

Religion and Anatomy in John Banister's *The Historie of Man* (1578)¹

Johnathan H. Pope
McMaster University, Canada

Abstract

The growing field of body criticism has expanded our understanding of the early modern body. Critics, however, have paid relatively little attention to the importance and role of Christianity in interpreting that body. Additionally, English anatomists have often been ignored in favor of their European counterparts. By examining John Banister's anatomical textbook *The Historie of Man* (1578), this paper argues that Banister and other English anatomists from the period understood and described their work from within the context of Christian narratives. Although English anatomical textbooks have often been dismissed as unoriginal and derivative, the Christian perspectives found in their descriptions of the body and even their images demonstrate the importance of the English example beyond the narrative of anatomical innovation.

Keywords

John Banister, *The Historie of Man*, anatomy, anatomical figures, dissection, Christianity, divine logic, devotion, Thomas Geminus, early modern, body criticism.

Published in 1578, John Banister's *The Historie of Man* was one of the very first English anatomical texts that employed a post-Vesalian approach to the human body. This text contains just five full-page images—two skeletons, two 'musclemen' or skinless figures, and one depiction of the tools of the anatomist's trade—

¹ I would like to thank Mary V. Silcox for her helpful feedback on early versions of this article. In addition, I would like to thank the referees at *LATCH* for their valuable input.

and critics have rarely commented on these images.² The historian David Cressy, for example, identifies the image that opens Banister's anatomy, a skeleton holding a shovel (Fig. 1), as a representation of death in his study *Birth, Marriage, and Death* (1997) but does not discuss it (Cressy 378). Although this image does in fact represent death, it does so within a devotional context that emphasizes death as the beginning of everlasting life. Anatomical explorations of the body ended at the bone after the laborious peeling away of flesh and organs. Consequently, a bare skeleton could also represent another kind of death—the end of the anatomist's journey, the death of intellectual investigation. Banister, however, *begins* his text with the image of the skeleton, a text that makes numerous references to the Christian belief in Judgment Day and the resurrection of the body. The skeleton, then, represents death as both an end *and* a beginning, tapping into late sixteenth-century corporeal and Christian narratives simultaneously. These Christian narratives cannot be dissociated from other early modern English intellectual paradigms, and the narrative of the body is no exception. As we will see, Christianity provided the context for corporeality during this period, and Banister draws heavily on religious understandings of the body and integrates biblical narratives into his discussions in his *Historie*. Although Banister has been marginalized in body criticism because he offered little to the advancement of anatomical knowledge, his work represents the emergence of a particularly English post-Vesalian narrative of the body that combines religion and anatomy. In part, this article fits into the larger critical project currently taking place that reasserts the centrality of religion in early modern culture and explores its pervasiveness. This approach has been championed by scholars such as Debora Shuger in response to what she sees as the anachronistic secularization of the period in contemporary criticism:

Religion during this period supplies the primary language of analysis. It is the cultural matrix for explorations of virtually every topic [. . . which are] not masked by religious

² A few small images also appear in the margins of Banister's text, such as a depiction of the "unnamed cartilage" in his discussion of the larynx (Banister 16).

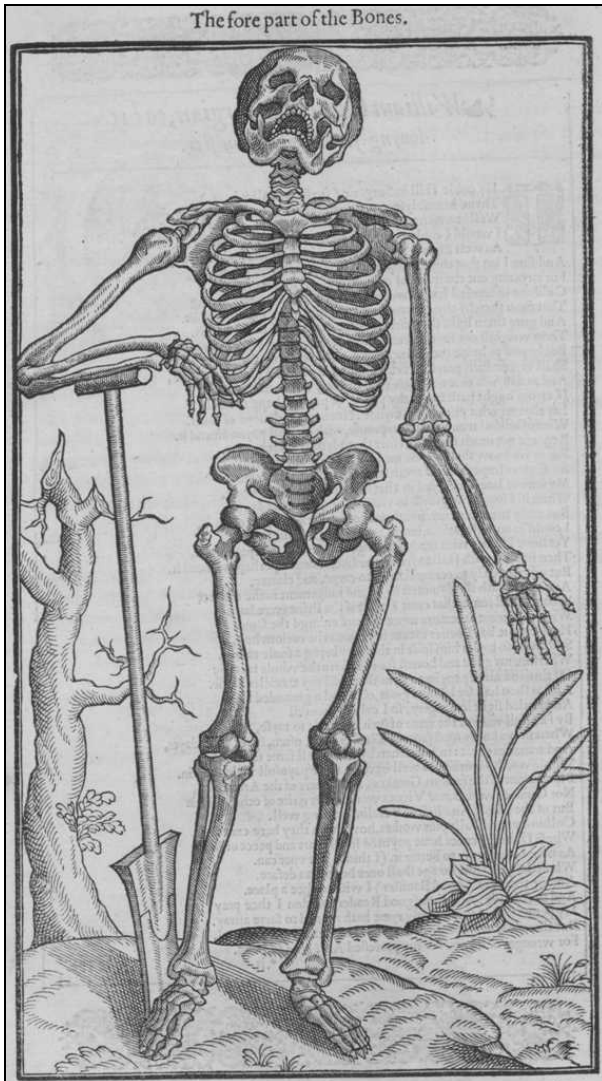


Fig. 1: Banister, *Historie* (1578) "The fore part of the Bones," p. *iv. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

religious discourse but articulated in it. [. . .] That is what it means to say that the English Renaissance was a religious culture, not simply a culture whose members generally were religious.

(Shuger, *Habits of Thought* 6)

As she notes, much of modern scholarship "brackets off religious materials from cultural analysis and vice versa," a division that tends to ignore the fact that "the Bible remained the primary locus for a good deal of what we might classify as cultural, psychological, or anthropological reflection" (Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible* 2, 4). Shuger emphasizes that early modern English culture could accommodate (sometimes drastic) differences of opinion, often within the same person or text and without being perceived as conflictual.

Many critics have examined early modern anatomical work as the beginning of the split between religion and science, but this approach ignores the frequent attempts made by anatomists, particularly English anatomists, throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to view their work as part of a religious narrative. Critics have frequently asserted the centrality of Christian perspectives to early modern English culture and the formation of identity, even if they have not been quick to explore this influence in detail, particularly as it relates to the body. Indeed, commenting on the "ever-expanding body of body criticism," Maurizio Calbi notes that contemporary interest in the early modern body

has already produced a number of critical works focusing on bodies as disparate as 'bodies tremulous,' 'bodies single-sexed,' 'bodies enclosed,' 'bodies intestinal,' 'bodies consumed,' 'bodies carnivalized,' 'bodies effeminized,' 'bodies embarrassed,' 'bodies sodomized,' 'bodies emblazoned or dissected,' 'bodies castrated,' or simply 'in parts.'

(Calbi xiii)

To this list I might also add (at least) 'bodies dismembered' and

'bodies politicized.'³ However, 'bodies religious' or 'bodies devotional' are noticeably absent from Calbi's succinct overview of 'body criticism,' or any subsequent lists we might make. The result is a critical paradox, a concurrent recognition of the importance of religion in understanding both the self and the body and a failure to address the nature of that importance. Cynthia Marshall emphasizes that

the idea of dissolving or destroying selfhood was a desirable goal within orthodox religious discourse. [. . .] In its strongest form, dissolving the self through submission to God is actually constitutive of identity. [. . .] We need to keep in mind the extent to which religious discourse shaped ideas about the body and the self in the early modern era and how regularly both Protestant and Catholic churches encouraged individual humility, submission to authority, and incorporation within the community.

