The recent purchase of a small number of books of Vesalian interest, combined with those already in stock, meant that we possess at least one edition of most of the books published by Vesalius, of which Cushing lists nine. The two works that we do not have are Vesalius’s contributions to the collected works of Galen, issued at Venice by the Giunta press in 1541–42, and his reply to the Observationes Anatomicae of Gabriele Falloppio (of which we have a copy in stock), Anatomicarum Gabrieli Fallopii obervationum examen, published in 1564, the year of his death. (I cannot recall ever having seen a copy of this book offered for sale.) Such an opportunity seemed too good to pass by, and this small catalogue is the result.
This catalogue is only available digitally as a PDF file. Further illustrations of some of the books can also be seen on the website to which the item numbers on the following pages are links.

The biographical text is adapted from the article on Vesalius in the Dictionary of Scientific Biography (vol. 14, pp. 3–6) by C. D. O’Malley.
ANDREAS VESALIUS initiated the scientific study of human anatomy, which was the first great discovery of Western medicine. He was born in Brussels on the last day of December 1514. His father, also named Andreas, was an apothecary of the Emperor Charles V and the illegitimate son of Everard van Wesele (Latinised as Vesalius). The young Vesalius received his elementary education in Brussels and matriculated at the University of Louvain in February 1530 to pursue the arts course, the necessary prerequisite for entrance into a professional school. It is not known when he decided to study medicine, but such a decision could have been related to the emperor’s legitimisation of the young man’s father in 1531, which may have encouraged him to carry on his family’s traditional profession.

Since at that time the medical school of Louvain had little repute, Vesalius chose to carry on his medical studies at the more illustrious faculty of the University of Paris, matriculating there probably in September 1533, where he studied under Guenther of Andernach and Jacques Dubois (Sylvius). Guenther, who in his Institutiones anatomicae (1536) spoke very favourably of his student, and Dubois, an arch-Galenist and later an enemy of Vesalius, each in his own way directed the young man towards anatomical research.

The war between France and the Holy Roman Empire compelled Vesalius to leave Paris in 1536. He returned to Louvain, where, with the friendly support of the burgomaster, he was able to reintroduce anatomical dissection, which had not been part of the medical curriculum for many years, and in 1537 he received the degree of bachelor of medicine. While completing his studies he produced his first publication, Paraphrasis in nonum librum Rhazae ad regem Almansorem [A paraphrase of the ninth Book of the Almansorem by Rhazes] (Louvain, 1537), which he considered sufficiently important to have reprinted in Basel later that year on his way to Italy:

1. RHAZES (or al-Razi, Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariya). Paraphrasis in Nonum Librum Rhazae ... ad Regem Almansorem, de affectuum singularum corporis partium curatone, Andrea Vvesalio Bruxellensi autore. Basileae [Basel]: [R. Winter, March 1537].

8vo, 12 leaves (the last blank), pp. 224, (6), 1 leaf (errata). Modern vellum. Occasional minor staining or foxing, but a fine copy. £47,500

Second edition, corrected, of Vesalius’s first book. Both the first, published in Louvain in February of 1537 before Vesalius received his degree, and this edition, issued a month afterwards in Basel, are of the greatest rarity on the market. Only a few of the great libraries have copies and there was no copy of either edition in the Norman collection. Cushing located only three copies of the first edition and two of them
are incomplete. O’Malley points out (p. 72) that this edition is superior in typography to the first.

“Vesalius’s first published work was his emendation of the ninth book of al-Razi’s Almansorem, which he prepared as a thesis for his bachelor’s degree in medicine from the University of Louvain. Finding the available Latin translation of al-Razi’s writings to be marred by obscurities, errors and transliterations of Arabic words, Vesalius made stylistic improvements, identified drugs by their contemporary names, and added marginalia noting classical viewpoints or casting doubt on some of al-Razi’s remarks” (Norman 2140, describing the third edition of 1544).

