

## REINER SOLENANDER (1524-1601): AN IMPORTANT 16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY MEDICAL PRACTITIONER AND HIS ORIGINAL REPORT OF VESALIUS' DEATH IN 1564

REINER SOLENANDER (1524.–1601.):  
ZNAČAJAN MEDICINSKI PRAKTIČAR IZ  
16. STOLJEĆA I NJEGOV IZVORNI IZVJEŠTAJ  
O VEZALOVOJ SMRTI 1564. GODINE

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### SUMMARY

*Reiner Solenander (1524-1601) was a physician born in the Duchy of Cleves, who got his education at the University of Leuven and at various universities in Italy and in France. Back at home he became the court physician of William V and later of his son John William. In this article his life and works are discussed. A report on the death of Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564), noted down by Solenander in May 1566, one year and seven months after the death of Vesalius, is discussed in detail. Due to the importance of that document a copy of its first publication is given, together with a transcription and a translation as well. It indicates that Vesalius did not die in a shipwreck.*

**Key words:** Solenander; Mercator; Vesalius; Zakynthos

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Figure 1. Portrait used by H. Pantaleon for Reiner Solenander, Johannes Wier and Andreas Vesalius in his *Prosopographiae heroum atque illustrium virorum totius Germaniae* (1566)

*Cleves*), and was able to spend two years studying in Leuven, thanks to William, Duke of Cleves, after which he deepened his proficiency in the study of philosophy even further there. After an initiation into medicine, he went from there to Italy to study medicine at all faculties there for seven more years. Through his contacts with scholars during his travels and his own hard work, he eventually became even more learned and experienced<sup>2</sup>. Andreas does not give any dates.

There are a number of other short biographies, including that of Melchior Adam, who mentions three years of study in Leuven and refers to Pantaleon's *Prosopographiae heroum atque illustrium virorum totius Germaniae* (Book 2) and to Ioannes Georgius Schenck<sup>3</sup>. There is also a short outline of his life in

Not every figure of importance or interest for the biography of Andreas Vesalius was mentioned by him in his work<sup>1</sup>. One example is the physician Reiner Solenander. As we shall see, he provides us with important insights about the great anatomist, though only after the latter's death.

Although Solenander is mentioned by Valerius Andreas in his *Bibliotheca Belgica* (Leuven, 1643), this writer does not mention him in his *Fasti academici* (Leuven, 1650). However, there is a hiatus in the latter work from 1541 to April 1556, precisely the period in which Solenander was in Leuven. In his biography he writes that Solenander 'was born in Budericus (in the Duchy of

<sup>1</sup> Maurits BIESBROUCK. *Contemporaries of Vesalius in His Works*, Roeselare (Belgium), 2014, 5 pp., see <[www.andreasvesalius.be](http://www.andreasvesalius.be)>

<sup>2</sup> Valerius ANDREAS. *Bibliotheca Belgica: de Belgis vita scriptisque claris. Praemissa topographica Belgii totius seu Germaniae inferioris descriptione*, Editio renovata, et tertia parte auctior, Lovanii, Jacobus Zegers, 1643, 900 pp.; see p. 791

<sup>3</sup> Melchior ADAM. *Vitae germanorum medicorum*, Haidelbergae: Jonae Rosae, 1620.

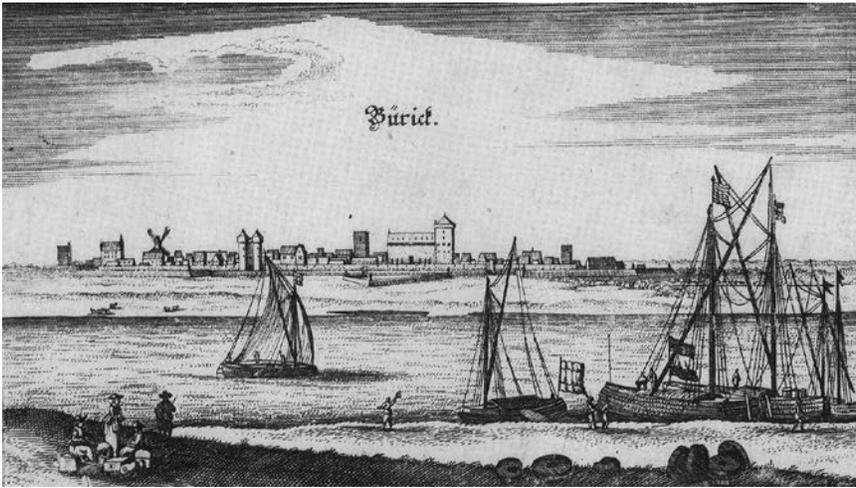


Figure 2. View of Büderich: engraving by Matthäus Merian the Elder (1593-1650), from Matthäus Merian, *Topographia Westphaliae. Das ist Beschreibung der vornembsten, vnd bekantisten Städte, vnd Plätze, im hochlöblichen westphälischen Craisze*, Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Mattaeo Merian, 1647.

August Hirsch<sup>4</sup>. It is noteworthy that in his *Prosopographiae*, Pantaleon used the same portrait for Solenander and Jan Wier as for Andreas Vesalius.

However, the most reliable biography of Reiner Solenander is that of Anton Wackerbauer<sup>5</sup>. He based the biography of this widely esteemed personal physician of Dukes William V and John William on the *Düsseldorfer Staatsarchiv* and especially on the letters that Solenander himself left behind. Unfortunately, by this time it was already more than a hundred years since the old town of Büderich, Solenander's birthplace, had been burned to the ground by Napoleon (in December 1813) along with the city's official records<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> August HIRSCH. *Biographisches Lexikon der hervorragenden Aerzte aller Zeiten und Völker*, Fünfter Band, Wien und Leipzig: Urban & Schwarzenberg, 1887.

<sup>5</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. 'Dr. Reiner Solenander (Reinhard Gathmann) ein niederrheinischer Arzt, Leibarzt am Düsseldorfer Hofe (1524-1601)' in *Düsseldorfer Jahrbuch 1932/33. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Niederrheins*, Düsseldorfer Geschichtsverein, 37. Band, Düsseldorf: Druck und Verlag Ed. Lintz A.-G., pp. 97-140, ill. Reissued as 'Dr. Reiner Solenander. Ein niederrheinischer Arzt aus Büderich (1524-1601)' in *Unsere Heimat, Heimatverein Büderich und Gest e.V., Wesel*, Nr. 17, 2001, pp. 5-47.

<sup>6</sup> For the history of Büderich and the surrounding area, see Jörg LORENZ, *Dem Erdboden gleichgemacht. Zeugnisse zur Geschichte der alten Stadt Büderich, mit einem Beitrag von Werner Arand*, Stadtarchiv und Städtisches Museum Wesel, Köln: Rheinland-Verlag, 1989, 132 pp., ill. Also: Jutta PRIEUR, *Büderich. Beiträge zur Stadtgeschichte, Studien und Quellen zur Geschichte von Wesel 9*, Selbstverlag des Stadtarchives Wesel, 1987, 200 pp., ill.; Martin Wilhelm ROELEN, *Untergang und Neubeginn. Vom alten und neuen Büderich*, Selbstverlag des Stadtarchives Wesel, *Studien und Quellen zur Geschichte von*

Around the time of his birth, his homeland, the Duchy of Cleves, was united with the County of Mark, the Duchies of Gulik (modern German Jülich) and Berg, and the County of Ravensberg, to create the richest of the flowering German duchies. In a vain attempt to acquire the Duchy of Guelders too, William V also entered into conflict with Emperor Charles V<sup>7</sup>. The great humanist Konrad (von) Heresbach turned the Court into a place of cultural allure as well as of political interest. As an adviser to William V, he succeeded in lifting talented young people out from the masses with various forms of support, including financial resources where necessary. Reiner Solenander was among those that owed their high level of education and subsequent success to him.

