

La *Fabrique* de Vésale et autres textes

Éditions, transcriptions et traductions
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Introduction to the introductory texts

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No eulogy, no poem, no official recommendation opens the *Fabrica*. Two texts nevertheless precede the seven anatomical books: a preface in the form of a dedicatory epistle addressed to Emperor Charles V, and a letter from Vesalius sent to the printer Oporinus and published by the latter.

The preface addressed to Charles V

The text is presented in the form of a dedicatory epistle in which the author presents his work to a patron and appeals to his benevolence and his protection. The *Fabrica* is the first – and last – book that Vesalius dedicated directly to the Emperor, the addressees of the previous books being physicians, admittedly linked more or less closely with the court. Indeed, the *Paraphrase to the ninth book of Rhazes* (*Paraphrasis in nonum librum Rhazæ*) published in 1537 and the 1539 *Letter on bloodletting* (*Epistola docens venam axillarem dextri cubiti in dolore laterali secandam*) were addressed to Nicolaus Florenas, a friend of the family and physician to the court of Charles V¹; the 1538 *Six Anatomical Plates* (*Tabulæ anatomicae sex*) were preceded with a dedication to Narcissus Vertunus Parthonopeus, *protomedicus*, first physician to the imperial court in Naples², and the *Epitome*, published at the same time as the *Fabrica*, was dedicated to Prince Philip, son of the Emperor. However, as specified by Vesalius himself, his father, first apothecary to the Emperor, had managed to prepare Charles V to give a warm welcome the young author, whose *Tabulæ anatomicae sex* he had already been able to appreciate. The customary compliments that end the preface praise the Emperor's interest for the sciences (astronomy, astrology, mathematics) and deftly recall, without naming him, that another anatomist had already had the honor of dedicating an anatomical treatise to Charles V's grandfather, Emperor Maximilian³.

But this text is no mere dedication. The term used by Vesalius is *præ-fatío*, introductory words, separate from the text of the treatise, but nonetheless constituting a kind of introduction or justification: the preface informs the addressee, *i.e.* the emperor, but also all the readers, of the pitiable state of medicine in the first half of the 16th century. It celebrates the restoration attempts led by the humanists, and places the young author in a vast contemporary movement that aims at combining the return to ancient knowledge with the diffusion of new methods. The pleasure provided by the dropped initial adorning first word *Quantumuis* cannot conceal the *ex abrupto* manner in which the subject is presented in this preamble, a plea in favor of a return to the unity of the medical art, in decline for centuries, and torn apart between different medical professions. Vesalius does not innovate, repeating the same commonplaces as most Renaissance anatomists, following an almost immutable canonical format: he recalls the former interest of kings for medicine, deplors the long decadence of theoretical and practical knowl-

¹ About Nicolaus Florenas (Nicolas of Florennes), see O. STEENO and M. BIESBROUCK, "Esquisse biographique de Nicolaus Florenas, mentor d'André Vésale" (A biographical outline of Nicolaus Florenas, Vesalius' mentor), *Vesalius XVIII*, 1, 2012, pp. 16-17.

² See A. DRIZENKO, « Apostille aux Tabulæ Anatomicae sex de Vésale (1538) » (Apostil to Vesalius' Tabulæ Anatomicae sex), *Histoire des sciences médicales XLVI*, 4, 2012, pp.415-424 (with text and translation of the dedication to Vertunus).

³ In 1502, Alessandro Benedetti dedicated his *Anatomice, siue Historia corporis humani* to Emperor Maximilian Ist, see J. VONS, "L'art de l'épître dédicatoire dans quelques traités médicaux latins du XVI^e siècle" (The art of dedicatory epistles in 16th century Latin medical treatises), in *Epistolæ antiquæ IV*, P. Laurence and F. Guillaumont (ed.), Louvain, Peeters, 2006, pp. 319-328.

edge across centuries in the Western world and tries to define its causes. Alessandro Benedetti, and even more Guinter of Andernach, had provided models of grievances, a style and even a vocabulary for this kind of writing; the similarities between the preface of the *Fabrica* and the beginning of the *Anatomica Methodus* by Andrès of Laguna, fellow student of Vesalius in Paris, Guinter's pupils both, are quite telling in this regard⁴.