(Marshall 20)⁴

Likewise, in his article on Shakespearean entrails, David Hillman suggests that, "Religion has always positioned the body's inner realm as the ultimate site of faith" (Hillman "Visceral Knowledge," 85). In both Marshall and Hillman, religion occupies an important role in the formation of identity and in the understanding of the body, but such assertions remain vague and undeveloped. They offer some further comments on the subject as a matter of establishing context rather than exploring the connection itself.

³ Respectively, Margaret E. Owens, *Stages of Dismemberment: The Fragmented Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Drama* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005); Susanne Scholz, *Body Narratives: Writing the Nation and Fashioning the Subject in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Kate Cregan, "Early Modern Anatomy and the Queen's Body Natural: The Sovereign Subject" in *Body & Society* 13:2 (2007), pp. 47-66.

⁴ See also Jonathan Sawday, "Self and Selfhood in the Seventeenth Century" in *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present*. Roy Porter, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1997). Marshall's comments stem from her discussion of Sawday's article.

The same can be said of Sawday as well, who, although he presents a more sustained focus on the Christianized understanding of corporeality than do most critics, offers this discussion as a context for his emphasis on the emergence of the mechanistic Cartesian body, which he argues displaced the religious understanding of the body in the mid-seventeenth century (Sawday 98). Since the publication of Sawday's *The Body Emblazoned* (1995), critics have frequently followed his cue, reiterating his argument about the emergence of the Cartesian body.⁵

The Christianized elements of anatomical textbooks from this period have not been entirely ignored by critics, but they have rarely been discussed in substantial detail or in relation to English anatomists. Andrew Cunningham's *The Anatomical Renaissance* (1997) and Roger French's *Dissection and Vivisection in the European Renaissance* (1999) both address the connections between theology and anatomy to an extent, but their work is focused on continental Europe. French, for example, argues that continental anatomists rarely engaged in specific theological debates and that "anatomists very rarely cite the authority of the Scriptures, the Church fathers or theologians" (French 10, 129). However, this was not the case for many English anatomists. Cunningham goes further by suggesting that the resurgence of anatomy during the late medieval and early modern periods can be connected to the rise of Protestant self-analysis, but he focuses primarily on parallel methods of inquiry through particular case studies, comparing, for example, Vesalius's and Martin Luther's approaches to the self in order to suggest the influence of the Reformation on continental anatomy (Cunningham 236). He argues against separating religion and science "into two piles" and asserts that "It is time to attempt to put the religion back into sixteenth century anatomizing" (Cunningham 202, 208). Although I wholeheartedly agree with this statement, and as valid and rewarding as the work of Cunningham and French is, their conclusions cannot be imposed in total onto England. It is obvious but necessary to note that sixteenth-century

⁵ For two of the most recent examples, see Richard Sugg, *Murder After Death: Literature and Anatomy in Early Modern England* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2007); Peter Mitchell, *The Purple Island and Anatomy in Early Seventeenth-Century Literature, Philosophy, and Theology* (Madison; Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007).

Padua was not sixteenth- or seventeenth-century London. Some critics have done excellent work in connecting religious narratives to specific body parts or processes, most notably the work done on the heart by Robert A. Erickson and William W. E. Slights, but we still lack a comprehensive examination of the relationship between religion and corporeality in early modern England.⁶

In addition, relatively little work has been done on the early modern English anatomists themselves, which complicates the argument in favour of a growing divide between science and religion. Certainly, the names of John Banister and some of his fellow anatomists such as Helkiah Crooke and William Harvey flit in and out of the critical literature on the body, but normally only as a backdrop, and these writers have rarely received a sustained focus on their work as both anatomists *and* authors. This is quite possibly due to the very nature of their work. Early modern anatomical texts tend to be meticulously indexed and partitioned into books and sections just as the body itself is parsed and divided, designed to act as a reference book to be consulted for information about a specific body part, illness, or procedure. This layout invites the twenty-first century reader to dip into these texts haphazardly, to turn to relevant sections and consequently dissociate them from the whole. Furthermore, even the most unscientific reader will find it difficult not to judge the findings of these anatomists through our own knowledge about the body, such as the many now-antiquated notions about procreation and birth that persisted throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, if we continue to approach these texts in this way, fragmenting them, then we will continue to miss the authors themselves as they appear in their own work

When reading texts from the period, it is important to keep in mind that it is impossible to separate religion from the fabric of early modern English society. The residue of Christian beliefs were everywhere and constituted many—or most—of the unquestioned and even unspoken truths that informed the way people thought about themselves, their lives, and the world around them. Silence

⁶Robert A. Erickson, *The Language of the Heart, 1600-1750* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997); William W. E. Slights, *The Heart in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

on issues of religion or a failure to discuss the connection between a particular idea and Christianity was not an indication of a lack of faith or an implied profession of atheism—some things were such commonly held beliefs that they simply did not need to be articulated. This was no less the case for the anatomist. Today, we normally think of science and religion as two separate entities often locked in a contentious relationship. However, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Christianity formed the basis of many scientific beliefs, and it was not uncommon for anatomists to force their findings into conformity with their religion or, in cases where findings and faith were incompatible, to favour a biblical interpretation over their own observations. In fact, the Bible was often viewed as a text to be read in conjunction with classical or contemporary sources such as Galen, Aristotle, and Vesalius as a guide to understanding the body, and it is often cited as such by the anatomists themselves. To read early modern English anatomical textbooks from Banister's *Historie of Man* (1578) to Crooke's *Mikrokosmographia* (1615) to Samuel Collins's *A Systeme of Anatomy* (1685) is to read repeated efforts by these anatomists to consolidate corporeal and Christian narratives. As Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford point out, "One of the great strengths of religious doctrine was its virtual immunity from empirical contradiction; theological truths were not considered susceptible to disproof in the same way that scientific theories might be overturned" (Mendelson and Crawford 33-34). Consequently, when religious theories influenced medical theories they became very resilient, and corporeal parts such as bodily fluids were revered in humoral medicine as well as religion. Early modern anatomies regularly connected the blood to the soul and the essence of life, a connection that itself has biblical roots.⁷ I do not think it would be

⁷ Some commonly cited passages were: Genesis 9:4 ("But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat"); Leviticus 17:12 ("Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood"); Leviticus 17:14 ("For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off"); Deuteronomy 12:23 ("Only

an overstatement to say that in early modern England, the body belonged as much to religion as it did to natural philosophy.

