

RENAISSANCE MEDICINE 1500-1750

BACKGROUND:

A time of REBIRTH (of academia & the arts), knowledge from the east & philosophies were expanded on by western academics

The Protestant reformation of 1534 saw the dissolution of monasteries so the state ran hospitals, as opposed to churches but Christianity's influence was still widespread

College of physicians set up in 1518 (physicians were licensed professionals) & dissections of criminals were allowed

Wars forced rapid advancement in response to new weaponry sourced from the New World

New world exploration brought new medicines to the UK e.g. guaiacum to treat syphilis.



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VESALIUS:

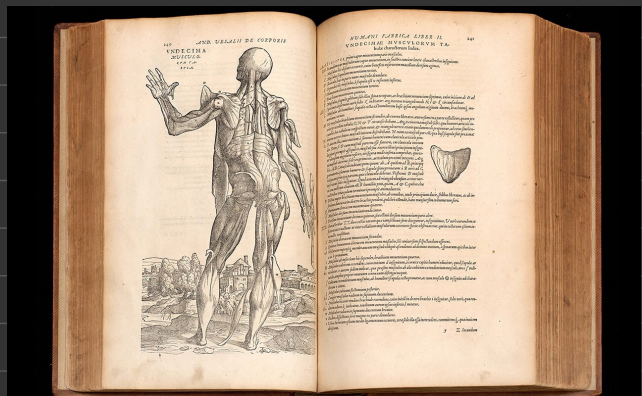
Italian professor who stressed the need for dissections to expand anatomical knowledge

His findings upon dissecting criminals were noted in his 1584 'fabric of the human body'

The development of the printing press in 1440 allowed for rapid transmission of his ideas amongst academics

Renown for correcting Galen's anatomical mistakes e.g. disproved that there were holes in the septum of the heart

He encouraged an inquisitive attitude amongst all to challenge outdated ideas.



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SYDENHAM:

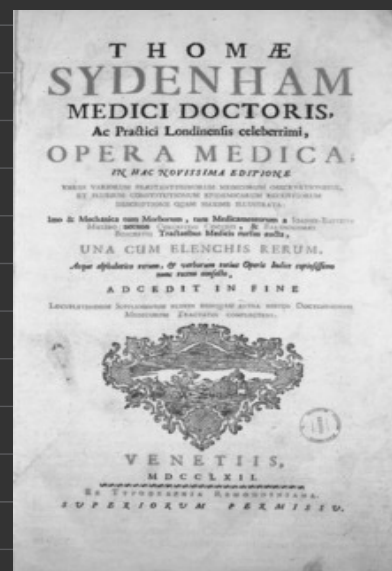
Known as the 'English Hippocrates'

Stressed the need for practical physician experience over theoretical knowledge (an empiricist)

Was able to classify diseases into groups e.g. distinguished scarlet fever from measles

Was the 1st to use iron to treat anaemia & quinine for malaria

1676– published 'medical observations', a textbook which made diagnosis easier through descriptions of symptoms= widely used for over 200 years.



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WILLIAM HARVEY:

Worked for James & Charles I in the Royal College of Physicians

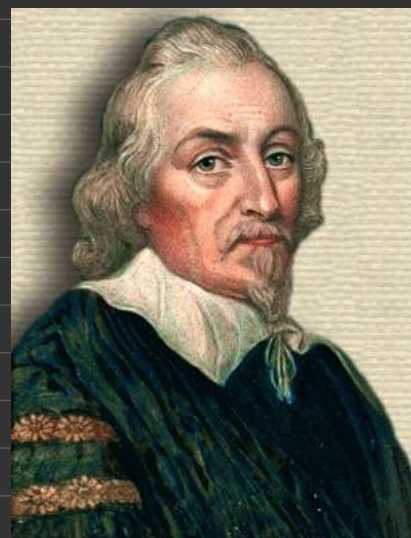
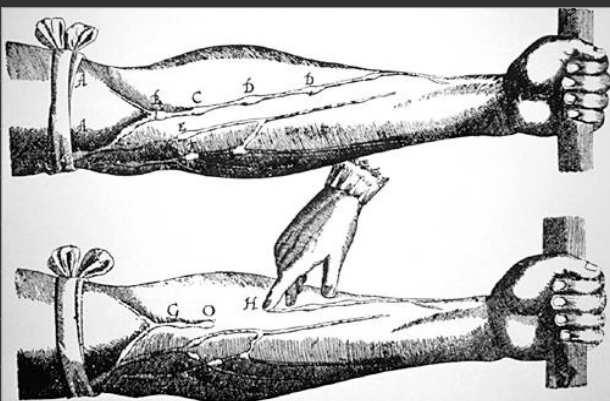
Dissected cold blooded animals & applied his findings to human anatomy