Taking his inspiration from the *Præmium* of the *De medicina* by Celsus, Vesalius briefly recalls the existence of the three ancient medical schools, the Logical, the Empirical and the Methodical schools, which, in spite of their epistemological differences, agreed on the practice of medicine, based on diet, medication and manual or surgical operation. The latter relied on anatomy, seen both as knowledge of the morphology of the body, and as a method of opening the body in order to acquire that knowledge. The progressive disaffection of physicians for manual interventions, considered as unrewarding, had led to a hierarchical organization of medical practices that in turn had induced a social hierarchy. The “physicians-physicists”⁵, humorously compared to architects supervising the work carried out by others on a construction site, are scathingly criticized by Vesalius, who debases their taste for money and honors to the detriment of the medical art and to the great prejudice of the sick. He also criticizes the mediocrity of the way medicine is taught at university. This is one of the most famous passages of the *Preface*, mingling disrespect, invective towards some masters, regret for having learnt less than any “butcher on the marketplace” and pride of having therefore undertaken to question the dissection protocols used in the faculties of Paris, Louvain, then Padua.

Authors of anatomical treatises, especially when they were professors, frequently presented themselves as groundbreakers, asked by students and friends to make their knowledge accessible to the largest possible audience. Guinter of Andernach had done so in his presentation of *Anatomical Institutions* (1536) and resorted to it in *Tabulæ anatomicae sex*, and Charles Estienne dedicated his treatise *On the dissection of the parts of the body* (1546) to his students. In the *Preface* to Charles V, Vesalius declares a superior necessity forces him to write, which he defines as the necessity to take part in a general attempt to restore a branch of natural philosophy that has fallen into oblivion. Let us make no mistake: behind this apparent humility, one finds a consummate professional practice, several published books, and a high awareness of his own worth as a teacher. Vesalius recalls the first dissections he conducted in Paris, encouraged by his fellow students and a few professors, and prides himself with having done a “careful” job, making it possible at last to see the inside of the body (the muscles of the hand and the viscera). He also flatters himself with the success of his lectures and dissections in front of students, scholars and learned men in Padua and Bologna, which has progressively led them to question mistakes made by Galen and passed on by his disciples and his translators. Relying on eyesight and touch rather than the nomenclature found in books is tantamount to “knowing and recognizing” the components of the body via the senses, not so much discovering new elements as going back to authentic (or idealized) ancient medicine, before it became abridged, condensed, and altered. This *re-volution*, in the etymological sense of the term, this going back, can only happen

⁴ A. Benedetti, *Anatomice, op. cit.*, (« preface, » p. 1) ; I. Guinter von Andernach, *Institutionum anatomicarum secundum Galeni sententiam libri quatuor*, Basel, Lasius, 1536 (“épître à I. Ebulinus”, médecin de l'évêque de Cologne) ; A. de Laguna, *Anatomica methodus seu de sectione humani corporis contemplatione*, Paris, L. Blauboom (Cyaneus), 1535 (“épître à Don Diego de Rivera”, epistle to Don Diego de Rivera, p. 1).

⁵ The physician-physicist is somebody who knows *phusis*, the nature of man, and is a specialist of internal diseases.

through a new way of seeing things, either dissecting, or reading the written reports on dissections. Thus, the treatise on the fabrication of the human body finds its justification by presenting a methodical description of the various parts of the body: the first book is devoted to bones and cartilages, the second one to ligaments and muscles, the third one to veins and arteries, the fourth one to nerves, the fifth one to digestion and generation organs, the sixth one to the heart, and the final one to the brain and its relations with the sense organs⁶.

With his abundantly illustrated book, Vesalius is eminently modern, displaying the concern of the professor to offer those who cannot attend his dissections a valid substitute for the body, and the enthusiasm of the humanist for the beauty of plates revealing the beauty of the human body⁷. The preface then echoes – and barely subdues – the fears expressed also in the letter to Oporinus, of seeing these plates being mistreated and damaged during their transportation or in the printing process, or the apprehension of seeing the work copied and adulterated by others. The conclusion to the preface is thus adumbrated, as is the objective of any and all dedicatory epistle: soliciting the protection of the prince is all the more necessary as the author is young and as his critique of Galen's theories will cause him to have enemies. This final part requires the use of a specific rhetoric, a ceremonial prose, and we must admit that Vesalius is quite awkward in his phrasing. Although the author condemns the use of pompous formulas and denies resorting to them, the compliment to Charles V is hardly less grandiloquent than those written by his contemporaries for other influent figures. It contains all the clichés of the genre, a praise of the political, strategic and intellectual qualities of Charles V, and contributes to drawing a portrait of the ideal Renaissance prince. The overall tone is declamatory, and the style overblown in the enumeration of the merits of the prince, concluded by wishes for a long life – typical features of the literary genre of the *laudatio*.

