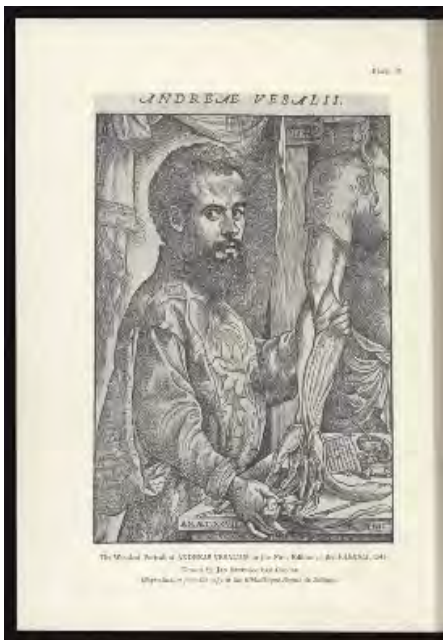# Andreas Vesalius

Andreas Vesalius was born in 1514 and was a medical professor at Padua University, Italy. He believed that successful surgery would only be possible if doctors had a proper understanding of anatomy. Vesalius was able to perform dissections on criminals who had been executed. He wrote books based on his observations using accurate diagrams to illustrate his work. The most important was the 'Fabric of the Human Body' (1543).

Source A: Re-print of a woodcut portrait of the Flemish anatomist and physician, Andreas Vesalius.

The iconography of Andreas Vesalius, **Pyb O.iv.05, Pybus (Professor Frederick) Collection, Newcastle University Special Collections, GB 186**

Activities:

Study Source A carefully.

1. Who is shown in this portrait?

2. Why do you think he is portrayed holding a human arm with the skin removed?

Source B: The frontispiece of a 1555 edition of Vesalius' book, *The Fabric of the Human Body,* showing Vesalius carrying out a dissection of a human body.

De humani corporis fabrica ..., 1555, **Pyb N.v.10, Pybus (Professor Frederick) Collection,** *Newcastle University Special Collections, GB 186*

Activities:
Study Source B carefully.

1. What is happening in this picture?
2. Write down 3 things you notice in this illustration.
3. How useful is Source B to an historian studying anatomy in the Renaissance period? Explain your answer using Source A and your contextual knowledge.

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