Solenander was born Reinhard Gathmann in 1524, in Buderich, just to the south-west from Wesel, across the Rhine<sup>8,9</sup>. His father's name was Amelonchius Gathmann, but he and his son changed their name, following a custom among scientists at that time, to 'Solenander'. It appears that his father was still alive in 1567, and that he had just one brother, Johann, also a physician. Reiner (sometimes Reinert) Solenander received his initial education in the *artes* at the city *Grossen Schule* in Wesel, when Johann Peringius was rector there. His studies were initially funded by Duke John III, and on the Duke's death in 1539 Johan Echt (Joannes Echtius) pleaded with his successor William V to continue the provision of this support<sup>10,11</sup>. He therefore continued his studies, at first at the University of Leuven, where on 10 May

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Wesel 35, 2013, 156 pp., ill. We wish to thank Dr Guido Sold (Wesel, Germany) for these sources.

7 Anton WACKERBAUER. Op. cit., p. 99. Guelders became 'Gelderland' after the secession during the Republic.

8 Buderich has been a submunicipality of Wesel, together with Ginderich, since 1975.

9 Heinrich HAESER. *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Medizin und der epidemischen Krankheiten*, Zweiter Band, Jena: Gustav Fisher, 1881, see pp. 124 and 144, gives his years of birth and death as '1521-1596' and mentions him as a pupil of Argenterius, whom he defended in his *Apologia* against Julius Alexander von Neustain (1506-1590), personal physician to the Emperor in Vienna. He also writes that Solenander came from Breslau. Karl SUDHOFF, *Kurzes Handbuch der Geschichte der Medizin*, Berlin: S. Karger, 1922, p. 241, also gives '1596' as his year of death. In August HIRSCH, Op. cit., p. 459 Pgl. (Pagel?) gives his year of birth as '1525' and states that he was still alive at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Melchior ADAM, Op. cit., p. 84, gives the same birth year. See also *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* <[http://de.wikisource.org/wiki/ADB/Solenander\\_Reiner](http://de.wikisource.org/wiki/ADB/Solenander_Reiner)>

10 John III, who died in 1539, was Duke of Jülich-Berg-Ravensberg from 1511 to 1539, of Cleves and Mark from 1521 to 1539 and of Ravenstein from 1528. His successor, William V, was Duke of Jülich, Berg, Ravensberg, Mark, Cleves and Ravenstein, died in 1592 and was himself succeeded by his son John William, who died in 1609.

11 Maurits BIESBROUCK, Theodoor GODDEERIS. 'Johann Bachoven von Echt en zijn werk: omen van Vesalius' dood?' (in preparation)

1548 he matriculated under rector Petrus Curtius as *Reynerus Solenandrus filius Amelonchii, Buricensis*<sup>12</sup>. He took classes initially in literature and then in medicine there<sup>13</sup>. Thanks to the intervention of his patron, William V, he found lodgings with Jeremias Brachelius (Triverius or de Dryvere from Brakel), who first initiated him into the basics of medical practice. He would remain there for over two years. Vera Hoorens recalls an incident in which the son of Servaes of Saxony (Servatius Sassenus), a bookseller, exhibited strange symptoms: first he acted like a madman, but then became drowsy and fell asleep; when he regained consciousness, he was questioned by Triverius, to whom Solenander was then apprenticed. Triverius found out in this way that the boy had eaten a nightshade berry, from the garden of his neighbour Gemma Frisius, who grew plants for his medical experiments<sup>14,15</sup>. According to Henry de Vocht, Solenander also attended the *Collegium trilingue* there<sup>16</sup>.

After Leuven, William V sent him to Italy to continue his studies. He remained there for seven years, attending the universities of Bologna, Pisa,

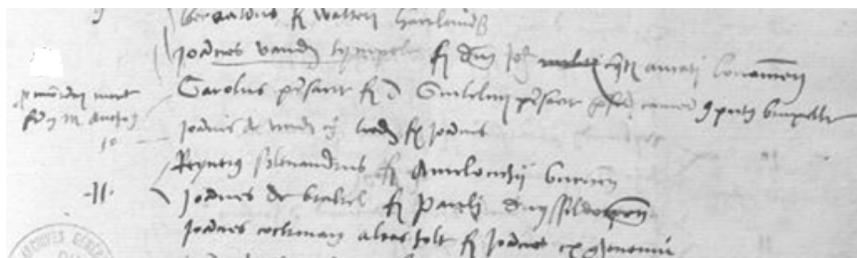


Figure 3. Solenander's matriculation record in Leuven

<sup>12</sup> State Archives of Leuven, Archives de l'Université de Louvain, no. 24: Liber Quartus Intitulatum, f° 227r. Also A. SCHILLINGS, *Matricule de l'Université de Louvain, Tome IV (février 1528-février 1569)*, Bruxelles: Palais des Académies, 1961, p. 266.

<sup>13</sup> Reiner SOLENANDER. *Apologia, qua Iulio Alexandrino respondetur pro Argenterio*, Florentiae, apud Leon. Torrentinum, 1556, 177 pp.; see preface to Echtius, p. 5: *Nam tum me antea suo stipendio Lovanii primum in literarum institutione, postea in Hieremiae Brachelii doctissimi medici schola aleret, ...*

<sup>14</sup> Vera HOORENS. *Een ketterse arts voor de heksen. Jan Wier (1515-1588)*, Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2011; see p. 137.

<sup>15</sup> Maurits BIESBROUCK, STEENO Omer. 'Leuven: Birthplace of Modern Skeletology, thanks to Andreas Vesalius, with the Help of Gemma Frisius, his Friend and Fellow-physician' in *Acta Chirurgica Belgica*, 2012, 112: 89-105, ill.

<sup>16</sup> Henry de VOCHT. *History of the Foundation and the Rise of the Collegium Trilingue Lovaniense 1517-1550*, Louvain: Bibliothèque de l'Université, Part the fourth: *Strengthened Maturity*, 1955; see pp. 415-416 (short biography) and 522 (list).

Rome and Naples<sup>17,18</sup>. The scientific and medical training in Italy was the most advanced of its days. He arrived there at a time when Greek writers such as Galen, Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates and Alexander, who had previously only been translated into Arabic, were now, due to the flourishing of Greek scholarship, becoming accessible in the original language and could therefore be studied more thoroughly. Vesalius' *De Humani Corporis Fabrica Libri Septem*, which was highly critical of Galen, had been published as recently as 1543, and as a result, not only the anatomy but also the physiological teaching of the ancient Greek physician was being called into question<sup>19</sup>. In response, a counter-movement of neo-Galenists arose to wage a bitter struggle against the new science, whose leading figure was Paracelsus. However, Solenander managed to avoid the partisan exaggerations of both camps and took 'the best' from both positions. All medical questions that were important at that time, such as those relating to blood-letting, taking the patient's pulse and uroscopy, were assessed against the background of this conflict. One very important result was that the practice of medicine was based on the direct assessment of the patient at the bedside. Clinical instruction now came to the foreground, and this stimulated the direct exchange of experiences among physicians. The *Consilia medicinalia*, discussed below, represent part of this development<sup>20</sup>.

One important professor in Italy was Johannes Argenterius, an anti-Galenist<sup>21</sup>. From 1543 he was in Pisa, where Solenander came later to him as a student, and in 1555 Argenterius moved to Naples, remaining there until 1560; Solenander followed him there until 1556, when he himself went to Lucca. In that year Solenander wrote a text defending his teacher against the Galenist Alexandrinus, and this was published as his first work. In Bologna, Professor Lucas Ghinus induced a love of botany in him<sup>22</sup>. He acquired his interest in

<sup>17</sup> Concerning the periods he spent at university, Solenander is not particularly clear himself. In his preface to William V in his *De caloris fontium medicatorum causa*, published in 1558, he writes that he 'moved to Leuven a decade ago, where I stayed for over two years'. The preface is dated 1 July [1558]. In the dedication in his *Consiliorum medicinalium ... sectiones quinque*, to Duke John William, son of William V, he also refers to the 'universities ... where as a novice I pursued my studies for three years in Leuven, a full seven years and more in Italy, first in Bologna and Pisa, then in Rome and Naples, and in addition a few years at renowned French universities, studying with the most famous men.' This preface ends with the words 'in haste, Bïderich, 1 March 1596'.