Apparently Vesalius was very disappointed with the appearance of the Louvain edition and for this second edition he modernized the spelling, corrected errors, provided an elaborate subject index, and doubled if not tripled the number of marginal notes.

Rhazes’ Almansorem was “an important work by the most original physician of the East, one of the great physicians of all time” (Stillwell). Its ten books discuss anatomy and physiology, simple remedies, health, skin diseases, diet for travellers, surgery, poisons, and diseases of various organs.

There are at least two settings of the title-page: in this copy the spacing of “Basileae” on the title is subtly different from the copy illustrated in Cushing’s bibliography; in our copy there is a distinct space between the “L” and the “E.”

2. RHAZES. Abubetri Rhazae Maomethi, Opera Exquisitiora ... Per Gerardum Toletanum medicum Cremonensem, Andream Vesalium Bruxellensem, Albanum Torinum Vitoduranum, Latinitate donata, ac jam primum quam castigatissime ad vetustum codicem summo studio collata & restaurata... Basileae [Basle]: In Officina Henrichi Petri, [1544].

Small folio, 24 leaves, 590 pages, 1 leaf (containing the colophon on recto and printer’s woodcut device on verso). Attractive antique panelled sheep over boards. A very good copy, lightly washed, title carefully remargined in gutter. £4000

First edition of Alban Thorer’s edition of Rhazes’ Opera. This edition includes the third edition of Vesalius’s first published work, his emendation of the ninth Book. There were two earlier separate editions of Vesalius’s translation (Louvain and Basel, both 1537; see above), but they are extremely rare books.

“...The [present] third edition was incorporated into an Opera Omnia of al-Razi’s works, edited by Alban Thorer, the German translator of Vesalius’s Epitome” (Norman).


In the autumn of 1537 Vesalius enrolled in the medical school of the University of Padua, then the most famous in Europe, where he received the degree of doctor of medicine magna cum laude on 5 December 1537, and on the following day accepted the appointment of explicator chirurgiae with the responsibility of lecturing on surgery and anatomy. Immediately thereafter he gave the required anatomical lectures and demonstrations, which although Galenic in character were unusual because, contrary to custom, Vesalius himself performed the dissections rather than consigning that task to a surgeon. To assist in his teaching he also produced a series of large anatomical drawings, six of which were published at Venice in 1538, now referred to as the Tabulae anatomicae sex:


Large folio (660 x 505 mm.), 14 leaves (including the first and last blank, the other 12 printed on the rectos only). Four leaves printed in red and black. Contemporary Continental marbled boards, purple roan spine. Ends of spine a little worn, otherwise a good copy. £2800

A fine facsimile, chronologically the second edition, of Vesalius’s first anatomical book, printed in a very small edition: “Of this gorgeously printed volume, as Stirling-Maxwell states, 30 copies were struck off, one on vellum, one on parchment, and 28 on paper” (Cushing). It comprises five preliminary leaves, a portrait of Vesalius, and facsimiles of the six separate leaves of anatomical drawings originally published in 1538. The original edition is known in a tiny handful of copies (Cushing positively located only two copies).

Cushing, A bio-bibliography of Andreas Vesalius, II.–2[B]. Cockx-Indestege, Andreas Vesalius. a Belgian census, 4 (records two copies, both presentation from Stirling-Maxwell, one in a similar binding to the present copy).
It should be no surprise that these remarkable figures were copied and extensively used in other books, among which was the surgical treatise of Jean Tagault:

4. Jean TAGAULT. De Chirurgica Institutione libri quinque. His accessit sextus liber de materia chirurgica, authore Jacobo Hollerio Stempano ... Parisiis: Apud Christianum Wechelum, ... 1543.

Small folio, 24 leaves, 421 pages, 1 leaf (errata and printer’s device), + 2 leaves numbered 354–355 inserted after p. 354 (at the end of Tagault’s book and before Houllier’s). With 10 full-page woodcuts, 3 of them copied from the Tabulae Sex of Vesalius (on the inserted leaves), and 5 of surgical instruments. Printed in italic type. Contemporary vellum, endpapers replaced. Very faint dampstain in upper margin of a few leaves, last page slightly soiled, but a fine copy.

