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The Amalgamation of Art and Science in the 16th Century: Ligier Richier's Transi of René de Châlon and Vesalius' Muscle-Men

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Publication Date

2024

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

The Amalgamation of Art and Science in the 16th Century:
Ligier Richier's Transi of René de Châlon and Vesalius' Muscle-Men

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Art History

by

Melissa Nini Reyes

June 2024

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Dr. Kristoffer Neville, Chairperson
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The Thesis of Melissa Nini Reyes is approved:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Kristoffer Neville. He has provided me with guidance, persistent help, and unwavering encouragement throughout the duration of this thesis. His insightful feedback and passion for art history has inspired me to always strive for excellence. I extend my gratitude to Dr. Jeanette Kohl for being a member of my committee. Without her expertise and valuable suggestions, I would not have arrived at this fascinating topic. I wish to further express my appreciation for the time, recommendations, and uplifting words of Dr. Yong Cho, who also served on my thesis committee. I am lucky to have had the opportunity to work closely with each and every one of these amazing art historians who have truly made this an enjoyable experience.

To my fellow colleagues and cohort, thank you for sharing this journey with me. Most importantly, thank you for your friendship. I have kept my sanity these past two years because of you all. It has been a pleasure to be surrounded by such intellectual, passionate, and humble individuals.

Lastly, without the ongoing support of a few special people in my life, completing a master's degree would have seemed impossible. I owe a great debt of appreciation to all of my loved ones (you know who you are). Your understanding, outpouring support, and patience during this challenging time does not go unnoticed. The most significant acknowledgement is reserved for my

mom. Regardless of our different interests, she has always encouraged me to pursue what I love. Thank you for all that you do and for enabling me to achieve everything that I have. This thesis would have not been possible without all of you.

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THESIS OVERVIEW

Arriving in mid-sixteenth century France was an aestheticized paradox of a “living” dead, which transitioned the recumbent and sleeping cadaver into a standing quasi-living corpse. Although this new variation of the transi tomb was still shown in a state of decomposition, the handling of its skin and muscles displayed this skeleton as a manifestation of life. Moving away from the despairing reminder of mortality displayed by the rotten and worm infested skin of the late medieval transis, the aesthetically draped skin surrounding the sculpted corpse was now displayed as an embodiment of life and a positive proclamation of life everlasting. The treatment of the muscles and decoratively displayed skin functions as a reflection of the sixteenth century view on death. It highlights its role in the early modern transformation of the transi: from the despairing image of memento mori to the enlivened covenant of resurrection, from the negation of self to the glorification of the individual.² Joys of the flesh once discouraged by medieval moralists, were now deliberately celebrated.³ Fully embodying this new mid-sixteenth century effigy variation was the innovative transi tomb of René de Châlon by Ligier Richier. Theologically driven, this sculpted and unusual figure appears to reflect verses from the Book of Job.

² Marisa Anne Bass, “The Transi Tomb and the Genius of Sixteenth-Century Netherlandish Funerary Sculpture,” *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art*, no. 2 (2017): 163.

³ A sixteenth-century poet wrote “Dedd forms a never-dyinge life do shroude”, which translates to “Life thus comes from death” which is a reversal of the transi symbolism of the fifteenth century.

I begin this work by providing a brief genealogy of the transi tomb in funerary sculpture from its beginning until the mid-sixteenth century, which returns attention to the paramount cataloging endeavors of Kathleen Cohen; she cataloged almost two hundred transi tombs from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. I carefully selected those that succeed in showcasing the iconographical elements of the common transi of that period. By providing the genealogy of this type of tomb, we witness the transformation of the sculpted corpse and its appearance; thus the innovative aesthetic qualities of René de Châlon's transi becomes extremely clear.

In this thesis, I focus on René de Châlon's transi tomb and concentrate on not only how images of the transi body interconnect with changing concepts of theology, but how these representations are influenced by anatomical interest and knowledge. A booming rise of scientific interest and modern medical science surfaced in the sixteenth century, specifically with Andreas Vesalius' 1543 publication of *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*. This work was recognised as an achievement not only of anatomical science, but also of sensational aesthetic value. *De fabrica's* theatrical and posed illustrations were intended not only for the physician, but for the instruction of the artist. Vesalius' work developed a greater coexistence between art and science. This harmonious integration was not only reflected in Vesalius' figures, but also in the transi tomb of René de Châlon. Sculpted shortly after *De fabrica's* publication, it is highly probable that Richier studied its content. René's transi tomb exhibits Vesalius'

correct anatomical framework, displayed specifically in the construction of its skeletal and musculature structures. By carrying out a thorough comparative analysis between Vesalius' muscle-men figures in *De fabrica's* Book II and the figure of René's cadaver tomb, I am able to provide evidence which suggests an intimate relation between the two. Ultimately, this study argues that Richier's transi tomb of René de Châlon was heavily influenced by Vesalius' illustrated cadavers, specifically his muscle-men in Book II.

In chapter one, I disclose details about the death of René de Châlon and the progressive features of his transi tomb. This section is foundational to this study as it provides the historical background necessary for the next chapter. In chapter two, I introduce Vesalius in the light of his anatomical works, specifically focusing on the importance of *De fabrica* in the field of anatomical studies. I shed light on how both his written work and acclaimed illustrations supersede other medical text and graphics in the sixteenth century. It is plausible that a distinguished artist such as Richier would utilize *De fabrica's* aestheticized and performative figures. In chapter three, I provide an elaborate comparative analysis in which I focus on the scientific and aesthetic similarities between Vesalius' muscle-men and René's transi tomb. This chapter concludes with a focused discussion on the importance of this work and how the marrying of Vesalius' muscle-men and René's transi tomb reveals a new and deeper understanding of both of these deceased figures.

INTRODUCTION: THE DAWN OF THE PUTREFIED CORPSE

Death is one of life's few undeniable realities that humans are guaranteed; however, its acknowledgement is influenced by the theological belief of the period. During the Middle Ages, Catholicism was the central power in Europe. The afterlife was a basic tenet of faith for Christians and was determined heavily upon holy scripture. Foundational writings of the New Testament were seen as an account of Jesus' ability to resurrect and ascend after his passion and crucifixion, thus showcasing the triumph of life over death. Salvation was predicated upon the pursued actions of the living, and most importantly, faith in Christ.⁴ Although strong in faith, Christians of the mid-fourteenth century tragically encountered death on a much grander scale. Wiping out millions of Europeans in less than a decade, the bubonic plague pandemic, known historically as the Black Death, left survivors terrified and in mourning.⁵ Its impact weighed heavily on their communities and altered the fundamental paradigm of European life. Christians entered a new religious culture that was hyper focused

⁴ Elizabeth Tingle, "Chapter 1 Changing Western European Visions of Christian Afterlives, 1350–1700: Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory," in *A Companion to Death, Burial, and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, c. 1300–1700*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2020), 33.

These beliefs are seen in the Apostles' Creed, which states "resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Tingle states that to "understand fully the nature of Christianity, it is vital to comprehend its eschatology for departed souls". This explains how important the depiction of Christ's passion, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascendant is to how the people in the Middle Ages viewed death.

⁵ This plague was caused by the transmission of the bacterium, *yersinia pestis* from infected rats and fleas.

on the macabre⁶ and death. With this abrupt depopulation, anxiety swept throughout Europe and the dramatic demand to showcase humility arose within the religious community. The practice of humility predates the plague, but its urgency was emphasized due to the overwhelming reminders of death. Fear and anxiety arose when formal religious rituals utilized for repentance were disrupted. Ideal confession became difficult as illness made travel to their parish priest almost impossible and caused them to forget their sins or speak them aloud. When parish priests fell terminally ill, some had to confess without anyone to absolve these sins. The most important of these were the fourth and fifth sacraments of penance and extreme unction which entailed confession and forgiveness.⁷ The form of the extreme unction is as follows:

Through this holy unction and his most tender compassion, the Lord grants thee forgiveness for whatever sins thou hast committed by the sight⁸

To have humility was to overcome pride by acts of repentance and by submitting their will to God's will. To repent was the basis for the absolvment of their sins in preparation for their meeting with Death.⁹ A death clear of mortal sin was to avoid lingering in the state of purgation. This liminal space between salvation and damnation was reserved for the souls unprepared to enter Heaven, but were

⁶ According to Oxford Languages, the definition of macabre is: disturbing and horrifying because of involvement with or depiction of death and injury.

⁷ This sacrament of the extreme unction was only given to the sick who are in fear of death.

⁸ Paul Halsall, "Internet Medieval Sourcebook," *Fordham University Center for Medieval Studies* (1996).

⁹ I am referring to Death as the personified force known as the Grim Reaper.

elected to be saved.¹⁰ Salvation was seen as achievable to those who were humble and contrite. With death as an unwavering subject, artists fueled their imaginations and were inspired to create funerary art based on the religious ideals of the Middle Ages.

Discussion about the relevance of the plague on stylistic development is expanded on in Millard Meiss' *Painting in Florence and Siena After the Black Death*. Focusing on the 1348 plague in Florence and Siena, Meiss argues that it was the tragedy, the drama, and the religious content that was prioritized, and that stylistic changes simply reflected these topics they were preoccupied with. This priority explains why art regressed stylistically. The heightened realism of Giotto reverted back to the heretical and ideal religious art of the later thirteenth century.¹¹ Meiss' work ultimately demonstrates that these iconographical changes are a reflection of a plague-affected society. Erwin Panofsky, Meiss' former teacher, expands on this topic in his *Tomb Sculpture: Four Lectures on Its Changing Aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini*.¹² Panofsky stresses the relevance of the Black Death in altering the iconography of the corpse in tomb imagery, while Meiss focuses on this notable change in Tuscan paintings.

¹⁰ Katherine Clark, "Purgatory, Punishment, and the Discourse of Holy Widowhood in the High and Later Middle Ages," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 16, no. 2 (2007): 169-203.

Purgatory as a concept was established by the Catholic Church in the beginning of the Middle Ages and grew more prevalent towards the end of the period. This idea was not exclusive to medieval Christianity. Its roots were also in Judaism, including counterparts in other religions.

¹¹ Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena After the Black Death* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951).

¹² Erwin Panofsky was a German art historian who, after immigrating to the United States in 1933, became one of the most influential figures in 20th-century art history.

Panofsky points out that the preoccupation with the macabre was a product of “feeling for the collective” after the devastating mass mortality of the plague.¹³ He notes that tombs had the ability to reveal the changing cultural attitudes toward the dead through its style, form, and function.¹⁴ My study accepts Panosky’s view of tombs as cultural symbols and therefore, the commonly accepted view that the appearance of these tombs is related to radical theological developments. Theological and cultural shifts related to the Reformation of the sixteenth century were bound to the changing concepts of the soul and new thoughts about death and memorial. Furthermore, there was a heightened emphasis on straying away from a period of permeating anxiety and emotional extremes of the late medieval. Funerary monuments underwent total transformations in style and form that reflected the diminishing intense apprehensiveness about the fate of the soul. It was during this time period where the genre’s most substantial rethinking and development took place.¹⁵

Known as a type of cadaver monument, transi tombs represent a specific category of funerary sculpture established in Europe during the latter half of the fourteenth century (Fig. 1).¹⁶ No evidence for the origination of transi tombs has been historically provided, and therefore they have been placed as a result of the

¹³ Erwin Panosfky, *Tomb Sculpture: Four Lectures on Its Changing Aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini*, H. W. Janson, ed. (New York: Harry Abrams, 1964).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Marisa Anne Bass, “The Transi Tomb and the Genius of Sixteenth-Century Netherlandish Funerary Sculpture,” *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art*, no. 2 (2017): 163.

¹⁶ The word “transi”, etymologically speaking, derives from the Latin verb “transire” which roughly translates to “pass away”.

late-medieval, plague-motivated culture of the macabre.¹⁷ Tombs of this type were prominent in Northern Europe, with the majority located in the Netherlands, France, England, and the German-speaking lands; they were nearly absent from Italy and Spain. Although the transi emerged in the fourteenth century, it continued its life for centuries after. About two hundred seventy corpse tombs remain from Northern Europe, with less than six dating to the fourteenth century, around seventy-five to the fifteenth century, and over one hundred to the sixteenth century.¹⁸

These tombs were considered effigies and were designed to bear semblance to the dead and decaying remains of the expired individual they enclose. Since one had to be wealthy and influential enough to be allotted tomb space in a church, the persons depicted were either nobles or clergymen. Funerary tombs have been most often explored in terms of the self-fashioning of their noble commissioners. These personages desired to construct their spiritual and worldly legacies through these sculpted monuments. Cadaver effigies served as an immediate image of self where the expression of humility and humbleness of the dead were emphasized with the figure's nudity. The established system of signs found on inscriptions, coats of arms, regalia, gestures, material, and garments was assigned the task of conveying an identity.¹⁹

¹⁷ Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 140.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Jakov Đorđević, "Made in the Skull's Likeness: Of Transi Tombs, Identity and Memento Mori," *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 17 (2017): 10.

These shriveled figures highlighted the disturbing nature of physical decomposition after death. Focusing on the transi that represent the departed as a naked corpse or one with a shroud, it is important to note that the above definition differentiates from the traditional funerary effigy, which represent the deceased in a state of beauty, dressed in their official garments, eyes open, and hands in prayer. These figures depict the deceased person either near the end of their adult life or in their youthful prime. These uncorrupted tomb figures were typically referred to as recumbent effigies (Fig. 2-3).²⁰ They were used as a type of idealized portraiture and depicted the deceased lying horizontally. Located on the top level of the memorial, these figures ensure that the deceased person is memorialized in effigy. The transi, a sculpture of a decomposing corpse was located at the bottom tier of the tomb located closest to the ground. In the process of putrefaction and desiccation, the transi is often singular, but may include two side by side, such as a married couple. Panofsky described cadaver tombs as 'double decker memorials' (Fig. 4) with the dead depicted in two states of being. In this argument, he agrees with Ernst Kantorowicz' *The King's Two Bodies* (1957). Kantorowicz introduces the double-decker tomb as the idea of the 'king's two bodies', as elucidated in the title of the book. The effigy represents the undying 'dignity' or office the man held in his lifetime - either as archbishop, bishop, or earl - while the transi below represents the man as mortal susceptible

²⁰ According to Kathleen Rogers Cohen, the word "gisant" is a French term meaning any recumbent sepulchral figure, whether that figure is intended to represent a living or a dead individual. These uncorrupted tomb effigies were a popular form of burial sculpture before the 'decayed' transi tombs became a well-known funerary style in Europe. They were meant to resemble the body in its most perfect state in Heaven.

to death and putrefaction. Kantorowicz was the first to link the double-decker tomb to his distinction between the 'two bodies'. During the 1327 funeral of Edward II and Henry Chichele's funeral, an effigy was displayed in this way as it was placed on top of the coffin that contained his corpse (Fig. 5). Chichele's double-decker transi tomb was therefore, according to Kantorowicz, a 'realistic representation of reality, rendering simply what was seen at the funerary procession: the effigy in regalia on top of the coffin which contained the almost naked corpse.'" However, Kathleen Cohen points out one issue with his understanding of Chichele's tomb: the tomb was created prior to his funeral procession. Nevertheless, Cohen accepts the idea for the double-decker tomb for the possibility that it could have been modeled on arrangements displayed at other funerals. This tomb style allows the body to be viewed in all its decaying glory in the form of the transi sculpture. The corpse that is concealed and contained in a coffin is thus put on display in the two-story tomb.²¹ This idea that the transi was modeled on the funerary ritual arrangement is also noted by Philippe Aries. He states that "the geographic distribution of transi tombs coincides with the practice of covering the dead in funerary ritual; macabre iconography occurs in those places where the corpse's face was concealed."²²

²¹ Marian Bleeker, "He was a Manly Man, to be an (Arch)Bishop Able: Transi Tombs and Masculinity in Fifteenth-Century England," *Different Visions: New Perspectives on Medieval Art*, no. 8 (2022): 6.

²² Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 140.

TRANSI TOMBS OF THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

Medieval tomb imagery was originally concerned with conveying hope for the salvation of the departed. Deceased figures were in a state of ideal beauty, specifically in Northern Europe during the thirteenth and early-fourteenth centuries. Absent of bodily decomposition and calm in state, these tomb figures expressed confidence in eternal salvation and in God's mercy. In the latter portion of the fourteenth century, the transi tomb, a new and unfamiliar type of sepulchral monument, appeared in the Netherlands, France, England, and the German-speaking countries. The Black Death of the mid-fourteenth century and the outbreaks that followed throughout the next century, indisputably increased the popularity of macabre sentiments, themes of death, and images of earthly transience.²³ Thousands perished at an expedited rate, creating a European culture that became accustomed to death and decay.²⁴

This type of gloom-ridden didactic warning of the transience of life is emphasized in the general tone of the late medieval transi tombs. Cadaver effigies epitomized the ultimate fate of the human body as opposed to the everlasting life of the soul: they were a warning against human egotism.²⁵ The

²³ Kathleen Rogers Cohen, *The Changing Meaning of the Transi Tomb in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 32.

²⁴ Colin Jones, "Plague and Its Metaphors in Early Modern France," *Representations*, no. 53 (1996): 98.

Many died in hordes in the gutter and were swept up by grave diggers and searchers. Their violated bodies were carelessly dumped on carts and thrown into mass graves without the guise of liturgical dignity or correctness. Bodies decorated the streets and were stacked in open graves. This allowed the deceased remains to rot at a rapid pace; thus the bodily state of decomposition became a well known image amongst the unaffected. Additionally, dissections and written documents played a part in understanding the decay process. It is possible that this was how artists were able to accurately showcase the physical damages of plague death.