<sup>18</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. Op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>19</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. Op. cit., pp. 100-101.

<sup>20</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. Op. cit., p. 102.

<sup>21</sup> 'Johann Argentier' in Wikipedia, <[http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann\\_Argentier](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Argentier)>

<sup>22</sup> Lucas Ghinus was the first professor of botany at Bologna, and designed the botanic garden in Pisa. He died in 1556.

geology and mineralogy there from his compatriot Georg Agricola<sup>23</sup>. He was also interested in the therapeutic effects of bathing, as is reflected in his balneological and geological work *De Caloris Fontium medicatorum causa & temperatione libri II*, published in Lyon in 1558. In its preface, he gives more details about his studies. He also spent quite some time at the spa town of Lucca. His main activities were clinical at this time, and he also went to the *Santo Spirito* hospital in Rome. Afterwards, he went to the universities of Paris, Orléans and Lyon, where he was briefly professor of medicine<sup>24</sup>. Then he went back to his homeland to practise medicine there, and soon afterwards (in 1559) became the personal physician of his patron William V<sup>25</sup>. This position can have been no sinecure, as according to the deed of appointment his duties involved looking after the health not only of the Duke, but of his family too. The Duke himself was suffering from an inherited mental disorder, had problems with one leg and had already had a stroke. His son John William also had poor physical and especially mental health – the latter to an even worse degree than his father<sup>26</sup>. The daughter of William V suffered an ear disorder, as is shown by a letter from Solenander to her father on 24 February 1585<sup>27</sup>. As personal physician, Solenander was also expected to accompany the Duke on all his travels. The number of scholars that he met during his studies and in his position at court is impressive. The names include Johan Sohet, Tarquinius Schnellenberg, Gisbert Horst, W. Teschenmacher, Jan Wier and his son Galenus, Johann Lythodius, Lampert Wolf, Heinrich Butter, Petrus Quentenius, Johann Lumcken, Wilhelm von Waldenfels, Johann von Offenbroich, Heinrich Oliszleger, August Lomberg, Kaspar Peucer, Johann Crato von Krafftheim, Johann Slotan, Mathias von Königsberg, Heinrich Smetius, Abel Sylvius, Joachim Meyer, Bertram Isaak, Abraham Seyler, Acht, Spina, Wilhelm Fabry von Hilden, and many others<sup>28</sup>. These contacts were accompanied by intense scientific and medical activity, which is reflected in a plethora of letters and *consilia*.

Shortly after his appointment, Solenander must have married Maria Lythodi, daughter of Dr Lythodius, a fellow personal physician to the Duke,

<sup>23</sup> 'Georgius Agricola' in Wikipedia, <[http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgius\\_Agricola](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgius_Agricola)>

<sup>24</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. Op. cit., p. 104.

<sup>25</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. Op. cit., p. 105. A transcript is also provided here of his appointment deed, dated 'Hambach, 3 August 1559'.

<sup>26</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. Op. cit., pp. 112-115.

<sup>27</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. Op. cit., pp. 111 and 116.

<sup>28</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. Op. cit., pp. 108-111.

who lived at *Zollstrasse 11* in Düsseldorf, known as *Zum Schlosse Benrath*<sup>29</sup>. Possibly Solenander lived there himself. This may have been a second marriage, as he appears to have been previously married to Margarethe von Engelhuisen. He cannot have lived there for very long, and his second marriage did not last long either. On 30 November 1563, a deed of purchase appears in his name in Büderich for a property named *Wals*, in *Vossenstrasse* and by the ramparts. In any case he was already living in Büderich in 1562, and he only stayed in Düsseldorf for his quarterly court service. Johanna von Eickelt, a third wife, bore him a son named Reinherus and two daughters: Lucia, who married Martin Haen, praetor of the province of Cleves and Katharina, who married Heinrich Lambertius, consul of the city of Cleves<sup>30</sup>.

Duke William V died on 5 January 1592. Solenander then remained in Büderich, where a deed of 30 August 1593 shows that he purchased a number of pieces of land<sup>31</sup>.

Around the turn of the year 1594-1595, a major case arose concerning Jakobe von Baden (16 January 1558 - Düsseldorf, 3 September 1597). She was the wife of John William, and was found dead in bed one morning, without any prior sickness. At the time of their wedding, John William was still perfectly healthy, but she seems to have had an adverse influence on him<sup>32</sup>. She is alleged to have treated him 'unworthily', and from then on his mental health, genetically encumbered as it was, went into decline. Their marriage was childless. She was regarded as responsible for this, and there was even a court case in the hope that he might have an heir by a second marriage to the Duchess Sybille. Eventually the elderly Solenander was even asked to 'take measures' through the chamberlain, Wilhelm von Waldenfels. From his written reply from Büderich on 6 January 1595, which Wackerbauer called a 'second Hippocratic oath', it appears that he had been bluntly asked to get rid of Jakobe. His comment in this reply, 'God gave

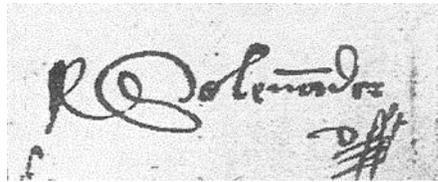


Figure 4. Signature of R. Solenander

<sup>29</sup> The two official physicians of Duke William V were Reiner Solenander and Jan Wier, his senior by eight years, who was succeeded in 1578 by his son Galen. Johann Bachoven von Echt (Echtius) was sometimes consulted, as on his last trip to Hambach, where William had a castle and country home. Echt was summoned on that occasion when William was sick with a fever.

<sup>30</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. Op. cit., p. 111.

<sup>31</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. Op. cit., pp. 116-117.

<sup>32</sup> Solenander wrote a report together with Johann Wier and Lambert Wolf about the hopeless state of health of John William in 1589.

medicine to mortals for their health, not to murder them,' made his position abundantly clear<sup>33</sup>. Soon afterwards, Solenander retired in his hometown.

Gerard Mercator (Rupelmonde, 5 March 1512 - Duisburg, 2 December 1594), a mathematician and astronomer, also received protection from the ducal court. This may be due to the fact that his parents were from Jülich, but he himself spent a long time in Duisburg, where Solenander successfully treated him for an eye complaint with *Augentrost*. Mercator was also cosmographer to William V, and he made instruments and a remarkable globe for him as well as designing an atlas in five volumes. He and Solenander knew each other for years and were friends. They kept in touch regularly. Two of Solenander's letters to him, which appeared in his *Consiliorum medicinalium sectiones quinque*, are worth mentioning.

The first, dated 24 December 1590, is written from Düsseldorf and concerns medical matters. It is a reply to a number of earlier letters from Mercator, who appeals to him for help because the left half of his body has been paralysed for two months. Mercator was almost eighty years old at this time, and Solenander repeats certain details from his letters almost verbatim. For example, his face was lopsided and he had speech problems. Solenander proposes a therapeutic regime, including laxatives based on rhubarb and a whole range of other drugs. He gives details about the recipes and the way in which the treatment should be applied according to his complaints. (Figure 5) At the end of his long letter he refers to earlier letters with dietary instructions, which he does not discuss again.

A second letter, from 1 January 1595 (1594 old style), also from Düsseldorf, has a more literary and scientific content. Mercator never received this letter, as he had died a month earlier. With the letter, he returned to Mercator the latter's study of the origins of the world, after having read it himself and after receiving it back from a lawyer friend to whom he in turn had sent it. Both advised Mercator to publish the piece without delay. Solenander even encourages him not to use his advanced age and health problems as an excuse to take it easy (although he says he would advise others to do so), but to accelerate the pace of his work for these very reasons. After discussing a number of philosophical issues, he talks about their common interest in the effect of medicinal herbs on animals and about the fact that in places where

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<sup>33</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. Op. cit., p. 120: Data est medicina ab ipso Deo mortalibus in salutem, non ad internecionem. See also pp. 100, 114 and 117-121. She must have been murdered: one source refers to her being 'beaten to death' (Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie) and another to her being 'strangled': see <<http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacoba.van.Baden>>.

certain diseases are frequent, the appropriate herb often grows abundantly. Particularly striking is his remark that scurvy is common among Danes, Frisians and Hollanders, with scurvy-grass apparently recommended as a remedy<sup>34</sup>. Solenander concludes by saying that he is looking forward to seeing him, but is still very busy with his work at Court<sup>35</sup>.