The preface finally finds its unity in the guiding principle that governs it all: the pride of taking part in a modern endeavor, of uncovering its ancient roots and of developing it with a view to knowing exactly what we are made of. It is as if Vesalius is respectful of the tradition and eager to fit into a formal academic mold only to explode its contents. The contrast is all the more striking with the second introductory text, also authored by Vesalius, and addressed to the printer. A short foreword by Oporinus testifies to his interest and indicates the reasons why the printer considered it useful to insert it in the book.

The Letter to Oporinus

Dated September 9, 1542, and sent at the same time as the copy of the text, the figure legends and the wood blocks for the *Fabrica* and the *Epitome*, the letter to Oporinus was written a few months before Vesalius went to Basel. The complexity of the layout of the book justifies the choice and the praise given to a new kind of printer, a well-read humanist, devoted to the Republic of Letters, and a perfect master of his technique. This also legitimizes the risks the author

⁶ The detailed table of contents is placed in the Introduction to each one of the seven books. On Vesalius' construction of the body as a literary creation, independently of the order of the dissection, cf. J. VONS and S. VELUT, *A. Vésale. Résumé des livres sur la Fabrique du corps humain (Andreas Vesalius. A Summary of the Fabrica Books)*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2008, p. L-LV.

⁷ Agreement on the principle of illustrated books in nature and human sciences was far from unanimous, cf. translation of the Preface. On the history of illustrated anatomical treatises in the 16th century, see J.-L. BINET, *Introduction à Vésale (1) (Introduction to Vesalius)*, <http://www.biusante.parisdescartes.fr/histmed/medica/anatomie.htm>

was taking when he decided to send the precious package across the Alps. Although we have not been able to identify the Milanese merchants involved in the transportation of the wood blocks⁸, the indications provided by Vesalius give us an insight into the sphere of exchanges, the commercial and intellectual networks between Venice and the south of the Netherlands, which existed through the scholars and qualified craftsmen from Brabant or Antwerp who had settled in Italy, in Venice for most of them. Thus, Nicolas de Stoop (Nicolaus Stopius), who was born in Alost in eastern Flanders, near Brussels, and died in Venice probably in 1568, is listed as a *poeta laureatus* in the *Biographie Nationale belge*⁹, and was a humanist who had editorial responsibilities, being in charge of selecting and presenting Greek and Latin work in Daniel van Bomberghen's house. His activity at various Venetian printers' testifies to his interest for belles-lettres, medicine and cartography¹⁰. The omission of his name and the reference to Daniel van Bomberghen's house in the Preface to the edition of the *Fabrica* published in 1555 are probably due to the fact that the two men had stopped collaborating a few years before. Indeed, Daniel van Bomberghen, born in Antwerp a little after 1483, had settled in Venice, and specialized in the printing of texts dealing with the Hebraic religion, a sector he was the first non-Jew to tackle, before he came back to his native city where he died in 1553. In Venice, he had become friends with Felix de Prato (Felix Pratense), a Jew converted to Catholicism who had taught him Hebrew. The first volume he printed in Venice on Petri Lichtenstein's presses, in 1515, was a translation into Latin of Felix de Prato's *Psalms*. The Ten of Venice then granted him a printing privilege for all the books in Hebrew, and also guaranteed all the print characters carved for him¹¹. In 1516-17, he published a simple *Tanakh*, without any commentaries, and a *Rabbinic Bible* in four volumes, commented, and dedicated to Pope Leo X. In 1519-20, still in association with Felix de Prato, he started the integral edition of the *Babylonian Talmud*, and pursued an editorial activity that had a major influence on Hebraic and Arabic philological studies, similar to the influence Alde Manuce had on Greek studies. His house was a meeting point for scholars and humanists such as Guillaume Postel, the first famous Orientalist at the Collège Royal created by François I^{er}. He died in destitution, but having earned the consideration of scholars across Europe¹². In 1539, he printed for the first (and only) time an

⁸ The Milanese merchants went through Mont Cenis or through the Saint Gotthard pass, more direct to go to Basel. Most of the exported goods were manufactured products: metallurgic objects, tanned skins, linen woven in the Lombard workshops, fustians, not forgetting the silk and spices that passed through Venice before arriving in Milan.