When *The Historie of Man* was published in 1578, it marked a turning point in English anatomical work away from Galenic anatomy and humoral medicine (although both still played a significant role in Banister's work and the anatomists that followed him for many years to come) and toward more modern, Vesalian-style anatomical work. Although Vesalius's work had been available in various forms throughout the mid- to late-sixteenth century, Banister was among the first English anatomists to produce a text based on the application of these new methodologies. The authorities cited by Banister in the text and marginalia run the gamut from the ancients (Galen, Aristotle, Hippocrates) to his continental contemporaries (Vesalius, Renaldus Columbus, Leonhart Fuchs). Although Banister recognizes the authority of Vesalius, "whose skilfulnes in matters Anathomically no man neglecteth," he describes Vesalius's work as "tedious" (Banister 102^r, Aiv^v). Instead, Banister expresses a clear preference for Columbus, Vesalius's student and rival, whom he praises for being "nothyng terrified with the face of their [Galen and Vesalius's] authoritie," and Banister commonly defers to Columbus in matters of debate (Banister 103^r). Indeed, the painting *The visceral lecture delivered by John Banister Aged 48, 1581* (c. 1581) depicts Banister lecturing over a newly-opened corpse and reading from Columbus' *De re anatomica* (Cregan 58), and "sayth Collumbus" is a frequent refrain throughout the text. Despite his preference for Columbus, Banister proclaims that his goal is not to simply regurgitate the findings of one particular anatomist but rather to pick "from all their Gardens" (Banister Aiv^v) in order to provide a comprehensive survey of the profession, noting that "no English Authour" has compiled a satisfactory anatomy up to this point (Banister Aiv^v). Although Richard Sugg is correct, in a sense, in asserting that Banister's *Historie* was "not original," and Banister's name certainly is not connected to any major anatomical innovations or discoveries, Banister offered a heretofore missing English voice navigating the new anatomy, confirming or refuting accepted theories and discoveries for the reader based on his own

be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh").

observations (Sugg 221, note 4).

Banister's 'originality' — if such a concept is wholly relevant in a culture that regularly praised the reworking of familiar narratives and themes—lies in his presentation of the new anatomy to an English readership, which in itself was not without controversy. In 1577, Thomas Vicary's 1548 pre-Vesalian anatomical text *Anatomie of Mans Body*, based primarily on Galenic theory, was reprinted in a "newly reuyued, corrected" form by the surgeons of St. Bartholomew's hospital in Smithfield and dedicated to Queen Elizabeth and Sir Roland Hayward, president of the hospital (Vicary, title page). Although Vicary's *Anatomie* was originally published in 1548, the surgeons of St. Bartholomew's saw fit to reprint the text with very few corrections or changes, an indication of the lasting appeal of Vicary's ideas thirty years later. Vicary's work, they say, is "grounded vpon reason and experience, which are two principal rootes of Physicke and Surgerie" (Vicary, iv^r), and they offer it to help "defende agaynst the rauening lawes of enuious Backbiters, which neuer cease by all vnlawful meanes to blemishe and deface the workes of the learned, expert, and well disposed persons" (Vicary, v^v-vi^r). If the surgeons at St. Bartholomew's hospital reprinted Vicary's text as a response to the emerging trends and challenges in anatomy, then Banister's work would likely have been seen as the opposition. Banister's impact on English anatomy is noted by the early seventeenth-century anatomist Helkiah Crooke, who describes Banister as a patriot and an "ingenuous old man" in *Mikrokosmographia* (Crooke 26). Following the publication of Banister's *Historie*, English anatomical texts employing post-Vesalian methodology began to appear with increasing frequency.

Critical discussions of Banister's *Historie* are normally quite concise. Banister appears in many works on the history of the body, but normally only briefly as a footnote to other anatomists and the reference is often focused on his refusal to write about female genitalia.⁸ When Banister begins his discussion of the

⁸Andrea Carlino, *Books of the Body: Anatomical Ritual and Renaissance Learning*. Translated by John Tedeschi and Anne C. Tedeschi. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 58-59; Richard Sugg, *Murder After Death: Literature and Anatomy in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), pp. 2, 40, 44, note 104 on p. 237; Katherine

generative parts, he draws on biblical determinism: "euen from the beginning, the almighty creator made ii. men: the Male, to reach out the effectuall begynnyng of generation: the Female, aptly to conceiue the same, and to nourish the infant begotten of that matter. To the which giftes, both the man, and the woman, obtaine fit, and peculiar instrumentes" (Banister 85^r). Even though reproduction requires both men and women, the male is granted the active, "effectuall begynnyng of generation" whereas the female passively receives that active property and nourishes it with her body. Life travels from man into woman because "the omnipotent maker hath given a member [to men] [. . .] most fit for the effusion of seede into the wombe," and, like Vicary, Banister describes sperm as comprised of "the best portion of the blood, and spirite" (Banister 87^r-87^v). However, although he describes male genitalia in his text, Banister says that he will not write about women's generative organs because, "by lifyng up the vayle of Natures secretes, in womens shapes, I shall commit most indecencie agaynst the office of Decorum" (Banister 88^v). Whereas the penis is discussed in terms of the divine will of God, an aura of lewdness, indecency, shame, and sexual danger surrounds the female genitals so much for Banister that he cannot bring himself to describe them. This is, of course, a somewhat puzzling declaration from a man responsible for dissecting human bodies, and his refusal hints at a broader, non-scientific frame of reference.

Banister begins *The Historie of Man* by offering an explicitly Christian framework for his text. He says that his book is for the practical use of godly surgeons and, in the case of the general reader, for "the obtainyng of a better mynde in Christ Iesu" (Banister Aiii^v). Banister hopes that through his work,

Rowe, "'God's Handy Worke': Divine Complicity and the Anatomist's Touch" in David Hillman and Carla Mazzio, eds. *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 288, 292; William W. E. Slights, *The Heart in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 101, 135; Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 186-187; David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 39-40.

we may seeke the aduauncement of the glory of God, in
healyng our afflicted brethren, whereto his diuine power
shall (so oft as it pleaseth him) suborne, and appoynt us
Ministers, that (I say) with the testimonie of a cleare
conscience, we may render out vauntaged talentes unto the
high Auditour, in the day of commying, which, we know
not how nere, approacheth.

(Banister Bir)

Banister sees healing as a religious service to God, one that he envisions the surgeon and anatomist performing even at Judgment Day, helping God sort the sinners from the virtuous Christians through their privileged ability to literally look inside another person. The spiritual omnipotence of God is mirrored by the corporeal omnipotence of the surgeon through his role as a "minister" of God. Given this association that he establishes, it is not surprising that Banister calls the surgeon a "Godly Artist" (Banister Bir). In contrast, he addresses false surgeons "ye Impes of Hell," and informs them that "all the true professours of Christ Jesus, and who carefully endeouour Godly to discharge their functions, do cry for vengeaunce from heauen upon you" (Banister Bir). Additionally, Banister also represents aspects of the bodily interior as a religious text. Commenting on the necessity for the anatomist to memorize the bones in the body, Banister writes,

And this doctrine of the iountes, and composition of bones,
I doubt not (after you haue once entred into the midst
therof) but you wilbe moved to thirst, in delite of often
readyng the same, and neuer cease till such tyme, as you
haue made is as perfect as the Pater noster.

(Banister 4^r)

Banister represents the bones as the Lord's Prayer, recited by the surgeon-minister as a religious text; the anatomist does his service to God through his corporeal work, increasing our knowledge of God's design in the body and preaching to those below him.