He disproved Galen's notion that there was purple & red blood that was replenished by the liver by stating that it CIRCULATED around the body

Harvey's work paved the way forward for modern haematology, complex surgeries & transfusions on the Western Front

His observations were published in the 'on the motion of the heart and blood' in 1628

His ideas were met with speculation, for they challenged Galen's but were eventually accepted.



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TRANSMISSION OF IDEAS:

The widespread use of the printing press in the 1470s meant work could be shared, amended & improve using peer review techniques

Royal Society was set up in 1660 (a prestigious scientific body), supported by King Charles III; it had the motto: 'nullius in verba' = 'take no ones word for it', thereby encouraged the questioning of prior knowledge

The Royal Society had the scientific journal: 'philosophical transactions' published & 'microgrpahia' in 1665 (Hooke's report of findings made using early microscopes)

The introduction of the printing press made university study more practical & ideas were continually improved by the Royal Society, resulting in some medical progress during the era of 'rebirth.'



THE ROYAL SOCIETY

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GREAT PLAGUE CASE STUDY:

1665- disease 'plagued' London, killing 20% of its population

Treatment attempts:

Carrying amulets & ingesting herbal remedies

Phlebotomies

Transference onto animals e.g. bathing with foxes & chickens

Council-run preventative measures:

Quarantining (marking homes with 'SOS')

Closing theatres

Collecting corpses for burial

The killing of cats & dogs (blamed for transmission)

Great fire of London 1666= believed to have sterilised London, ridding it of the plague

Lots of overlap with the Black Death of 1346 in perceived causes e.g. sin, indicative of continuity of societal beliefs despite the rise of new, correct medical knowledge.



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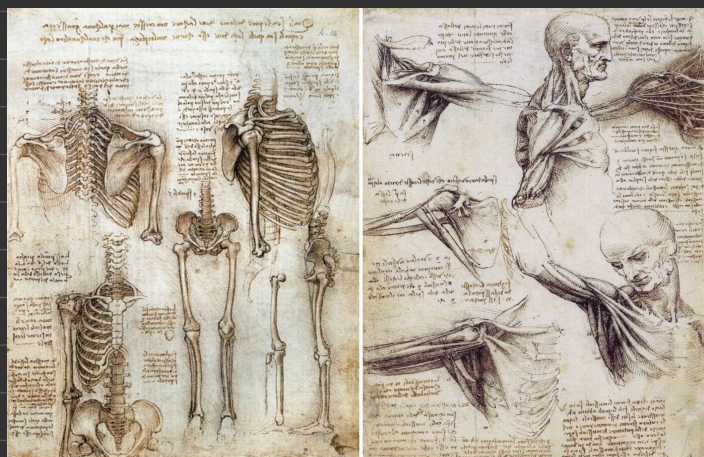
ANALYSIS OF THE ERA:

Despite the Reformation, Christian medical ideas (coined by Galen in line with Biblical teachings) were generally STILL believed.

Key figures like the likes of: Vesalius, Harvey & Sydenham brought innovation to the medical field through rigorous observation and experimentation, facilitating a 'rebirth' of ideas (particularly those of Galen.)

The printing press & Royal Society helped articles get peer reviewed to enhance accuracy, whilst promoting skepticism in the medical field and diagnosis upon patient observation.

Evident progress was made in itself by individuals, but the general societal consensus is that beliefs remained stagnant, in accordance with prehistoric religious medical teachings, explicit in the lack of actioning of new findings.



THE RENAISSANCE WAS RICH IN ART & CULTURE, WITH MICHELANGELO'S WORKS BEING NOTABLY BEAUTIFUL!!