⁹ On Nicolas de Stoop, see *Biographie Nationale belge*, vol. 20, t. V, col. 809 and 810 (Destoop entry), Brussels, 1876; A. ROERSCH, "Les Alba amicorum du XVI^e et du XVII^e siècles" (The 16th and 17th century Alba Amicorum), *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 1929, 8, pp. 530-536 [533].

¹⁰ Several addresses and introductory texts testify to N. de Stoop's later activity, in cartography (a large map of Cairo, engraved on wood, published in Venice by M. Pagano in 1549, accompanied with an opusculum attributed to Guillaume Postel; a map of Africa engraved by P. Forlani and printed by Camotius in Venice in 1566) or in medicine (preface to the six books by Actuarius Iohannes, *Methodi medendi libri sex* [...] translated into Latin by Cornelius Henricus Mathis, first physician to Charles V, Venice, G. Scoto, in 1553). His name is also featured in Aelia Laelia Crispis' small book, *epitaphium antiquum quod in agro Bononiensi adhuc videtur* [...], published by Ricardus Vitus (William White) in Padua in 1568; he was also attributed the transcripts of works by Roland De Lattre (Orlandus de Lassus, 1532-1594), cantor and composer to the Bavarian court.

¹¹ G. E. WEIL, *Elie Levita, humaniste et massorète* (1469-1549) (*Elie Levita, Humanist and Masorete*), Leiden, Brill, 1963, pp. 112-133.

¹² See B. NIELSEN, "Daniel van Bomberghen, a Bookman of two worlds," in *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy*, J. HACKER and A. SHEAR (ed.), University of Pennsylvania Press, Pennsylvania, 2011, pp. 56-75; M. J. HELLER, *Printing the Talmud: a history of the earliest printed editions of the Talmud*, Brooklyn, New York, Im Hasefer, 1992, p. 174; [Henri van Bomberghen], *Généalogie de la famille van Bomberghen* (*A Genealogy of the Van Bomberghen family*), Brussels 1914, p. 121-138; F. van ORTROY, *Les van Bomberghen* (*The Van Bomberghens*), Antwerp, 1924, p. 131-144; A. ROERSCH, *Correspondance de Nicolas Clénard* (*Nicolas Clénard's correspondence*), t. II, Brussels, Palais des Académies, 1940, p. 124. In 1563, the printer Christophe Plantin associated with Cornelius van Bomberghen, Daniel's great-nephew, and retrieved the latter's Hebraic letters for the Antwerp polyglot Bible (see F. BARBIER, "Le livre hébreu en Occident XIII^e-XVI^e siècle" (*The Hebrew Book in the Western countries, 13th-16th centuries*),

anti-Jewish polemical text, *Sch' wile, Hinera deserti*, written by Gérard Veltwijck, a converted Jew, former secretary to Cardinal de Granvelle who had become secretary and adviser to Charles V. This learned man, born in Utrecht or Ravenstein in Flanders in 1505, Bachelor in Arts from Louvain in 1528, who lived in Brussels when he was not away on a diplomatic mission, and was in contact with humanists such as G. Postel, A. Masius and J. Blesius, who admired the scope of his erudition and his knowledge of numerous languages, had placed his talents at the service of politics. Charles V entrusted him with several diplomatic missions in Europe and to Sultan Suleyman. He also had a reputation as a botanist, and in 1552 Dodoens dedicated his book *De frugum historia* to him. Veltwijck died on January 5, 1555¹³; his name is not featured in the preface to the *Fabrica* published in August 1555. In this milieu of scholars involved on the book industry – printers, proof-readers, editors, philologists and humanists – the absence of the name of the draughtsman, and even more of that of the engraver, essential character in the fabrication of an illustrated book, are all the more surprising as Vesalius says he knew the engraver, having helped him prepare the plates in view of their transportation, and tells Oporinus he admires the work of this friend of Nicolas de Stoop¹⁴.

