthodontist" and "dentition."



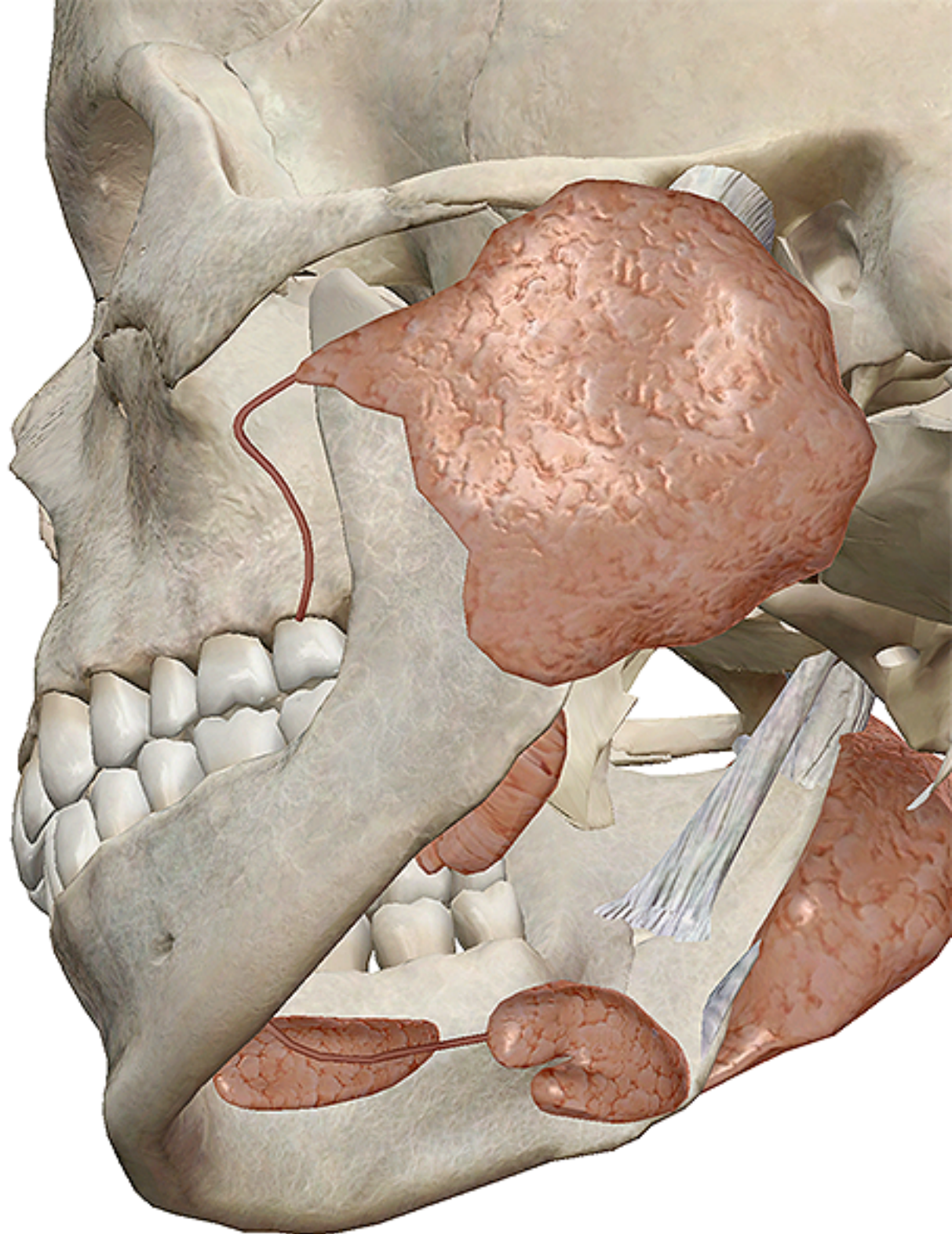


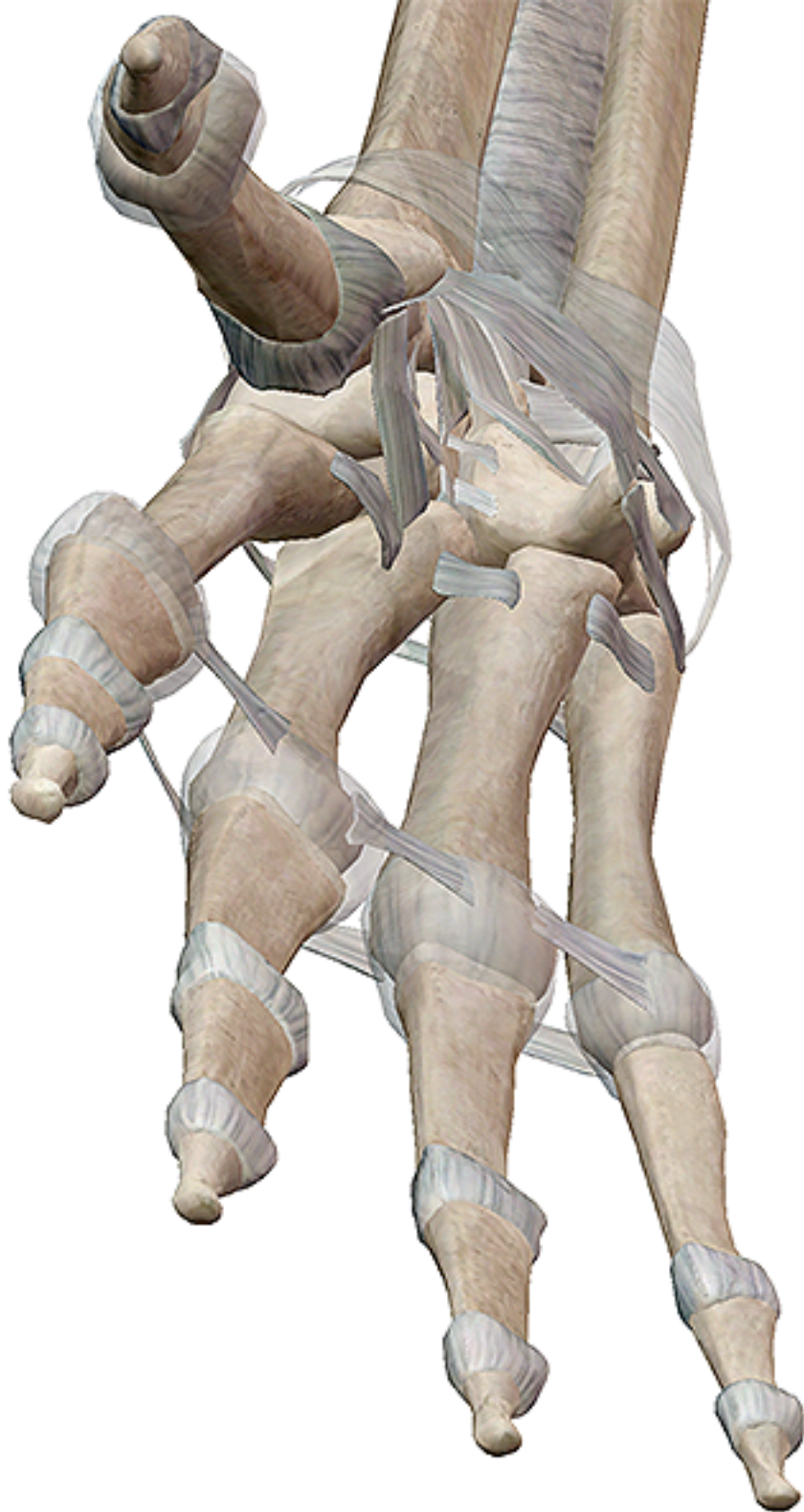
Kidney

Of unknown origin, originally *kidenere*, perhaps a compound of Old English *cwið* “womb” + *ey* “egg,” in reference to the shape of the organ

Saliva

Of unknown origin, from Middle French *salive*,
from Latin *saliva* "spittle"





Finger

Old English *finger*, *finger* "finger," from Proto-Germanic **fingraz*, with no cognates outside Germanic

FUN FACT: It is thought that the word is connected with PIE **penkwe-*, the root meaning "five."

GRATITUDE

From Middle French *gratitude*, from Latin *gratus* “thankful, pleasing”

**Thanks for an amazing year.
See you in 2015!**

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