FIRST EDITION, the only one in folio other than a Dutch translation, and one of only two published during the author’s lifetime. This is one of the great early works of surgery, predating Paré and Würtz, and often reprinted throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Cushing lists 22 separate editions between 1543 and 1645, suggesting a popularity approaching that of Vigo). The subjects principally treated by Tagault in the five books are tumours, wounds, ulcers, fractures, and dislocations. It also contains the first edition of Jacques Houllier’s De materia chirurgica. Of the full-page woodcuts, three are of skeletal anatomy (see below), and two are taken from Gersdorff showing the wound-man and the extraction of an arrow on the battlefield. This first and most attractive edition is of great rarity: Cushing and Waller have
copies (although the latter lacks the index), and NUC lists 4 copies. Not in the Wellcome.

Cushing, A bio-bibliography of Andreas Vesalius, II.–27: "...a handsomely printed folio." Cockx-Indestege, Andreas Vesalius. a Belgian census, 16–20 (later editions). Apart from being published in the same year as the Fabrica, Tagault's book on surgery is involved with Vesalius because someone copied the first three figures of the Tabulae Sex and used them in the present work and in the works of Walter Ryff. The four chief suspects are the anatomist Loys Vassé, the printers Charles Estienne and Christian Wechel, and Tagault himself. The three copied skeletal figures, with text, are on two inserted leaves printed on slightly different paper to the rest of the book.

In the same year as the Tabulae anatomicae sex appeared, Vesalius produced a dissection manual for his students:

5. Johann GUENTHER von Andernach. Institutionum Anatomicarum Secundum Galeni sententiam ad candidatos medicine libri quatuor... ab Andrea VVesalio Bruxellensi, auctiores & emendatiores redditi. [Venice: Melchiore Sessa, ca. 1538–1540].

16mo, ff. (xvi), 101, (3) blank. Complete with the three blank leaves at the beginning and at the end. Sessa’s woodcut device on title (there is no imprint or colophon), a few woodcut initials. Title a little spotty; this, the following leaf, and the first blank leaves with small, old repair to lower blank margin; a few leaves a little stained. A very good copy in contemporary limp vellum, front pastedown and first blank repaired, spine lettered ‘Vesal Inst: Anat’ in ink. Signature of Antonio Pengo of Padua on third blank leaf. Sold

Second edition of Vesalius’s extensively revised pocket edition of his teacher’s anatomical handbook, which he brought out only a month after publication of the Tabulae Sex. His “revised version was superior as a dissection manual to Guinter’s original edition, or, indeed, to anything else that was available” (O’Malley, Andreas Vesalius of Brussels 1514–1564, p. 94). Vesalius had assisted Guenther in preparing the first edition which came out in Basel in 1536. It contained a glowing tribute by Guenther to his young prosector Andreas Vesalius, referring to him as a promising anatomist — the first reference to him in print. That may have given Vesalius some sense of proprietorship which encouraged him to prepare a revised edition without authorisation of his teacher.

The first edition revised by Vesalius was issued in Venice in 1538 in the same small format as the present edition. Cushing, in his bibliography, p. 48, suggests these pocket student manuals were mostly read out of existence, causing their excessive rarity: “This tiny book must have found its way promptly into the hands and pockets of the flock of student-onlookers who were crowding in to see the demonstrations of the young Paduan appointee, and its rarity suggests that the copies became worn out with use.”

“Vesalius’s edition of the Institutiones anatomicae may be said to have fulfilled several purposes. Probably he saw in his revision a fairly simple method of calling attention to himself and, within the framework of Guinter’s treatise, of indicating his anatomical discoveries or revisions which were as yet insufficient to justify a separate work...