²⁵ Sophie Oosterwijk, "Food for worms—food for thought," *Church Monuments* 20 (2005): 45.

horrors of death seen in these transi tombs were stressed specifically as a counter to pride. Due to the plague, bishops and priests no longer performed the regular rituals of penance and utter unction; therefore, the responsibility to practice humility was placed on one's own self. Death's image as a way to inspire humility is traced back to the Judaic tradition. Found in the tenth chapter of the Book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament, the writer asked:

Who is earth and ashes proud, for when a man dies, he shall inherit
creeping things, beasts: and worms?²⁶

There is no doubt that this verse in scripture influenced the sculpted bodies of medieval transi tombs. Stated in the inscription that accompanied Cardinal La Grange's transi monument (Fig. 6):

Miserable one, what reason have you to be proud?
For soon you will be as I am,
A fetid cadaver, food for worms.²⁷

Located inside the church of Benedictine College of Saint Martial, Lagrange's transi is in a recumbent position and shown in a state of decay. His ribs project above his retracted abdomen while skin is drawn tautly over the bones. The upper sections of his ribs are in some measure flattened, while the lower ribs are more prominent. Similar to this transi is that of Guillaume de Harcigny (Fig. 1). Both figures showcase their shriveled skin, their tense diagonal tendons in the

²⁶ Kathleen Rogers Cohen, *The Changing Meaning of the Transi Tomb in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 30.

²⁷ Kathleen Rogers Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol: The Transi Tomb in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 24.

throats, and their stiffened feet. Hair appears to be falling off their scalp, resulting in what appears to be a receding hairline. The figures both appear haggard with bulging eyes within their sunken eye sockets. Of particular interest is their overly extended Adam's apples which are a recollection of the story of Adam and Eve in the Christian Bible.²⁸ According to this biblical account, Adam partakes in the forbidden apple, which became lodged in his throat as a reminder of his sin. Therefore, their Adam's apples are sharply projected in order to prompt its visitors to repent. Their bodies mirror the hardened and rigid quality of the stone in which they are carved with. The movement of life is absent within these figures as they showcase their decay as the ultimate fate of the human body. These tombs were meant to be contemplated and utilized to humble one's pride as they realize that the corpse is an unpreventable image of oneself.

Surrounded by the suffering wrought by this plague, a level of solace with death emerged in Europe. The calm and idealized deceased figure transitioned to a ghastly and macabre depiction of death. Once displayed as alive or sleeping, these tomb figures were replaced in the late fourteenth century with figures whose physical ravages of decomposition were emphasized. These hideous images displayed naked, worm infested cadavers with a gaping mouth, cramped hands, and hardened feet.²⁹

²⁸ Adam's act of disobedience occurred at the biblical Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. The fruit was the catalyst for the fall of man and was when the Original Sin entered creation.

²⁹ Sophie Oosterwijk, "Food for worms—food for thought," *Church Monuments* 20 (2005): 45.

Depending on geographical preferences, these transis can be seen to have distinct stylistic differences.

The emaciated transi was dominant in England, while in Germany and Austria, the corpse figure covered by frogs and snakes became prevalent, Enshrouded figures were used in northern France, Burgundy, England and the Lowlands, any French transis were shown riddled with worms [.]³⁰

Corpses were displayed as hosts for vermin: worms, frogs or serpents in various Germanic depictions. Cohen investigated this interrelation and discovered that some folktales assumed that the dead would take the form of a reptile following physical decay (Fig. 7). Serpents were often used in behalf of Death within Germanic literature. Further, the transis association with frogs derived from its intimate connection with Death. Frogs were considered as Death's preferred pet and byproduct. Other reptilian and animal artistic motifs emerged from this trend. For example, newts and salamanders represented death, martyrdom and resurrection; therefore they were found in some depictions of the dead. These accompanying vermin maintained the eyes of the spectator and drew attention to the natural process of decay.

Death was an ever impending reality for all men and the decomposing body served as food for worms and all sorts of vermin. Surely, the elaborate presentation of decay recalls death and decomposition as punishment for the

³⁰ Pamela Margaret King, "Contexts of the Cadaver Tomb in Fifteenth Century England" (PhD diss., University of York, 1987), 45.

Original Sin³¹ which is the Christian doctrine expressed in the well known passage in Genesis:

‘For dust you are, and to dust you will return.’

Concurrently shocking and fascinating, the veristic transi enables one to recall their own fallibility in encountering death.³² This notion reflects the temporality of the physical body and that neither joys of the flesh or power will endure.

Underlying this idea was a detestation of the flesh and overall the human body.

The rotting flesh that clothed the bones of the deceased represented the painfully tedious wait in purgatory; a bare skeleton clear of flesh symbolized the belief that purgation was complete and that the soul was able to transcend to heaven.³³

Theologically influenced, their treatment of flesh derived directly from Old Testament scripture: “The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of the ungodly made me afraid [Psalms 17:5-6].” “I am but a worm and no man [Psalms 21:7].” “My flesh is clothed with corruption and with the filth of dust; my skin is dried up and shrivelled [Job 7:5].”³⁴ Sculpted worms infested the spoiled flesh of the transi, insinuating that the fate of the physical body was to be devoured by vermin. The treatment of the transi skin was a direct parallel to this final verse (Job 7:5).

³¹ The Original Sin is a Christian doctrine that states that humans, from the moment of birth, inherit a tainted nature in need of regeneration.

³² Regina Deckers, "Frightening Fragments: The Representation of the Corpse in Baroque Sculpture," (2017): 82.

³³ The Church stated that the soul experienced judgment immediately after death, even before receiving their resurrected body after the Last Judgment. This belief implied Purgatory, an interim period which emphasized the physicality of the resurrection.

³⁴ Kathleen Rogers Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol: The Transi Tomb in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 60.

Displayed at Saint Barthélemy in Bethune, France, is a life-sized fifteenth century transi of Guillaume le Francois, a Dominican friar and priest (Fig. 8). Lying on a woven mat with hands crossed over the lower body, worms crawl and consume his flesh. His head has finished its state of deterioration, revealing the skull that once was clothed with human tissue, muscle, and skin. Emerging from his mouth is a banderole³⁵ containing the following inscriptions:

J'ay esperanche de mon salut en la seulle miséricorde de Dieu.

(My hope of salvation lies solely in God's mercy.)

In addition to the worms that gnaw at his skin and muscles, these inscriptions express the clear display of his contrition and humility as he begs for mercy.

These worms perhaps serve as symbols of repentance.³⁶ Caked with worms and dust, the skin is displayed as cracked, hardened and broken. Fashioned and carved, this handling of flesh spoke to its ability to reflect the perception of death in the epoch of time in which the transi was created.

THE CARVED CORPSE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Creeping into Europe during the mid-sixteenth century, a new type of transi developed which slowly transformed the despairing reminder of mortality into a positive declaration of salvation.³⁷ The profound anxiety about the fate of

³⁵ According to Oxford Dictionary, a banderole refers to 'a ribbon-shaped stone scroll bearing an inscription'.

³⁶ Kathleen Rogers Cohen, *The Changing Meaning of the Transi Tomb in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 66.

³⁷ Kathleen Rogers Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol: The Transi Tomb in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 180.

one's soul caused by the Black Death was alleviated. Dead plague bodies no longer enveloped the streets and proper funeral services commenced. As a result, attitudes toward death and the commemoration of the dead were extremely affected. Funeral orations such as the "partie deplorative" and "partie consolative" took place at each funeral service. Traditionally the "partie deplorative" stressed the sorrowful aspects of death, while the "partie consolative" emphasized the aspects of hope. Biblical verses on the transitory quality of the flesh were cited:

Man cometh into this world; he cometh forth like a flower and withereth. All flesh is as grass, and all men's glory is like the flower of the field.³⁸

All that enters this world outside of the word of God is temporal, and everyone must return to dust. They spoke of the body ascending straight to heaven which strayed away from the doctrine of purgatory. These funerary sermons stressed a direct relationship with Christ and spoke of the victory over death, the hope and concept of resurrection, and the mortality of the body. Through the "partie consolative", the idea that death was simply an unavoidable step in achieving a new and everlasting life was fully developed. These important Catholic concepts expressed in sixteenth century funerals and funeral orations were reflected on the structure and iconography of transi tombs.³⁹

The wormridden skin and muscles that once portrayed the visceral terror of mortality, became filled with life as it beautifully draped the skeletal remains.

³⁸ Kathleen Rogers Cohen, *The Changing Meaning of the Transi Tomb in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 163.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 165.

In a rigid state of reform, the Roman Catholic Church⁴⁰ gave prominence to associating death with hope and salvation through faith, doing away with the pessimistic medieval construct. Accompanying this shift of death perception was the belief of a personal judgment at the time of death rather than the collective judgment of humanity known as Doomsday. With this belief, the glorification of the individual overruled the medieval denial of self.

The medieval moralistic emphasis on the body becoming dust and ashes as a means to subjugate pride was replaced with the biblical command “love and live”. This positive and newly popularized phrase was associated with the English transi of the sixteenth century. A tendency to emphasize the message of resurrection and the hope of salvation appeared as well during this period. Inscribed in black letter on the epitaph of the transi tomb of John Colet, humanist and Dean from Old St. Paul’s is the phrase: “Istuc recidit gloria carnis / Morere mundo ut vivas deo / Love and lyve” (The Glory of the body is reduced to this / Die to the world that you may live in God / Love and Live).⁴¹ While the phrasing of this quote isn’t directly from the Bible, key biblical themes about the centrality of love and impermanence of earthly life are encapsulated.

Colet’s transi figure (Fig.), placed on the bottom tier of a double-decker tomb, replaces the rotting corpse with a bare skeleton. He does not seem to be troubled with the suffering of his soul in purgatory. Death became a loving

⁴⁰ Roman Catholicism was the state religion of France beginning with the conversion of King Clovis I.

⁴¹ Judith W. Hurtig, “Seventeenth-Century Shroud Tombs: Classical Revival and Anglican Context,” *The Art Bulletin* 64, no. 2 (1982): 220.

approach to God as opposed to a punishment for sin. Joyful aspects of death were embraced: through love and the willing sacrifice of the flesh, one reaches everlasting life and union with God. The temporal body was considered a prison for the soul. It is through physical death that a person can truly live and have a spiritual unity with God. This increased positivity toward death is summed up in the popular sixteenth century phrase “Die to Live”, which gradually replaced previous phrases like “timor mortis conturbat me” (the fear of death disturbs me) which comes from the medieval Catholic Office of the Dead.⁴² Death was no longer a fearful enemy.

Decomposition of the body, and at times the presence of worms, were still very much present in transi tombs, but its treatment paralleled this positive sixteenth century mindset. Now standing, this new transi variation displayed both temporal death and eternal life; decaying in their worldly bodies, but filled with hope and faith in God’s resurrection. The decomposition of the flesh in the sixteenth century transi became positive. Through bodily decomposition, the soul is able to elevate to eternity in paradise. Perhaps it is making its way back to the incorporeal world from which it came from.

This positive meaning associated with later French transis can be seen in the transi of Saint-Innocent (Fig. 9-11). Titled *The Death of Saint Innocent*, this 1.2 meter Gothic sixteenth century alabaster sculpture was placed in the famous cemetery of the Innocents around 1530. This standing transi has his right arm

⁴² Kathleen Rogers Cohen, *The Changing Meaning of the Transi Tomb in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 135.

uplifted and seems willing to accept his inevitable fate, knowing that corruption is a necessary prelude to resurrection. Included with the transi is a shield with an inscription (Fig. 12) that showcases this optimistic view on death:

Il n'est vivant tant soit plein d'art / Ne de force pour résistance / Que je ne
frappe de mon dart [sic] / Pour bailler aux vers leur pitance / Priez dieu
pour les trépassés⁴³

(He is not alive unless he is full of art / Do not force for resistance / That I
do not strike with my dart / To give the worms their pittance / Pray to God
for death)

The last verse specifically 'Pray to God for death' reflects the mindset that death is not associated with dismay, fear, and horror. A just individual who greets death, greets God.

Although in a position of decay, the figure is imbued with life as flesh adorn his bones. Muscles and tendons envelop the neck and limbs in such a way that transforms the stagnation of death to the movement of life. The right arm is bent and raised, while his right hand forms a partial fist. His left hand delicately grabs ahold of his shield and the slight bend of his left knee transfers weight to the left side of the body. Through carved flesh, movement that is originally performed by the living is now fulfilled by this figure of decay. While the flesh on his limbs appear unscathed, ripped skin appears on his abdominal and pelvic area; creating a hole wide enough to reveal his spine. While it is clear that the

⁴³ *Louvre Museum*, collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010094573.

skin is decaying, it is aesthetically sculpted to reveal a decorative quality. An intended flowing pattern is seen on the skin as it mirrors the movement of the long draping shroud. The skin therefore clothes the body in the same fashion as the elegant fabric. Paying close attention to the thoracic area⁴⁴ I speculate that the downward draping of the skin emphasizes the shape of a pointed arch created by the outline of the ribs. Pointed arches were common in Gothic Cathedrals and often symbolizes the entrance to heaven. This iconographic feature supports the idea that decomposition was indeed a literal portal to the celestial city.

Carved in the mid-sixteenth century and accredited to the school of Ligier Richier is another standing transi monument titled *La Mort* (The Death), now displayed at the Musée des Beaux Arts in Dijon, France (Fig. 13). Although the flesh is treated similarly as in the transi of Saint Innocent, worms are present on this figure. Worms devouring the medieval body were visual symbols of repentance, while their existence on sixteenth century transis functioned as an affirmation of bodily resurrection. The skeleton is filled with movement as he uses the tendons on his neck to tilt his head upward towards the direction of heaven. Although there are no accounts describing the reason for his missing arm, the upward motion of his shroud covered shoulder signals that this arm was lifted to a degree. A large gaping hole is seen in his lower abdominal area which exposes the backside of his flesh and reveals that the lower spinal cord is non-existent.

⁴⁴ According to Cleveland Clinic, the thoracic cavity is located in the chest. It's enclosed by the bones and muscles that make up the chest wall. The thoracic cavity begins just below the neck and ends at the bottom of the ribcage.

His muscles are accentuated in his arms and legs, while his frayed skin partially reveals his ribs. Unlike the elaborately draped skin found on Saint Innocent's transi, the skin resembles that of pliable rolled out dough. Whilst stylistically different, the skin in *La Mort* beautifully decorates the chest area. A distribution of weight is produced by the slight bend of his left knee. Movement is produced by the flesh which injects the hardened stone with aliveness as it reveals the message of everlasting life. Another quotation from the Book of Job, the first of the Poetic Books in the Old Testament, was significant in creating this new meaning. The erect, but decomposing figure holds a shield inscribed with the following passage:

Ainsy fault Humain / Nature finer & est de / Dieu Raclus /

Putredini dixi pater / Meus et mater mea / Et soror mea vermicus⁴⁵

The last three lines are from Job 17:14: "I have said to corruption Thou art my father, to the worms, Thou art my mother and my sister." Even though his body is consumed by worms, he too will be granted resurrection. The corpse, which functioned either as an individual tomb or as the emblem for a cemetery, willingly accepts his unavoidable fate. He is fully aware that putrefaction is an overture to resurrection. Dressing the skeleton in a particular fashion, the flesh reflected death's grant of eternal life. Deriving from the Book of Job, the body's flesh was a tool that revealed hope for the vision of God after death. Stated in Chapter 19, verses 25-26:

⁴⁵ Kathleen Rogers Cohen, *The Changing Meaning of the Transi Tomb in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 121.

For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin: and in my flesh I shall see my God.⁴⁶

Resurrection of the flesh, as stated in the Apostles' Creed, was the beginning of life everlasting. The standing transi embodied resurrection over death and the positive promise of a glorified body over the abasement of the human figure.

Transis conveyed the time period's religious concern for the state of the body and the soul after death. It is through these transi monuments, that we can continue to witness the power of sculpted flesh to relay the Christian dogma of sin, death, and resurrection throughout the fourteenth - sixteenth centuries.

⁴⁶ Book of Job. 19:25-26.

CHAPTER 1: THE DEATH OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE

Born René de Nassau-Breda to Count Hendrik III and Claudia de Chalon, René inherited the Principality of Orange in the year of 1530 and thus was referred to hereafter as René de Châlon (1519-1544) (Fig. 14). Through the sacrament of marriage of his mother and father, the houses of Orange and Nassau were united, making René the first Nassau to be Prince of Orange. This title is initially associated with the sovereign Principality of Orange, in what is currently southern France and thereafter held by Netherlandish sovereigns. A decade after René's inheritance, he was married to Anne de Lorraine (Fig. 15) and made a knight of the Golden Fleece. It was under Emperor Charles V (Fig. 16) and Phillip II, that the Golden Fleece became the expression of unwavering loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church, a supporter of Habsburg ideology.⁴⁷ René's relation with the emperor was close due to familial ties: Count Hendrik III was Charles V's Upper Chamberlain and close confidant, while his cousin William of Orange was raised by the emperor himself.

At the youthful age of twenty-six, René took part in the siege of Saint Dizier in the service of Emperor Charles V, where he would soon pass due to being mortally wounded in battle. Injured and breaking three right shoulder bones around 2 in the afternoon on Monday, July 14, 1544, René was taken in by

⁴⁷ Liesbeth Geevers, "Family Matters: William of Orange and the Habsburgs After the Abdication of Charles V (1555–67)," *Renaissance Quarterly* 63, no. 2 (2010): 471. Charles V was both Lord of the Netherlands and emperor during this time.