The first part of the letter is devoted to instructions on the layout, which was particularly difficult to implement. The detail with which Vesalius explains his typographical choices is most probably dictated by didactic and pedagogical concerns, as well as by a desire to govern the editorial project from beginning to end. Some of his remarks, though they may seem trivial at first, find their justification in the particular wish not to leave anything to chance, at the risk of leaving little initiative to the printer. See, for example, the recommendations concerning the layout of the descriptive text, separated from the explanations to the anatomical figures by a line, or the justification of a double system of marginal notes: the first ones, placed in the outer margins, are the equivalent of a table of contents and comprise commentaries and references to authorities. On the other hand, the inner *marginalia*, referenced by a letter placed “in superscript” usually at the beginning of a word, show in which illustration the part mentioned in the description is to be observed. While this system does constitute an economy in the repetition of the plates¹⁵, the systematic reference to various plates from various books requires from the reader a sustained attention and a switching back-and-forth between the text and the corresponding image. Oporinus probably published the letter because he had understood it was also addressed to the reader through him. Just as in the letter to the reader of the *Epitome*, Vesalius gives the “directions for use” of his book, or, more precisely, a code for reading the referenced plates. Knowing this code is necessary to understand the book. The letter to Oporinus is therefore also a key, an initiation into the knowledge to be imparted in the book. The *Fabrica* is not

in *Cultural norms and the elaboration of deviance / Kulturelle Normen und Konstruktion von deviantz*, J. GUILBAUD, N. LE MOIGNE, Th. LÜTTENBERG (ed.), Geneva, Droz, 2004, p. 67).

¹³ A very complete biography of Gérard Veltwijck can be found in J. V. POLLET, *Martin Bucer*, tome I, Leiden, Brill, 1977, pp. 35-49. On the relationship between Veltwijck and Dodoens, see P. J. van MEERBEEK, *Recherches historiques sur la vie et les ouvrages de Rembert Dodoens (Historical research on the life and work of Rembert Dodoens)*, Malines, Hanicq, 1841, pp. 21-27.

¹⁴ See F. DUBRANA, Qui a gravé la *Fabrica* ? (Who engraved the *Fabrica*?), conference given at the Study Days on the History of Anatomy and Surgery, December 10-11, 2010, Paris, http://www.biusante.parisdescartes.fr/sfhm/seances/cr_201012.htm (abstract). The hypothesis of a voluntary omission of the name, in the context of ever harder measures taken against heretics in Venice pursuant to the failure of the conference of Regensburg (1541), should not be dismissed.

¹⁵ H. CAZÈS underlines this economy in “Anatomie de l’image répétée chez André Vésale et Charles Estienne” (An Anatomy of Repeated Images in Vesalius’ and Charles Estienne’s work), in *Proceedings of the Conference on The Repeated Image*, June 2011, Victoria, electronic version available in Textimage, Le Conférencier, October 2012, p. 6, http://revue-textimage.com/conferencier/intro_conferencier.html

a work of popularization. In spite of the numerous details, what is essential remains hidden as long as the reader does not have the key to access it. And apparently we are still missing numerous keys that would be necessary to understand everything from this letter, were it only the exact nature of the document – *i.e.* the copy to be used as a model (*exemplar*) – that Vesalius entrusted to Milanese merchants when he placed the text pages between the engraved wood blocks.

The praise of the printer *cum* humanist, which is also an invitation to give priority to esthetic aspects in the representation of anatomical figures, is accompanied by an indictment of poor quality printings and of the lack of conscientiousness of ordinary printers, illustrated by the example of the unauthorized copies of the *Tabulæ anatomicae sex*, in spite of the signature by their author at the end of the dedication to Narcissus Vertunus Parthonopeus and of the privilege mentioned on the sixth plate:

*By decree of Paul III, Supreme Pontiff of His Holy Imperial Majesty, and of the Illustrious Senate of Venice, it is stipulated that no one may print these tables by Andreas Vesalius of Brussels, or sell copies printed elsewhere, on pain of incurring the most severe punishments defined in the present privileges*¹⁶.