Reiner Solenander died in the town of his birth, Büberich, on 5 January 1601. He must have converted from Catholicism to Protestantism at some stage, because he was not buried at the Catholic church in his hometown, but at St Willibrord's Church in Wesel. His grave is no longer to be found there, but Wackerbauer reports a description of his epitaph by the preacher A. von Dorth, a contemporary:

*Im rechten, der beiden Wappen ist oben und im Helm ein Flügel, im linken ein Balck zwischen zwei Hörnern. "Memento Mori. Hier liegt die Leiche des hochberühmten Arztes Reiner Solenander aus Büberich, im Jahre 1601, am Tage vor Epiphanie, in seinem 77. Lebensjahre aus dem Leben abberufen."*<sup>36</sup>.

A number of cities and municipalities in Germany now have a *Solenander Strasse*.

The first of his known works is his *Apologia, qua Iulio Alexandrino respondetur pro Argenterio* (Florentiae, apud Leon. Torrentinum, 1556, 177 pp.), published as an octavo. It was written in Lucca and is dedicated to Dr Johan Echt of Bachoven. In this dedication, Solenander expresses his gratitude to Echt for urging Dukes John III and William V to give him their patronage during

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<sup>34</sup> Scurvy-grass or spoonwort (*Cochlearia*) is rich in vitamin C. The relationship between vitamin C deficiency and scurvy was not established until much later. The first to describe the disease entity, however, was Johannes Eichtius (1541). James Lind discovered the beneficial effects of citrus fruits in 1757, the term vitamin was not invented until 1911, and in 1937 A. Szent-Györgyi received the Nobel Prize for his discovery of the role of vitamin C in cell metabolism.

<sup>35</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. Op. cit., pp. 109, 122, 127 and 131. The two letters are found in Solenander's *Consiliorum medicinalium sectiones quinque* (the first as *consilium XXI* in *Sectio II*, pp. 177-181; the second as *consilium XXI, Sectio V*, pp. 500-502). The second letter is also found in Gerardus MERCATOR, *Atlas sive cosmographicae meditationes de fabrica mundi et fabricati figura*, Dusseldorpii, excudebat Bernardus Busius, 1602; see the front, just after his biography and epitaph. However, this transcript differs on some points from the previous one, especially the date *Calendis Iulii. Anno 1594.stilo veteri*, which must be a misprint, as the addition *stilo veteri* is meaningless in the month of July. Possibly the original letter, owned by Mercator's son, was hard to read, causing some transcription errors.

<sup>36</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. Op. cit., p. 122. He refers to 'Des Weseler Predigers A. v. Dorth Inschriftensammlung' in *Düsseldorfer Staatsarchiv, Depos. Köln 11*; and states 'die Grabstätte ist heute nicht mehr erhalten'. The grave must therefore have disappeared before 1932/33.

his education. In the preface, *Ad medicinae candidatos ceterosque benevoles lectores*, Solenander refers several times to the work of Vesalius to support his position<sup>37</sup>. This work, a defence of his professor Johann Argenterius against the Galenist Iulius Alexandrinus, thus relates entirely to the controversy over Galen. Vesalius himself is mentioned only twice in the text and quite casually. On the first occasion, he comments that ‘if the Galenists were right, Vesalius need not have written a single book on anatomy’; on the second occasion, he notes that Vesalius took a significantly harder line against Galen than Argenterius did<sup>38</sup>.

Next, in Lyon, he published his work on the therapeutic effects of bathing and his experiences in Lucca: *De Caloris Fontium medicatorum causa, eorumque temperatione, libri duo, et Philosophis et Medicis perutiles* (Lugduni, apud Ioannem Franciscum De Gabiano, 1558, 238 pp. + index), octavo<sup>39</sup>. In the preface addressed to William V, he urges him to open up the springs on the Lower Rhine for the sick. Vesalius is not mentioned in this work. Johann Guenther von Andernach drew on Solenander’s work for his ‘*Badebuch*’<sup>40</sup>.

His new edition of Montanus’ *Consultationes medicinales* (Lugduni, apud Ioannem franciscum de Gabiano, 1558) is counted as his third work. This is the *Centuria prima* of Montanus’ *consultationes*, which had already been published in Venice in 1554, with a reprint in 1556, by his pupil Valentin Lublinus, and again in Basel in 1557, with the addition of 57 new *consilia*, by two other pupils, Hieronymus Donzellini and Philip Bechius. Later, a *Centuria secunda* and *tertia* appeared in Venice in 1559. These three *centuria* were eventually published by Johan Crato in a modified sequence, organised according to health complaint, in a single volume in Breslau (now Wroclaw) in 1565<sup>41</sup>. Giovanni Battista da Monte (Johannes Baptista Montanus, died 6

<sup>37</sup> Reiner SOLENANDER. *Apologia, qua Iulio Alexandrino respondetur pro Argenterio*, Florentiae, apud Leon. Torrentinum, 1556, see pp. 20 and 23.

<sup>38</sup> Reiner SOLENANDER. *Op. cit.*, p. 110: *Ergo de Anatome uno volumine Vesalius scribere non debebat; ...*; and p. 171: *Scriptis Argenterius magna cum modestia, & veneratione nonnulla in arte sua adversus Galenum: scripsit & Vesalius multo acrius...*

<sup>39</sup> In August HIRSCH, *Op. cit.*, Pgl. (ref. 9) incorrectly locates the publication of this work in ‘Leyden’ (Lugduni Batavorum) instead of Lyon, due to a mistranslation of Lugduni. This was taken over by C. Binz in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*.

<sup>40</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. *Op. cit.*, p. 107. See Ioannes Guintherius Andernacus, *Commentarius de Balneis, & aquis medicatis in tres Dialogos distinctus* (Strasbourg, 1565), which can be found on the Internet.

<sup>41</sup> Ioannes CRATO Vratislaviensis. *Consultationes Medicae Ioannis Baptistae Montani. Antea quidem Ioannis Cratonis Vratislavensis Medici Caesarei opera atque studio correctae, emendatae, adactae: Nunc vero et novorum Consiliorum Appendice, & necessariis veterum Additionibus locupletatae*, Basileae, per Henricum Petri, et Petrum Pernam, without any date on the title page, but 1565 in the prooemium and as impressum

May 1551), another founder of clinical medicine in Italy, spent much of his career working in Padua, where – as we know from the documents relating to the conferrals of doctors’ degrees – he was definitely professor of medicine from 27 January 1543 to 31 December 1550. Solenander took the *Centuria prima* (*consilia* 1-157) with him from Italy, added numerous improvements at the request of the printer Ioannes Franciscus Gabiano and reworked it into two volumes, as he explains to his readers (*Medicinae Studiosis Salutem*). Since the second volume turned out to be smaller than the first, Solenander added to it his own first *consilia*, twenty-five in all, as his *sectio prima*, namely those that he had written up or dictated during his sick visits on a casual basis and not with the direct intention of ever publishing them. At any rate, this was the plan, according to this dedication to the students. However, such a publication cannot be traced. Eventually, the material appeared in three volumes:

1. *Tomus primus* with Montanus’ *consilia* 1-100 (the *centuria prima*, ca. 712 pp.), as *Ioannis Baptistae Montani Veronensis, Consultationes Medicinales, in duos distinctae tomos, Nunc primum, post Valentini Lublini, Hieronymi Donzellini Philippique Bechii editiones ac castigatones, summa diligentia D. Reineri Solenandri Medici, recognitae. Accessit eiusdem Reineri Sol. Consiliorum Medicinalium Sectio prima, iam quoque edita primum* (Lugduni, Apud Ioannem Franciscum de Gabiano, ..., 1558, sextodecimo; the printing privilege (p. 2) states: *corigé par mestre Rainier Solenander docteur en Medecine ... le vj de Iuin 1558*. These *consilia* are preceded by the dedications of Lublinus from 1554 and Bechius from 1556.
2. *Tomus secundus* with Montanus’ *consilia* 101-157 (also known as the *centuria dimidia*, ca. 322 pp.), as *Ioannis Baptistae Montani Medici Veronensis Consultationum Medicinalium, Tomus secundus* (Lugduni, Apud Ioannem Franciscum de Gabiano, 1558).
3. Solenander’s *consilia*: his *sectio prima* in a separate volume (362 pp.), as *Reineri Solenandri Budericensis Medici Consiliorum Medicinalium, Sectio prima* (Lugduni, Apud Ioannem franciscum de Gabiano, 1558). These twenty-five *consilia* were written in Lucca and Lyon, and are preceded by Solenander’s *Medicinae Studiosis Salutem*.