Doctor Jean-Baptiste Cavani and another physician, whom I will reveal in the following chapter. Unresponsive to treatment, the Prince of Orange departed around 7:35 on the night of Tuesday, July 15, 1544, with the emperor attending at his bedside. Charles V allegedly consoled him with all he could, kissed him farewell on the cheek, and wept as if he had lost a son.⁴⁸ Written on June 20, 1544, René's will and testament stated he preferred to be buried at Notre-Dame de Breda, but trusted for the most suitable place if it wasn't possible. Fulfilling his wish, René was buried in the table tomb of his great uncle, Count Engelbert II of Nassau (Fig. 17), at the Grote Kerk/ Onze-Lieve- Vrouwekerk (Church of Our Lady) in Breda. Although this tomb monument was built by his father Henri de Nassau alongside architect Thomas Vincenzi from Bologna, its creation has been falsely attributed to artists Richier and Michelangelo. Sculpted in alabaster and lying in their shrouds, Count Henry III and Claudia de Chalon are displayed side by side resting on a black marble base. René's body still rests today next to his father, his two wives, and a newborn child. Before his burial in Breda, the prince's corpse was sealed in a lead coffin and brought to Bar-le-Duc, France, to the Collegiate Church of Saint-Maxe on Wednesday, July 16, 1544, where his funeral procession was held. A commemorative monument was erected at Saint-Maxe shortly after. This second tomb monument, commissioned by his wife, Anne de Lorraine, became known as the *Transi of René de Châlon*, also known as *The*

⁴⁸ Ibid., 459.

Skeleton or the Memorial to the Heart of René de Châlon (Fig. 18) sculpted by Ligier Richier.

Richier primarily worked in the churches of Lorraine in north-east France and was commissioned for work by René de Châlon's father in law, Antoine, Duke of Lorraine. This information provides a direct and intimate link between Richier, René, and his wife. Although a written document concerning Rene's tomb commission is not known, his relation to her father creates a clear explanation to why Anne de Lorraine entrusted Richier with her husband's tomb monument. Although the attribution to Richier is not based on documents, the statue is evidently his work.

THE TRANSI OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE

Representing the young prince of Orange, this 1545 cenotaph by Richier showcases a lifesize standing decomposed cadaver surrounded by an altarpiece. Although originally placed in the church of Saint-Maxe, this tomb has been physically relocated more than once. In its intended location, the figure was placed at the top of the choir, on the gospel side and faced towards the main altar. In 1790, this monument was transferred to the Collegiate Church of Saint-Étienne in northeastern France. During the war in 1918, the service for the protection of works of art in the Eastern region called for the transportation of the figure to the Pantheon in Paris (Fig. 19-21). Several months later, it was returned

to Saint-Étienne where it is currently housed.⁴⁹ This precious masterpiece overcame deplorable conditions; the left arm was broken into several pieces, the left leg was broken below the knee and the calf, the right leg was broken above the ankles, the left arm was shattered, the right index finger was fragmented, and the left buttock had a missing piece.⁵⁰ Thanks to the intervention of Saint-Maxe's former canon, Abbot Claude Rollet, this transi figure was restored (Fig. 22). With the understanding that this figure has been damaged since its completion, I will speak of the standing cadaver in its repaired state.

Carved out of two blocks of creamy white limestone and left untouched by paint, the figure is monochromatic in color. A stone of a pinkish yellow tone and fine grain from Saint-Mihiel was used by Richier. After its completion, he coated it with a brush with a mixture whose composition remains unknown.⁵¹ Although many historians have recorded that Anne of Lorraine wanted René to appear as he would be three years after his death, there is nothing to support this claim. Absent in his documented will and testament, the popular statement of 'René appearing as he would be three years after his death' remains a legend, unproven, and likely unfactual. Richier pursued the "faithful portrait" of the early modern which emphasized 'truthfulness' and a literal faithful display of the individual. Wounds that ultimately killed twenty-six year old Chalon such as the broken bones of the right shoulder would have been displayed. None of this is

⁴⁹ Lucien Braye, *René de Châlon et le mausolée du Cœur. France: Imprimerie Contant-Laguerre*, (Bar-le-Duc: Imprimerie Contant-Laguerre, 1924), 34.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

present and his fleshly remains are intact and showcase correct anatomical data. Corruption has devoured the eyes and facial features. Few teeth remain in the sockets of the jaw and the facial features are entirely defleshed. The trachea and the muscles of the anterior region of the neck connect the head to the trunk and are still equipped with its attached ligaments. The sternum and the ribs are partially covered by a few shreds of flesh which spread over the intercostal gaps, but are revealed due to the thorax being almost completely stripped. The skin of the stomach, whose transversal folds spread out in the manner of drapery, is not entirely devoured. Entrails are absent in the abdominal cavity, exposing the lumbar vertebrae and its inferior articular, transverse and spinous processes. A fold of skin that is skillfully torn around the pelvic region appears to be his genitals. Blatantly less affected by decomposition, the arms and legs have preserved their desiccated muscles which are shielded in certain areas by skin. The skin in these parts appear to be raised in open and fairly large, purulent blisters. Richier undeniably has full possession of the science of the human body, as he has reproduced the body with accuracy and detail. Both its skeletal framework and muscles have been evidently studied prior and are therefore exceptionally accurate. Its attachment points are in their exact place and the tense muscles of the neck are wonderfully executed as it maneuvers the head upward.

In regard to the representation of decomposition, it is of a naturalism that is more visible than realistic. Richier drew the principles from anatomy, but

artistically modified them without disturbing its correct anatomical structure. His visceral creation showcases René de Châlon standing in skeletal form with thin streams of flapping skin, meaty flesh and tendon wrapped around his bones. Although the reappearance of the Late Gothic love of skeletons is apparent, the treatment is different. Partially enveloping the bones, the deteriorated horror of the flesh and skin is transformed into decorative patterns similar to tattered parchment. Chalon's right arm folds towards his right breast as his inner forearm holds the magnificent cartouche (Fig. 23) that displays his role as a member of the Golden Fleece order. Absent of worms and maggots, the flesh is given full functionality, seen twisting and wrinkling as it follows and emulates the skeleton's gesture. Although flesh is absent on its torso and head, veristic muscles and tendons remain fully intact on its skeletal limbs (Fig. 24). Unlike the ornamented shreds of skin, the flesh remains whole and fully functional on both arms and legs; thus creating a graceful performance that strives to convince us that it is alive. To elevate the notion of life, an asymmetrical arrangement of the figure in which the line of the shoulders and arms differ strikingly with, while stabilizing, those of the legs and hips, is executed. This arrangement, known traditionally as *contrapposto*, creates dynamism within its composition to better portray movement, emotion, and reaction in this skeletal effigy. Overall, the use of flesh such as its muscles and tendons was necessary in order to render the skeleton's pose. Representative of how living humans would stand, this inanimate object becomes a thing of beauty, vitalized and filled with dynamic energy in which

spectators receive as an embodiment of life.⁵² Delightfully wearing his adorned flesh and skin, René de Châlon welcomes the beginning of his resurrection as he turns towards the vault of heaven in an outburst of faith, love, and hope.⁵³ The residual tendons around the throat seem to be tensing, bringing a glimmer of life to this figure of death (Fig. 25). Unashamed of his decomposed flesh, the upright figure displays pride and nobility. Death solely was used as a means of expression. Theatrically posed, this decaying figure exhibits an attitude full of life which makes it, somehow, speak and act.⁵⁴

Having been ripped from his chest, René's skeleton dramatically contemplates his heart. His heart is placed in the hand of the left elevated arm, as if beckoning towards the heavens (Fig. 26). The well-known transi was assigned to the monument of the prince's heart which was originally enclosed in a heart-shaped silver gilt box. While his heart was held inside the church of Saint-Maxe, his body was buried inside Grote Kerk. French royals believed that prayer at the site of the corpse could potentially put an end to purgatorial suffering. Elated at this thought, the idea of splitting their bodies to increase their spiritual potential was a standard burial practice made popular by the Capetian

⁵² Poet, Secundus suggests: 'A figuration of death vivid enough to elicit a physical response in its viewers is neither without art nor entirely without life'.

⁵³ Lucien Braye, *René de Châlon et le mausolée du Cœur. France: Imprimerie Contant-Laguerre*, (Bar-le-Duc: Imprimerie Contant-Laguerre, 1924), 27.

Three gestures complete and clarify this symbolism: the orbits turned towards the sky say: I believe; the right hand folded on the chest: I hope; and the heart raised towards God: I love. Faith, hope and love: the theological virtues, which René de Châlon protested at the hour of death. This interpretation supports the view of the positive symbolism of transi images during the mid-sixteenth century France.

⁵⁴ Paul Denis, *Ligier Richier: l'artiste et son œuvre* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1911), 206.

dynasty.⁵⁵ The separate burial of the heart and intestines became standard practice of French aristocratic mortuary etiquette from the twelfth century onwards. French aristocracy preferred three separate burial locations for their corpses; one dedicated to the body, the second to the entrails, and the third for the heart.⁵⁶

This procedure was revived in the sixteenth century by the commission of Francois I's heart monument (Fig. 27). His body was laid to rest in the Basilica of Saint-Denis, while his heart was placed in the abbey of Hautes-Bruyère (Yvelines). Due to the French Revolution, the priory was shut down, and eventually destroyed in the 1790's. Six decades later the monument was brought to Saint-Denis and placed near his tomb. Commissioned by his son King Henri II and sculpted by Pierre Bontemps, this monument was the first Renaissance example of such a royal monument showcasing a richly decorated urn.⁵⁷ A repopularized tradition, a heart monument, designed by Francesco Primaticcio and carved by Germain Pilon, was granted to his heir Henri II and wife Catherine de Medici (Fig. 28). Undoubtedly revolutionary in their own sense, the heart monuments of Francois I and his lineage ultimately showcase the unique and innovative quality of René's transi. No other sixteenth century monument of the heart exists in the form of a decomposed cadaver offering its own heart to the

⁵⁵ Jack Hartnell, *Medieval Bodies: Life, Death and Art in the Middle Ages* (London: Wellcome Collection, 2018), 219.

⁵⁶ Estella Weiss-Krejci, "Heart Burial in Medieval and Early Post-Medieval Central Europe," in *Body Parts and Bodies Whole: Changing Relations and Meanings* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010), 120.

⁵⁷ Colin Eisler, "Fit for a Royal Heart?: A French Renaissance Relief at the Metropolitan Museum of Art," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 38 (2003): 146.

heavens. This famous transi is shown standing, and not as a gisant. Thus this skeletal figure appears to foretell early modern anatomical models, although Richier most likely intended to display the Book of Job's message of hope for the vision of God after death.⁵⁸ Tragically, the original heart was lost and its cause remains unbeknownst to historians today. During the reconstruction of the skeleton's left hand, an hourglass made with plaster and wood replaced this loss. Fortunately, this rudimentary substitution was temporary and replaced by a heart in plaster.

THE PRINCE'S HEART

Throughout medieval and early modern Europe, the heart has done a considerable amount of symbolic work. It is a physical organ related to emotions, the self and identity, cognition, and the body. The heart was the site of emotion and emotional practices. In René de Châlon's transi tomb, his heart is raised by his left arm in a gesture of a theologically sanctioned love. Deriving from the medieval story of Abbess Chiara Vengente, the heart became intertwined with religious devotion which came to be known as the Cult of the Sacred Heart. Prior to Vengente's passing, she pronounced that Christ was residing in her heart, nourishing her. Following Vengente's death, Sister Francesa was compelled to inspect her heart in which she discovered a miniature sculpted image of Christ and, adjacent to it, a whole collection of objects correlated to the Passion. Thus

⁵⁸ Regina Deckers, "Frightening Fragments: The Representation of the Corpse in Baroque Sculpture," (2017): 90.

The Cult of the Sacred Heart formed as they were certain her heart had been chosen by holy forces as a result of her unexcelled religious steadfastness. In the following decades and centuries, paintings were commissioned displaying Christ planting a cross directly into her heart. Prints of this miraculous organ were created, in hopes of spreading word of this sensational phenomenon.⁵⁹

Familiarity with Vegente's story grew amongst artists and therefore contributed to the symbolism of the heart. The heart became a representation of sensuality and spirituality; it played a role in loving God and linking an individual to holiness. It is probable that Richier or Anne de Lorraine, both learned people involved in Catholicism, were familiar and inspired by this occurrence. Both Vegente and René's heart were enclosed in a box which serves as a potential indicator of this influence. Perhaps the focus of the heart in René de Châlon's transi was intended to display this ultimate devotion to Christ. René willingly offers his heart to God and proudly unveils his decaying body. Through this act, he conveys his willingness to leave the earthly realm to reside within Heaven's gates. Recognized as the house of the soul, it is no wonder that Christ has chosen to inhabit this passionate and intelligent organ.

This chapter provides important historical information regarding the death of the Prince of Orange and his innovative transi. Although rooted in the iconographic tradition of the transi, its realistic depiction of a corpse stresses the interest in anatomical accuracy. With this realization, this upcoming chapter

⁵⁹ Jack Hartnell, *Medieval Bodies: Life, Death and Art in the Middle Ages* (London: Wellcome Collection, 2018), 133.

explores its relation to Vesalius' *De fabrica* illustrations, specifically his muscle-men in Book II. It is within this upcoming chapter that we will look at the conceptions of the body. Vesalius' *De fabrica* muscle-men exhibits a new anatomical and scientific understanding, combined with a theatrical moment. These qualities are reflected in this monument of the heart which serves as evidence that Richier was surely influenced by these muscle-men. These anatomical figures, just like René's transi, have components of the staging body. Much of this explanation will come through in chapter two.

CHAPTER 2: VESALIUS' ANATOMICAL TREATISE

Born Andries van Wezel (1514-1564) (Fig. 29), Vesalius is often recognized as one of the most notable anatomists and the founder of modern human anatomy.⁶⁰ Vesalius was born into an influential and wealthy Flemish family in Brussels, which was considered a part of the Habsburg Netherlands in the sixteenth century. His grandfather, Everard van Wesel, was the Royal Physician to Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I (1459-1519), while his father, Anders van Wesel was an apothecary to Maximilian I and later served as valet de chambre to his successor, Emperor Charles V.⁶¹ In 1533, his medical training began in Paris under Jacobus Sylvius (1478-1555), the most celebrated anatomist of the time. Before becoming an imperial physician at the court of Emperor Charles V, Vesalius had been teaching surgical theory and anatomy at the University of Padua for five years and had written and illustrated three original works.

Vesalius' successful publication of *De humani corporis fabrica* (*The Fabric of the Human Body*) (Fig. 30) famed him as a master of dissection. Written when he was only 28 years of age, this great treatise was published in Basel during the

⁶⁰ Ahmadreza Afshar, David P. Steensma, and Robert A. Kyle, "Andreas Vesalius and De Fabrica," *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* 94, no. 5 (2019): 67–68.

The name Vesalius is a Latinized version of Andries van Wezel, as was customary for scientists and other scholars at that time.

⁶¹ According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, apothecary is "one who prepares and sells drugs or compounds for medicinal purposes".

month of June, 1543. A year after *De fabrica*'s publication, twenty-nine year old Vesalius deserted his studies to serve as physician to Charles V. His decision to join Charles V's court was apparently prior to the printing of *De fabrica*. Apart from his familial connection to the royal court, Vesalius perhaps anticipated that his presence would be well received there due to the fame brought by his work.⁶² To showcase his respect and personal admiration for the emperor, he dedicated *De fabrica* to Charles V and his son Philip. *De fabrica* with its two hundred and seventy-eight anatomical woodcuts yielded a total of seven hundred and sixteen pages. Due to its large size and high expense for the ordinary student or physician, an abridged version titled *The Epitome*, published at the same time, was created. Containing nine large anatomical woodcuts, but only eleven pages of text, this work was cost-efficient in comparison to its lengthier and more expensive counterpart. This version was also dedicated to the emperor and his son. Preceding *De fabrica* by five years, Vesalius commissioned the printing of *Tabulae sex*, a series of six unbound large anatomical woodcuts intended to aid students in their own research and study.⁶³ In 1522 Jacopo Berengario de Carpi published *Commentaria super anatomia Mundini*, the first full-scale anatomy book that included detailed anatomical illustrations. Carpi implemented hands-on research that created a distinct break between the medieval period and the

⁶² Charles T Ambrose, "Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564) - an unfinished life," *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica* 12, no. 2 (2014): 224.

⁶³ The *Tabulae sex* depicted the venous and portal systems, the liver, other viscera, and the skeleton.

Renaissance.⁶⁴ Although Carpi's work was essential to anatomical data, it was Vesalius' study that became the most influential books on human anatomy. While some scholars were firmly situated in the traditional anatomical practices of their medieval precursors, Vesalius challenged them.

Human dissections were not common practice in medieval universities, and public dissections were strictly standardized. Three persons were necessary to perform an autopsy at public anatomical lessons. Lecturers relied and based their lesson on an authoritative text, which typically was Mondino De' Luzzi's major work, *Anathomia corporis humani* (completed in Bologna around 1316). The procedure was performed by either a surgeon or a barber who utilized the text as their unquestioned guide. What was seen in a dissected body only confirmed what was relayed in the text. In *De fabrica*, Vesalius criticizes the medieval method of dissection and disapproves the dependence of anatomy on authoritative texts. He firmly stated that a lecturer on anatomy must have the ability to trust his own pair of eyes and be able to dissect a corpse himself.⁶⁵ This is clearly illustrated in the frontispiece of *De fabrica*, an imposing work that will establish a break between previous and latter studies of the human body. It is in itself the beginning of a revolution.

Dissections during Vesalius' time usually remained public teaching events, which occurred in winter in order to regard the process of decay. The frontispiece

⁶⁴ Benjamin A. Rifkin, Michael J. Ackerman, and Judith Folkenberg, *Human Anatomy: A Visual History from the Renaissance to the Digital Age* (New York: Abrams, 2011), 13.