Such a perspective was not without precedence in early modern English anatomical texts. In 1577, a reprinting of Thomas Vicary's now lost 1548 text *Anatomie of Mans Body* appeared, just one year

prior to Banister's *Historie*. Although Vicary's work—which is indebted to humoral medicine and pre-Vesalian anatomy—is methodologically dissimilar to Banister's work, he shares with Banister a Christianized perspective on the human body and the special role of the anatomist. Vicary sometimes invokes Christian allegories when he describes parts of the body. For example, he describes the breast or torso as "the Arke or Chest of the spiritual members of man" (Vicary Hiii^v). According to the Bible, the Ark of the Covenant was built at the command of God, a sacred container for the Ten Commandments, the core principles of Judeo-Christian culture. By representing the human body as another Ark, Vicary emphasizes the body as a divine object and sacred vessel, also constructed at the command of God at Creation, according to His specifications, as a physical container for spiritual things. Whenever the Ark was carried around, it was covered in animal skins and cloth, obscuring it from sight just as human skin cloaks our own physical interior. Access to the Ark was permitted only once a year and then only to the high priest. In this metaphor, the anatomist performs a taboo but sacred action, opening the ark of the body to read the divine laws contained within, and Vicary's invocation of the Ark raises the status of the anatomist to a supremely religious position. Opening the body may have been a taboo just as opening the Ark was, but Vicary's anatomist was no layperson—he was the high priest of the human body, sanctioned by God to do His work and preach from the text within. Certainly, having a surgeon who is a virtuous Christian would be important in this respect because the act of delving into the body brings one into contact with God.

We can also see in Banister an absolute willingness to read the Bible as an authoritative source on the body. He writes

that the magnitude of our body is greatly diminished, it is a thing in readynes to euery man, not onely by the authoitie of auncient writers, but also that dayly, and (as I suppose) throughout the world, the stature of man in all pointes decreaseth: especially in those regions wheras matrimonie is ouer liberally, & before the iust age, permitted. Who is so ignoraunt, to whom the Scriptures haue not ere now testified, how much longer then in these dayes, the age of man hath bene in times past?

(Banister Bii^r)

Not only does Banister accept scriptural proof that humans once lived much longer lives than they do now and that bodies were once much larger, he also scoffs at those who suggest otherwise, labeling them as "ignoraunt." Significantly, he blurs any clear distinction between the authority of Scripture and that of the "auncient writers" such as Galen for determining changes the body has undergone since those times. Banister emphasizes throughout his Proem that everything undergoes change over time, including the human body, and varies from place to place and according to variations in geography and climate. Consequently, the differences between the body as it is described in the Bible or in Galen's work could simply be a result of the effects of "Tyme, the generall rust of the world, which weareth, eateth, consumeth, and perforateth all thynges, [and which] hath denied that the preceptes of the deuine parentes and progenitours of Physicke, should for euermore remaine insoluble, or free from all future chaunge" (Banister Bii^r). Banister's justification for accepting these ancient texts as true, at least for their historical moment, applies the logic of faith: "If histories be to be beleued, then these [accounts of the body] are true: if not, what do we with auncient testimonies? Why credite we thynges written, or beleue any thyng to be true which our owne eyes haue not witnessed vnto us?" (Banister Bii^v). For Banister, a well-rounded anatomical education necessitates reading the Bible in conjunction with Galen, Aristotle, and Vesalius. Additionally, Banister describes the reader's progression through the text—with his guidance—as "our journey or *pilgrimage*," further establishing the religious nature of the anatomist's work (Banister 4^r, my emphasis). In a religious context, pilgrimages were often undertaken for the purpose of healing or addressing a moral wound. The journey itself was just as important as the holy site that was the destination, but it is also important to note that the pilgrimage itself did not represent the end of the process of repentance. A pilgrimage might redress a particular sin, but it did not absolve the pilgrim from the need to repent for future sins; a pilgrimage was thus part of a lifelong process of penitence, one that was seen as never complete. Similarly, the pilgrimage of anatomy was directed toward the holy site of the body, a journey that helped heal the body but which also held it up as a devotional object, one constructed by God. Like religious pilgrimages, the anatomical

pilgrimage was seen as constantly moving forward. Banister might have viewed his text as authoritative, but he did not see it as the end point of all anatomical work: rather, anatomy was a continually evolving journey. Just as a pilgrim knew that he or she would likely lapse into sin again, Banister understood that more work needed to be done before humanity could stand before the body and see the entirety of God's plan mapped onto its flesh and bones. The anatomist's pilgrimage could help heal the body, but it could not prevent disease and sickness from ever existing again; like the religious pilgrimage, it was aimed more at redressing than preventing.

In addition to his Christianized approach to the body and the anatomist's work, Banister also weaves religious narratives into his descriptions of the functioning and overall logic of the body. At the outset of Book One on the bones, he writes that 'God' and 'Nature' are essentially interchangeable, and he marvels at the construction of the body (Banister 1^r). God's skill is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the structure of the hand:

Thus if we perpend the construction, and composition of the partes, and bones of the hand, our senses shall soone conceiue the maner of action, with no less admiration, in beholding the handy worke of the incomprehensible Creator: who not one mite, or portion of a part hath fited any where, that serueth for no end, or vtilitie to the body.

(Banister 31^r)

Banister returns to the hand again in his section on the muscles, in which he even more explicitly states: "As touchyng the hand so notably of the omnipotent creator created, as that it is most apt, and prompt to all, and euery kynde of Art, defence, and safe prouision for the body, so as no member more declareth the vnspeakeable power of almighty God in the creatyng of man" (Banister 60^v). This perspective is not limited to obviously remarkable parts such as the hand, but also extends to the minutiae of the body. Banister notes that "the Divine creator hath commaunded [the bones of the fingers] to be Perforated" so they can be nourished by blood, and he is in awe of the tongue, which "provident nature (whose foresight in all thynges is vnspeakeable)" has provided with a unique bone to help it move (Banister 1^r, 16^r).

Likewise, he discusses the spine, "the construction whereof is not so maruailous, as laudable to the high Parent, & Progenitor of all thynges" (Banister 17^v). The more the anatomist delves into the body, the more he bears witness to God's unmatched skill.

It is within this context that we return to the images that accompany Banister's text, images that complement the religious nature of the anatomical project that he envisions. The first image (fig. 1, "The fore part of the Bones") that appears in his text (see above), and the one that Cressy identifies as a representation of death, precedes Banister's discussion of the bones. In the image we see a skeleton standing in a sparse landscape, flanked by vegetation and leaning on a spade with its right arm. Its left arm is bent slightly, palm toward the viewer, and its head is raised, with its empty eye sockets directed upwards. The pose is that of a weary farmer who has—quite literally—worked himself to the bone. At his right stands a largely leafless tree, analogous to the fleshless body beside it. Another image (fig. 2) appears at the end of the author's 'history of bones' and portrays a skeleton with its back to the viewer and its knees bent. It is identified as "The Sceleton of the Backe." Its head is bowed slightly, with its forehead lowered toward the interlocking fingers of both hands, and its mouth is agape. Banister's third full-page image (fig. 3, "The forepart of the Muscles") depicts a skinless musclemán facing the viewer, in a pose and setting reminiscent of the skeleton in the first image. His arms are lifted slightly from his sides, and his head lolls to his left with his eyes clearly open (or lidless), looking skyward. The fourth image shows a musclemán in a comparable pose from the reverse angle to show the back, but without his head raised (fig. 4, "The backe part of the Muscles"). The final image shows a table with the various implements used by the practicing anatomist, including various saws, knives, pliers, and thread (fig. 5, "A Table of the Instrumentes seruyng to Anathomicall dissection"). Indeed, the table itself is such an instrument, as we can tell by the fact that the edge is outfitted with metal rings, which would have been used for tying down the subjects of live anatomies or vivisections, which were normally animals such as dogs or pigs, not humans.