It would take 38 years, until 1596, before the sequel appeared, in what Wackerbauer regards as Solenander’s main work: the *Consiliorum*

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in col. 1023/1024; reprinted in 1572 with the year on the title page and the addition of a *Consiliorum* appendix and Vesalius’ *consilium* to Herwart, with new pagination; final reprint 1583 in a completely new reset.

*medicinalium sectiones quinque*. This fourth work, a small folio of 516 pages, is a collection of his own *consilia* or medical experiences. It consists of five sections, namely a new edition of the twenty-five *consilia*, which he had already published as the *sectio prima* in 1558 along with Montanus' *consilia*, followed by four new sections of *consilia* he had written later. There are two known editions of this five-part work: *Francofurti, apud Andreae Wecheli heredes, Claudium Marnium, & Ioan. Aubrium, 1596* and *Hanoviae, typis Wechelianis apud Claudium Marnium & heredes Ioan. Aubrii, 1609*. The two editions have the same pagination<sup>42</sup>. Solenander mentions in this work that Vesalius was the first to



Figure 5. Title page of Solenander's *Consiliorum medicinalium sectiones quinque* (Hanoviae, 1609)

show that there are three auditory ossicles<sup>43</sup>. However, this is not correct: Vesalius only described the *malleus* and the *incus*<sup>44</sup>. The *stapes*, the third ossicle, was first described by Ioannes Philippus Ingrassia, who discovered it by chance and described the incident in his *In Galeni librum de ossibus*<sup>45</sup>. The *Consiliorum medicinalium sectiones quinque* also mentions a laxative recipe

<sup>42</sup> C. BINZ in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* mentions an edition Leyden 1571 (instead of Frankfurt 1596), which we have been unable to trace.

<sup>43</sup> Reiner SOLENANDER. *Consiliorum medicinalium sectiones quinque*, Hanoviae, typis Wechelianis apud Claudium Marnium & heredes Ioan. Aubrii, 1609; see p. 16.

<sup>44</sup> Andreas VESALIUS. *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, Bazel: J. Oporinus, 1543; see liber I, caput VIII. *De ossiculis auditus organi constructionem ingredientibus* (the ossicles that are involved in the construction of the hearing organ), pp. 33-35.

<sup>45</sup> Ioan. Philippus INGRASSIA. *In Galeni librum de ossibus*, Panormi, ex typographia Io. Baptistae Maringhi, 1603; see pp. 7-8. Ingrassia discovered the stapes when handling a skull during a class: it suddenly fell out on one side. It is always worth holding a skull diagonally and giving it a shake: sometimes a stapes falls out, as one of us (MB) has experienced.

based on rhubarb used by Vesalius: it is passed on by Solenander in his letter to Fredericus Beurhusius of 14 December 1585. Fredericus Beurhusius or Friedrich Beurhaus (1536-1609) was a musician and rector at the *gymnasium* in Dortmund. The introductory paragraph of the letter reads: *Docte Beurhusi, amice, nomine mihi, non de facie, cognite, infirmiolem tuam valetudinem illibenter intellexi*<sup>46</sup>. This indicates that Vesalius was also known for his clinical activity. He was certainly also interested in rhubarb as a medicinal plant, which is proved by the fact that he sent his friend Leonart Fuchs an illustration of it by Albrecht Meyer<sup>47</sup>.

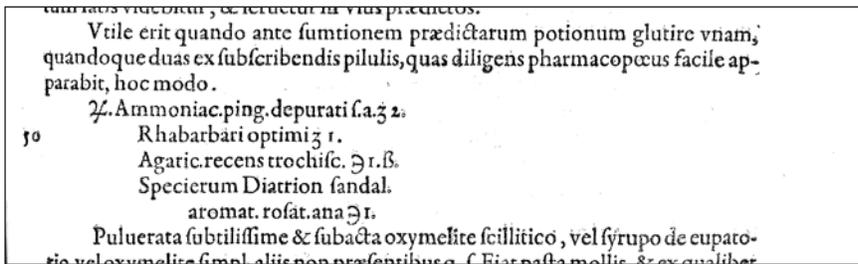


Figure 6. Rhubarb recipe used by Vesalius according to Solenander (*Consiliorum medicinalium sectiones quinque*, p. 240)

There is also the contribution *Historia de Obitu Andreae Vesalii* (Augsburg, 1566) (Account of the death of Andreas Vesalius), which, though unknown to his biographers, is very important. It is just eight pages, and is contained in a work of Theodor Crusius. This account is discussed below. The large catalogues likewise contain no mention of this work, despite its importance for Vesalius' biography.

In addition, there is his *Commentarius de Characterismo*, which he himself mentions in his letter to Mercator of 1 January 1594, old style (=1 January 1595). It was thus written in or before 1594. Wackerbauer writes that *de Characterismo* or *de characteristicis* must have existed in manuscript form, but was never printed.

<sup>46</sup> Reiner SOLENANDER. Op. cit., see sectiones V, p. [236] (incorrectly '240')-241; for the recipe itself, see p. 240.

<sup>47</sup> Sachiko KUSUKAWA. *Picturing the Book of Nature. Image, Text, and Argument in Sixteenth-Century Human Anatomy and Medical Botany*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2012, 331 pp., ill.; see pp. 134-136. The mortally wounded French King Henry II was also treated with a drink based on rhubarb.

Solenander must also have several other works to his name which have not been found, as he refers to them several times in his letters<sup>48</sup>.

Few collections contain work by Solenander.

O'Malley mentions Solenander as a friend of Vesalius from his time in Padua and believes on this basis that Solenander's story of the quarrel between Vesalius and his wife in Cette is probably accurate. He also states that Solenander studied in Padua under Da Monte. However, O'Malley gives no evidence for these claims<sup>49</sup>. Solenander's name is nowhere mentioned in the lists of newly graduated doctors in Padua<sup>50</sup>. Since the original authors of these records also mention, against the name of each doctoral candidate, the name of his promoters and the witnesses, we have to assume that not only did he not gain any degree in Padua, but also that he never even stayed there: otherwise he would have turned up as a witness, as anyone who belonged to the faculty was invited to the doctoral degree conferral. The claim that Solenander studied in Padua and that Vesalius and Solenander met each other personally there therefore cannot be maintained. In any case, Solenander makes no mention of Padua among the various universities he attended. All this therefore suggests that there were no direct contacts between Vesalius and Solenander. O'Malley did not know of Solenander's matriculation in Leuven on 11 May 1548, and consequently imagined him to be in Italy earlier; and the fact that Solenander had a reverential attitude towards Montanus led him to conjecture that he had also been in Padua.

Most important of all, however, is what we learn through Solenander about the circumstances of Vesalius' death, thanks to an eyewitness account in a *Kursze Nachricht* composed by him. This eight-page contribution has

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<sup>48</sup> Anton WACKERBAUER. Op. cit., p. 133 n. 2: Wie schon mehrmals in seinen Schriften, erwähnt Solenander auch hier wieder ein weiteres Werk "De characterismo" oder "de characteristicis", das ganz bestimmt als Manuskript existierte; gedruckt wurde diese Schrift nie. This work is mentioned in the letter in Mercator's atlas (presumably incorrectly) as *Commentarius de Climacterismo*; in *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire littéraire des dix-sept provinces des Pays-Bas, de la Principauté de Liège, et de quelques contrées voisines*, Tome troisième, Louvain: l'imprimerie académique, 1768, with a brief biography of Solenander (pp. 179-181), there is a reference on p. 181, under point 4, to this last title (*Commentarius de Climacterismo*) in the atlas.