⁶⁵ Timo Joutsivuo, "[Vesalius and *De humani corporis fabrica*: Galen's Errors and the Change of Anatomy in the Sixteenth Century]," *Hippocrates* (1997): 98.

(Fig. 31) illustrates a classical amphitheater in which the scene centers around Vesalius, the newly appointed Professor of Anatomy at the University of Padua. He is seen performing an autopsy on the cadaver of an executed female criminal (Fig. 32) who claimed to be pregnant in an attempt to escape execution. Magistrate of the criminal court of the Venetian Republic, Marcantonio Contarini, subjected this Paduan prostitute to examination by a midwife who is shown behind the right-hand column. To the woman's dismay, the midwife declared her statement to be fabricated and her execution was authorized by Contarini. The anatomical investigation served the purpose of authenticating the professionalism of the midwife and the veracity of the woman's statement. Her flayed body is frontal in position which highlights Vesalius' privilege to publicly present the principle of life concealed within the corpse.

This anatomy lesson is placed within a circular theatre with intricate Corinthian columns and an ornamental frieze reminiscent of a church. Until the construction of dissecting theatres, dissections were often carried out in churches.⁶⁶ Vesalius' performance as dissector, ostensor, and professor was public and accessible to everybody. In a semicircular frame, over a hundred bystanders are placed on three levels. Closely surrounding this examination were fellow physicians, his students, rectors of the city and university, counselors and representatives of the nobility and church. Each of the figures was assigned a singular role. This image is theatrical in nature as it dramatically captures a real

⁶⁶ Deanna Petherbridge and Ludmilla J. Jordanova, *The Quick and the Dead: Artists and Anatomy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 34.

moment in time, similar to the capability of a photograph. What appears to be a dissection at a Paduan lecture hall has been placed in a fabricated space.

The various allegorical figures and motifs help to emphasize this constructed image. Amongst the chaos and numerous bodies, one central figure remains aware of their own presence. Vesalius himself is standing, while his hands are concentrated in demonstrating this dissection. His left hand is raised as his right hand reaches for her internal organs. He himself is the prosecutor and signals his ultimate authority by forgoing the ostensors or demonstrators. Underneath the sector table, two men argue with one another to preserve a role that was now assigned to the medical sector.

(Fig. 33). Their positions as previous dissectors are removed by Vesalius as he places them beneath the table. He stares directly at his spectator and is conscious that his actions are being observed, almost as if this was the main intention of the frontispiece. Vesalius chooses and desires to be seen engaged in the act of opening a body as he promotes the physician's new role in public dissections. The differentiation of roles disappears and for the first time in the history of anatomy, practice and theory are unified. He exhibits himself as a proud and elegant physician confiding in his vision over ancient anatomical texts. His dissection tools are set on the table: a razor, a scalpel, a sponge, a candle, an inkwell, sheet, and pen. The writing utensils highlight Vesalius' message that the text should follow observational experience instead of preceding it. Through Vesalius' influence, physicians of the sixteenth century fixated on the certainty

that there is more to the body than what ancient writers had committed to paper. The body came to be viewed as a material of experience and as a source of knowledge. Internal viewing of the body, in both art and dissection, was a pivotal means of attaining knowledge in the early modern period.⁶⁷ Fascination for the body's interior rose with the popularity of anatomical dissections, where the exterior was punctured to disclose knowledge of its internal flesh. Openings and wounds were perceived as sites of truthfulness and were thought to allow the "truth inside the body to usher forth." To view the internal body was to receive a glimpse into "the central mystery of God and his operation in the world."⁶⁸ Vesalius' choice of performing a public dissection on a female corpse in this frontispiece was likely intentional. Male bodies were much more accessible than female bodies to the anatomist, which meant there was a lack of understanding and knowledge about the female reproductive system. His accessibility to this female criminal and his ability to showcase the internal female body displays his erudition and status as a high ranked physician. By placing the uterus as the corporeal center, he successfully accentuates the new knowledge he has obtained and has presented in *De fabrica*. The curiosity and newfound excitement of the interior body led to the emphasis of anatomical parts, which formed the cultural backdrop for unusual objects such as the transi monument.

Vesalius' reliance on his vision led him to question the established anatomical statements of Aelius Galenus (130-200) (Fig. 34), an accomplished

⁶⁷ Karen Marie Lark, "Bernini's Blessed Ludovica Albertoni: Drapery and the Permeability of the Body" (Master's thesis, University of Washington, 2020), 20.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

medical researcher. Galen's work was based on ancient heritage which encapsulated the idealism of Renaissance humanism. His work was favored and he became regarded as the greatest physician whose work was considered infallible. Vesalius, of course, questioned this infallibility and through his research proved Galen's findings to be unreliable. Vesalius' *De fabrica* gained substantial fame and became a major advance over Galen's anatomical treatises. While influential in the development of anatomy, his work was essentially erroneous in multiple instances which stemmed from a faulty methodology. After six months of analyzing and reading Galen's work, it was Vesalius who made this point clear as he harshly states in his own imputation:

[Galen] never dissected a human body; but deceived by his monkeys-although he did have access to two dried human cadavers-he frequently and improperly opposed the ancient physicians trained in human dissection ... not to mention that it is very astonishing that Galen noticed none of the many and infinite differences between the organs of the human body and of the monkey except in the fingers and the bend of the knee, which undoubtedly he would have overlooked with the others except that they were obvious to him without human dissection.⁶⁹

Galen relied on the comparative studies of animals to obtain knowledge of human anatomy. Throughout his *De fabrica*, specifically in Book II, Vesalius continues to contest Galen's descriptions, making it clear that the real issue was

⁶⁹ Glenn Harcourt, "Andreas Vesalius and the Anatomy of Antique Sculpture," *Representations*, no. 17 (1987): 40.

his reliance on monkey anatomy which differed greatly from the human body. For instance, humans have a separate muscle to flex the thumb, as opposed to that of monkeys where the thumb muscle is united with the flexor of the fingers. In addition, these creatures have several additional muscles from the trunk to the shoulder girdle and their long flexors of the toes are differently arranged.

Vesalius' muscle-men also included the semimembranosus muscle, one of the larger muscles in the thigh, in which Galen overlooked in his works discussing the nine thigh muscles.⁷⁰ Galen's dependence on animal anatomy is presented in Vesalius' frontispiece through the chained monkey, an age-old symbol of medicine, and the dog.⁷¹

Even in the pursuit of scientific knowledge, Western civilization deemed the violation of the human body to be in some sense wrong. 'Desecrating' the corpse was regarded as taboo and anatomists were forced to defend themselves against any accusation that dissection was a sacrilegious act against the body. The taboo against the practice of dissection was considered a safety measure against the mysterious power of the cadaver. These supposed powers included rejuvenating the living through its body fluid or communicating death. Recognition of these mystic abilities were manifested during the late Middle Ages in the grotesque, vermin ridden transi tombs.

⁷⁰ Andreas Vesalius et al., *On the Fabric of the Human Body. Book II, The Ligaments and Muscles* (San Francisco: Norman Publishing, 1999), xxii.

⁷¹ Andreas Vesalius et al., *The Illustrations from the Works of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels* (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), 42.

Saint Augustine states this Christian disapproval in his *De anima et ejus origine libri quatuor*. According to his text, the whole nature of man is body, soul, and spirit; therefore the estrangement of the body from this whole, is heavily frowned upon.⁷² Annual dissections were rare outside of Italy as they were considered controversial, were seen as socially degrading, and were deemed unnecessary for most physicians. Besides, this gruesome act was assigned to barber-surgeons, surgeons, and mechanics, which failed to provide any useful information outside Galen's work. By the sixteenth century, anatomical dissection had been accepted by the Catholic church and with the rise of scientific interest, the practice rose in popularity.

Unlike Galen, Vesalius' decisions were not dictated and plagued by criticism. His unswerving dedication in performing human dissections opened the way for the modern study of anatomy. Vesalius' use of human cadavers for dissection allowed him to rectify Galen's errors in *De fabrica*, which was first and foremost a book that showcased and described the anatomical body. He states:

The books [of *De fabrica*] present in sufficient detail the number, site, shape, size, substance, connection to other parts, use and function of each part of the human body, and many other matters I have been accustomed to explain during dissection regarding the nature of the parts and the technique for dissection of the dead and living.⁷³

⁷² Glenn Harcourt, "Andreas Vesalius and the Anatomy of Antique Sculpture," *Representations*, no. 17 (1987): 37.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 38.

In *De fabrica*, he labeled various body parts and discussed their function, structure, and pathology. Personal anecdotes about his grave-robbing and dissections of executed criminals were included. He expressed the hope that his anatomical illustrations would serve as beneficial models for both artists and physicians.⁷⁴ According to Erwin Panofsky, anatomy was brought to its scientific apex in *De fabrica* and was adjacent with the artistic Renaissance. Panofsky's assertion reveals that the work of Vesalius, while clearly a scientific program, essentially becomes an artistic artifact as it consists of descriptive text and image.⁷⁵ Through the artistic activity displayed in *De fabrica*'s anatomical figures, we witness the union of art and science.

⁷⁴ Benjamin A. Rifkin, Michael J. Ackerman, and Judith Folkenberg, *Human Anatomy: A Visual History from the Renaissance to the Digital Age* (New York: Abrams, 2011), 69.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

CHAPTER 3: THE FUSING OF ANATOMY AND THE TRANSI TOMB

From Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, images displaying the interior structure of the human body were almost non-existent. Sculptures and paintings in particular exclusively presented the naked outer body. This is not to say that no corpse dissections were performed or that no anatomical writings existed. Extensive studies concerning the human body's functionality and structure were conducted by doctors Erasistratos of Iulius and Herophilos of Chalcedon as early as the fourth century BCE. Writings by first century BCE Roman physicians such as Rufus of Ephesus, Cornelius Celsus, and Aelius Galenus (Galen) expanded on this study. Galen in particular laid the foundation for early anatomical research in his *De Anatomicis Administrationibus* and *De Usu Parium corporis humani*. Six centuries after Galen's death, images, although rudimentary, were added to advance anatomical text. One of the earliest illustrations involved the pregnant uterus which showcased the housed fetus in numerous positions (Fig. 35). At last, the twelfth century brought about whole depictions of the body as seen in an Alexandrian model. Internal organs and blood vessels were added in the thirteenth century (Fig. 36). With the popularity of manuscripts and increase of anatomical interest during the late medieval period, stylized illustrations of the full human figure exposing its organs with an open truck appeared. While more didactic images were displayed on painted panels during a surgeon's lecture,

what passed into manuscripts were simplified versions. As the sixteenth century approached, anatomy was labeled as an important and popular science. Events showcasing public dissections of executed criminals became a popular activity amongst the European populace, particularly in Italy. Public anatomies in sixteenth-century Padua were understood as a celebration of the body's existence and were considered formal events. With the invention of the printing press, images accompanying anatomical texts became widely shared. Artists became increasingly involved as it led to the nexus between art and science. This is the case in Vesalius' *De fabrica*.

Compared to his predecessors, and even among his contemporary peers, Vesalius' dissections were more accurate and extensive. His contribution to the development of anatomy lies not only in the exceptional accuracy of his dissections but also in his attentiveness of the visual and its ability to describe the human body. Due to his astonishing and innovative illustrations and demand that the body be studied solely through human dissection, Vesalius has earned the reputation as the forefather of modern scientific anatomy. Appreciative of the power of the printing press to reproduce images, Vesalius' work is familiar to many art historians and to the majority of anatomists.⁷⁶ Not only was Vesalius a dissector who had a remarkable eye, but he reshaped the way in which people viewed the body. For the sake of knowledge, *De fabrica's* figures, as performative images of dissection, serve to conceal the gruesome reality of postmortem

⁷⁶ Robrecht Van Hee, ed., *Art of Vesalius* (Antwerp: Garant Publishers, 2014), 35.

examinations. By removing this bloody reality, Vesalius was able to provide clearer images of the body and its anatomical features. It is also probable that the gruesome aspects of dissection were hidden as to not appall its audience. He states in his dedication to Emperor Charles V that the *De fabrica* images were specially convenient for those who were not able to witness the actual process.

Realistic illustrations of the body have been showcased by artists for plenty of decades. Distinguished artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael and Michelangelo were neither the first nor the last to create drawings that entailed realistic images of the body. This is not to say that Leonardo da Vinci's anatomical notations and notebooks were not impressive or fascinating. He was indeed one of the most artistically gifted scientists and scientifically acute artists of his time. Having dissected dozens of cadavers, Leonardo was able to fill a handful of notebooks with punctilious drawings and scribbled notations (Fig. 37-38).⁷⁷ Unfortunately, Leonardo's anatomical illustrations failed to influence the renaissance anatomical tradition as they remained a mystery for an extended time period. Leonardo's deepest thoughts were buried in his manuscripts for many centuries, therefore they exerted no immediate influence. Many great scientists of the sixteenth century had to rediscover the same findings or principles that were originally manifested by Leonardo. The relation between Leonardo's anatomical studies and Vesalius' *De fabrica* seems to remain a controversial issue for many scholars. Some even went as far as spewing

⁷⁷ Benjamin A. Rifkin, Michael J. Ackerman, and Judith Folkenberg, *Human Anatomy: A Visual History from the Renaissance to the Digital Age* (New York: Abrams, 2011), 8.

plagiarism accusations towards Vesalius. One anonymous scholar went as far as absurdly stating that it was improbable that a twenty-eight young man wrote such a perfect work as *De fabrica*. Vesalius' expertise went as far back as practicing surgery and attending plague cases at fifteen years old. Although Vesalius may have known the results of Leonardo's research, his work in a methodological or philosophical sense, has a claim to originality. Vesalius' work developed a degree of certainty in anatomy that ceased to exist prior. Anatomy in the Middle Ages and in the Quattrocento and Cinquecento, was intimately connected with various mythical speculations. Physicians during these times were simultaneously famous astrologers who placed the human body within the realm of the cosmic order. Organs, such as the lungs and liver, were correlated with planets and the heart was considered the sun. Examples of this strange astrological anatomy were still found in Leonardo's manuscripts. With Vesalius, anatomy became a pure empirical science as he completely obliterated its association with astrology.

Regardless of Leonardo's delayed discovery, Vesalius' work also surpassed Leonardo's studies in systematic organization, details and completeness. Vesalius corpses were much more than anatomically correct corpses as their theatrically staged bodies demonstrated the interweaving of science and performance. Leonardo's figures were pragmatic and lacked this performative quality as his interest was solely in presenting his scientific findings of the body. The contours of the body were familiar amongst sculptors of the Renaissance as they were inspired by Hercules Farnese (Fig. 39) and Apollo

Belvedere (Fig. 40), both famous ancient sculptures.⁷⁸ So while the human body and all of its contours were already embedded in the artist's mind, illustrations of the human body were rarely included in writings in anatomy before Vesalius. Images found in early printed books and manuscripts only repeated the message of the text, but failed to go beyond it. Greater naturalism was strived for in images found in books of anatomy or medicine, but they were often poorly drawn and simplified, such as those found in Berengario da Caripi's *Commentaria super anatomia Mundini* of 1521. Charles Estienne's treatise *De dissectione* became the only anatomy book written before *De fabrica*'s publication that included realistic images drawn from dissections. When compared, differences between Estienne's and Vesalius' contained significant differences in artistic quality and technique. Although hatching was utilized in both works, Vesalius' images were able to prominently convey volume (Fig. 41), while Estienne's resulted were flat and aesthetically less appealing (Fig. 42).⁷⁹ Unfortunately Estienne's book was delayed until 1545 with illustrations too miniature to reveal essential details.⁸⁰

Displays of Vesalius' anatomical view of the body are both illustration in usability and science in subject.⁸¹ His figures intended to create an aesthetic impact and have been known to obtain the powers to revive the dead. While artists such as Michelangelo and Leonardo used naturalistic qualities to

⁷⁸ Robrecht Van Hee, ed., *Art of Vesalius* (Antwerp: Garant Publishers, 2014), 41.

⁷⁹ Domenico Laurenza, *Art and Anatomy in Renaissance Italy: Images from a Scientific Revolution* (New York: Yale University Press, 2012), 23.

⁸⁰ Robrecht Van Hee, ed., *Art of Vesalius* (Antwerp: Garant Publishers, 2014), 42.

⁸¹ Benjamin A. Rifkin, Michael J. Ackerman, and Judith Folkenberg, *Human Anatomy: A Visual History from the Renaissance to the Digital Age* (New York: Abrams, 2011), Intro.

accentuate existing life, Vesalius was the first to accomplish bringing life to death. Through his images, he showcases his capability to transform the dead body into art and as a performance of life and posing. This, of course, was possible due to the collaboration with the rare skill and imagination of the hands that created his figures. While it is certain that Jan van Calcar (Fig. 43) prepared six elaborate anatomical plates for Vesalius' *Tabulae anatomicae sex*, no scholarship provides a definite answer to the century-long debate on *De fabrica's* artistic authorship. Various scholars speculate that either Titian or an artist from his workshop, precisely Calcar, was responsible for creating the prints. Vesalius' expression of hope in working with Calcar again after their previous partnership on the *Tabulae* in conjunction with Vasari's claim that Calcar was involved, firmly indicates that Calcar participated in *De fabrica's* illustrations. Oddly, neither Calcar nor any of the artists that would have been required to complete these illustrations were credited by Vesalius. Although Calcar's involvement with the whole project remains inconclusive, like Vasari, I acknowledge his association with the entirety of *De fabrica*. Regardless of who was responsible for the plates' draftsmanship, *De fabrica* was, first and foremost, Vesalius' own treatise, filled with his scientific intellect and wisdom. It is apparent, especially in his charts of the vessels and the nervous system, that these diagrams are the result of combined data of multiple dissections. An artist would unlikely be capable of creating these illustrations solely as it displays details obtained from substantial dissection experience. In addition, persistent notions of the Galenic tradition are echoed in the images and

corresponding text. These notions would have been unfamiliar to artists such as Calcar, or even Titian for that matter.