In many ways, these images serve a very functional purpose in an anatomical text, designed to give the viewer a clear picture of the bones and muscles of the body in a relatable context. The posture of the first musclemán (fig. 3), for example, allows the

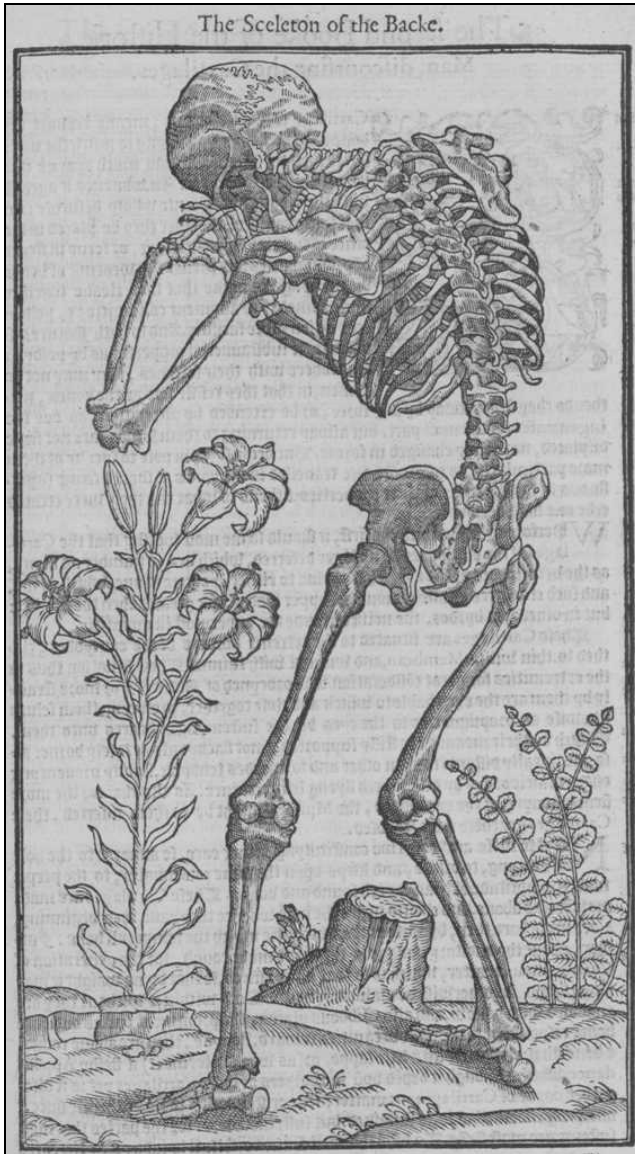


Fig. 2: Banister, *Historie* (1578) "The Sceletron of the Backe," p. 38^r. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

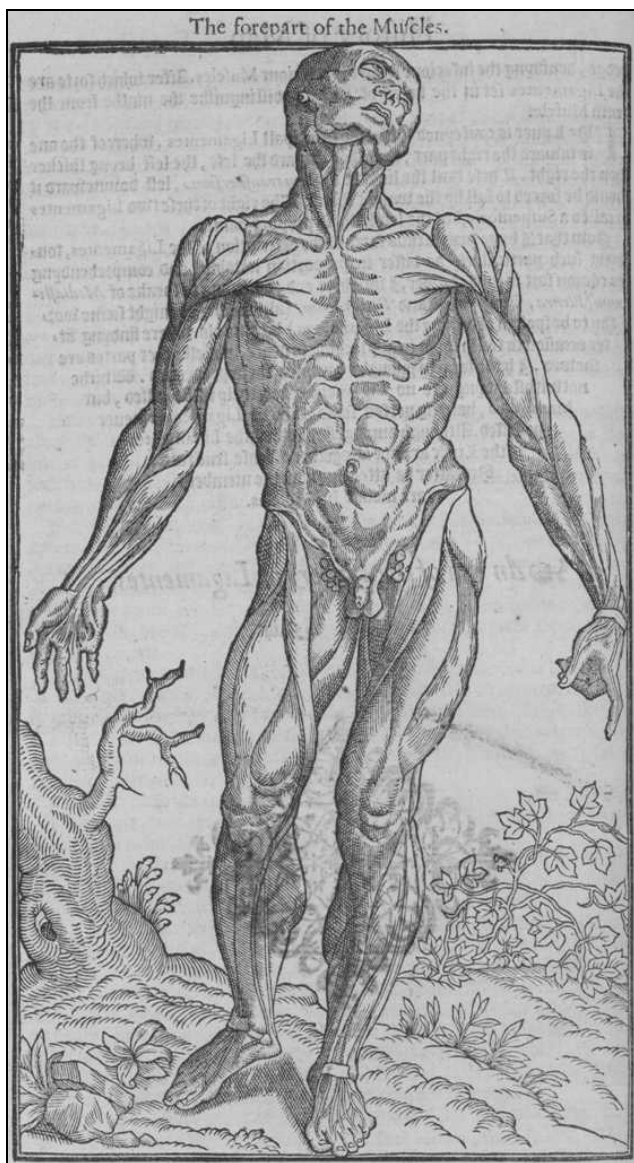


Fig. 3: Banister, *Historie* (1578) "The forepart of the Muscles," p. 43^v. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

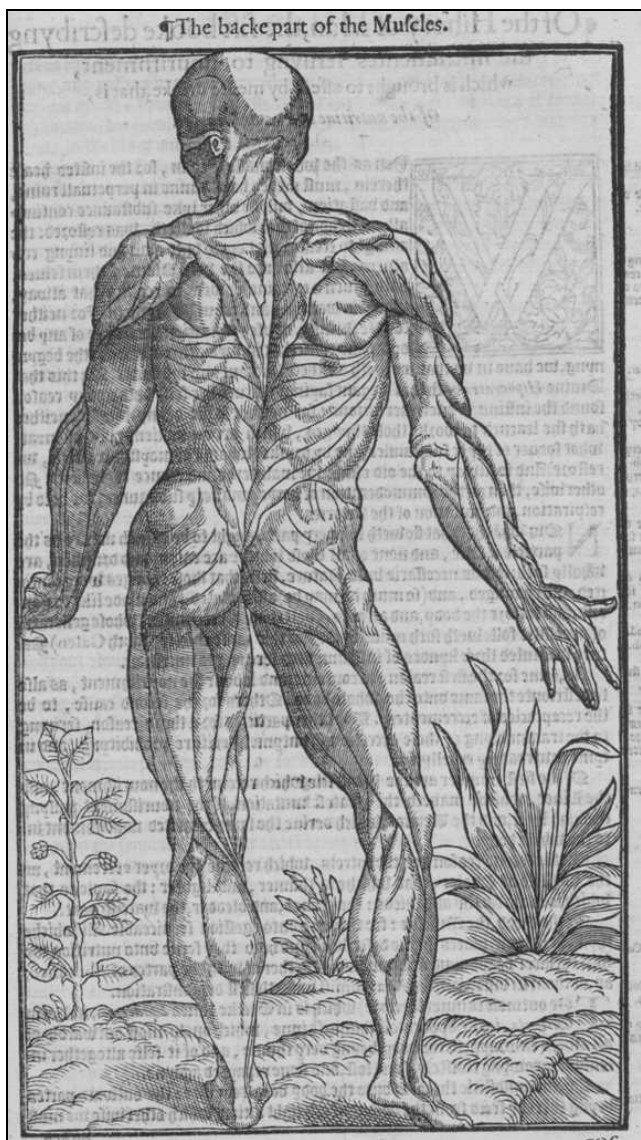


Fig. 4: Banister, *Historie* (1578) "The backe part of the Muscles," p. 63r. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