<sup>49</sup> Charles Donald O'MALLEY. *Andreas Vesalius of Brussels 1514-1564*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1964, 480 pp.; see pp. 307 and 430 n 10.

<sup>50</sup> Elda MARTELLOZZO FORIN. *Acta graduum academicorum ab anno 1501 ad annum 1550*, Padova: Antenore, 1982. Also Elisabetta dalla FRANCESCA & Emilia VERONESE, *Acta Graduum Academicorum Gymnasii Patavini ab anno 1551 ad annum 1565*, Roma-Padova: Antenore, 2001, 723 pp. His name does not appear in the matriculation records of the University of Cologne, either.

remained unknown to Solenander's biographers until now. The mention appears only in an elusive work by Thomas Theodor Crusius, *Vergnügung müssiger Stunden, oder allerhand nützliche zur heutigen galanten Gelehrsamkeit dienende Anmerckungen* (1722)<sup>51</sup>. One of us (TG) found a copy in the Herzog August Library (Wolfenbüttel). It contains the story of Vesalius' death, derived from Solenander and dated May 1566, one year and seven months after Vesalius' death. Because of its importance we give here both the Latin text with the short German introduction by Crusius, and our translation of the relevant section. It is usually assumed that the ship in which Vesalius was travelling was caught in a storm and then cast ashore at Zakynthos. Vesalius is therefore thought to have died in a shipwreck. But as we shall see, the true facts, according to this eyewitness, are totally different.

#### TRANSCRIPT

##### *Kurze Nachricht von des Andreae Vesalii Todt und Begräbnisz.*

§ I. Da ich von dem Afsterben und Beerdigung des berühmten Medici und Anatomici, *Andreae Vesalii*, eine *kurze Nachricht* ertheilen will / so solte zwar auch etwas von seinem Lebens-Wandel mit einflicken; weilen aber bereits Andere mit *Adamo* und *Frehero* hierinnenfalls ihren Fleisz nicht gesparet; als will ich nicht allererst auff's neue mit einer aufgewärmten Speise aufgezogen kommen / sondern vielmehr blos meinem Versprechen nachkommen / und hier eine Nachricht von *Vesalio* communiciren / welche von obberuehrtem Auctoribus in etlichen Passagen abweicht und ebenfalls aus der Feder eines gelehrten und vortrefflichen Medici geflossen ist / so folgendes Innhalts ist:

*Historia de Obitu Andreae Vesalii  
ex Literis Reineri Solenandri ex Comitii Augusti. 1566. mense Majo.*

*Vesalius una cum uxore solvit ex Hispaniis proficiscens Massiliano, ut Palaestinam adiret, eamque perlustraret, religione ductus, an lucri causa, non potui satis intelligere. Religione non arbitror: Eam enim semper nihili fecit. Lucri gratia permulti ex Batavis Vicinisque eo proficiscuntur, quod ita fieri solet: Qui*

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<sup>51</sup> Reiner SOLENANDER. 'Kurze Nachricht von des Andreae Vesalii Todt und Begräbnisz - Historia de Obitu Andreae Vesalii ex Literis Reineri Solenandri ex Comitii Augusti. 1566. Mense Majo' in Thomas Theodor CRUSIUS, *Vergnügung müssiger Stunden, oder allerhand nützliche zur heutigen galanten Gelehrsamkeit dienende Anmerckungen*, M. Rohrlachs Wittib und Erben, 1722, pp. 483-490. The 'work' *Vergnügung müssiger Stunden* was in fact a journal that was published by Theodor Crusius in Leipzig for 20 years from 1713 to 1732; Solenander's contribution about Vesalius' death appeared in volume 18, 1722.

hoc instituit iter, compositis rebus omnibus, distribuit sua in usuras, ea conditione & pacto, ut cui unum dederit, ab eo duo vel plura recipiat redux, sin emanserit, perit ipsi suisque sors ipsa. Cum venisset Massiliam, pertaesa iam uxor viae (neque enim ante illi cum marito convenit) recusat se ulterius progressuram. Ibi dissidio facto, illa abit in Belgium, Vesalius pergit, non reconciliatus, ut intelligo, uxori, porro Venetias.

Conscensa ibi navi, solvit Hierosolymam versus, perlustrat ea loca. Ubi iam socii omnia ibi expeditissent, redeunt in navem: Soluti adversa jactantur tempestate primum, tum progressi in altum, tantam aëris tranquillitatem (liberet potius dicere immobilitatem) experiuntur, ut aliquot septimanas uno eodemque fere in loco immota navis haereret. Fuit id aestate media, in aestu summo. Ibi plerique ex sociis incidere in morbos, multi emori: Quos cum videret singulis diebus praecipitari in mare Vesalius, subtristis factus, coepit & ipse morbo affligi, sed quem non propalavit. Dum ita una in statione fluctuarent, deficere coeperunt. Multa inopia erat & penuria aquae dulcis summa, quae singulis dabatur quotidie ad dimensum, neque ultra id quacunque in necessitate constituto, addebatur vel guttula. In his necessitatibus constitutus Vesalius, natura taciturnus & melancholicus & non tam ad rem attentus, quam sordidus, cum rerum necessariarum minus & sordidius fere ceteris in viam assumpsisset, gravius laborare coepit, cumque videret singulis diebus ex sociis ei e navi praecipitarique in altum, rogare coepit aeger Navis Dominum ceterasque nautas, ne si quid sibi humanitus accideret, aut mori contingeret, se praecipitarent in mare. Postquam ita diu fluctuassent, accepto tandem vento adspirantque aura benigniora provehuntur. Interea navis inferiore parte desidet aeger & decumbit Vesalius, neminem habens, qui eum consoletur aut curet. Cum terra videri coepta, aliique hilares facti, ille gravius aegrotare incipit. Occurrit tum primum navigantibus Zacynthus, illam appellunt, & cum ingrederentur portum, atque jam vela dimitterent contraherentque, in eo ipso rudentum & camelorum strepitu, ipse Vesalius exspirat. Sed quod maximopere optaverat, obtinuit, ut scilicet appulsa iam navi sepeliretur in terra, juxta sacellum aut fanum quoddam, quod vicinum est portui in Zacyntho. Qui haec retulit Norinbergensis mercator, is una Venetiis cum Vesalio navim ingressus est. Cum venissent in Cyprum, ibi mercator, relictis sociis, egrediens conscensaque alia navi, proficiscitur Alexandriam, inde Cairum, postea, expeditis negotiis, rediens, forte fortuna reperit eandem navim eosdemque socios in Cypro. Quibus cum se iterum junxisset, expertus est haec pericula communemque cum sociis sortem habuit. Rediit tamen Venetias, sed relicto atque sepulto in Zacyntho Vesalio. Uxor postquam intellexit, maritum suum obiisse diem, illa statim nupsit alteri, nobili cuidam. Reliquit Vesalius filiam & in pecunia numerata XII. millia Thalerorum & annuorum reddituum 700. & plures.