Despite this uncertainty, their alliance as artist and physician resulted in the preservation of life. At last, the dead were illustrated as a living manifestation of our physical state and destiny. Although illustrations of macabre skeletons have been displayed since the Middle Ages, Vesalius's skeletal figures differed from those represented in the medieval Dance of Death (Fig. 44). While it is true that these figures are dancing in various gestures, their bodies are not aestheticized, nor truly performative in nature. *De fabrica's* cadavers, through their elegant and flaunting poses, succeed in transforming their dead bodies into artworks that embody life. An artificial life concerned with its artistic presentation. The dissected bodies, although 'dead' with flayed flesh, represent themselves in dynamic fashion, emphasizing their 'livingness'. These cadavers performed as conscious victims of a posthumous realm. Their mortality, almost too tangible and accurately showcased, to be anything else other than human. Although produced with mediums and tools to showcase medical illustration, their sufferings are clear and elicitate emotional responses within its viewers.

De Fabrica brought a new dimension to anatomy in every way. Images were displayed clearly as allowed by its size. Utilizing this space, several illustrations of the same figure were included on the same page to provide an idea of three-dimensionality. Presumed as fact, it appears that Vesalius secured Jan Steven van Calcar and the best draftsmen from Titian's studio who studied

the work of artists that showcased a clear understanding of human anatomy.

Calcar showcased in the *De fabrica* figures, his familiarity with Raphael and great Venetian artists such as Giorgione. While the history of anatomy is in fact set in the history of art, anatomy is also embedded in art's future. We witness art clearly permeating the scientific treatise of *De fabrica*, that in return influenced art created after its publication. The breath of life that Vesalius injected into the *De fabrica* corpse was paralleled in tomb monuments, specifically in the sixteenth century standing transi of René de Châlon.

Some may argue that René's transi was influenced by Saint Innocent's transi tomb (Fig. 12), a dramatized *écorché* with a raised arm, but upon further analysis, this hypothesis lacks the visual evidence to strengthen this argument. Looking specifically at the structure of the ribs and genital area, the figure's anatomical structure is simple and outdated, while René's anatomical structure is complex and correct. This well-known transi assigned to the monument of René de Châlon's heart reflects Vesalius' *De fabrica* illustrations, whereas the transi tomb of Saint Innocent is similar to Guido da Vigevano's illustrated figures in his work on dissection in *Anothomia Philippi Septimi* (1345) (Fig. 45) Although a moralizing sculpture, René's transi tomb is aestheticized and performative. It is a work that delivers a meaningful didactic message and craves the gaze of its spectator. Standing upright in a position that is neither inhibited or restricted, the limestone corpse proudly showcases its correct anatomical structure. With anatomy as a beloved and prevalent science in the sixteenth century, religious

artwork was used as a vessel to showcase the body in such a way. René's transi anticipated early modern anatomical models as seen in its artistic representations of muscle tissue, skin, and the skeletal form. I argue that this was the result of the advanced anatomical works of Vesalius offered in his *De fabrica*. Through René's transi, Richier flaunts Vesalius' innovative take of displaying life in death and transforms it into sculptural form. Before delving into the aestheticized reasoning behind this claim, I must briefly discuss the personal relationship between René de Châlon and Andreas Vesalius.

RENÉ DE CHÂLON AND VESALIUS

Serving as Emperor Charles V's court physician during his fight against the French armies, Vesalius joined the Saint Dizier Imperial forces in July 1544.⁸² As surgeon of the Court, he was assigned to treat the injured soldiers and embalm the dead fighters in order for their bodies to be buried in their country of origin. On July 14, a member of the Nassau family who had been injured by a cannonball was in need of Vesalius' expertise and aid. This patient was the mighty René de Châlon, Prince of Orange. Unfortunately, Vesalius and Doctor Jean-Baptiste Cavani were unable to save the prince from this life-threatening injury. Due to this intimate interaction with René, their shared association to the Netherlands, and their mutual personal relation with the emperor, Vesalius was granted permission to dissect his body.⁸³ Partaking in the most private act with

⁸² Robrecht Van Hee, ed., *Art of Vesalius* (Antwerp: Garant Publishers, 2014), 27.

⁸³ Maurits Biesbrouck and Omer Steeno, "Andreas Vesalius' Corpses," *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica* 12, no. 1 (2014): 21.

the prince, it is highly probable that a connection exists between Vesalius' *De fabrica* corpses and the transi figure of René de Châlon.

De fabrica is a series of seven books focused on the various parts of the body: the skeletal system, muscles/ligaments, circulatory system, cerebral/peripheral nerves, abdominal organs, thoracic organs, brain and organs of special senses. With the aim of showing that René de Châlon's transi, was in fact, influenced by this work, I will be solely focusing on illustrations from *De fabrica*'s "Book II: The Ligaments and Muscles". This emphasis is purposeful as René's transi is the most homogenous to these muscle-men. Both the corpses of the sculpted René and the drawn figures in Book II exhibit a performance of life so comparable to one another, that it becomes arduous to deny their relation. Although I find that an in-depth discussion about "Book I: The Bones and Cartilages" is unnecessary, it is important to mention and note that Richier indeed would have studied Vesalius' skeleton figures. After all, the transi's decomposed flesh partially reveals the skeletal structure that replicates Vesalius' updated anatomical studies. Vesalius clarifies that the artist must gain a detailed comprehension of the bones instead of being solely focused on gaining an exact knowledge of the superficial muscles. To understand when to draw certain muscles longer, shorter, more compressed, or more protuberant, the artist must ensure the bones are fully acquainted with the function of each muscle. Stated directly from Vesalius himself, it is likely that Richier would have studied both Book I and II to create the visionary transi. It is also important to communicate

that although this sculpture is considered a monument of the heart, “Book 6: The Heart and Associated Organs” does not influence this transi creation as its original heart belonged to René himself and was not sculpted.⁸⁴

Vesalius begins the first chapter of *De fabrica* with the human skeletal structure, the final result of dissection in which layers of flesh and muscle are removed.⁸⁵ He was adamant that the skeletal structure was preparatory to the study of anatomy. The three consecutive plates which represent the anterior, lateral and posterior details of the skeleton are viewed in relation to the muscle-men figures in Book II. These illustrations, including certain muscle figures, were intended for the instruction of the artist. Vesalius expressed the hope that his work would prove useful for “the painter, the sculptor, and the moulder”⁸⁶, as well as for doctors, by helping to show how the muscles contracted and expanded in motion. If this indeed was Vesalius' wish, he has been remarkably successful. Globally admired for their dynamic qualities, these figures have influenced the artist as they have been copied, reproduced, or modified on various occasions. For instance, the first two plates (plates 25 and 26) from Book II specifically have been utilized throughout the last couple of centuries and are found in an altered form in countless textbooks on anatomy for

⁸⁴ This statement serves as a reminder that this claim is based on René de Châlon's original transi monument that included René's actual heart.

⁸⁵ *De fabrica's* choice of organization was influenced by Galen. It was Galen who determined how an anatomical text should be arranged. The skeletal system was always set as the first chapter in Galen's publications. One unfamiliar with anatomical texts, would expect the study of the skeleton to come at the end, as to follow the actual process of dissection.

⁸⁶ Andreas Vesalius et al., *On the Fabric of the Human Body. Book II, The Ligaments and Muscles* (San Francisco: Norman Publishing, 1999), 5.

art students today. Modified constructions of the *écorché* in plate 25 have even been discovered in art supply shops.⁸⁷ I argue that Richier was one of these artists who, through studying the muscle-men in Book II of *De fabrica*, masterfully shaped René de Châlon's putrefied body into sculpture. Considering that René's *transi* was created shortly after the 1543 publication of *De fabrica*, it would be reasonable to assume that Richier would have used the most popular and updated book of anatomy, renowned for its detailed and revolutionary illustrations.

VESALIUS' MUSCLE-MEN IN BOOK II

In Book II of *De fabrica*, Vesalius introduces a striking series of sixteen plates illustrating the layers of muscle in the body, through progressive dissections. The bodies are posed in the Italian countryside and can be lined up to form a continuous landscape of Euganean Hills (Fig. 46).⁸⁸ Considering that it was in Padua where Vesalius wrote his *De fabrica*, it seems almost natural that the atmosphere of his muscle-men would be here. These muscle-men were illustrated directly from the dissected corpses which the anatomist held upright with the aid of ropes and pulleys. The first fourteen displays the whole human figure. In the first plate of the muscles (Fig. 47), the anterior view of the male body is illustrated. Vesalius addressed in his note that the second plate (Fig. 48)

⁸⁷ Andreas Vesalius et al., *The Illustrations from the Works of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels* (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), 92.

⁸⁸ Martin Gumpert, "Vesalius: Discoverer of the Human Body," *Scientific American* 178, no. 5 (1948): 26.

in the book is another representation of a single dissection found in the first plate of the muscles, but from the lateral aspect.⁸⁹ Like Plate I, the frontal view of the figure is shown in Plates III, IV, V, VI, VII, and VIII. Vesalius supervised the publication of the printed images with entire explanatory legends related by numbers, letters, and symbols. Individual muscles are marked with a single symbol in the first and second plate of the muscles as Vesalius expresses that these two plates deserve careful study. Majority of the head and all the face are osseous, therefore very few symbols are placed here. The skin, fat, sinews, veins and arteries have been cut away in Plate I. The fleshy deep fascia, also known as the membrane, has also been rid of. In the second, third, and ninth plate, the fleshy membranes are not as concealed. These early illustrations in particular show superficial dissections and were designed to offer a complete view of the major muscles to physicians and artists. Although Plates I and II are to be studied diligently, Plate III (Fig. 49) is the first illustration Vesalius has prepared for teaching purposes. The first two show what erudite painters and sculptors regularly portray in muscular and 'thick-set' figures. The muscular fibers and the membranes evident in the face and neck however, were more prone to trouble the painter, the sculptor, and the molder, the set of artists Vesalius wished to assist in their pursuits. Vesalius strongly suggested in the introduction of Book II that one must study a particular muscle in all of his muscle-men plates,

⁸⁹ Martin Kemp, "A Drawing for the Fabrica; and Some Thoughts Upon the Vesalius Muscle-Men," *Medical History* 14, no. 3 (1970): 282.

especially those illustrations where the whole of it is revealed. Vesalius states that:

The main reason why I have depicted the muscles in full-length figures like this and have not begun each chapter with a picture of a single joint and its muscles is that if the joints were depicted on their own only a very experienced anatomist could identify them. But with them all cohering like this it is obvious to anyone in what area each muscle is to be found, and indeed it would have been desirable to present full-length figures like these even if the joints had been individually depicted as well. In fact, if I had thought it would be at all useful to depict at the head of each chapter the muscles it contained, the student would not have been deprived of this advantage, for apart from the expense it would have required no work on my part: these full-length figures had to be cut anyway, and it would have been no more difficult for me to give the block-cutter individual portions and joints to copy than to cut off from the illustrations shortly to be presented and give to the sculptor a head, an arm, a leg, or a thorax as required.⁹⁰

Vesalius' suggestion of using all plates of the muscles, makes it particularly likely that Richier took this advice.

This innovative display of the dead body is reflected in the transi of René, not only through its lively, melodramatic and aestheticized poses, but also

⁹⁰ Andreas Vesalius et al., *On the Fabric of the Human Body. Book II, The Ligaments and Muscles* (San Francisco: Norman Publishing, 1999), 2.

through Vesalius' newfound research displayed in these muscle-men. My main task in the following section is to present the correlation between Vesalius' muscle-men and the transi of René de Châlon through a comparative analysis; by assessing their anatomical similarities. Although it is possible that Richier was influenced by multiple of his muscle-men, I focus on Plates I and II. Upon first glance, it is undeniably evident that the similitude between René's transi and these particular muscle-men is initially seen in their ostentatious posing. Both the transi and the theatrical figure in Plate I display an upward gaze that reveal their taut neck muscles and a contrapposto pose that showcase the leg muscles in a state of shifted weight. The muscular corpse in Plate II presents the left arm in a raised position to present the muscles of both the outer and inner regions of the brachium and antebrachium. Plates I and II are exactly the same as far as dissection is concerned; Plate II is turned, but nonetheless shows the same muscles. Together they provide a direct view of the front and side profile of the muscular system.

By observing and comparing their anatomical similarities, I have prepared a list of muscles that appear in both muscle-men and those in René's transi. To make this portion easily comprehensible, I use Plate I and II's explanatory legend in which letters, numbers or symbols are used to locate the muscle being discussed. Please note that I will not be repeating muscles found in Plate I in Plate II's list. This upcoming list of muscles comes directly from *De fabrica's* English translation by William Frank Richardson in collaboration with John Burd

Carman. Additional information regarding the muscle or its location on René's transi tomb is placed in brackets to help distinguish text outside of *De fabrica*. I have placed the modern terminology for each muscle right after the key symbol.

Due to its decaying state and Richier's own innovative take on his creation, René's transi does not display all the muscles listed in Plates I and II. Additionally, photographs of the cadaver provide its audience a limited view; neither the back or direct side views can be observed, yet alone seen. Bearing in mind that the back region of the figure is not visually accessible, this list only contains muscles from the frontal region. To some, this may appear as a slight impediment, but I consider this as affirmation to my claim. A frontal view of the image of the transi is all that is required to discover various undeniable similarities between these man-made corpses. (Please view fig. 50-54. I have marked René's transi with letters, numbers, or symbols that reflect the same muscles found on Plates I and II)

Plate I

F - Sternocleidomastoid: Muscle arising from the breastbone and clavicle and implanted by a fleshy insertion into the mastoid process of the bone in the occiput.

G - Trapezius: This is a portion of the second muscle moving the scapula; it looks rather like the cowls that monks wear.

H - (references to omohyoid and scalenus anterior): This area transmits the outer jugular veins, and therefore, in the living only, appears hollow without any distinguishing muscle.

I - Clavicle: Front of the clavicle, not covered by flesh.

K - Deltoid: Muscle that raises the arm; it takes its origin from the clavicle, the acromion, and the spine of the scapula. Here that part of it is visible which grows forth from the clavicle and acromion.

[This muscle is shown in a state of decay on René's transi. Nonetheless, the muscle remains anatomically correct.]

M - Sternum: Breast bone with no fleshy covering.

[Galen claimed that the human breast bone has seven segments, in which Vesalius disproved by discovering that it only has three segments: manubrium, corpus sternum, and xiphoid process.]

N - Latissimus dorsi: Hidden beneath the armpit; it marks part of the muscle that draws the arm downward and toward the back.

R - Coracobrachialis: R is hidden beneath the armpit; it marks the fleshy part of the inner head of the muscle just mentioned, which swells out as if it were a separate muscle.

T - Long head of triceps: Muscle growing forth from the lower edge of the scapula and serving to extend the elbow.

[The long head of the triceps is seen on the left arm of the transi.]

Y - Palmaris longus: Muscle extending a broad tendon into the hand.

[This muscle is shown on the left raised arm of the transi.]

Z - Flexor carpi ulnaris: In the right forearm this marks the muscle that takes its origin from the inner tubercle of the humerus and is inserted into the upright bone of the carpus. It flexes the wrist.

[This muscle is seen on René's left raised arm.]

c - Abductor pollicis longus and extensor pollicis brevis: In both forearms this marks two muscles that take their origin from the ulna. One of them extends a tendon to the carpal bone that sustains the thumb; the other divides into two tendons, of which it inserts one into the first bone of the thumb and the other into the second and third bones.

d - Extensor pollicis longus: In the left hand here occurs a tendon of the muscle that everts the thumb toward the index finger.

[Displayed on the right hand of the transi.]

e - Extensor digitorum and extensor indicis: In the left hand are seen tendons stretching into the outer area of the index finger.

3, 4, 5, 6 - Extensor retinaculum: In the left hand these mark the transverse ligament visible on the outside of the forearm. The numerical symbols denote individually how many depressions and rings appear to dissectors in this surface of the hand. There are in all four belonging to the radius and serving the tendons in whose vicinity you see the number. The figure 6 can be seen on the right forearm, making the same thing on the left.

[These are shown on the right hand of the transi.]

h - First dorsal interosseous: In the left hand, this indicates the seat of the muscle that pulls the thumb very close to the index finger.

[This muscle can be seen clearly on the right hand of the transi.]

i - Abductor pollicis brevis: In the right hand the muscle that abducts the thumb a long way from the index finger.

[On René's transi, this muscle can be seen on its raised left arm. This muscle tenses as it holds its heart.]

q; - Abductor digiti minimi: Muscle abducting the little finger from the others, at the right side of which can be seen the one that, for the most part hidden beneath this one, flexes the first internode of the little finger and draws it outward.

[seen on the right hand of the transi, near the pinky]

p - Gracilis: Muscle which grows forth from the joint of the pubic bones, the second of those that move the lower leg.

[seen in the innermost part of the thighs]

q - Tensor fasciae latae and iliotibial tract: Sixth among the muscles that move the lower leg. Its tendon is so thin that it does not conceal the outline of the muscles that lie beneath it.

[This muscle is more defined on the outer right thigh of the transi.]

r - Vastus lateralis: Although this muscle along with others lying superficially at this point is overlain by the aforesaid membranous tendon

of the sixth muscle moving the lower leg, yet it can be seen and does not escape notice even in muscular people with their skin unbroken.

