Selected pages from Andreas Vesalius's De Humani Corporis Fabrica Libri Septem, circa 1555, reproduced for your coloring pleasure.

Published when he was only 29 years old, Vesalius revolutionized not only the science of anatomy but how it was taught through this work. Vesalius provided a fuller and more detailed description of human anatomy than any of his predecessors in this book. He corrected errors in the traditional anatomical teachings of Galen which had been obtained from primate rather than human dissection. Vesalius’s most lasting contribution to the teaching of anatomy was the principle that only through human dissection could the physician learn human anatomy in sufficient detail to be able to teach it accurately.

The first edition was printed in 1543. Images for this coloring book were taken from the second printing of the book, printed in 1555. It is one of the 20,000 rare books currently housed in the Ohio State University’s Medical Heritage Center (MHC), part of the OSU Health Sciences Library.

The title page and the series of more than 200 anatomical woodcuts spread throughout the book remain the most famous series of anatomical illustrations ever published. Vesalius never named the artist, but Jan Stephen van Calcar is the only named artist definitely known to have worked with Vesalius, so the illustrations are often attributed to him. Each book is covered in a different material including silk and human skin. The MHC volume is covered in pigskin.

The MHC preserves, promotes, teaches and celebrates the health care legacy of central Ohio as the essential foundation from which the future of the health sciences is born. Located on the fifth floor of Prior Hall, the MHC’s holdings include rare books, archives and artifacts.
ANDREAE VESALII
BRUXELLensis, INVITISSIMI CAROLI V. IMPERATORIS
medici, de HUMANI CORPORIS
fabrica Libri septem.
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