Judging by the number of unauthorized copies published in the Germanic world and in France which Vesalius complains about, one is forced to admit that these precautions were completely useless! However, the *Tabulæ* were not the first anatomical atlas on the book market. Berengario da Carpi (1470–1530) had had anatomical schema printed on separate sheets for his Bologna students. In Strasburg, the physician Wendelin Hock von Brackenau had had a series of anatomical plates intended for surgeons printed by Iohan Schott, after a dissection performed in 1517 in front of students and scholars¹⁷. There was indeed a demand – which editors and printers in search of profits understood very well – for this kind of separate plates, which were fairly inexpensive and could be used in all circumstances. Such is the major grievance Vesalius bears against those who copied, translated and defaced his *Tabulæ*, without his authorization. No name is explicitly given, but the authors can be identified in most cases. One of the first copies was published in Cologne in 1539, along with a preface in Latin by the author, who claims he embellished the 1538 illustrations. Although Vesalius refers to the author exclusively by the phrase “*nescio quis*” (“I do not know who”), this copy is attributed to Ægidius Macrolius, an anatomist, reader at the University of Cologne¹⁸. Another copy was made in Augsburg by the engraver and printer Jost de Negker, born in Antwerp in 1485, and who died in 1544; he published a translation into German of the *Tabulæ* in 1539, followed by a second, amended edition, probably in 1540; a long letter to the reader, *Zum Leser*, explains the improvements he brought to the Latin text, which Vesalius denies¹⁹.

¹⁶ On the colophon: *Cautum est decreto Pauli III Pontificis Maximæ et Sacratissimæ Cæsareæ Maiestatis illustrissimique Senatus Veneti ne quis has Andreæ Vuesalii Bruxellensis tabulas aut imprimat, aut alibi excissas diuendat, sub penis grauissimis in priuilegiis expressis.*

¹⁷ See J. M. LE MINOR, *Les sciences morphologiques médicales à Strasbourg du XVe au XXe siècle (The medical morphological sciences in Strasbourg from the 15th to the 20th centuries)*, Strasbourg, Presses universitaires, 2002, pp. 15-17.

¹⁸ One copy of this copy, long considered to be a mere legend, was purchased in 1964 by the Royal Library of Belgium. The document is calf-bound, without any flyleaf or title page. It comprises seven plates, not six as in the edition printed in Venice. The additional plate (the fourth one in the order of presentation) is the only one to feature an imperial privilege. At the bottom of the last plate one can see the monogram VH, which is probably the signature of the – unidentified yet – engraver. The anatomist Æ. Macrolius, the editor E. Tappe and the printer L. Molendinus took part in the work. See A. DEVEEN-VANDEWYER, Introduction, *Tabulæ anatomicae* (fac-simile), Brussels, Culture and civilization, 1964, n.p.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Finally, Vesalius clearly accuses two physicians of the Germanic sphere of plagiarism²⁰. One of them is a physician from Strasbourg, Walter Ryff (1500–1548), a surgeon, author and compiler of texts and images in various fields (anatomy, obstetrics, teratology, astrology, etc). In Strasbourg in 1541, he published two editions of an anatomical treatise at Balthasar Beck (Pistorius). The two editions are respectively in Latin and in German, *Omnium humani corporis partium descriptio GVALTHERI H. RYFF, Argentini Medici* and *Des aller fürnämbssten Geschöpffs Anathomii*; they comprise 19 illustrations among which three representations of skeletons, which were smaller and rather poor copies of the 1538 *Tabulæ*²¹. According to H. Cushing, the plates copied by Ryff in Strasbourg were bought by Chrétien Wechel, who then used them in his own editions, among which an edition of Ryff's *Anatomia* (1543) and a treatise by Jean Ta-gault, *De chirurgiæ institutione libri quinque* in 1543²². The second person to be accused is most probably Iohann Dryander (1500–1560) or Eichmann, who came to Paris to study anatomy between 1528 and 1534. He had been appointed to the chair of medicine and mathematics at Marburg after obtaining his doctorate in Mainz. A talented anatomist, he published a work illustrated with woodcuts in 1536, *Anatomia capitis humani*, at Eucharius Cervicornus²³, followed in 1537 with an *Anatomia, hoc est corporis humani dissectionis pars prior*. In the dedicatory epistle addressed to a friend from Frankfurt, he placed himself among the best anatomists of his time (A. Benedetti, Guintier of Andernach, A. of Laguna, Vesalius). In 1541, he published an *Anatomia Mundini*, featuring plates from the *Tabulæ anatomicae*²⁴.

