

# The first human anatomy's book in Spanish: *Libro de la anathomía del hombre* written by Bernardino Montaña de Monserrate

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## Introduction

Bernardino Montaña de Monserrate (1480-1558) was professor of anatomy at the University of Valladolid, court physician to King Charles V of Spain. He wrote the first human anatomy's book in Spanish, *Libro de la anathomía del hombre*, printed in Valladolid, Spain in 1551. It was written on the basis of Galen's anatomical viewpoints and its content was arranged topographically, all with a view to surgical practice. Although Valverde de Hamusco's *Historia de la composición del cuerpo humano* published in Rome in 1556 is often credited with presenting anatomical knowledge in Spanish and along with Vesalian's illustrations for the first time in Spain, in fact both honours belong to Montaña de Monserrate's *Libro de la anathomía del hombre*.



## Aim of the project

The aim of this research is to review search in *Libro de la anathomía del hombre*, focusing essentially on its anatomical components. Also to contribute to the understanding of early Spanish- language inputs on human anatomy.

## Materials and methods

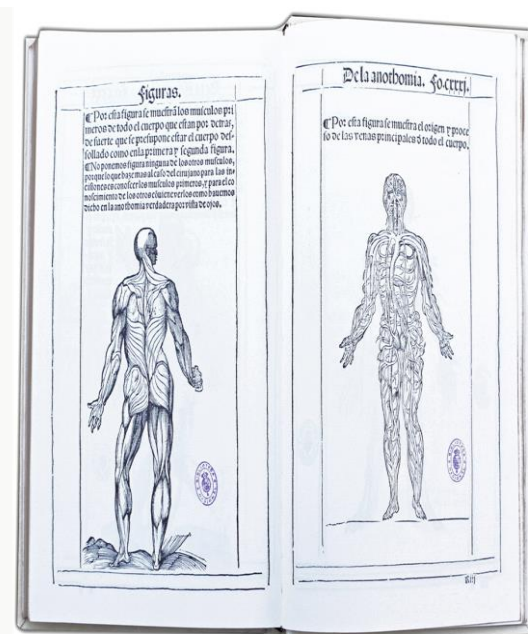
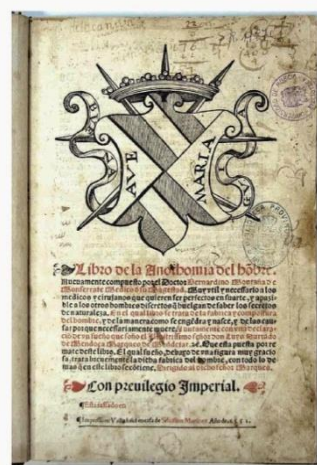
The source of this research was a copy of *Libro de la anathomía del hombre* reprinted in 1998 by *Librerías Paris- Valencia* and other references: Saunders and O'Malley (1946), Barona (1993, 2011), Pedraz (2013), Rojo (2014). This rare book was reviewed and its anatomical contents and characteristics were pointed out.

## Results

The *Libro de la anathomía del hombre* consists of two different works although both cover the same content. The first is a regular presentation of human body study. The second is a narration in which anatomical, physiological and philosophical problems are discussed starting from the interpretation of an allegorical dream. In medical terms, this book is a blend of anatomical and physiological knowledge with a mechanistic point of view incorporating fair amount of typically medieval Arabized Galenism.

The first part of Montaña's book consists of an essential anatomical exposition divided into twelve chapters whereby Bernardino pretends that surgeons bereft of Latin and medical terminology, but who know where organs, muscles, vein, arteries are thanks to their daily basic medical practice, can form an idea of parts and organs, how many they are, what their complexion is and what they are used for, fundamentally, by referring to them, in the ordinary language of common people, for examples calling muscles "morcilla" (blood sausage), the uterus "the mother", the vertebrae "espóndiles" and the ribs "ternillas".

The exposition follows medical school traditional procedure from top to bottom, from head to toe. It is originality lies in the surgical margins notes addressed mainly to the surgeons who continents and contained parts with difference that it followed the topographic system in reference to external and internal parts, thus configuring parts by their differences of shape from other human body parts. As for disease linked to each part or organ, the book does mention them but very briefly.



Title page and others pages of the *Libro de la Anothomia del hombre* (1551).

## Conclusions

Given the traditionalist scientific content of Montaña de Monserrate's book, it was very soon overtaken by the work of medical humanists who have become better known, such as Valverde de Hamusco. His *Historia de la composición del cuerpo humano* became the second human anatomy book in Spanish. This work of Valverde became one of the best and most widespread human anatomy treatises in the post-Vesalian era. It was Montaña de Monserrate who initiated this creation of Spanish anatomical vocabulary; Valverde de Hamusco brought it to a greater plenitude, by adding the main and most arduous part of it. Even Montaña's book was no breakthrough in the field of human anatomy, the real value of it was his pioneering use of Castilian (old Spanish) in a human anatomy book and his incorporation of numerous terms taken from popular speech. It can be concluded that Montaña's work *Libro de la anathomía del hombre* is a milestone among human anatomy books in Spanish.