
The Illustrations in the *De Dissectione Partium Corporis Humani Libri Tres* (1545) of Charles Estienne (1504-1564)

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The use of woodcuts to illustrate books concerning human anatomy developed during the first half of the sixteenth century. The most famous of these books is the *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* of Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564) published in 1543; the illustrations in this book may be the work of Jan Stephan van Calcar (1499-1546?). A less well-known book, the *De dissectione partium corporis humani libri tres* of Charles Estienne (1504-1564), was published in 1545. Although the *De dissectione* was published two years later than Vesalius's book, it was of a somewhat earlier date. Charles Estienne stated in the preface of the *De dissectione* that it was printed through one half of its third and last book by 1539, when a lawsuit forced the printing to cease. Estienne de La Rivière (d. 1569) brought this suit against Charles Estienne, and it concerned the ownership of the book being printed. The title of the *De dissectione* credits La Rivière with the composition of figures and expositions of incisions; the preface mentions his aid in both the drawings and in the accounts of dissections. The suit was settled, and the *De dissectione* was finally published in 1545. A French translation was published one year later.¹

The *De dissectione* contains 62 full page woodcuts and 100 smaller woodcuts. There are 56 different full page cuts among the 62; two are repeated three times each, and two are repeated two times each. Book one contains 17 (15 different) full page cuts, which depict full length skeletons and full length male figures displaying such parts as bones, nerves, muscles, veins and arteries, and names of parts. Book two contains 31 full page cuts that depict full length male figures displaying the interior parts of the trunk, neck, and head. In the third book there are ten full page cuts showing a woman with her female organs exposed,

and it also contains 100 smaller cuts that are within the body of the text. The smaller cuts follow the text and plates that describe the female parts and portray the eye (six), the individual muscles (91) and a figure representing the ideal movement of the head muscles, and the spinal medulla (two). The smaller cuts of the muscles are keyed by number to the repetition of four full page cuts, which are also found in book one.

Eleven of the 62 full page plates in the *De dissectione* bear markings. The first woodcut contains a plaque, which hangs from a bush in the background, that bears the letters SR. The letters presumably represent Stephanus Riverius (Estienne de La Rivière), who was credited with contributing to the book. Another plate bears a small cross of Lorraine adjacent to its lower border. This cross has been identified as the mark of Geoffrey Tory (1480-1533) or his shop. Tory was an artist and typographer who is known to have been associated after 1522 with Simon de Colines (d. 1546), publisher of the *De dissectione* and stepfather of Charles Estienne. The printer's mark on the title page also bears this cross. Five plates bear a mark associated with Mercure Jollat (fl. 1530). This mark is the symbol for the planet Mercury, and it occurs either alone or replaces the J in Jollat followed by all or part of the surname. Four other plates bear both the cross of Lorraine and the symbol of Jollat, and these bear the dates 1530, 1531, 1532, and 1532. The SR appears on the first plate of book one, the five crosses appear on plates in book one, and the symbols for Jollat occur on plates in all three books.⁷

One feature makes the illustrations in the *De dissectione* unique among early sixteenth century illustrations in anatomy books. Many of the full page plates indicate that the original woodblock had been modified before the printing of the woodcuts. A central portion of varying size was removed from the woodblock, a new piece of wood inserted, and this new piece then cut to match the original surrounding block. None of the 17 plates in book one indicate that the woodblocks had been modified. Of the 31 plates in book two, all but two indicate alteration. At least seven of these have a second smaller insertion, which is not connected with the larger insertion and represents an anatomical part associated with the parts depicted in the larger inset. Of the 10 full-page plates depicting females in the third book, eight have insets, and one of these has a second smaller inset.⁸ There seems to be no record of a printing of the unaltered woodcuts.