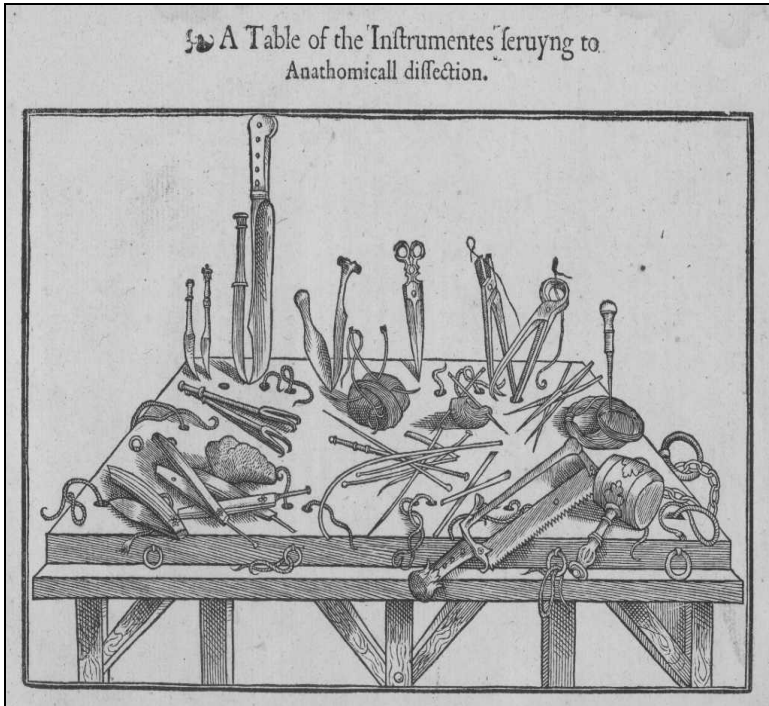


Fig. 5: Banister, *Historie* (1578) "A Table of the Instrumentes seruyng to Anathomieall dissection," p. 112^r. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

reader to see the muscles of the arm and hand from two different perspectives (both palm forward and arm turned) and the angle of the head enables us to see the muscles of the neck and the side of the head in a way that a forward-facing figure would not permit. However, as Jonathan Sawday points out in his discussion of anatomical drawings, images such as these also employ devotional gestures or even evoke the image of the crucified Christ (Sawday 119). Certainly, Banister's muscleman is posed in a suitably Christ-like fashion. Nevertheless, beyond the general positioning of the body, there is little else to make such a connection. For example, the violence, suffering, and copious bleeding that is commonly connected to Christ's passion are noticeably absent. In fact, I would suggest that Banister would be hesitant to make such a connection. If anything, Banister sees the surgeon himself as the Christ-like or exalted figure, not the body that he works on; as we have seen, Banister seems to fantasize about standing alongside God on Judgment Day, using his knowledge to assist in the separation of the saved from the damned. Perhaps these figures are more representative of the resurrected bodies that the surgeon will help sort through with God, an idea that I will return to in a moment.

While these figures may not be wholly analogous to the crucified Christ, the poses of the figures certainly demonstrate some devotional gestures, an interpretation that is illuminated by some of Banister's comments in his textbook. Both the first skeleton and the first muscleman look up in a recognizably devout gesture, presumably looking toward God and Heaven. In his discussion of the eye, Banister valorizes this exact gesture. Speaking specifically about the muscle under the eye that allows us to lift our eyes and turn them about, he says, "And peraduenture this is the vse of that marueilous Muscle, that by the helpe therof we behold the heauens, and work of his Diuine maiestie, whereto we be borne, to the fulfillng wherof, this sayd Nerue is no litle, or meane helpe" (Banister 47^v). He returns to a discussion of this muscle later in the text when he says that it is partly the ability to raise our eyes that separates us from the animals, evidence of God's love for humanity. He writes that this muscle, "is not to be despised or with slight regarde beholden, since the motion therof is not onely exquisite, but accordyng to the prouidence of God ordained, whereby the countenance of man, is different from beastes. [. . .]

[B]y the benefite of the fift Muscle we behold the heauens, and directly cast our countenance upward" (Banister 102v). Although we cannot see the eyes of the skeleton whose head is raised because they are not there, the eyes of the first muscleman (fig. 3) are clearly visible, raised in a posture similar to the one described in Banister's discussion of the eye, a posture of admiration of the divine being. Likewise, the figure in "The Sceleton of the Backe" (fig. 2) has his hands together as 'prayer hands' with his head bowed and mouth open, turned away from us in what looks like a moment of silent and private prayer.

Although the images in Banister's *Historie* were copied from a continental source, Vesalius's *On the Fabric of the Human Body* (published in 1543), when we compare Banister's skeleton of the back to the Vesalian original, we can notice a slight but significant difference—Banister's skeleton faces a flower whereas Vesalius's skeleton does not. Neither does the flower appear in the 1545 adaptation of Vesalius prepared by Thomas Geminus and printed in London (fig. 6) (STC 11714), nor in the subsequent editions of 1553 and 1559 (STC 11715.5 and 11718, respectively). Banister's figure is bowed toward a lily, a flower often used as a Christian symbol for the Virgin Mary, the virtue of chastity, and (perhaps most importantly) the church itself. Consequently, the addition of the lily suggests an added religious quality rather than a simple copying of the image. The religious significance of this image is emphasized even further by the textual content of the facing page, on which Banister concludes his discussion of the bones on a religious note. He ends this section by discussing the "Sefamine bones," small round bones under the joints of the hands and feet. According to Banister, the largest of these bones is found under the joint of the big toe, and he takes this opportunity to address a religious controversy about this particular bone,

Which the followers of hidden, and Philosophicall misteries, haue affirmed subiect to no corruption: feinyng that it is kept in the earth untill the day of resurrection, when, as a seede it shall spryng, and renew the body agayne, So that I perceiue the godly Martyrs, whose odyes, for the