The technical incompetence of the draughtsman or of the printer of the Parisian copies is yet another of Vesalius' grievances. Several names have been suggested, but the addition of a precision in the 1555 edition removes any doubt: Vesalius accuses the surgeon *cum* draughtsman Estienne Rivière, who had illustrated Charles Estienne's anatomical treatise, *De dissectione partium corporis humani libri*, or rather the printer Simon de Colines. The latter hypothesis is confirmed in the preface that Charles Estienne addresses to students in anatomy: the author recalls that the book, not published until 1545, had been ready for printing since 1539, but, not secured by the printer, it was stolen (*furtum appellandum est*) and secretly taken to Germany where several plates were copied, in particular those representing the nerves, the veins and the arteries²⁵.

²⁰ The term *plagiarius*, which originally referred to slave kidnapping, was already used in Antiquity to refer to the illicit appropriation of a literary work, cf. Martial I, 52.

²¹ Ryff published under his name books dealing with botany, medicine, architecture and astronomy, which are plagiarisms of editorial successes or excerpts from pre-existing compilations. Among pirated authors one also finds Iohann Dryander and Leonart Fuchs, who had just had his major botanical treatise, *De historia stirpium commentarii insignes* published in Basel by Isengrin. Vesalius alluded to Fuchs' recriminations against his shameless plagiarist (*impudentissimum plagium Gualteri Riffi*) in the dedicatory epistle to *De sanandis totius humani corporis eiusdemque partium tam internis malis libri quinque*, published by Ferri in Venice in 1543, f. *3a. The reference to Fuchs disappeared from the 1555 edition. See J. VONS and S. VELUT, *A. Vésale. Résumé des livres sur la Fabrique (Andreas Vesalius. A Summary of the Fabrica Books)*, op. cit., p. LXXII, n. 198; J. M. LE MINOR, *Les sciences morphologiques médicales (The medical morphological sciences)*, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

²² H. CUSHING, *A bio-bibliography of Andreas Vesalius*, London, 1962, pp. 22-23.

²³ On Eucharius Cervicornus (E. Hirtzhorn), official printer at the University of Marburg, see J.-C. MARGOLIN, *Recherches érasmiennes (Research on Erasmus)*, Geneva, Droz, 1969, pp. 166-167.

²⁴ See É. TURNER, *Études historiques. Les planches anatomiques de J. Dryander et de G. H. Ryff. Les six premières planches anatomiques de Vésale et leurs contrefaçons. Le Portrait d'André Vésale au Musée du Louvre. Les Planches du grand livre d'anatomie et de l'Épitome (1543). Ce que sont devenues les planches anatomiques de Vésale publiées en 1543 (Historical studies. Dryander's and Ryff's anatomical plates. Vesalius' first six anatomical plates and their counterfeited versions. Vesalius' portrait at the Louvres Museum. The plates in the Great anatomical book and in the Epitome (1543). What became of Vesalius' plates published in 1543)*, Paris, Masson, 1878.

²⁵ Ch. Estienne, *C. Stephani de dissectione partium corporis humani libri*, Paris, S. de Colines, 1545, *ij. The plates were used for

In this extensive condemnation, over one page in length, one may very well see the emergence of the notion of the author – an individual who is responsible for his work to public opinion in the same way as an editor is entrusted with the material realization of the work. Oporinus saw this, and published this letter, which, though a most illusory protection against plagiarists, is in fact a tribute to the editor *cum* humanist²⁶.