“The Institutiones of 1538 gives a truer and more flattering idea of Vesalius’s anatomical development than does the Tabulae published a month earlier” (O’Malley, idem., p. 94, and see pp. 90–94 for a full discussion of the importance of Vesalius’s revisions).

Also in 1538 Vesalius visited Matteo Corti, professor of medicine in Bologna, and discussed the problems of therapy by venesection. Differences of opinion between the two men seem to have been the impulse behind Vesalius’s next book, Epistola docens venam axillarem dextri cubiti in dolore laterali secandam (Basle, 1539), now usually referred to as the venesection letter:


Small 4to, 66 pages (of 68, lacking the final leaf with the printer’s device & colophon, otherwise blank). One full-page woodcut in text. Blank portion of title patched on recto and verso, final few leaves somewhat foxed & stained, but a very good copy. Attractive modern blue morocco, single gilt fillet round sides, spine gilt, red morocco label on spine.

FIRST EDITION of one of the rarest publications by Vesalius, which reveals his growing independence in medical matters, moving away from traditional and authoritarian anatomy in the direction of independent investigation and judgement.

In the beginning of the 16th century, a bitter debate existed concerning where to bleed patients. The Arab tradition taught that blood should be withdrawn as far from the afflicted part as possible. Vesalius advocated the new “classical” method of letting blood near the site of affliction.

“Here, then, is the significance of the Venesection letter. The basis of Vesalius’s theory of bleeding rested not on the authority of the classical physicians but rather upon his
knowledge of the anatomy of the venous system... Vesalius’s presentation of the anatomy and continuity of the vessels carried far more weight than a mere array of authorities, especially when it could be demonstrated, or at least asserted, that the statement of the authorities were in conflict with the true anatomy of the venous system. Henceforth the debate on venesection could be carried on properly only by resort and reference to the dissection table, and it was in line with this idea that Vesalius pondered that question already mentioned, ‘the possibility that anatomical dissection might be used to check speculation’ ” (O’Malley, Andreas Vesalius of Brussels 1514–1564, p. 96).

“Here too he declared clearly, on the basis of vivisection, that cardiac systole was synchronous with arterial expansion and for the first time mentioned his initial efforts in the preparation of the anatomical monograph that was ultimately to take shape as De humani corporis fabrica” (C.D. O’Malley in DSB).

It is often the case that the final leaf, which is blank save for the printer’s device and colophon, is missing, and many copies, including Cushing’s own and the Waller copy, lack it. Cushing, A bio-bibliography of Andreas Vesalius, IV.–1. Cockx-Indestege, Andreas Vesalius. a Belgian census, 22. Parkinson, Breakthroughs, 1539. Norman catalogue 2136.

In 1539 Vesalius’s supply of dissection material became much greater when Marcantonio Contarini, judge of the Paduan criminal court, became interested in his investigations and made the bodies of executed criminals available to him. For the first time Vesalius had sufficient human material to make and to repeat detailed and comparative dissections. As a result he became increasingly convinced that Galen’s description of human anatomy was basically an account of the anatomy of animals in general and was often erroneous insofar as the human body was concerned. During the winter of 1539 he was sufficiently sure of his position to challenge the validity of Galenic anatomy in Padua and shortly thereafter to repeat the challenge in Bologna. In 1540 he began the composition of the Fabrica in its final form; it appeared in 1543, and in many editions thereafter:


2 works in 1 volume (the first in two parts), folio. I: 4 leaves, pp. 510, (46), 10 leaves, including the finely engraved title-page and 223 woodcuts in the text. Title a little spotted in blank margins, occasional very faint dampstaining, but a nice, large copy with many edges uncut. II: 4 leaves, 288 pages and 9 engraved plates. Large woodcut printer’s device on title (occasional light browning). Two important medical works, both nice copies, bound together in modern vellum, ties.