[This is seen more defined in the left leg of the transi.]

l - Rectus femoris: Muscle that starts above the joint of the hip bone and is the ninth among the movers of the lower leg. It too is overlain by the membranous tendon of the sixth muscle moving the lower leg.

t - Vastus medialis and vastus intermedius: Muscle enveloping virtually the whole of the femur; it is eighth among the movers of the lower leg.

[Vastus medialis is located on the lower inner portion of the thigh. Vastus intermedius is located in the center portion of the mid-thigh.]

v - Flexor retinaculum: Transverse ligament stretching from the tibia to the heel bone.

[This is clearly displayed on the right ankle of the transi.]

x,y - Tibia: The whole of this area of the tibia has no flesh, being not covered by any muscle.

[The top portion of the tibia is seen, as the rest of the lower half is less noticeable due to the draping skin of the transi.]

α - Extensor digitorum longus: Muscle extending the four toes.

β - Peroneus tertius: This is the portion of the muscle that extends the four toes; it serves to raise the foot toward the front and is counted as the ninth of those that move the foot.

ε- Lateral malleolus: Outer malleolus, or fleshless part of the fibula.

[visible on the left ankle of the transi from the angle of its photos]

ξ - Abductor hallucis: Muscle drawing big toe inward.

ω - Extensor hallucis brevis and extensor digitorum brevis: In the right foot this marks the muscle that adducts the big toe to the other toes (or moves it outward).

Plate II

S - Brachioradialis: Muscle growing forth from the humerus; it is inserted into the lower epiphysis of the radius and supinates the radius.

T - Extensor carpi radialis longus and brevis: Muscle extending the wrist by means of a twin-horned tendon.

V - Extensor digitorum: Muscle extending the index, middle, and ring fingers.

Y - Extensor carpi ulnaris: Lower of the muscles that extend the metacarpus

us.⁹¹

Considering that René's transi reflects new correct anatomical displays of the muscles that have never been presented in this light prior to *De fabrica*, this list establishes concrete evidence that Richier's creation was heavily inspired by Vesalius' figures.

⁹¹ Andreas Vesalius et al., *On the Fabric of the Human Body. Book II, The Ligaments and Muscles* (San Francisco: Norman Publishing, 1999), 5-9.

THE MARRYING OF THE MUSCLE-MEN AND RENÉ'S TRANSI TOMB

Vesalius' *De fabrica* illustrations were created with a view to pedagogic utility. Richier's utilization of the muscle-men just a couple years after *De fabrica*'s publication proves how immediate the reception of Vesalius was, not just for physicians, but for artists as well. This study highlights the importance of Vesalius specifically in the arts and the extraordinariness of René's transi. While it is known that dissections and their associated illustrations contributed to the newly emerging sciences of body knowledge, the marrying of Vesalius' muscle-men and Richier's limestone corpse, offers a new approach to viewing the transi body. Fantastical and wondrous, René's transi displays aesthetically innovative qualities made possible with the anatomical influence of these muscle-men. René's tomb naturally consists of traditional iconographic elements of previous transi tombs, but the figure itself is new, different, and quite spectacular. Instead of recycling all of the stylistic characteristics of earlier transi tombs, Richier incorporated new forms of visual knowledge about the body. Although already an established artist, perhaps Richier's intention for this incorporation was to further elevate his status as a sculptor. It also remains probable that a collaboration between Anne de Lorraine and Richier occurred during the creation of her husband's tomb. If their partnership did transpire, it is feasible that its design was implemented to advance the status of both himself and Anne, and quite possibly even the status of the entire House of Orange. If this assumption is correct,

René's transi conveys their erudition, as knowledge of the latest anatomical treatise is evident throughout this figure.

Never seen in any transi tomb prior, this proud putrescent body not only is correct in its anatomical structure, but it also displays a completely phenomenal dramatization. With the combination of theatricality and the most cutting edge scientific standards, the liveness of the corpse takes on an original and different kind of animation. Like Vesalius' muscle-men, the transi of René is theatrically posed in a way that elucidates its extreme desire to be seen and contemplated upon. It is without a doubt utterly self-absorbed and a figure of vanity. In an attempt to disguise this self-absorption, this figure strives to identify itself as one who is sanctified and pious by displaying the theological message of resurrection, a popular theme in sixteenth-century transi tombs. This transi tomb benefits from its placement in a church and its identity as a funerary monument, which is already in itself, religious in context. It dramatically uplifts its neck to look intently at its left elevated hand that grasps its own heart. While it was seen as a symbol of offering this miraculous organ to the heavens, the transi seems to be focused on pondering its own existence. Innovative and striking in its composition, René's standing figure is undeniably important in the history of the transi tomb. It marks one of the final steps in the evolution of the transi, for the dead sculpted body is for the first time united with Vesalius' anatomical world.

Furthermore, Vesalius and Richier's figures successfully combine the 'realistic' representation of the corpse and the fantastical. This union of art and

science is what makes these figures so effective. René's tomb injects scientific elements in the arts, while Vesalius administers artistic elements in his scientific displays. Both Vesalius and Richier both desired for the 'realistic' depiction of the decaying body. These bodies, although 'realistic' are bodies in a manner that is arguably performative and aesthetic. 'Realistic' representations meant conveying a figure as having volumetric form and depended upon notions of accuracy, the demand which was popularized in the sixteenth century. Their renderings, therefore, had to be visually intelligible with clear definition and correct proportions. However, in both the muscle-men and the transi figure of René, such demand for this accurate representation is paradoxical as it reveals the discrepancies between the reality of the body and the purported 'reality' of the images. Vesalius' muscle-men hid the bloody reality of dissection while René's transi concealed the repugnant reality of bodily decay. Messy and difficult to comprehend in its deceased state, the body is cleaned up not only to enable an unobstructed view of its parts, but also for the sake of aesthetics. Obscuring the viscerality of the body, both the muscle-men and the transi figure are idealized corpses, cleansed and drained of their fluids. Dry and odorless, the presentation of these bodies had little to do with death's biological effects. In addition to their performative nature, it is through this aestheticization that these dead fascinating figures were able to gain the attention they so heavily sought. René's transi becomes the first of its kind to crave authenticity in such a way that is contradicting. Full of contradictions, the human body is aestheticized as a

masterpiece despite its incomplete nature. Vesalius' muscle-men is deprived of its largest organ and René's flesh has heavily been consumed by vermin.

Regardless of their label as dead figures, both René's sculpted corpse and Vesalius' muscle-men are immortalized. This preservation is established on a desire to cheat death by pausing the processes of its action for an indefinite period. Time has been essentially disrupted in the dead figures which ultimately avoids these bodies from being subjected to organic post-mortem experiences. Vesalius' muscle-men and the transi of René de Chalon are corpses that are successful in defying death, bypassing the cycle of life as they continue to perform to grasp the eyes of their audience. It is through this amalgamation of art and science that we witness the performance of everlasting life.

FIGURES



Fig. 1 - Unknown artist, *Transi of Guillaume de Harcigny*, limestone, after 1393.
Musée Archéologique, Laon, France.





Fig. 2 - Unknown artist, *Gisants of the Entrails of Charles Le Bel and Jeanne D'Evreux*, marble, 1372. Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.



Fig. 3 - Unknown artist, *Tomb of Philip the Bold*, 1381-1410. Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon, France.



Fig. 4 - Unknown artist, *Double-decker monument of John Fitzalan*, mid-15th century. Fitzalan Chapel, Arundel Castle, West Sussex, England.



Fig. 5 - Unknown artist, *Double-decker tomb of Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury*, polychromed stone, 1424-26. Cathedral, Canterbury.



Fig. 6 - Unknown artist, *The Tomb of Cardinal Jean de La Grange* (fragment), marble, 1388-1402. Benedictine College of St. Martial Church, Musée du Petit Palais, Avignon, France.



Fig. 7 - Unknown artist, *Transi tomb of Francois I de la Sarra* (covered with frogs and snakes), mid-late 14th century. Chapel at La Sarraz, Vaud, Switzerland.



Fig. 8 - Unknown artist, *Transi tomb of Guillaume Lefranchois*, after 1456. Arras Museum, France.



Fig. 9 - Unknown artist, *La Mort Saint-Innocent*, gypsum alabaster, 1520s. Louvre Museum, Paris, France.



Fig. 10 - Unknown artist, *La Mort Saint-Innocent* (backside), gypsum alabaster, 1520s. Louvre Museum, Paris, France.



Fig. 11 - Unknown artist, *La Mort Saint-Innocent* (right side view), gypsum alabaster, 1520s. Louvre Museum, Paris, France.

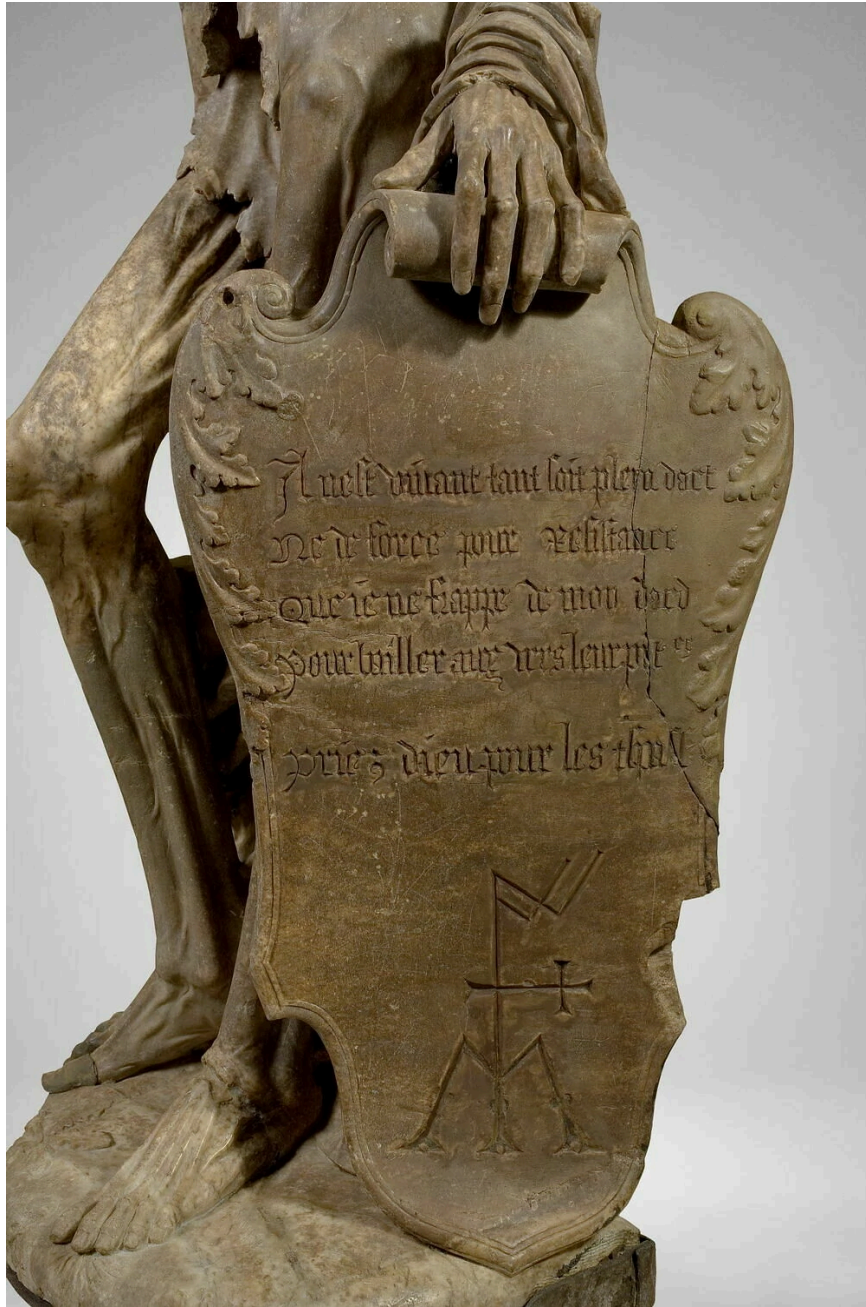


Fig. 12 - Unknown artist, *La Mort Saint-Innocent* (shield inscription), gypsum alabaster, 1520s. Louvre Museum, Paris, France.



Fig. 13 - Ligier Richier, *La Mort*, stone, mid-16th century. Musée des Beaux Arts, Dijon, France.



Fig. 14 - Attributed to Jacques Le Boucq, *Portrait of René de Chalon*, mid-16th century. A drawing in the Recueil d'Arras manuscript.



Fig. 15 - Attributed to Jacques Le Boucq, *Portrait of Anne de Lorraine*, mid-16th century. A drawing in the Recueil d'Arras manuscript.



Fig. 16 - Attributed to Lambert Sustris, *Portrait of Charles V*, oil on canvas, 1548.



Fig. 17 - Henri de Nassau and Thomas Vincenzi, *Mausoleum of Engelbert II of Nassau and Cimburga van Baden*, alabaster and black marble, early 16th century. Grote Kerk/Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk (Church of Our Lady), Breda.



Fig. 18 - Ligier Richier, *Transi of René de Châlon*, black marble and limestone, 1545. Church of Saint-Étienne, Bar-le-duc, France.

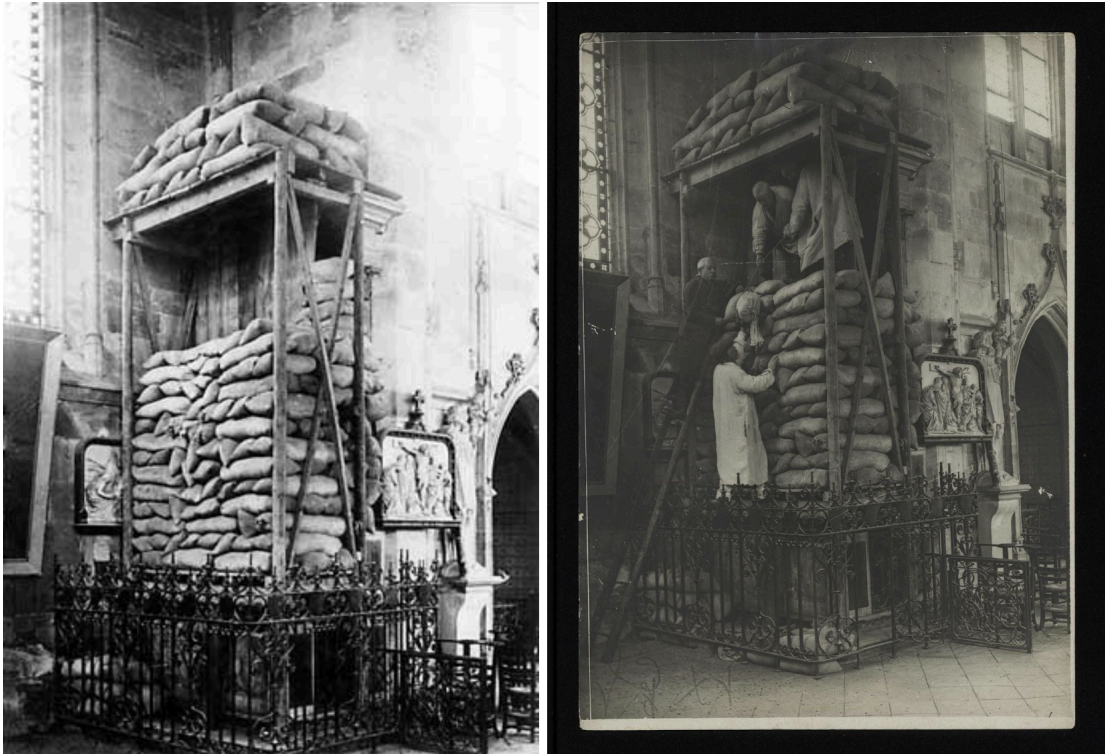


Fig. 19 - Unknown artist, *Protection of the sculpture*, photograph, 1917.
Bar-le-Duc, France.

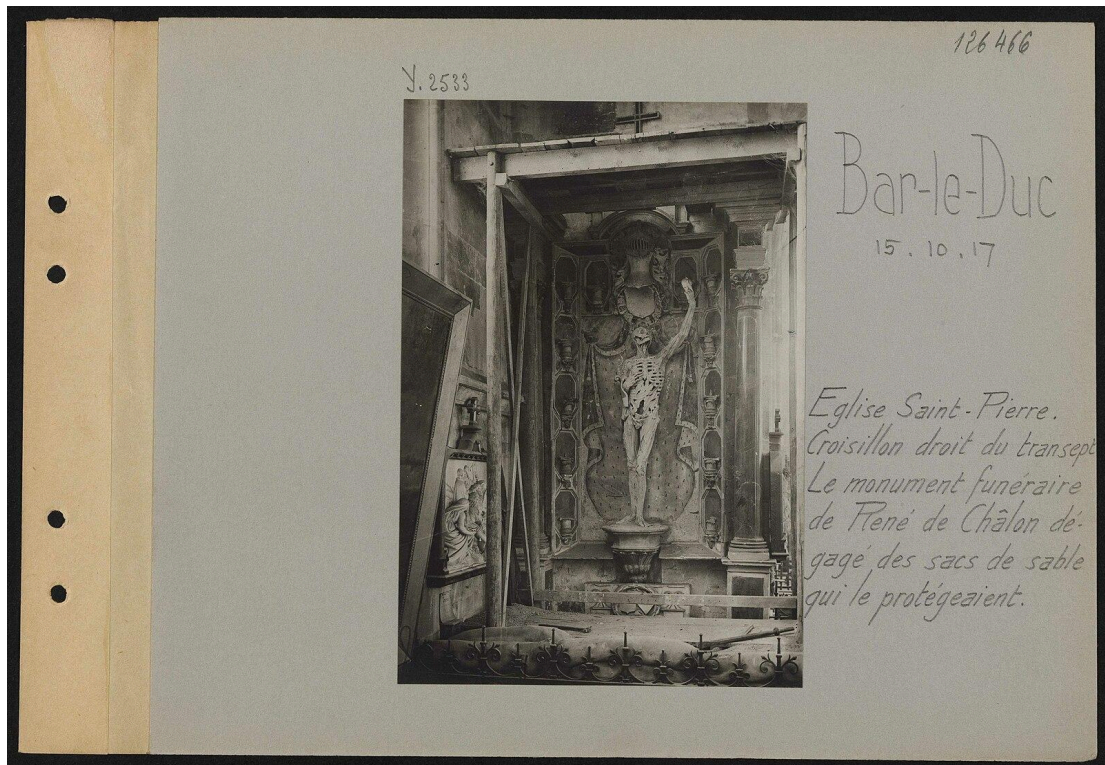


Fig. 20 - Unknown artist, *Freed from the sandbags which protected it*, 1917.
Bar-le-Duc, France.