*Eximium nostrae decus ille Vesalius artis  
In Pelago moritur, membra Zacynthus habet.  
Anno 1564.*

§ 2. *Es ist also ein Irrthum derjenigen / welche vorgeben / als wenn unser Vesalius auf der Insul Zacynthus, dahin Er aus der Insul Cypren durch Ungewitter solte seyn verschlagen worden / in einem armen Fischers Hüttlein seinen Geist aufgegeben hätte. Ob aber nicht eben dieses der gedachte Nürnbergische Kauffmann mag gewesen syn / welchen Andere vor einen Goldschmiedt ausgeben / der sein Grab mit folgender Grabschrift:*

ANDREAE VESALII BRUXELLENSIS  
TUMULUS, QUI OBIIT IDIBUS OCTO-  
BRIS ANNO CIO IO LXIV. AETATIS VE-  
RO SUAE, LVIII. CUM REDIISSSET  
HIEROSOLYMAS.  
*gezieret / lasse ich dahin gestellet seyn.*

TRANSLATION

‘As I wish to give a brief account of the death and burial of the famous physician and anatomist Andreas Vesalius, I should also relate something about his life. But as others such as Adam<sup>52</sup> and Freher<sup>53</sup> have already written about this, I do not wish to rehash their information here, but merely fulfil a promise and give a report about Vesalius, which differs from the said authors in various points, and which also flowed from the pen of a scholar and renowned physician and reads as follows:

*Account of the death of Andreas Vesalius  
from the letter of Reinert Solenander  
during the Diet of Augsburg, May 1566*

Vesalius left Spain with his wife and went to Marseille in order to travel to Palestine. Whether he did so for religious reasons or for profit I am unable to tell. I do not think it was out of piety: he never cared for such matters. In Holland and the neighbouring parts there are many who travel there for profit, and the custom is as follows: anyone who sets out on this journey settles all his affairs and lends all his possessions out at interest, on this condition, that from the person to whom he has given one, he will receive two or more on his return, but if he

<sup>52</sup> Melchior ADAM. Op. cit.

<sup>53</sup> Paul FREHER. *Theatrum virorum eruditione clarorum ...tomus posterior, Norimbergae, impensis J. Hoffmanni, & typis haeredum Andreae Knorzii, 1688, 2 vol., see plate 56 p. 1254.*

\* ( 483 ) \*

Die Erste Anmerkung.  
Kürze Nachricht von des  
Andrae Vesalii Todt und  
Begräbniß.

§. I.

**W**Ich von dem Absterben und  
Beredung des berühmten Medici-  
 und Anatomici, ANDRAE  
VESALII, eine kurze Nachricht  
ertheilen will; so solte zwar auch et-  
was von seinem Lebens-Wandel mit einfließen;  
weilen aber bereits Andre mit *Adamo* und *Frodo-  
doro* hienemselben ihren Hiß nicht gespart;  
als will ich nicht allereit außs neue mit einer  
ausgenommeten Spottz außgezogen kommen son-  
den vielmehr dies meinum Besprechen nach  
kommen und hier eine Nachricht von *Vesalio*  
communiciren welche von obberührenten Ancto-  
ribus in etlichen Passagen abweichet und etwe-  
sils auß der Feder eines gelehrten und vortref-  
lichen Medici geflossen ist / so folgendes Zum-  
hiltz ist:

*Historia de Obitu Andrae Vesalii  
ex Liberis Reineri Sorwandii ex Comitibus Au-  
gust. 1566. mensis Martii.*

VESALIVS una cum uxore soluit

\* ( 484 ) \*

ex Hispaniis proficiens Massiliam, ut Pa-  
lædium adiret, eoque perlatum, reli-  
gione ductus, an luci causa, non potui fa-  
cie intelligere. Religione non arbitror: Eam  
enim semper nihil fecit. Lucis gratia per-  
muti ex Baratus Vidinisque eo proficiscuntur,  
quod ita fieri solet: Qui hoc institum  
iter, compositis rebus omnibus, distribuit  
sua in usus, ea conditione & pacto, ut cui  
unum dedit, ab eo duo vel plura recipiat  
sedux, sin emanerit, perit ipsi suisque socii  
ipsa. Cum venisset Massiliam, pertæsa iam  
uxor viae ( neque enim ante illi cum mari-  
to conuenit) recusat se ulterius proficiscum.  
Ibi dissidio facto, illa abijt in Belgium, *Vesalio*  
pergit, non reconciliatum, ut intelligo,  
uxori, porro Venetias. Constat illi nauis,  
soluit Hierosolymam versus, perstruat ea  
loca. Vbi jam focis omnia ibi expediunt,  
redeunt in nauim: Solui aduerfa iactantur  
tempestate primum, tum progressi in altum,  
tantam aeri tranquillitatem ( liberet potius  
dicere immobilitatem ) experiuntur, ut ali-  
quot septimas uno eodemque fere in loco  
innota nauis haereret. Fuit id aestate me-  
dia, in aestu summo. Ibi plerique ex focis  
incidere in morbos, mox emortui: Quos cura  
uideret singulis diebus praecipitari in mare  
*Vesalio*, subtritus factus, coepit & ipse mor-  
bo affigi, sed quem non propulauit. Dum ita  
una

\* ( 485 ) \*

una in statione fluctuarent, desicere coepe-  
runt. Multa inopia erat & penuria aquae  
dulcis summa, quae singulis dabatur quoci-  
que ad dimensum, neque ultra id quacun-  
que in necessitate confisuto, addebatur vel  
guttula. In his necessitatibus confisuto  
*Vesalio*, nauis sciturus & melancholicus &  
non tam ad rem attentus, quam fordichus,  
cum rerum necessarium minus & foetidius  
fere ceteris in viam asumpisset, grauius la-  
borare coepit, cumque uideret singulis die-  
bus ex focis illi e nauis praecipitatisque in  
aerem, rogare coepit aeger Nauis Dominum  
ceterum nauis sciturus, ne si quid sibi huma-  
nus accideret, aut mori contingeret, se praeci-  
pitarent in mare. Postquam ita diu stu-  
tuissent, accepto tandem vento adspirante  
que auri benigniora proueniunt. Interea  
nauis inferiore parte desidet aeger & decum-  
bit *Vesalio*, neminem habens, qui eum con-  
solaret aut curet. Cum terra uideri coepit,  
aliquae hilares facti, ille grauius aegrotare  
incipit. Occurrit primum nauigantibus  
Zacynthus, illam appellat, & cum ingre-  
derentur portum, atque iam uela dimitte-  
rent contrahentisque, in eo ipso rudentum  
& canelorum strepitu, ipse *Vesalio* expirat.  
Sic quod maxime optauerat, obtinuit,  
ut scilicet appulla iam nauis sepeliretur in  
terra, juxta lacellum aut fanum quoddam  
quod

Figure 7. Solenander's text on Vesalius's death in Thomas Theodor Crusius, *Vergnügung müssiger Stunden* (Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel)

does not return, his estate is lost to himself and his relatives. When he reached Marseille, his wife, who had grown tired of travelling (for she did not get on with her husband even before then) refused to go any further. After they had separated there, she left for Belgium and Vesalius continued his journey to Venice without being reconciled with his wife, as I understand.

Having boarded ship there, he set sail for Jerusalem and visited those places. As soon as all his companions had explored all these parts, they returned to the boat. Having set sail, they were hit at first by stormy weather and then, after getting out into the open sea, they experienced such tranquil weather (or rather they were so becalmed) that the ship remained in virtually the same place for several weeks. This was in the middle of the summer, in great heat. Most of his companions fell ill, and many died. When he saw them being thrown into the sea for several days in a row, Vesalius became downcast and began himself to be ill, but did not reveal this. While they were floating around on one spot in this way, their supplies began to run out. There was a general shortage and an acute lack of fresh water.

For each of them a daily ration of fresh water was provided, but beyond this not a drop more was given, regardless of how desperately it was needed. Finding himself in this serious situation, Vesalius – who was taciturn by nature, inclined to melancholy and not so much frugal as miserly – because he had stocked up with essentials for the journey to a lesser degree and more meanly than the others, began to suffer more seriously, and when he saw his companions being thrown overboard and cast into the sea day after day, being sick he began to ask

the master of the ship and the other sailors, should anything happen to him or should he die, not to cast him too into the sea. After they had floated around in this way for a long time, the wind finally picked up and they were able to sail with a favourable wind. Meanwhile Vesalius lay sick in the hold, with nobody to give him encouragement or care. When land came into sight, and the others became mad with joy, he became even more ill. Only then did they arrive in Zakynthos, they brought the ship in there, and as they were entering harbour and striking the sails, Vesalius expired amid the noise of ropes and camels. But he obtained what he had longed for most, that he should be taken off the ship and buried in the earth, near a chapel or shrine in the vicinity of the port of Zakynthos.