Note on the edition and the translation of the introductory texts

Remarkably enough, the 1543 preliminary texts were maintained in the 1555 edition of the *Fabrica*, including the initial dates and the general presentation of the themes developed at the time of the first edition. The change in the historical context is nonetheless perceptible through the variation in the references to people's names. Some have disappeared possibly due to death (sometimes recent, as that of G. Veltwijck) or to Vesalius' personal history (for example his disagreement with Jacques Dubois). Other modifications bear on the form. To start with, let us mention the first word in the preface, in which a *Vtcunque* replaces the 1543 *Quantumuis*, leading to a change in the dropped initial, unless, conversely, the choice of a new initial, pointing to the significant role of the anatomist, caused the change in the conjunction²⁷. Was that change the initiative of Vesalius, or that of the printer? Vesalius was not in Basel at the time of the second edition, and we have no correspondence on the topic. The passages that were either omitted or added in the 1555 preface have been referenced in the translation, signaled with the signs **. However, the various lexical, syntactic or punctuation modifications are not mentioned, but will be examined in a critical edition currently in progress, presenting the characteristics of the introductory texts across the various editions of the *Fabrica*. On the whole, the presentation of the 1555 text is clearer, and the modifications in the punctuation make reading easier, but the final result is neither necessarily nor consistently more elegant.

The transcription follows the same spelling as the 1543 edition, as for the whole of the *Fabrica*²⁸.

To the best of our knowledge, there is no other translation of the 1543 introductory texts into French. Louis Bakelants published the Preface to Charles V from the 1555 edition with an annotated translation at Arscia in Brussels in 1961. This was fully reprinted in the bilingual edition produced by C. Ambroselli, A. Fagot-Largeault and C. Sinding under the title *La fabrique du corps humain*, published in Arles, by Actes Sud and Inserm, in 1987. In 1964, a Latin-Italian

Dryander's treatise, *Artzenei Spiegel*, published by Egenolph in 1542. For a review of the names (Estienne, Tagault, Vassé, etc.) involved in the Parisian copies, see H. CUSHING, *A bio-bibliography of Andreas Vesalius*, London, 1962, pp. 33-43.

²⁶ See J. L. FLOOD, "Le livre dans le monde germanique à l'époque de la Renaissance" (The book in the Germanic world of the Renaissance), in *La réforme et le livre. L'Europe de l'imprimé (1517-1570) (The Reformation and the Book. European Print)*, J. F. GILMONT (dir.), Paris, Éd. du Cerf, 1990, pp. 29-104. On the value of the privileges granted to a printer on the territories under the guaranteeing jurisdiction of the institutions, see P. CHAIX, *Recherches sur l'imprimerie à Genève de 1550 à 1564 (Research on the printing activity in Geneva from 1550 to 1564)*, Geneva, Droz, 1954, pp. 63-73.

²⁷ The initial is decorated with a scene representing Apollo flaying Marsyas. There are numerous interpretations of this mythological scene, see for instance A. CARLINO, "Marsyas, saint Antoine et autres indices: le corps puni et la dissection entre le XVe et le XVIe siècles" (Marsyas, Saint Anthony and other signs: the punished body and dissection in the 15th and 16th centuries), *La Part de l'Oeil*, 11, 1995, pp. 31-40.

²⁸ See the General introduction.

bilingual edition of the 1543 Preface was published by Loris Premuda in Padua, but the translation is marred with several deficiencies and errors. The translation of the two cited texts (1543) given by W. F. Richardson and J. B. Carman in the first volume *On the Fabric of the Human Body (Book I: The Bones and Cartilages)*, published in San Francisco in 1998, tends to oversimplify Vesalius' syntax and modernizes the vocabulary. The reader may also refer to two translations of the 1543 texts that are published online; a Dutch version, which we owe to Dr Maurits Biesbrouck, can be accessed on the following website: www.andreasvesalius.be ; and an English one, made by Daniel Garrison and Malcolm Hast, which was published on this website : vesalius.northwestern.edu.

In the French translation presented here, we have tried to maintain the difference between two rather distinct texts: a preface addressed to the Emperor on the one hand, and a more friendly and more technical letter sent to a printer who was also a friend on the other. The use of “*tu*” would have stricken us as anachronistic in the Preface, all the more so as there are texts written at the same time as the *Fabrica*, addressed to princes, written in the vernacular, in which the use of “*vous*” is de rigueur. We also tried to maintain as much as possible the very long sentences of the Preface, because they are representative of the ceremonial style customary at the time, and also of the clumsiness of the young author at using these quite pedantic formulas, making the contrast with the technical precision of some observations in the Letter to Oporinus all the more interesting. Details on the precise meaning of a term are given in the notes on the French text; we limited their number on purpose, so as not to break the flow of the text.

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