£6000
I. This is the fifth edition of Vesalius’s *Fabrica*. It is the fourth edition to be illustrated and the second to use this set of woodcuts. It is a line-for-line reprint of the 1568 edition, with the addition of a handsomely engraved title-page and a new series of anatomical tables compiled by Fabio Paulo from Rufus and Soranus. These additional tables have a separate title-page giving the date of publication which is absent from the title-page of the first part. The 1604 edition was published by the sons of the publisher of the 1568 edition.

Cushing suggests, and was clearly right, based on evidence in this *sammelband*, that this edition of Vesalius was probably issued to fill the demand for copies created when Fabricius of Aquapendente became professor of anatomy at Padua and made the text required reading.


II. Fabricius’s textbook of surgery was first published in 1617 and described techniques entirely new for that age. It was reprinted many times, even into the 18th century. Fabricius (ca. 1533–1619), was a great professor at Padua, a pupil of Falloppio and teacher of Harvey.

This edition is very rare with no copy listed in OCLC. A “seconda impressione” was issued a year later.
Not until modern times, when an English translation was published by Jeremy Norman & Co, Inc., has the complete Fabrica been printed in any language other than Latin, but various versions have been printed in, among other languages, French...


Folio, pp. (viii), 106, (2), and 40 engraved anatomical plates (1 folding). Printer’s woodcut device on title, repeated on verso of last leaf (otherwise blank), woodcut headpieces and initials, ruled in red throughout. Two very neat restorations in margins of the title and faint traces of two inscriptions erased, folding Adam & Eve plate backed and with two tears neatly repaired without loss, a few small marks and slight browning of the paper. Early eighteenth century vellum over boards. Ownership inscription of Johannes Desprez, 1574, on title.

£24,000

FIRST EDITION IN FRENCH of Vesalius’s Epitome, illustrated with the first anatomical copperplates.

The translation was made by Jacques Grevin who was both a distinguished physician and an accomplished poet, adding a chapter of his own, Brefe Declaration des Parties du Corps Humain. In 1559–1560 he was forced to leave France for England for religious reasons where he was befriended by Queen Elizabeth. Here he probably met Thomas Geminus, who had published a plagiarised edition of Vesalius illustrated with his own copper engravings, the first time that the medium
had been used in an anatomical book. It was probably Grevin who enabled the Parisian printer Christian Wechel to acquire Geminus’s copperplates, as Wechel published an edition of Geminus’s *Compendiosa* in 1564, illustrated with Geminus’s original engravings. Five years later Grevin published the present translation of the Vesalian text, illustrated with the same engravings. Vesalius complained about Geminus’s plagiarism and regarded his engravings as inept, but “in fact Gemini’s copies, though omitting the background to Vesalius’s figures, are very competent technically. Perhaps the best tribute to this competence is the speed with which his copperplates were in turn themselves plagiarized by continental publishers” (ODNB).

Not only were these plates made from the best anatomical illustrations that had ever been published, but Grevin gave prominence to the new technique in the title to this book; it was published not merely with illustrations, but because of them.

Cushing, *A bio-bibliography of Andreas Vesalius*, VI.C.–7 (omitting the last leaf from his collation). Cockx-Idestege, *Andreas Vesalius, a Belgian census*, 56; Durling 2175; Cushing V94; Waller 9915 (all lacking the last leaf). Not in the Wellcome. See G&M 376 (first edition of the *Epitome* of 1543). A fine copy of this beautiful edition, and particularly rare when complete with the final leaf.

... and German:

9. Andreas VESALIUS. Zergliederung deß Menchlichen Cörpers, oder Verfaß der Anatomiae, in so fern dieselbe Mahlern und Bildhauern, ja insgemein allen und jeden Künstlern, welche nach
der Natur, und von Bildern was aufzureissen und zu zeichnen haben; ingleichem auch denen der Medicin und Chirurgie zugethanen sehr dienlich und erwünscht ist. Diese Figuren sind von dem berühmten Mahler Titian gezeichnet. Augspurg: gedruckt und verlegt durch Andreas Maschenbauer, 1723.