Fig. 21 - Unknown artist, *The Skeleton is evacuated to Paris*, 1917.
Bar-le-Duc station, Bar-le-Duc, France.



Fig. 22 - Unknown artist, *The Skeleton's Restoration Process*. Bar-le-Duc, France.



Fig. 23 - Fabio Viale, *Replica of Ligier Richier's Transi of René de Châlon* (right-side view), carrara marble, 2022. Aurum Exhibition, Arezzo, Italy.⁹²

⁹² A replica is used to showcase different angles of Richier's original *Transi of René de Châlon*. Photos of the original piece in this angle are not available to view. The back region of the region is still not visible.



Fig. 24 - Ligier Richier, *Transi of René de Châlon*, black marble and limestone, 1545. Church of Saint-Étienne, Bar-le-duc, France.



Fig. 25 -

Left image: Fabio Viale, *Replica of Ligier Richier's Transi of René de Châlon* (view of the neck), carrara marble, 2022. Aurum Exhibition, Arezzo, Italy.⁹³

Right image: Ligier Richier, *Transi of René de Châlon* (view of the neck), black marble and limestone, 1545. Church of Saint-Étienne, Bar-le-duc, France.

⁹³ A replica is used to showcase different angles of Richier's original *Transi of René de Châlon*. Photos of the original piece in this angle are not available to view.



Fig. 26 - Fabio Viale, *Replica of Ligier Richier's Transi of René de Châlon*, carrara marble, 2022. Aurum Exhibition, Arezzo, Italy.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ A replica is used to showcase different angles of Richier's original *Transi of René de Châlon*. Photos of the original piece in this angle are not available to view.



Fig. 27 - Unknown artist, *Monument for the Heart of Francois I*, marble, 1550.
Abbey Church, Saint-Denis, France.



Fig. 28 - Germain Pilon, *The Three Graces*, funerary monument with the heart of *Henri II*, marble, 1559. Originally at Château d'Anet, Eure-et-Loir; now at the Louvre, Paris, France.



Fig. 29 - Unknown artist, *Portrait of Andreas Vesalius*, 16th century. "Hall of Medicine" at the Bo Palace of the University of Padua, Italy.

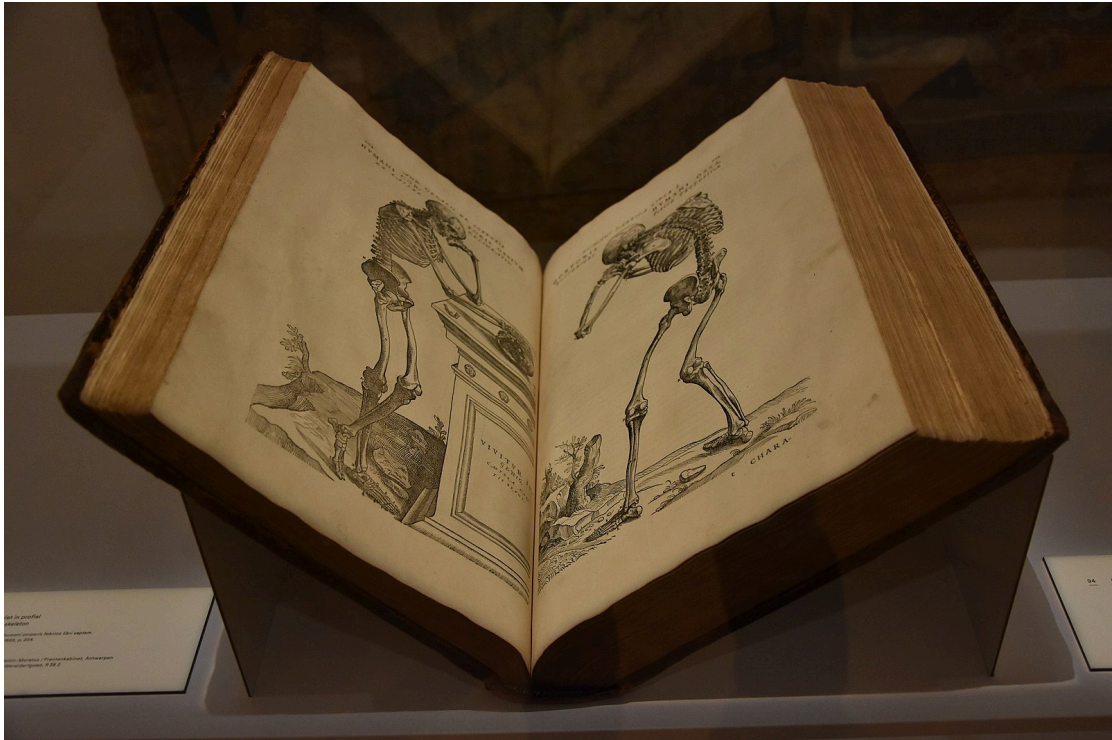


Fig. 30 - Photographed by Paul Hermans/illustrations attributed to Jan van Calcar, *Andreas Vesalius' De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, woodcut, 1543. Museum Hof van Busleyden, Mechelen, Netherlands.



Fig. 31 - Jan van Calcar, *Frontispiece from De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, woodcut, 1543. Published in Basel, Switzerland.



Fig. 32 - Jan van Calcar, *Frontispiece from De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* (Vesalius dissecting a woman), woodcut, 1543. Published in Basel, Switzerland.



Fig. 33 - Jan van Calcar, *Frontispiece from De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* (figures surrounding Vesalius), woodcut, 1543. Published in Basel, Switzerland.



Fig. 34 - Georg Paul Busch, *Portrait of Galen*, engraving, 18th century.

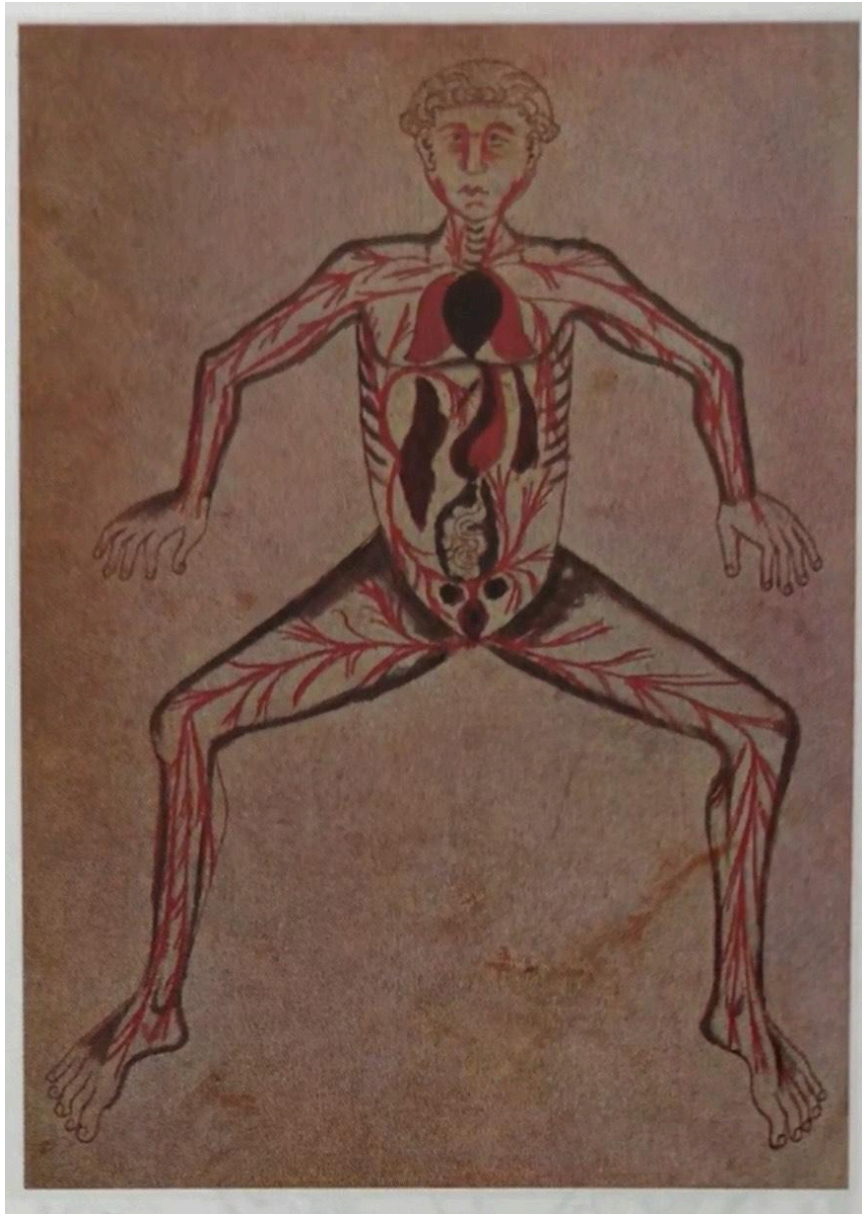


Fig. 36 - Unknown artist, *Depiction from a manuscript of the Provence*, 13th century. University Library, Basel.



Fig. 37 - Leonardo da Vinci, *The Three Volumes of Codex Forster*, late 15th - early 16th century. Written in Italy and now residing at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

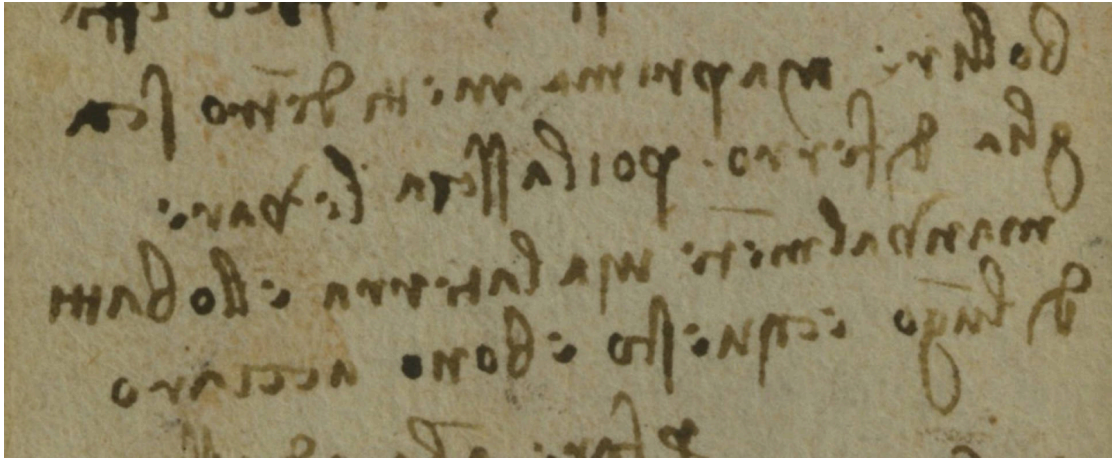


Fig. 38 - Leonardo da Vinci, *Codex Forster III Folio 33 verso*, late 15th - early 16th century. Written in Italy and now residing at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 39 - Glycon of Athens (copy), *Hercule Farnèse*, Early Hellenistic era. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples.



Fig. 40 - Unknown artist, *Apollo Belvedere* (also called the *Belvedere Apollo*, *Apollo of the Belvedere*, or *Pythian Apollo*), white marble, c. 120 - 140 AD. Vatican Museums, Vatican City.

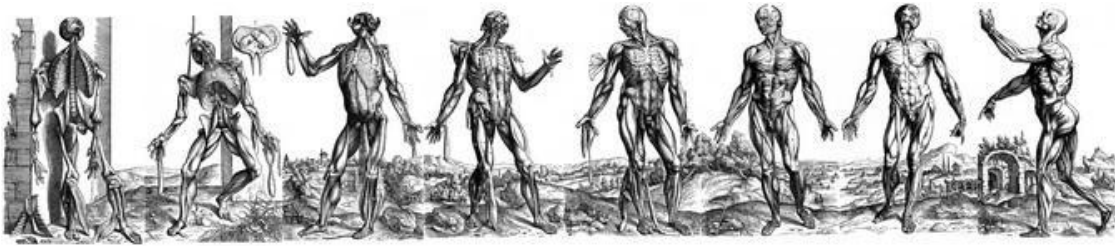


Fig. 41 - Attributed to Jan van Calcar, *Muscle-Men Plates* from Andreas Vesalius' *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, woodcut, 1543. Published in Basel, Switzerland.

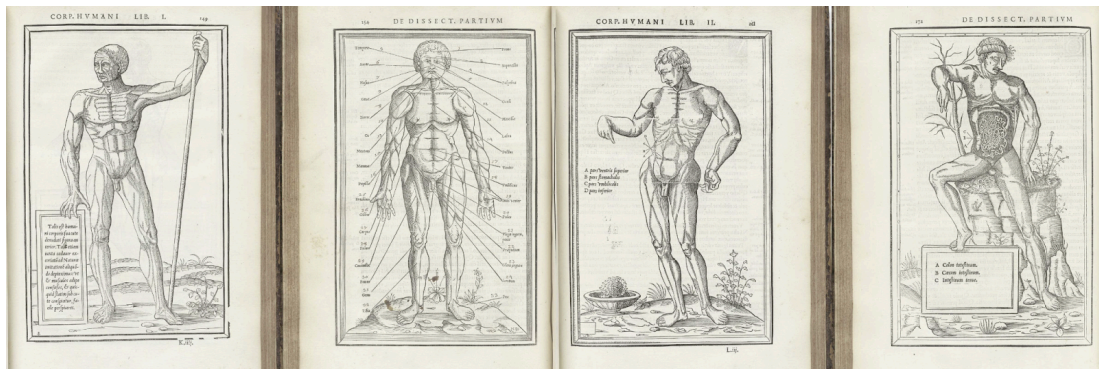


Fig. 42 - Étienne de la Rivière, *Illustrations* from Charles Estienne' *De dissectione partium corporis humani libri tres*, woodcut, 1545. Published in Paris, France.



Fig. 43 - Maximilian Franck, *Portrait of Calcar*, mid-16th century. Deutsche Künstler-Galerie, Deutschland.

stüchkeit. von der tödlichkeit zu der vntdlichkeit. vñ der vngedultigkeit zu der gedultigkeit. Dem nach ha-
 ben etlich nicht vnschicklich gemaynt das der tod nit allain nit böse sündet aller güter ding das greiff sey. vñ
 wann vns nit weder der tag noch die stund vnser aufforderung von hymen bekant ist so ist vns haupter in die
 willen gottes zelben seine gepot zehalten vñ also alweg berayt zesein vñ nit beraytung nicht zueersehen. dan
 wir haben vil gesehen die in hoher gesamtheit des lebens bey gangen fresten sich nicht solcher ding besorgende
 mit dem tod geding hingeguckt woode sind. In vnderumb etlich die bis zu verpuffung d' erte lechnende ge-
 suntheit erlangt. So nit die d'ng alle allain in gottes gewalt vñ macht sicut so gepürt vns nichts anders nit
 zehanden. dan das wir als vortemid ist den gepotten gottes in allem vnsam leben bis in das end g'hoisant
 seyen. Wie glawen alle festiglich das got nach seiner bildnus den menschen gemacht hat. was mag vns nit
 leichtlicher begehen den diesen kätigen tödlichen lechnanden funden fact zelassen vñ zu dem wider zeteren der
 nit verschmäh hat vns nach seiner gleichnus zemachen das der gaiff des menschen mit dem gaiff gottes erfil-
 let als kayshafig der gothes vñ nit stetigt zwischen den engeln vñ chöten der heiligen ewiglich leben
 soll.



Fig. 44 - Michael Wolgemut, *Dance of Death*, leaf from "The Nuremberg Chronicle", woodcut and letterpress text, 1493. Deutschland.



Fig. 45 - Guido da Vigevano, *The Anatomist Opens the Chest* (figure seven from *Anothomia Philippi Septimi*), 1345. Musée Condé, France.

