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The Old and Rare Books Collection: A Treasure of Medical History at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Lisbon

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KEYWORDS: Old and rare medical books; Medical heritage collections; History of medicine; Faculty of Medicine of the University of Lisbon; Vesalius.

CONTEXT

Over the years, Library of the Medical School of the University of Lisbon (FMUL) has incorporated the personal collections of physicians and professors associated with the School, who made a significant contribution to medical education by donating their personal libraries. Of particular importance is the collection bequeathed by the physician Simão José Fernandes, a distinguished bibliophile, in the mid-nineteenth century. This collection can be identified by an ownership stamp on the title pages of several hundred volumes.

THE OLD AND RARE BOOKS

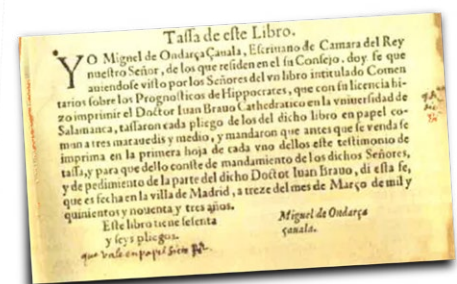
The collection consists primarily of works in the medical sciences by Portuguese and foreign authors, leading figures of their respective periods, such as Andreas Vesalius, Herman Boerhaave, Bernardo Santucci, Pedro Dufau, Soares Franco, Francisco José de Almeida, and Jacob de Castro Sarmiento, among others. These are complemented by numerous editions of works from the Hippocratic Corpus, as well as writings by Galen, two of the earliest known treatise writers in the medical art.

Among the most valuable items in the collection is a copy of the second edition (1555) of *De humani corporis fabrica* by Andreas Vesalius. One of the founding figures of modern anatomy, Vesalius produced anatomical representations and descriptions of the human body which,

nearly five centuries later, continue to impress for their scientific rigour. These images are far closer to modern anatomical atlases than to the medieval representations to which they are chronologically nearer.

THE PAST IN THE PRESENT

The Library is committed to increasing the visibility of this historical heritage of FMUL, thereby promoting the memory of medical education and of the institution itself. To this end, it relies on new information and communication technologies, which provide invaluable support in the preservation and dissemination of this heritage. The Library's website, under the section "Digitised Collections", offers open access to a selection of digitised works.



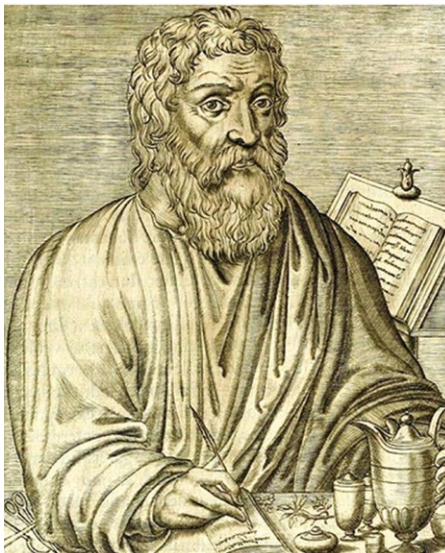
"Old books exert a strange fascination for me - their smell, their feel, their history; wondering who might have owned them, how they lived, what they felt."

Lauren Willig

Hippocrates: Between Myth and Reality

For historians of medicine, the so-called *Corpus Hippocraticum*, comprising some seven dozen works, should not be attributed to a single author bearing this name and originating from the Greek island of Cos. Tradition has attributed to this figure the foundations of medical rationalism and, when in medical schools around the world students read, for the first time, a version of his oath with minor adaptations to the original text, they also pay tribute to the Greek genius. Among the various works of the aforementioned *Corpus*, the Library-CDI holds a copy of the *Hippocrates Luzitano*, or *Aforismos of Hippocrates*, translated from latin Francisco Daniel Nogueira.

HIPPOCRATES, c. 460–377 BC. FMUL: RES. 2119.



At the Beginnings Of Modern Anatomy. *De Humanis Corporis Fabrica*

Among the most valuable items is a copy of the second edition (1555) of *De humani corporis fabrica* by Andreas Vesalius. Vesalius produced anatomical representations and descriptions of the human body which, nearly five centuries later, continue to impress by their scientific rigour and bear a far closer resemblance to modern anatomical atlases than to the medieval representations to which it is chronologically closer.

VESALIUS, Andreas, 1514–1564. FMUL: IA/RES. 339.



A Journey into Eighteenth-Century Medical Education

Among the many works of interest, one may also find an eighteenth-century medical sebenta, entirely handwritten, which provides privileged insight into the medical teaching of the period and into the lessons delivered by its masters. It is the only known surviving copy and was reproduced in facsimile several decades ago.

CONSTÂNCIO, Manuel, 1725–1817. FMUL: RES. 2647.