Large folio, 14 leaves. With 13 full-page woodcut figures (3 of the skeleton, 8 of the musculature, and the nude male and female figures at the end), and 8 woodcuts of skulls on the last page, typographical headpieces, 1 large woodcut tailpiece. Dampstain on two leaves, and small dampstain in lower corner of two adjacent leaves, some other minor marks or faint foxing. 19th century German speckled boards, spine and edges chipped and worn. Bookplate of Marcel de Meuron, and his pencilled signature on the front free endpaper.

£3400

The second of Maschenbaur’s editions, printed from the original woodblocks cut for the Fabrica and the Epitome.

After the printing of the 1555 Fabrica, Vesalius’s woodblocks cannot be accounted for until they were acquired by the Augsburg publisher Andreas Maschenbauer, who used some of them to illustrate this book, aimed principally at artists, adding at the foot of the title-page that the figures were by Titian. “He was probably unaware of the Calcar tradition and even had he known of it, the name of Titian added to his title-page would certainly have a greater sales value” (Cushing, p. 98). After Maschenbauer’s two editions the blocks were used only twice more, in Leveling’s edition of 1783 and in the Bremer Press edition of 1934, before their destruction a few years later during the war.

This edition by Maschenbauer has two leaves and one full-page woodcut fewer than his first of 1706, but it is much rarer.

Cushing, A bio-bibliography of Andreas Vesalius, VI.A.–13. Cockx-Idestege (Andreas Vesalius, a Belgian census), 39 has the 1706 edition only, as does Blake (but the online catalogue has this edition also); Wellcome has neither edition (in fact Copac finds no copy in the UK). Cushing, of course, had both editions (V87 and V88).

After the publication of the Fabrica, Vesalius decided to relinquish his anatomical studies, and, following a long tradition of imperial service in his family, he applied to the emperor Charles V, the dedicatee of the Fabrica, and received an appointment as physician to the imperial household, a position he held for the next thirteen years. However, he did not give up his interest in anatomy entirely, and travelled to Pisa to give a series of demonstrations and participate in post mortem examinations wherever he could. In 1546, during an extended visit to Regensburg, he wrote a long letter partly concerned with the discovery and therapeutic use of the china root (Chinae radix) in the treatment of syphilis:

10. Andreas VESALIUS. Epistola, rationem modumque propinandi radicis Chynae decocti, quo nuper invictissimus Carolus V. Imperator usus est, pertractans... Basileae [Basel]: [colophon: ex officina Joannis Oporini... 1546].

Small folio, pp. 204, (16). Complete with the errata leaf and the final leaf with the printer’s mark. Woodcut portrait on B1 verso, 3 large historiated initials. Eighteenth century Continental sheep.

Sold

FIRST EDITION. The China root epistle, on the discovery and use of Smilax chines in the treatment of syphilis, is the first attempt to formulate methods of identification of an exotic
drug. It offered for the first time an opportunity for physicians to determine whether or not a drug coming into common use might be adulterated.

The greater part of the book, however, is a defence of Vesalius’s anatomical methods and doctrines as described in the Fabrica. It also contains important biographical information, including Vesalius’s remarks about his teaching at Pisa, his destruction of some of his early manuscripts (a reaction to the reception of the Fabrica), and information concerning his medical forbears. It also contains the only known authentic portrait of Vesalius, previously used in the Fabrica.


During his service with the imperial army Vesalius was able to apply his unrivalled anatomical knowledge to surgery. He learned the emollient treatment of gunshot wounds and other existing surgical techniques from the Italian surgeon Bartolomeo Maggi, as well as going on to develop others. His most notable contribution was the introduction, as early as 1547, of surgically induced drainage of empyema, and he became so proficient in this procedure that he was sufficiently confident of the outcome to recommend it to other surgeons. His account of this operation, written as a letter (1562) to Giovanni Filippo Ingrassia of Sicily, was an outstanding contribution to the surgical literature:

11. Giovanni Filippo INGRASSIA. Quaestio de purgatione per medicamentum, atque obiter etiam De sanguinis missione, An Sexta morbi die fieri possint... Illustrissimi Ducis Terraenovae casus Enarratio, & Curatio. E quibus tum penetrantis in thorace Vulneris, tum Fistulae curandae Methodus elucescit. Quaestio utrum victus a à principio ad statum usque procedere debeat subtiliando, an (ut multi perpetuo observant) potius ingrossando. Quod Veterinaria medicina formaliter una eademque cum nobiliori Hominis medicina sit, materiae duntaxat nobilitate differens... Omnia Nunc primum in unum corpus redacta, in lucem edita... Venetiis [Venice]: sumptibus Angeli Patessii... 1568.

FIRST EDITION of this uncommon book which contains one of the rarest writings of Vesalius — his 1562 consilium to Giovanni Ingrassia, in which Vesalius clearly describes in great detail his surgical operation for empyema. This consilium is particularly important as it is the best evidence we have that Vesalius was an expert surgeon as well as a great anatomist. Although treatment of empyema by surgery was referred to in classical times, it became unfashionable, and Vesalius seems to have been the first in modern times to revive the actual use
of surgery for this illness. His consilium — which appears on pages 92–98 of the second part — was a remarkable piece of surgical writing for his time. Ingrassia’s reply to Vesalius, in which he congratulates him and declares him the first to operate for empyema, is found immediately following, on pages 99–101.

Vesalius’s consilium, dated Christmas 1562 at Madrid, was occasioned by the injury which was sustained in the spring of 1562 by Giovanni, Duke of Terranova, who suffered a penetrating wound of the left chest during a tournament in Palermo. When the Duke failed to respond to Ingrassia’s treatment, the physician circularized the leading physicians of Europe for suggestions and ultimately elicited, in late 1562, Vesalius’s remarkable description of his surgical procedure for treatment of empyema. Ingrassia acknowledged the advice in the following year but declared that he found it unnecessary to employ it since the Duke had finally recovered.

Part II, which contains Vesalius’s consilium, is almost entirely devoted to this case history and gives an interesting picture of medicine of the time. Ingrassia also asked Bartolomeo Eustachi for an opinion and his reply, dated 3 August 1562, appears on pages 5–7.

Ingrassia (ca. 1510–1580), after studying medicine at Palermo and Padua, was called to Palermo in 1556 by the Spanish viceroy of Sicily as protomedicus. In this position, Ingrassia “was concerned for the most part with problems of hygiene, epidemiology, and the general administration of Sicilian medicine. His activities included efforts to suppress quackery, to control the pharmaceutical trade, and to improve
the conditions in hospitals... Ingrassia was responsible for the establishment of one of the first sanitary codes and a council of public health. He was also a founder of the study of legal medicine... Ingrassia is best known for his anatomical studies, admittedly based upon the methods and procedures of Vesalius, for whom he expressed the greatest admiration” (D.S.B., VII, pp. 16–17).

The other sections of the book are concerned with purgative remedies, blood-letting, and other medical topics.


Another consilium by Vesalius was printed in a collection of observations and cases by a Dutch physician, Pieter van Foreest:


FIRST EDITION of this uncommon book, especially notable for containing on pages 694–696 the first printing of one of the six consilia (consultations) by Vesalius which survive. “In the latter part of June 1556 a young student at Louvain, Augustine Teyling, son of the treasurer of the Duke of Egmont, was afflicted with severe fever and nosebleed which he survived, although as recorded it was found that his legs had been seriously weakened. Probably at the suggestion of the eminent Dutch physician Pieter van Foreest, a relative of the patient, Vesalius’s opinion was sought on this case — which, on the basis of statements in his consilium, remotely suggests bacterial meningitis. This was a problem beyond the therapeutic skill of that age, yet astonishingly the patient did recuperate sufficiently to continue his studies in France and Italy although he never regained full use of his legs” (O’Malley, Andreas Vesalius of Brussels 1514–1564, pp. 266–267).