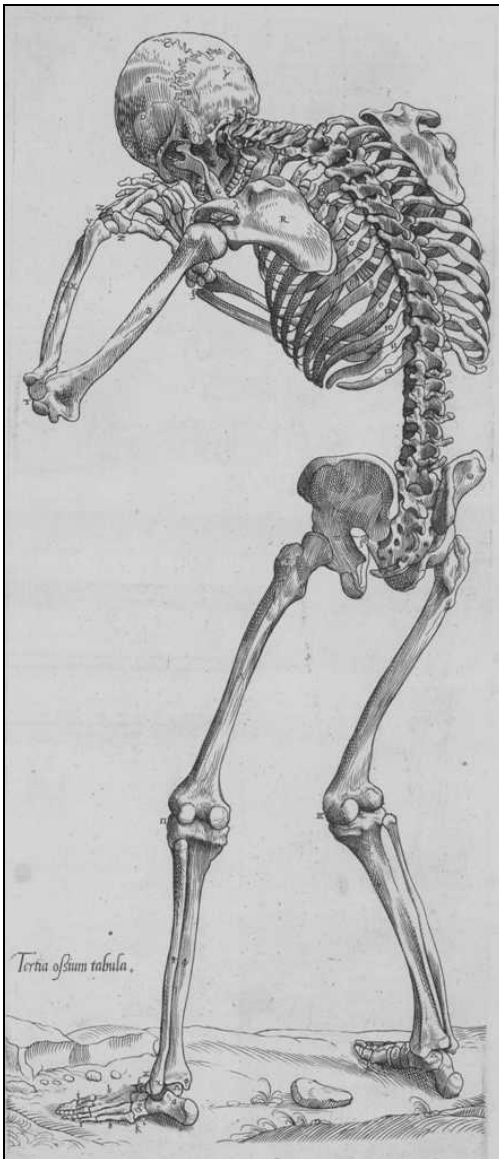


Fig. 6: Geminus, *Compendiosa* (1545), back view of skeleton, facing p. B4/5. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

profession of Christ haue bene burnt to death, shall neuer rise agayne. For well I am assured, that what seede soeuer is once confounded by the force of that element [ie, fire], the same shall no where after be found to take roote: which doctrine, together with the Doctours, is to be shunned, and detested of all true beleuers of Christ, his death, and resurrection.

(Banister 37^v)

Banister rejects what he sees to be a heretical understanding of the body, one that maintains that humans will grow from these seed bones in the foot and sprout a new body at Judgment Day, and he likewise advises all true believers to reject this view. In the context of these comments and Banister's stance on this religio-scientific controversy, the praying skeleton could be a representation of his own piety as a proponent of what he perceives to be true Christian faith, which is also reinforced by his perception of his work as service to God—if the surgeon acts as a minister of God presiding over the body, then who better to settle a religious controversy based on the body?

There are two narratives of the body at work in Banister's text, one anatomical and one religious. Generally speaking, the narrative of anatomy ends at the bone. The early modern anatomist began his work on a whole body, hopefully obtained as soon after death as possible. From there, skin was cut, muscles and veins were followed, and organs were removed, often in front of an audience over the course of a few days in a race against decay. The anatomist begins with clean, sharp tools that become progressively bloodier as he works his way through the body. Typically, once the anatomist is left with nothing but bone, his work is done. Consequently, from a purely anatomical perspective, Cressy is right to suggest that the skeleton of Figure 1 is a representation of death, a body that has been utterly destroyed and stripped of virtually all of its usefulness. However, in contrast, the religious narrative of the resurrection essentially *begins* at the bone, a skeleton that is risen, 'refleshed,' and reunited with the soul, and it is this narrative that Banister's images follow. As we have seen, there are five images in total; a front and back view of the skeleton, followed by a front and back view of the muscleman, and, finally, the image of the tools used in anatomical and surgical work. Following these

images in the order in which they appear in text (fig. 1 through fig. 5), we see a skeleton holding the tool of its own excavation in the first image, then making a devout gesture of prayer in the second image before regaining its flesh, and the tools of dissection emerging unbloodied at the conclusion of the text as if the gore has been returned to its rightful owner. Essentially, the images follow the reverse order of a dissection. The anatomical narrative of inanimate-body-becomes-muscle-becomes-bone is replaced by the religious narrative of animate bone gaining flesh and leaving the anatomist's table. In the context of the resurrection, then, the conclusion of anatomy at the bone is not an endpoint but rather a midpoint in a broader religious narrative, the beginning of everlasting life. In stark contrast, the Vesalian figure dies a decidedly anatomical death in both Vesalius's original images and in Geminus's copies (fig. 7 through fig. 10), losing its flesh in increments as the text progresses. By the end of this series of images, the anatomical figure is no longer capable of supporting himself and he is instead held in place by a rope reminiscent of the hangman's noose. Whereas Vesalius's figure appears to lose his strength and mobility, Banister's figure arguably becomes more vigorous; he supports himself with a spade as a skeleton in the first image, but this support is no longer required after this initial image.

By way of conclusion, then, the image of the skeleton that opens Banister's *The Historie of Man* represents the intersection of both secular and religious narratives of the body. Viewed on its own and removed from the accompanying texts and images, the skeleton is a recognizable and familiar figure of death. But when we consider the image from within the devotional perspective proffered by Banister, we also see the skeleton emerge as a representation of the Christian narrative of the resurrection of the body at Judgment Day. Banister, like many other early modern anatomists, did not see himself as engaged in a struggle with the Christian 'master narrative' but was rather content to expand that narrative and demonstrate how it was written onto and into the body. The anatomist was effectively a minister of physiology, reading from the holy text of the body to illuminate God's plan.

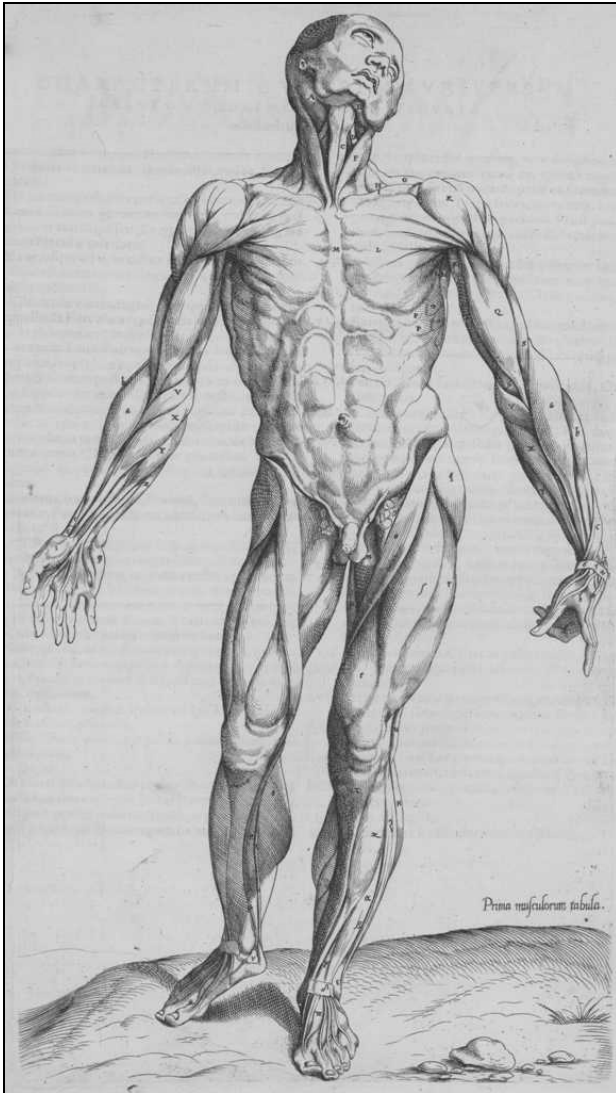


Fig. 7: Geminus, *Compendiosa* (1545), forward facing musclemann, facing p. B6r. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