The original, unaltered woodcuts probably depicted anatomical figures. Around the edges of some of the new insertions can be seen the remains of the original illustrations of anatomical parts.⁴ The remains of the original illustrations that appear in cuts in book two possibly indicate that the original illustrations depicted figures in which the skin that covered the trunk was pulled down over the thighs and up over the shoulders. This manner of revealing the internal parts can be seen in such illustrations as the woodcuts in a 1541 edition of an anatomical treatise by Mondino dei Luzzi (d. 1326).⁹ A 1557 publication, *Les figures et portraits des parties du corps humain*, included the full page plates from the *De dissectione* but not the text. Three additional plates were included, which show the relation of the planets and the zodiacal signs to the different parts of the body. However, they bear markings similar to the plates in the *De dissectione*: Two have both the cross of Lorraine, the symbol of Jollat, and the date 1533, while the third has the cross and the date 1533. The two frontal views of the three figures depict the internal organs of the body with the skin removed in the same manner as the remains of the original cuts that can be seen in the altered woodcuts of the *De dissectione*.⁶

An English physician, Charles Ernest Kellett, has suggested that Rosso de' Rossi (1496-1541), who came to France from Florence, was

involved in the production of the illustrations. Kellett has shown that some of the females depicted in book three of the *De dissectione* are strikingly similar in position to the females in a series of engravings taken from two drawings by Rosso and 18 drawings by Perino del Vaga (1500-1547).⁷ Kellett has also suggested that the series of figures depicted in book two was "drawn by Rosso and based on Mondino."⁸ There are no identifying marks on the plates in the *De dissectione* to support these ideas.

The exact rôle of Charles Estienne, Estienne de La Rivière, Geoffroy Tory, Mercure Jollat, and Rosso de' Rossi in the production of the illustrations in the *De dissectione* is not clear; information derived from markings on the woodcuts themselves does not solve this complex historical problem. The study of the illustrations in the *De dissectione* will help determine the respective rôles of the artist, anatomist, and publisher in the important developments that occurred in anatomy during the sixteenth century.

NOTES AND LITERATURE CITED

¹Andreas Vesalius, *Andreae Vesalii Bruxellensis, Scholae Medicorum Patavinae Professoris, De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* (Basileae: [Ex officina Ioannis Oporini, 1543]). Charles Estienne, *De dissectione partium corporis humani libri tres, à Carolo Stephano, Doctore Medico, editi. Vnà cum figuris, & incisionum declarationibus à Stephano Riuerio Chirurgo compositis* (Parisiis: Apud Simonem Colinaeum, 1545); cited hereafter as *De dissectione*. See *De dissectione*, pp. *i.j. recto et verso. Charles Estienne, *La dissection des parties du corps humain diuisee en trois liures, faitz par Charles Estienne Docteur en Medecine: Avec les figures & declaration des incisions, composees par Estienne de La Riviere Chirurgien* (Paris: Simon de Colines, 1546); cited hereafter as *La dissection*. For information on the lawsuit see: Joseph François Malgaigne, *Surgery and Ambroise Paré*, trans. and ed. Wallace B. Hamby (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, [1965]), p. 247; Charles Ernest Kellett, "Two Anatomies," *Medical History*, VIII, (1964), 350. For information on Charles Estienne and his anatomical work see: William Mills Ivins, "What about the *Fabrica* of Vesalius?," *Three Vesalian Essays to Accompany the "Icones anatomicae of 1934"* ("The History of Medicine Series," No. 11; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952), pp. 45-99; Charles Ernest Kellett, "Sylvius and the Reform of Anatomy," *Medical History*, V(1961), 101-16; Erich Lau, *Charles Estienne (Biographie und Bibliographie)* (Wertheim a. M.: E. Bechstein, 1930); Gernot Rath, "Charles Estienne, Anatom im Schatten Vesals," *Sudhoffs Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften*, XXXIX (1953), 85-43; Gernot Rath, "Charles Estienne: Contemporary of Vesalius," *Medical History*, VIII (1964), 354-59.