Foreest (1522–1597) “studied medicine in Italy and was a pupil and colleague of Vesalius... He was a prolific writer and began publishing his Observationes et curationes series in 1588. At the time of his death, this comprehensive series on diseases numbered thirty-two books. It was his practice to issue three or four books at a time, and the first seven books had already been published before this work, containing the eighth through tenth books, appeared. This work is primarily devoted to diseases of the head... The tenth book contains a
rare consilium (letter of consultation) from Vesalius to Foreest concerning a serious case of nosebleed in a young man” (Heirs of Hippocrates 328).

In these three books, Foreest describes many “head” diseases including mental illness, epilepsy, stroke, etc. He describes a case of hysteria and a case of lycanthropy (“wolf-madness”) as well as skin diseases in relation to the head.


With the abdication of Charles V in 1555, Vesalius took service with his son Philip II of Spain as physician to the Netherlanders at the Spanish court, and from time to time to the king himself. He remained in Spain from 1559 until the year of his death. Towards the end of 1561 Vesalius completed a long reply to the Observationes Anatomicae (1561) of Gabriele Falloppio, which had been sent to him by the author the preceding summer. Vesalius’s reply, later published under the title of Anatomicarum Gabrielis Falloppii observationum examen (Venice, 1564), is partly a defence against Falloppio’s respectful criticisms and partly an acceptance of them.

In 1564 Vesalius left Spain for a trip to the Holy Land. On the return voyage his ship was delayed by a violent storm, finally reaching the Greek island of Zákinthos (Zante) in October, where he died and was buried in an unmarked grave.

A few years after Vesalius’s death appeared the surgical work to which he may, or may not, have made a considerable contribution:

13. Prospero BORGARUCCI. Andreae Vessalii Bruxellensis...Chirurgia Magna in septem libros digesta: in qua nihil desiderari potest, quod ad perfectam, atque integram de curandis humani corporis malis, methodum pertineat. Ab...Prospero Borgarutio, recognita, emendata, ac in lucem edita... Venetiis [Venice]: Ex officina Valgrisiana. 1568 [colophon: 1569].

Small 8vo, ff. (xxviii), 475, (1). With the last two preliminary leaves (c7–8, both blank), printer’s device on title and on verso of last leaf (otherwise blank), 23 full-page woodcut illustrations in the text including 4 of the human skeleton, the ‘wound man’, the battle scene, and instruments. Contemporary vellum (endpapers renewed, lacking ties), spine lettered boldly in ink “Chirurgia Vesal”, gauffered edges. Small stamp removed from title-page leaving a slight scar, light browning or foxing (a little heavier in four gatherings). Some early manuscript marginal notes mostly in the “Antidotarium”.

£10,500
FIRST EDITION, second issue, with the date “V. nonas Octobris 1568” at the end of the dedication and a slightly altered title. It states on the title-page that this book was written by Vesalius and edited by Prospero Borgarucci, who was professor at the university at Padua and formerly a pupil of Vesalius.

Although its authenticity has been in question since even before it was published, the Chirurgia Magna was included by Boerhaave and Albinus in the collected works of Vesalius, and it does contain the text of the Epitome. However, it is now seen as not having been written by Vesalius, although it should be remembered that Vesalius had actually taught surgery in Paris and had intended to write a book on the subject.

“That the ‘Surgery’ edited by Borgarucci is not the work which Vesalius intended to write on surgery is absolutely certain. However, one may properly suggest that what Borgarucci bought in Paris and edited and published may have been the class notes of some pupils of Vesalius. The custom of publishing students’ notes as the posthumous works of famous lectures was very common, even in the Italy of the Renaissance... Today we may pass judgment on his [i.e. Borgarucci’s] work as being neither correct nor opportune nor authentic, but we cannot with absolute certainty deny Borgarucci the good intention of contributing to the greater glory of Vesalius” (Arturo Castiglioni in Cushing, A bio-bibliography of Andreas Vesalius, pp. 216–217.

FINIS