This account was given by a merchant from Nuremberg, who had boarded the same ship as Vesalius in Venice. When they came to Cyprus [on their outward journey], the merchant left his fellow-travellers behind there, and continued his journey to Alexandria on board another ship, and thence to Cairo and then, after completing his business, returned to Cyprus, where by a great coincidence he joined the same ship and the same companions [on their return journey]. After joining them again, he underwent the same perils and shared the fate of his companions. However, he returned to Venice, after Vesalius had been left behind, buried on Zakynthos. When his wife heard of her husband's death, she at once married another, a certain nobleman. Vesalius left a daughter and an estate worth twelve thousand thalers and an annual income of more than seven hundred.

*Vesalius, the supreme glory of our art,  
died at sea; his body lies in Zakynthos.  
In the year 1564.*

§ 2. Those who assert that our Vesalius died in a poor fisherman's hut on the island of Zakynthos, whither he had been driven from Cyprus by storms, are therefore mistaken. But I leave it open whether it was not the supposed merchant from Nuremberg, whom others say was a goldsmith, who provided his grave with the following epitaph:

THE GRAVE OF ANDREAS VESALIUS OF BRUSSELS,  
WHO DIED ON 15 OCTOBER 1564  
AGED 58 YEARS,  
WHILE RETURNING FROM JERUSALEM.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> As Vesalius was born on 31 December 1514, at the time of his death on 15 October 1564 he was nearly fifty years old and not fifty-eight. Fürer von Haimendorf also saw the grave with the epitaph in the Santa Maria delle Grazie on 6 August 1565 and gives the same erroneous

According to this eyewitness, there was thus no storm when the ship arrived at Zakynthos, and no shipwreck. Vesalius' ship docked in the normal way. The problems at sea had occurred much earlier and had caused not a shipwreck, but a general shortage of supplies and drinking water, especially as a result of the hot weather. This account is therefore much more credible than the thesis of the shipwreck, as it fits better with the fact that on his arrival at Zakynthos Vesalius was apparently the only one to die, and that the letter that he had with him for King Philip II of Spain from Fra Bonifacio Ragusa (now Dubrovnik) still exists<sup>55</sup>. If there had been a shipwreck this would not have been the case.

Roth also mentions Solenander several times, although mainly during the period around Vesalius' death. He also refers to Solenander's account of Vesalius' death which is included in Theodor Crusius' *Vergnügung müssiger Stunden*, unlike O'Malley. Thus Roth mentions the assertion of Solenander's eyewitness that Vesalius was greedy (something which is also mentioned by Pantaleon) and unreligious, although Roth argues the opposite<sup>56</sup>. In connection with Solenander's claim that Vesalius was taciturn and of a melancholy character (*Vesalius, natura taciturnus et melancholicus*), Roth refers to a passage in the *Fabrica*, where Vesalius recounts that he sometimes suffers from abdominal cramps<sup>57</sup>. He also discusses Vesalius' quarrel with his wife and the merchant from Nuremberg. Finally, Roth quotes Solenander's verse on Vesalius' tomb<sup>59</sup>. Roth does not mention Padua in connection with

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age in his *Itinerarium* (1621). This shows that it was the epitaph that was wrong and not their report. The brass plaque was stolen by the Turks in 1571 when they plundered the island.

55 Maurits BIESBROUCK, Omer STEENO. 'The last months of Andreas Vesalius. Part II – From Jerusalem to Zakynthos (Zante)' in *Vesalius - Acta Internationalia Historiae Medicinae*, 2011, 17 (no. 1): 30-34, ill.

56 Moritz ROTH. *Andreas Vesalius Bruxellensis*, Berlin, G. Reimer, 1892, 500 pp.; see pp. 74-5, 179, 277. In his *Fabrica* 1543 Vesalius regularly refers respectfully to the *Opifex rerum* (literally 'The maker of things'). In several places it is clear that for him this term is synonymous with 'God': book IV, p. 329, book VII, p. 63.

57 Moritz ROTH. *Op. cit.*, p. 190 n 4.

58 Andreas VESALIUS. *Op. cit.*, book V, chapter 8, p. 511. At the end of the chapter on the gall bladder, he writes, after noting that the end of the duodenum is sufficiently far from the stomach to ensure that bile rarely rises from the intestine to the stomach: *Quoniam & id biliosis naturis familiare sit, quoties his ieiunus venter paulo diutius (ut ipse quoque nonnumquam experior) torquetur* (... although this is a familiar experience for people of a bilious nature, when they get cramps after fasting for too long, as I myself have experienced more than once). Of course, a different interpretation of this is also possible: that Vesalius was sometimes so absorbed in his work that he forgot to eat and had stomach trouble as a result...

59 Moritz ROTH. *Op. cit.*, p. 442: *Eximium nostrae decus ille Vesalius artis / In Pelago moritur, membra Zacynthos habet.* (Vesalius, the supreme glory of our art, died at sea; his body lies in Zakynthos).

Solenander. However, in Padua a matriculation in the *artes* is recorded on 14 March 1574 in the name of *Joannes Soleander* [sic] *Buricensis*, nephew of Reiner Solenander, which may be the cause of the confusion<sup>60</sup>.

The most important point about Vesalius in Solenander's work is that an entirely different light is cast here on the circumstances in which the great anatomist died. There is no mention of a shipwreck. The problems started on the high seas, where his ship was becalmed for a long time and those on board ran out of food and drinking water. Afterwards, the ship put in at the port of Zakynthos in the normal fashion. A scenario such as a shipwreck is in any case – as we have seen – also ruled out by the fact that Vesalius had with him a letter from Fra Bonifacio to King Philip II of Spain. This letter is still extant, having been discovered by the Spanish paediatrician José Baron Hernandez in the archives of Simancas<sup>61</sup>.

#### SAŽETAK

*Reiner Solenander (1524.–1601.) bio je liječnik rođen u Vojvodstvu Klevea, koji se školovao na Sveučilištu u Lewenu i na različitim sveučilištima u Italiji i Francuskoj. Po povratku kući postaje dvorski liječnik Wilhelm V. a kasnije njegov sin Johann Wilhelm. U ovom se članku raspravlja o njegovu život i djelu. Detaljno je raspravljeno izvješće o smrti Andrije Vezala (1514.–1564.), kojega je napisao Solenander u svibnju 1566., godinu i sedam mjeseci nakon smrti Vezala. Zbog važnosti tog dokumenta priređen je faksimil njenog prvog objavljivanja, zajedno s transkriptom i prijevodom. On ukazuje na to da Vezal nije umro u brodolomu.*

**Ključne riječi:** Solenander; Mercator; Vezal; Zakintoš.

<sup>60</sup> 'Aus Stadt und Herzogtum Cleve gebürtige Studenten auf der Universität Padua im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert' in *Niederrheinischer Geschichts- und Altertumsfreund*, No. 8 of 1904 (Doppelblatt 62/63), based on the 68th volume (1899) of the "Annalen des histor. Vereins für die Niederrhein. II. Matricula Artistarum"; see <<http://forum.ahnenforschung.net>>

<sup>61</sup> José BARON FERNANDEZ. Andrés Vesalio: su vida y su obra, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto "Arnaldo de Villanova", 1970, 8°, XIX-312 pp., ill.; see pp. 243-245 and apéndice xi. Baron, however, had already reported this finding in a nota previa, with a copy of the letter in question, in his 'Nuevas aportaciones acerca de Vesalio' in *Archivo Iberoamericano de Historia de la Medicina y Antropología Medica*, 1962, 14: 207214, ill. and gave a paper on the matter at the International Congress for the History of Medicine in Basel (7-11 September 1964) as 'Le pèlerinage d'André Vésale. Nouveaux documents', published in R. BLASER, H. BUESS (ed.), *Aktuelle Probleme aus der Geschichte der Medizin. Verhandlungen des XIX. Internationalen Kongresses für Geschichte der Medizin - Current Problems in History of Medicine. Proceedings of the XIXth International Congress for the History of Medicine*, Basel, 7.-11. September 1964, *Comptes rendus du XIXe congrès international d'histoire de la médecine*, Basel - New York: S. Karger, 1966, pp. 63-66, likewise with copies of the documents that had been found.