



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

The finger of God : anatomical practice in 17th century Leiden

Huisman, T.

Citation

Huisman, T. (2008, May 8). *The finger of God : anatomical practice in 17th century Leiden*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/12842>

Version: Corrected Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/12842>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

The Finger of God

Anatomical Practice in 17th-Century Leiden

Tim Huisman

The Finger of God

Anatomical Practice in 17th Century Leiden

PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus prof. mr. P.F. van der Heijden,
volgens het besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op donderdag 8 mei 2008,
klokke 13.45 uur

door

TIJS HUISMAN

geboren te Terneuzen
in 1964

PROMOTIECOMMISSIE

Promotor prof. dr. H. Beukers

Referenten prof. dr. H.J. Cook (University College London)
 dr. H.G.M. Jorink

Overige leden prof. dr. E.S. Houwaart (VrijeUniversiteit Amsterdam)
 prof. dr. W. Otterspeer
 prof. dr. G.J.R. Maat
 prof. dr. Ing. R.L. Zwijnenberg
 prof. dr. D. van Delft

Foreword

I first came across the Leiden anatomical theatre as an art history student studying the print collection of the Museum Boerhaave in 1986. When some years later the Boerhaave became my employer my fascination for this strange object of 17th century scientific culture only deepened. I therefore feel grateful to the museum for having allowed me the chance to write this book. Many people have helped me in the process of whom I specifically like to mention Ton Meijknecht for his enthusiasm, Huib Zuidervaart for his criticism and of course my colleagues for their patience. I am indebted to Dalila Wallé for her work on the index to this book.

My biggest thanks however go to Lotje, for putting up with my frequent mental excursions into the 17th century, and to our sons Sam and Job for doing everything in their power to make me *not* work on this thesis.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	10
Existing literature	11
The themes of this investigation	12
About this book	13
PART ONE	16
THE LEIDEN THEATRUM ANATOMICUM	17
Introduction: Changing Identity from 1590 to 1725	17
I. <i>The construction of the Leiden anatomical theatre</i>	19
Leiden's first anatomists	21
Who designed the theatre	26
II. <i>Petrus Paaw: his Practice of Anatomy</i>	27
Public anatomy in practice	28
Paaw's famulus anatomicus	30
Deviations from the normal procedure	31
III. <i>Reconstructing the contents of anatomy: Paaw's intellectual background</i>	33
Humanism	35
Communicating in images	36
The broader scope of anatomy	37
Anatomy and philosophy/theology	40
IV. <i>The Succession of Petrus Paaw</i>	42
V. <i>The Dawn of a New Era? Otho Heurnius</i>	46
Otho Heurnius's collecting activities	48
VI. <i>Otho Heurnius: his Vision of History, Philosophy and Collecting</i>	55
The Book of Nature, Dutch collections in the 17 th century	55
Princely collections	58
Egypt	59
Otho Heurnius, Govert Basson and Robert Fludd	64
VII. <i>The New Anatomy: Joannes van Horne</i>	70
Van Horne and Leiden	71
Van Horne's anatomical atlas	73
A private collection	75
Van Horne and the anatomical theatre	75
Louis de Bils: an anatomical entrepreneur and his dealings with Van Horne	76
Van Horne and the anatomy servant	79
Accounts of anatomical practice under Van Horne	82
VIII. <i>Carolus Drelincourt</i>	88
Counteracting decline	89
Drelincourt's practice of anatomy	90
The anatomical theatre as a source of income	91
Reading the Book of Nature at University	93
A shift in the message of anatomy	94
IX. <i>Govard Bidloo</i>	96

Bidloo appointed in Leiden	98
Complaints	99
<i>X. The Anatomy Servant</i>	103
PART TWO	109
THE COLLEGIUM MEDICO PRACTICUM AT THE CAECILIA HOSPITAL	110
Introduction	110
<i>I. Caecilia Hospital</i>	112
<i>II. Clinical Teaching</i>	115
Collegium Medico Practicum	118
Maps and bills	119
The interior of the Collegium	122
Moral education in prints	123
<i>III. The Collegium in practice: teaching methods and grumbling students</i>	126
Thirty cases by Otho Heurnius	126
Problems of continuity	128
New faces	129
<i>IV. Sylvius</i>	130
Sylvius at work in the Collegium Medico Practicum	132
A Danish eyewitness	134
Descartes, Sylvius and Anatomia Nova	135
<i>V. The Collegium in the final decades of the 17th century</i>	138
Some concluding remarks	143
PART THREE (CODA)	145
AN UNEASY SYMBIOSIS; THE LEIDEN SURGEONS AND THE UNIVERSITY	146
Introduction	146
<i>I. The Leiden Surgeons' Guild, the University and Anatomy</i>	147
Surgeons and Anatomy	147
Leiden	148
<i>II. A new room for the surgeons</i>	152
Jacob Remmers	153
SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS	156
1589-1617 Petrus Paaw	156
1618-1650 Otho Heurnius	157
1651-1669 Johannes van Horne	158
1670-1713 Charles Drelincourt, Antonius Nuck and Govard Bidloo	159
1650-1720 The rise of the anatomy servant	160
1636 The Collegium Medico Practicum	161
Anatomy and the surgeons' guild	162
Conclusion	163
SAMENVATTING (Summary in Dutch)	164
REFERENCES	168
Archives	168
References	169
<i>APPENDIX I: Inventory of the Collegium Medico Practicum</i>	179

<i>APPENDIX II: Inventory of the Leiden Surgeons' Hall</i>	183
<i>APPENDIX III: Dissections in the Leiden anatomical theatre, as documented in archives and contemporary literature</i>	191
Index	196
Curriculum Vitae	202

