

Mondino De Luzzi's Anathomia

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Letter to the Editor

On the 7th Anniversary of "Anathomia corporis humani" (Mondino De Luzzi) we consider the first example of a modern dissection manual and the first anatomical text [1]. We pay tribute to this book and its author.

Mondino de Luzzi (1270-1326) was born in Florentine (Italy) and received his medical training at the University of Bologna. This physician and anatomist was the first to incorporate a systematic study of anatomy and dissection [2,3]. He realized his first public dissection in Bologna (Italy) in 1315. In that moment it was common for the professor of anatomy to sit in a chair elevated above the dissection proceedings, reading from an anatomical text while a surgeon performed the dissection and an ostensor pointed out the specific parts of the body that were being examined. Mondino's teaching methods were different; he performed dissection in person and incorporated his personal experience into teaching [4].

Much of the medical information included in *Anathomia* is derived from commentaries on Hippocrates, Aristotle and Galen [5]. Mondino describe the organs in the order in which they present during the dissection: opening of the abdominal cavity (musculature of the intestinal tract, stomach, spleen, liver, gallbladder, cecum and

pancreas), heart (with its three chambers), lungs, larynx and epiglottis [1]. *Anathomia* also includes the surgical treatment of a hernia and description of cataract surgery. The book also contains a description of the cranial nerves and of the brain [3].

In *Anathomia*, Mondino repeated numerous fallacies reported by Galen and Aristotle. For example the notion that a rete mirabile of blood vessels exists at the base of the human brain. Nonetheless Mondino de Luzzi's *Anathomia* was the most widely used anatomical text for 250 years [1,5].

References

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