

The Restoration of Vesalius De Humani Corporius Fabrica

By: Sharia Hudson



The Reynolds Historical Library kicked off their first lecture series for 2014-2015 with preservationist Gabrielle Fox's lecture on the restoration of the Andreas Vesalius's first edition of De Humani Corporius Fabrica. Michael Flannery contacted Ms. Fox to see if she was available and interested in restoring the book in time for the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Andreas Vesalius.

Ms. Fox discussed how she previously worked mostly with second editions but rarely on first edition. This would be her second time restoring a first edition of De Humani Corporius Fabrica. After Fox confirmed she would be willing to restore the first edition of the book, a representative from the Reynolds Historical Library drove from Birmingham to Cincinnati where Fox taught her basic conservation techniques. Furthermore, they only had a week to conserve the book. To restore the book, Fox made sure she had all the paper repair ingredients that consisted of the following: bleeding paper, Tenguju paper, bone folders, tweezers, scalpel, small knife, ruler, small weights, needle point for tearing tissue, paste, q-tips, water, and brushes. Fox began to elaborate on the differences between the first and second editions. Typically, pigskin was utilized for the cover of the second editions whereas alum tawed goatskin was common for the first edition's cover. For the restoration of this cover she used fair calf skin. For two to three days, she reviewed the book to make sure all pages were intact and surfaced cleaned each individual page. A soft cloth and ground up white eraser was utilized to clean the surfaces of the pages. After reviewing the book, she noticed she had to detach and reattach the backboard. Also, she discovered that this particular edition may have had a second binding because the style was the same for that period of time; however, the material was uncommon. Lastly, several layers of thin Japanese paper, Tengujo, was used to amend the torn pages. Overall, Gabrielle Fox did an outstanding job of restoring Andreas Vesalius's De Humani Corporius Fabrica.

For additional information visit <http://gabriellefox.com>