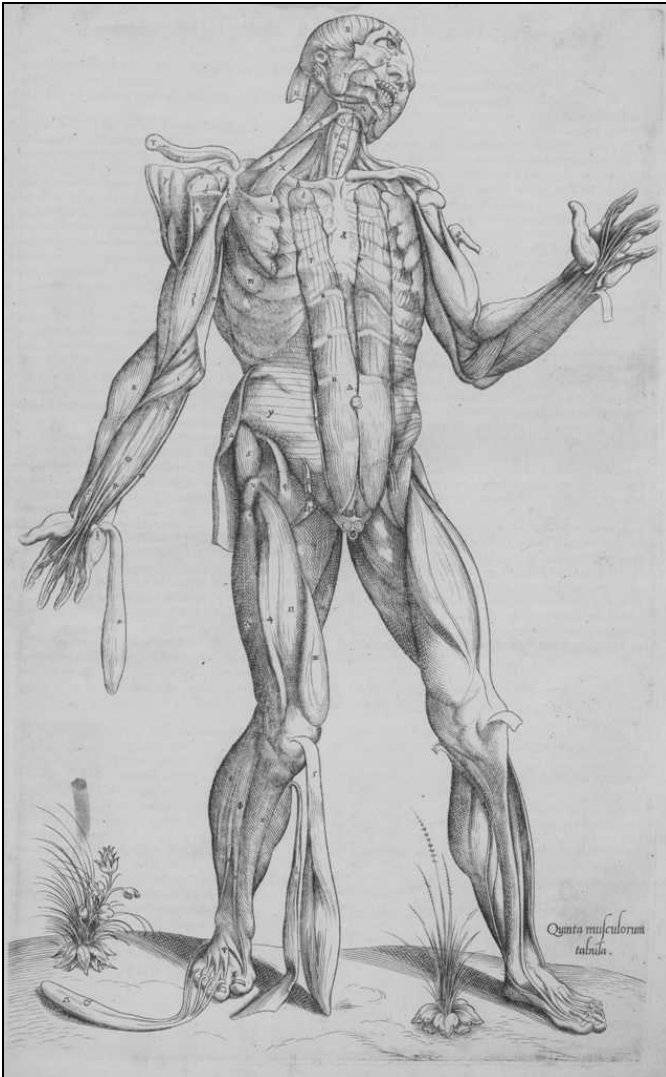


Fig. 8: Geminus, *Compendiosa* (1545), forward facing muscleman with right-side muscles visible, facing p. C3v. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

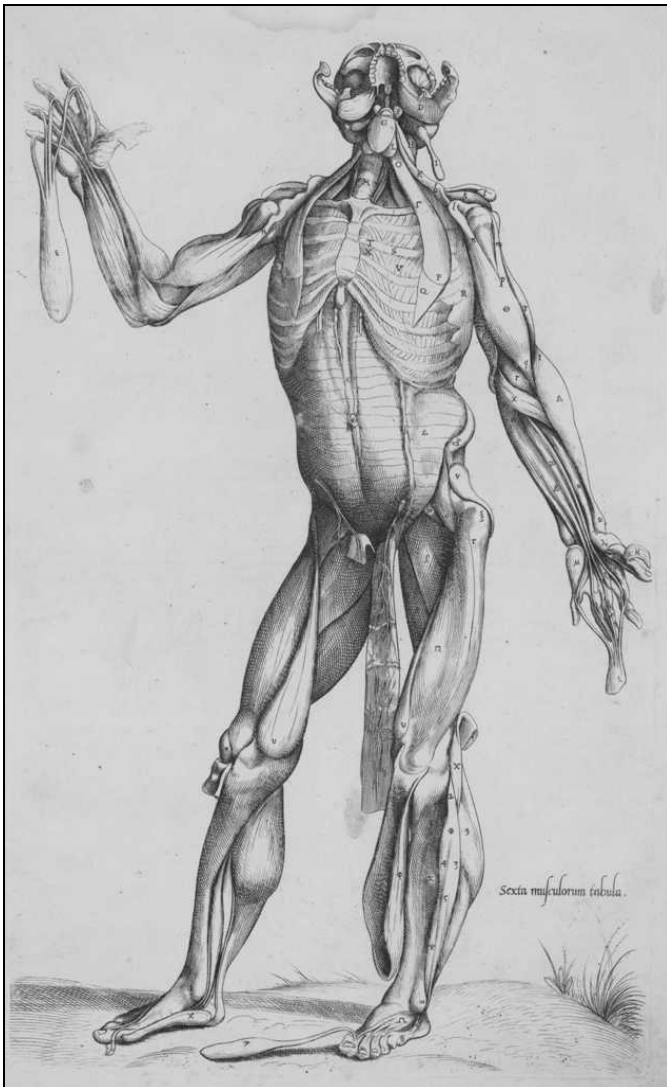


Fig. 9: Geminus, *Compendiosa* (1545), muscleman with jaw visible, facing p. C4v. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

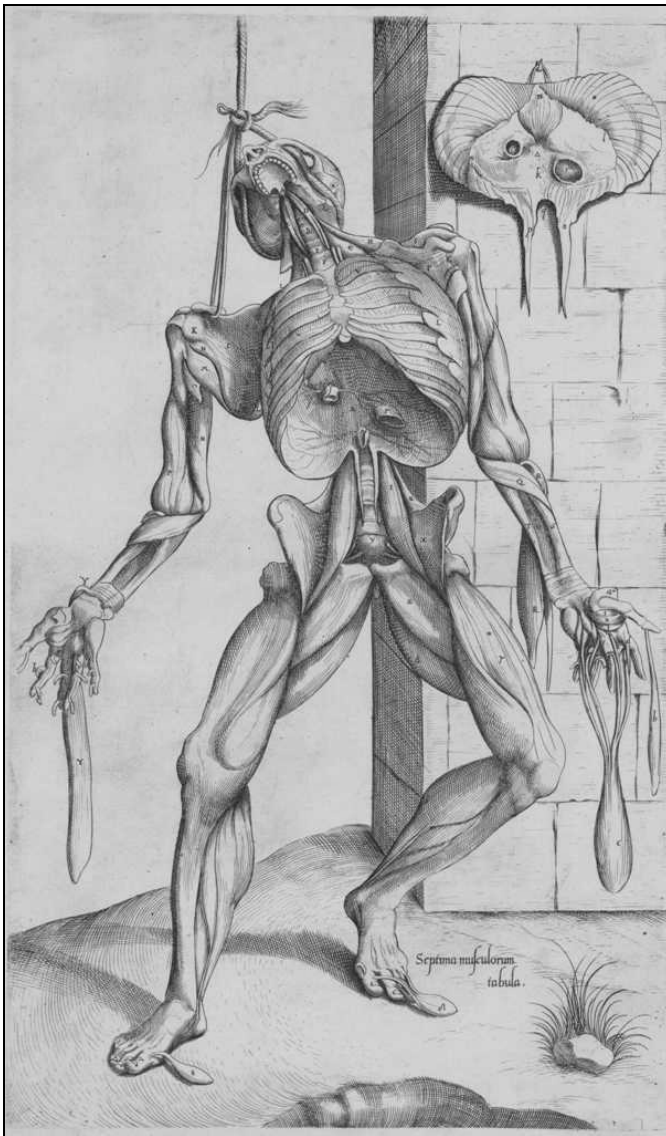


Fig. 10: Geminus, *Compendiosa* (1545), muscleman supported by rope, facing p. C5r. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

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