²The following markings appear on plates in the *De dissectione*: p. [*i.] recto, cross; p. 13, S.R.; p. 149, cross; p. 150, cross, Mercury plus *ollat*, and 1532; p. 151, cross, Mercury plus *ollat*, and 1532; p. 154[156], cross, Mercury, and 1530; p. 155[157], cross, Mercury plus *ollA*, and 1531; p. 198, Mercury plus *oll.*; p. 236, Mercury plus *ollA*; p. 239, Mercury (on tree trunk?); p. 267, Mercury; p. 279, Mercury. The woodcuts in the *De dissectione* and *La dissection* are the same except the writing on the plates is in Latin in one and in French in the other and the pagination is different. *La dissection* contains two cuts in the first book that are not in the *De dissectione*: p. 11, cross, Mercury; p. 13, cross, Mercury plus *ollat*, and 1532. For Tory see: Elizabeth Armstrong, *Robert Estienne Royal Printer: An Historical Study of the Elder Stephanus* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1954), p. 9; William Mills Ivins, "Geoffroy Tory," *Prints and Books: Informal Papers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), pp. [52]-64. For Jollat see: "Jollat, Jean (oder Mer-

cure?)." *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart begründet von Ulrich Thieme und Felix Becker*, ed. Hans Vollmer, Vol. XIX (Leipzig: E. A. Seeman, 1926), 104.

*Woodcuts in book two that have not been altered are: *De dissectione*, pp. 237, 250. Woodcuts in book two that clearly have a second inset are: *De dissectione*, pp. 180, 196, 210, 221, 224, 239, 241. Woodcuts of females in book three that have not been altered are: *De dissectione*, pp. 285, 287. The woodcut in book three that has a second inset is: *De dissectione*, p. 279.

*Estienne, *De dissectione*, pp. 168, 175, 180, 196, 208, 210, 253, 270.

*Mondino dei Luzzi, *Anatomia Mvndini, ad vetustissimorum, erudemque aliquot manu scriptorum, codicum fidem collata, iustoque suo ordini restituta. Per Ioannem Dryandrum Medicum Professorem Marpurgensem. Adiectae sunt, quarumcunque partium corporis, ad utuum expressae figurae. Adsunt & scholia non inducta, quae prolixorum commentariorum unice esse possunt* (Marpvrgi: In officinia Christiani Egenolphi, [1541]).

*The information concerning [Charles Estienne], *Les figures et portraits des parties du corps humain* (Paris: Iagues Keruer, 1557), and *Les figures et portraits des parties du corps humain* (Paris: Iagues Keruer, 1575) was taken from Harvey Williams Cushing, *A Bio-bibliography of Andreas Vesalius* (2d ed.; Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1962), pp. 33-39; the following markings occur on the three added plates in *Les figures* (1557): p. A 1 verso, cross, 1533; p. A 6 recto, cross, Mercury, 1533; p. A 6 verso, cross, Mercury, 1533.

*Charles Ernest Kellett, "A Note on Rosso and the Illustrations to Charles Estienne's *De dissectione*," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, XII (1957), 325-36; Charles Ernest Kellett, "Perino del Vaga et les illustrations pour l'anatomie d'Estienne," *Aesculape*, XXXVII (1955), [74]-89. For Rosso de' Rossi see: Ludwig Choulant, *History and Bibliography of Anatomic Illustration*, trans. and annotated by Mortimer Frank (Reprint of rev. ed.; New York: Hafner Publishing Company, [1962]), pp. 113-14; Giorgio Vasari, *Vasari's Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, trans. and annotated by Mrs. Jonathan Foster, Vol. III (London: George Bell and Sons, 1895), 304-24.

*Kellett, *Medical History*, VIII, 347. Also see: Charles Ernest Kellett, *Medical Illustration and the School of Fontainebleau* ([Newcastle upon Tyne: King's College Printing Section, 1957]); Charles Ernest Kellett, *Two Anatomies: An Occasional Lecture on the "De dissectione" of Charles Estienne Given to the University of Durham Dental Students on the 8th May, 1958* ([Newcastle upon Tyne: King's College Printing Section, 1958]); Choulant, pp. 152-55. Choulant, p. 152, stated (trans. Frank): "It is said that P. Woelriot is the author of several drawings [of the *De dissectione*], but this is impossible if the latter was born in 1532. One should perhaps much rather suggest Jean Cousin or Maître Roux (Rosso) or Jean Goujon, that is to say, masters of the Renaissance."