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Bob Van Hee and **Maurits Biesbrouck**, *Tijdgenotem uit de leefwereld van Andreas Vesalius*. Cahiers Geschiedenis van de Geneeskunde en Gezondheidszorg, Vol. 11 (Antwerp and Apeldoorn: Garant-Uitgevers n.v., 2018), pp. 212, €31,50, paperback, ISBN: 9789044-36432.

Many congresses around the world celebrated the 500th anniversary of the death of Andreas Vesalius in 2014. A joint Belgian–Greek meeting took place on the island of Zante/Zakynthos, where the great anatomist died, and a bust was unveiled in one of the central squares in its capital. A second meeting took place in 2017, and some of the papers in this volume originated there. They mostly represent the hard work that has been done in libraries and archives to recover forgotten details of his life. (The exception is the piece by Maurits Biesbrouck and Omer Steeno on how this sculpture and subsequent smaller busts were created by Richard Neave and Chantal and Pascale Pollier.) The papers are all in Flemish, not a common language for most medical historians, coupled with a small English summary that underplays the riches to be found there. A review in English may help to prevent this valuable work from suffering undeserved neglect.

The first paper, by Biesbrouck, Steeno, and Theodoor Godderis, examines the evidence for Vesalius' knowledge of Flemish and other languages, somewhat forgotten since he published in Latin, which was, like modern English, the scientific language of the day. The three authors continue with their discovery of a previously neglected copy of Vesalius' *Paraphrasis* of 1537, now in Paris, which contains the original preface dedicated to his friend Rutger van Geffen (Giffeus). They describe his relations with Vesalius, as well as the career of a very early owner, the botanist Jean Mouton (d. 1590). An appendix discusses the unusual binding, by Joannes Hillen van Hoochstraaten (1476–1558), who had worked as far afield as Malmö, before spending his last years near Antwerp. Francis Van Glabbeek explains his reconstruction of Vesalius' bone-saw, throwing light on Vesalius' technical abilities beyond actual dissection. Theo Dirix discusses Vesalius' religious views in the light of the recent discovery that Vesalius' 1564 visit to the Holy Land, from which he never returned, was as part of an official embassy to deliver imperial funds for the Christian churches there. He shows an image of the letter of 1565 by Hubert Languet, a French diplomat in Spain, perhaps the earliest source for rumours that he had been forced by the Inquisition to undertake the journey as a penance. Jacqueline Vons presents the rare 1569 Dutch translation of the *Epitome* by Jan Woters. Biesbrouck, Godderis, and Steeno offer three further papers on their archival researches. The first publishes a letter from Spain by a member of the Flemish choir directly after the death of Don Carlos in 1562 to a fellow chorister on leave in Flanders, as well as evidence for two lost letters by Vesalius on the subject. The second discusses a letter by Hadrianus Junius (1511–75) describing Vesalius' second stay in Bologna and the warm welcome that his anatomical display had received there. The letter fixes his return to Padua at the very end of January 1540, or a day or so later. The third piece is concerned with the criticisms of Vesalius by Amatus Lusitanus (1510/11–1568), a much-travelled Marrano physician, who worked in Antwerp, Ferrara, Ancona, and finally Thessalonica. The two men knew each other's work, but never met. The last historical essay is by Bob Van Hee, who provides a brief survey of the careers of Giulio and Prospero Borgarucci and their relation to Vesalius. Giulio was present at a conversation at which a Venetian jeweller recalled the events he had witnessed on Zakynthos as a fellow-passenger with the sick Vesalius. Prospero, also a writer on anatomy, produced a mysterious *Chirurgia Vesalii* in 1568, which seems to be a combination of

passages of the *Epitome* with some images from the *Fabrica* and notes he had taken on surgery while in Padua as a student ten years or so after Vesalius had left.

Together, these papers are a major contribution to Vesalian studies, showing how much is still to be discovered in contemporary documents. Those without Flemish or Latin, the language of most of the documents studied here, will have to rely for further enlightenment on the brief English summaries or take up for themselves the challenge of reading the two languages with which Vesalius himself was most familiar.

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