

UICB 4150: Introduction to Book Studies: Women, Gender, and the Book, Fall 2015
Elizabeth Yale, Department of History/Center for the Book, University of Iowa

Questions for Early Modern Anatomy Books

Binding: What is the quality of the binding? How would you describe it? New or older? Is it tooled or blind embossed (this refers to stamping on the leather that is not colored). Are there remnants of clasps or ties? Are there marks on the outside that might indicate how the book was shelved?

Foreedges: are the edges of the pages marked or colored in any way? Are they ragged or smooth? Are they cut or uncut?

Paper quality: richer, thicker, smoother, or thinner and cheaper? More or less used/worn? Sheets missing at the front or the end of the book?

Format: What is the size and weight of the book? Heavier? Lighter? Larger? Smaller?

Page layout: What is the size of the type? How much white space is there on the pages? Are there marginal notes? Are there footnotes? Are there page numbers? Decorated initial letters? Running heads? Keep in mind that paper is expensive.

Frontispiece and title page: What is the full title? How is the author named and described? Is there imagery on the title page? Who else is named or depicted on the title page? Is there any imagery that might be symbolic—for example, a coat of arms or a heraldic animal? Are there any secondary title pages, for example, introducing a new work or second section in the middle of the book?

Navigational aids: is there a table of contents? An index? Multiple indices? Where are these in the book, and how are they arranged? Alphabetically, or in some other fashion? What clues do these give you about how the book was used and by whom?

Prefaces, dedicatory letters, and other front matter: Who is the book dedicated to? Why? Is there a letter to the reader? Who has written it? What instructions or advice do they have for the reader?

Images: Describe the images. What is depicted in the images? How many are there? What size? Are they integrated into the text, or on separate pages? Describe their quality. Are the images worn and blurred, or are they crisp and clear? Are they colored? Are the lines thick or thin? What is the quality of the shading? What do they illustrate about conceptions of the body? For Vesalian anatomical texts, think about how the images are similar/different from the images in Vesalius's original 1543 *De humani corporis fabrica*.

Marginalia: Has anybody written in this book? What have they written? Look on front and back endpapers, title pages, and margins. Are there any ownership inscriptions? Is the handwriting compact or expansive? Shaky or smooth? What color is the ink?

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Assignment Guidelines: Short Essay

This assignment asks you to read and analyze late medieval and early modern learned anatomical texts (primary sources—that is, original historical documents) in relation to Katharine Park,

Secrets of Women: Gender, Generation, and the Origins of Human Dissection (our secondary source—that is, an account based on the analysis of primary sources).

This paper allows you to begin developing the skills of observation and analysis this course requires and gives me a chance to see where everybody is at and offer some feedback early in the semester.

Over three class sessions, you'll have the opportunity to study multiple early modern anatomical texts and discuss Park's arguments. In the paper, I'd like you to present your analysis of early modern anatomical writing and imagery, as it relates to gender, generation, and reproduction, using Park's account as context and background. Think about how bodies are presented in these texts, with a particular focus on the images. How are men's bodies depicted? Women's? What is the "ideal" body? What level of knowledge of actual bodies do the images reflect? How might these books have been used, and by whom? Always keep in mind that the material qualities of the books, as well as their actual content, can help you address these questions.

How to Cite This Exercise:

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