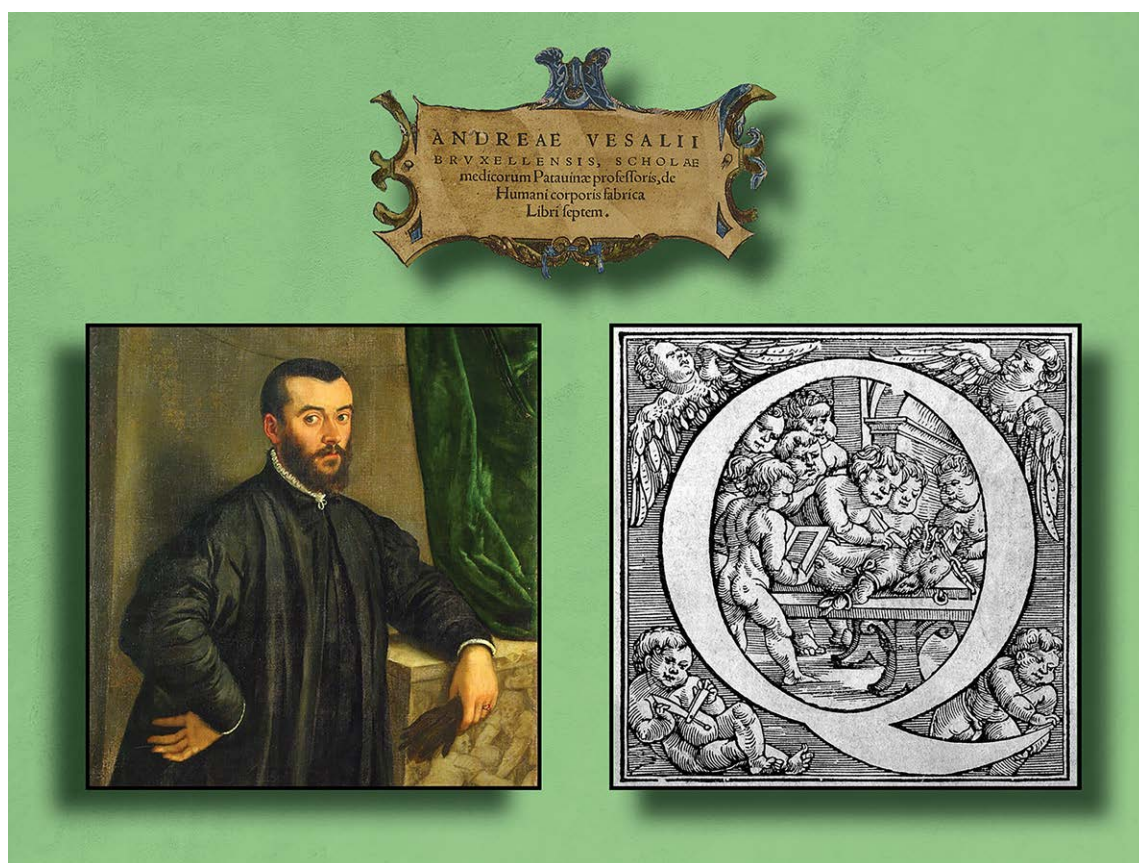


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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Vesalius' *Fabrica*: Sublime Anatomy, Crude Physiology



Flemish physician Andreas Vesalius (1514 to 1564, *lower left*) relished dissecting cadavers and inspecting cemetery bones as a medical student at the University of Paris. By age 23, he was appointed Professor of Surgery and Anatomy at the University of Padua. A Paduan judge so admired his work that he began supplying him with bodies of executed criminals for examination. Vesalius soon found anatomic errors in the long-revered texts of Galen (129 to c. 216 CE), who by Roman imperial decree had only been allowed to dissect animals. Vesalius published his magnificent *De humani corporis fabrica* (*upper middle*), or simply, the *Fabrica*, in 1543, the same year as Copernicus' *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres*. Although best known for the sublime detail of its anatomic illustrations, the *Fabrica* also contained decorative initials with mischievous *putti*, chubby child figures, in morbid scenes. Through these crude images, Vesalius paid homage to Galen's use of live animal dissection to learn physiology. In the book's preface, a large letter Q featured *putti* vivisecting a restrained pig's neck (*lower right*). After lecturing on the anatomy of the recurrent laryngeal nerves, Vesalius repeated Galen's experiment by cutting the nerves of a pig to abolish its squeal. (Lanska DJ. *J Hist Neurosci* 2014; 23:211–32. Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library–Museum of Anesthesiology. www.woodlibrarymuseum.org)

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