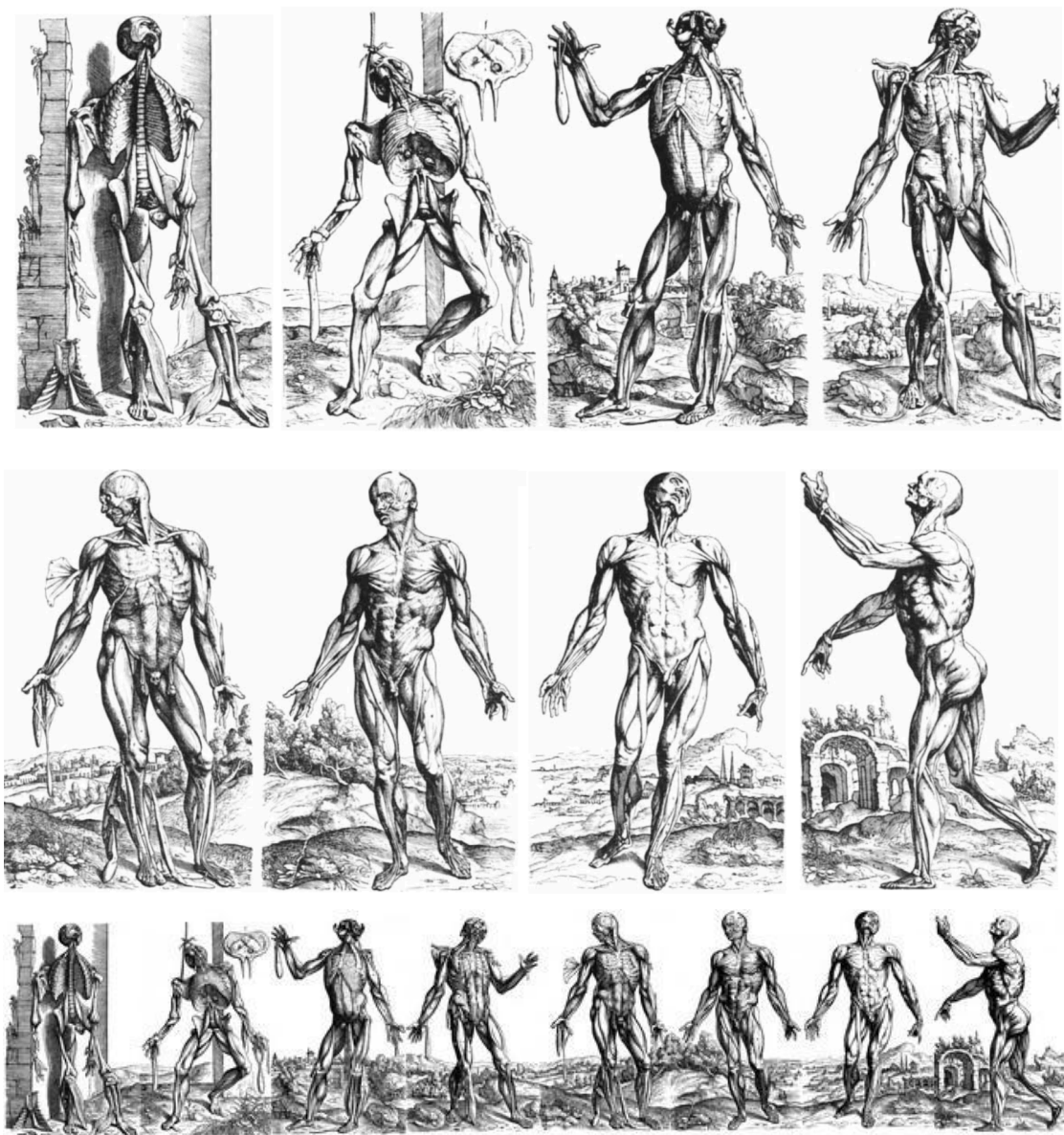


Fig. 46 - Attributed to Jan van Calcar, *Muscle-Men Plates from Vesalius' De fabrica*, woodcut, 1543. Published in Basel, Switzerland.



Fig. 47 - Attributed to Jan van Calcar, *Plate I Muscle-Man from De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, 1543. Published in Basel, Switzerland.

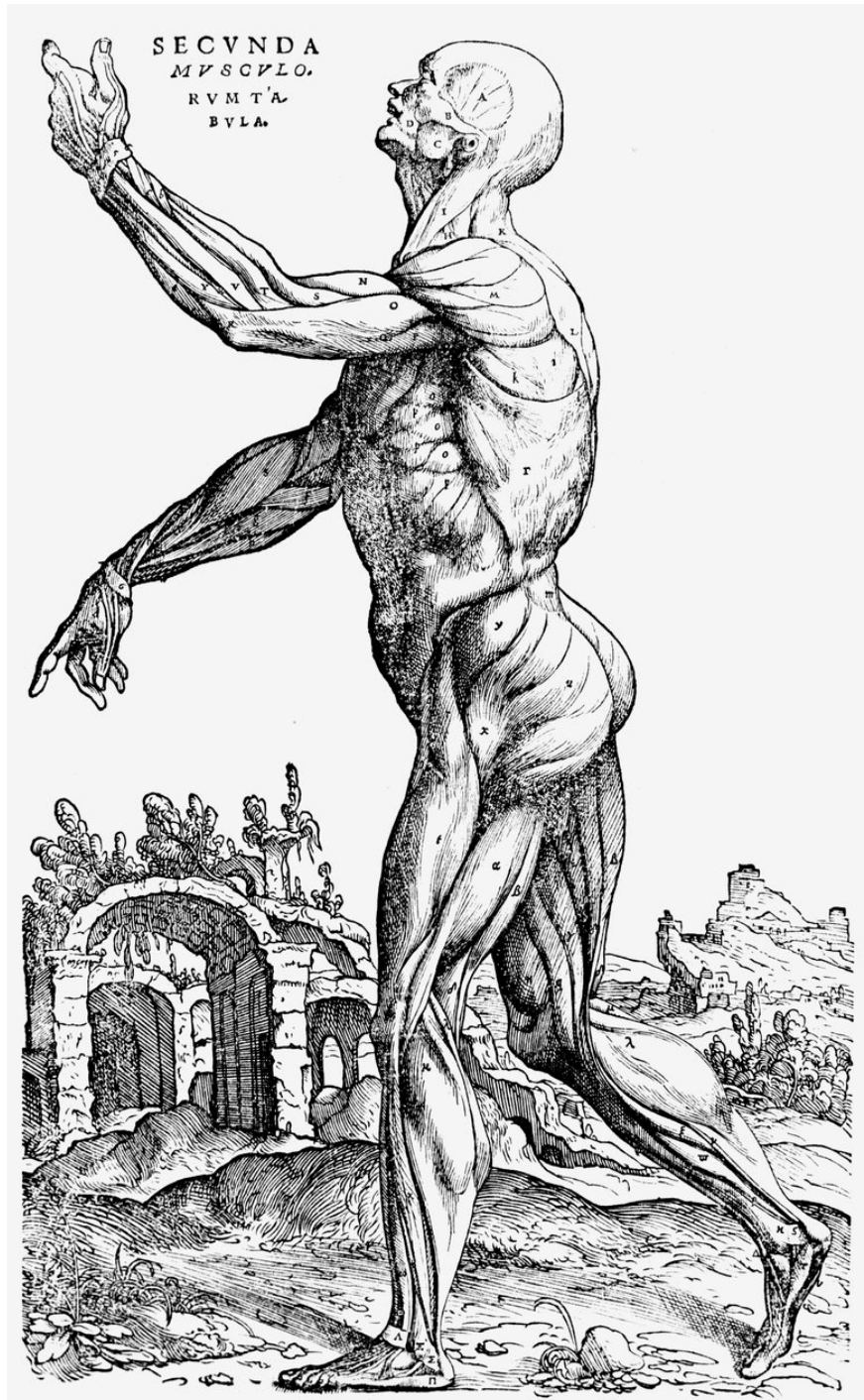


Fig. 48 - Attributed to Jan van Calcar, *Plate II Muscle-Man from De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, 1543. Published in Basel, Switzerland.



Fig. 49 - Attributed to Jan van Calcar, *Plate III Muscle-Man* from *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, 1543. Published in Basel, Switzerland.

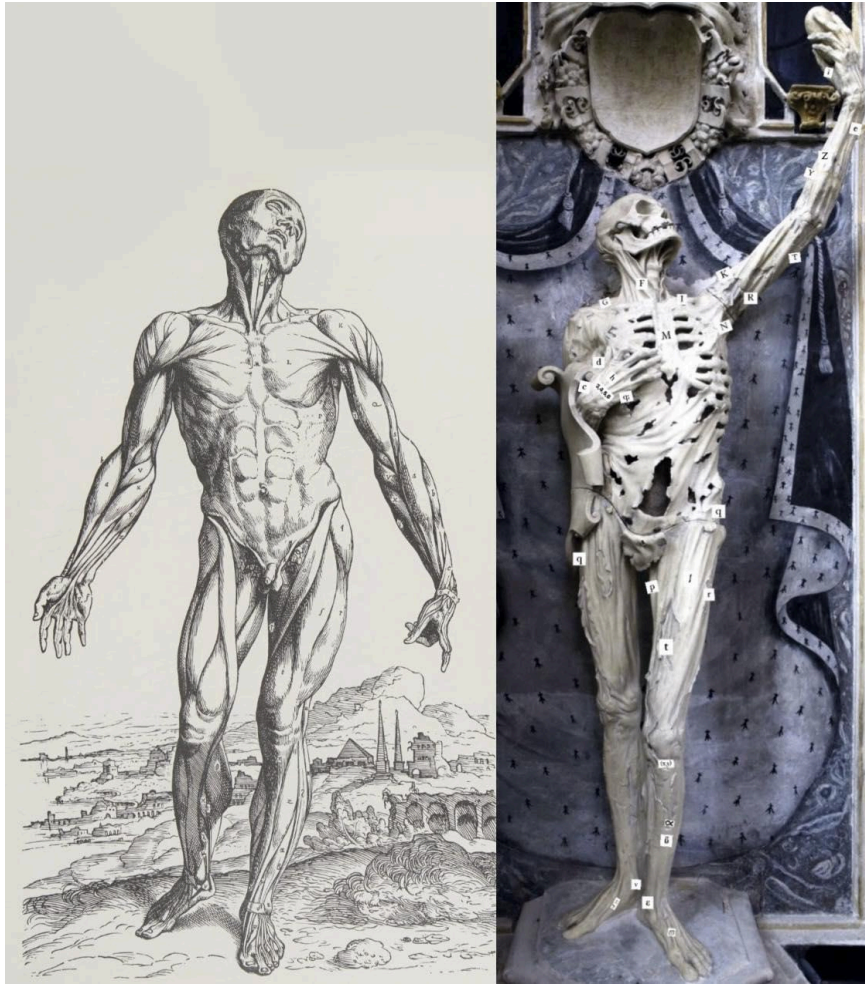


Fig. 50 -

Left image: Attributed to Jan van Calcar, *Plate I Muscle-Man from De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, 1543. Published in Basel, Switzerland.

Right image: Ligier Richier, *Transi of René de Châlon* (marked with letters, numbers, or symbols that reflect the same muscles found on Plates I and II), black marble and limestone, 1545. Church of Saint-Étienne, Bar-le-duc, France.

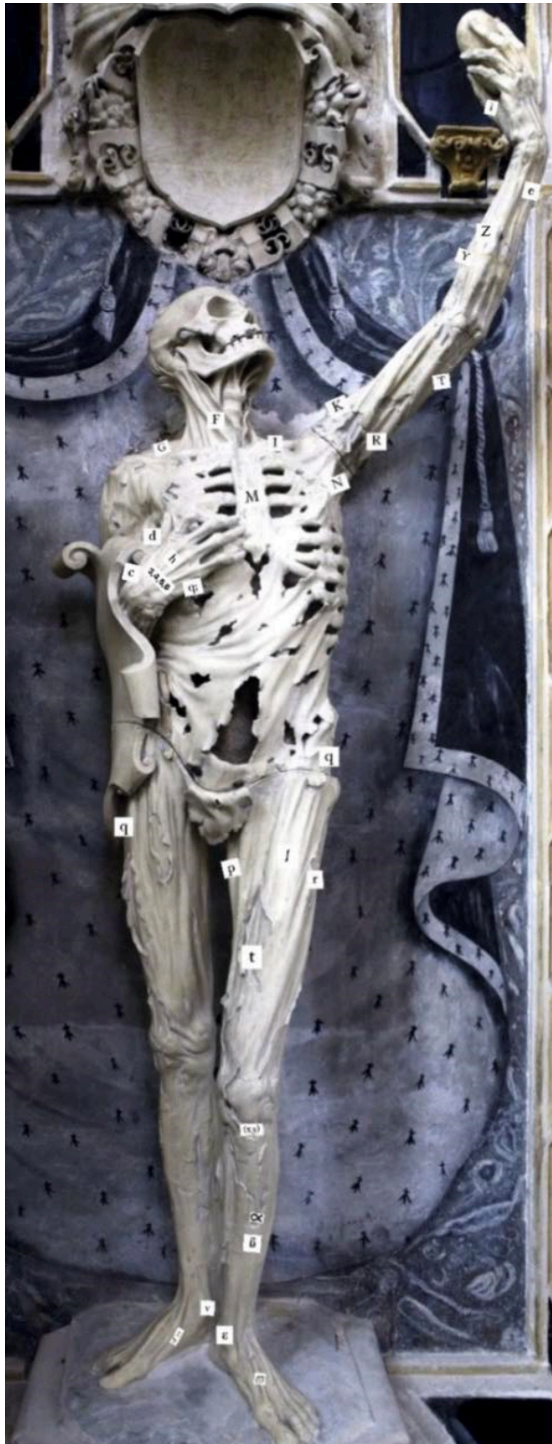


Fig. 51 - Ligier Richier, *Transi of René de Châlon* (marked with letters, numbers, or symbols that reflect the same muscles found on Plates I and II), black marble and limestone, 1545. Church of Saint-Étienne, Bar-le-duc, France.

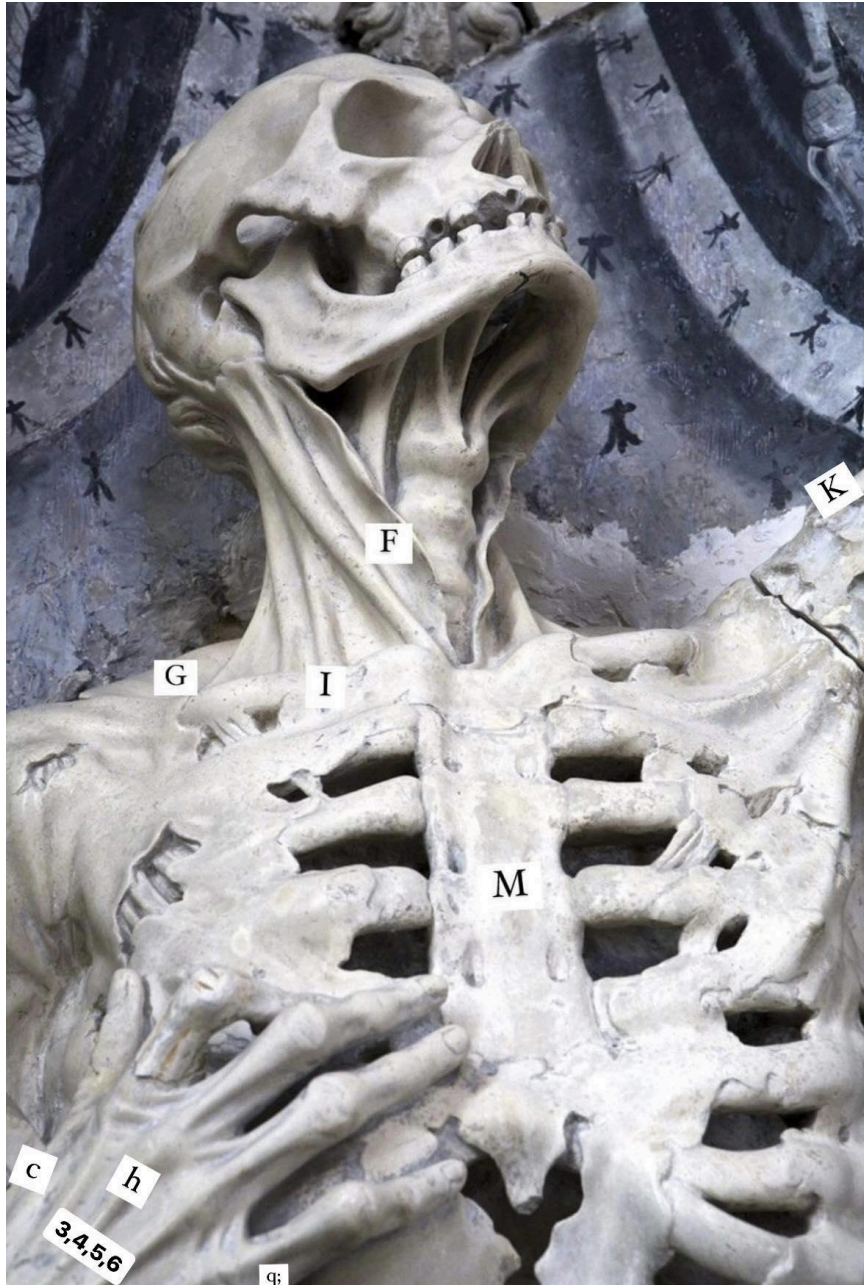


Fig. 52 - Ligier Richier, *Transi of René de Châlon* (marked with letters, numbers, or symbols that reflect the same muscles found on Plates I and II), black marble and limestone, 1545. Church of Saint-Étienne, Bar-le-duc, France.



Fig. 53 - Ligier Richier, *Transi of René de Châlon* (marked with letters, numbers, or symbols that reflect the same muscles found on Plates I and II), black marble and limestone, 1545. Church of Saint-Étienne, Bar-le-duc, France.



Fig. 54 -

Left image: Attributed to Jan van Calcar, *Plate II Muscle-Man from De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, 1543. Published in Basel, Switzerland.

Right image: Ligier Richier, *Transi of René de Châlon* (marked with letters, numbers, or symbols that reflect the same muscles found on Plates I and II), black marble and limestone, 1545. Church of Saint-Étienne, Bar-le-duc, France.

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