An important aspect of human anatomies published between 1627 and 1778 is the growing interest in function as well as structure. This period of anatomical illustration set in motion trends that continued through the modern period: 1) an emphasis on specific sections or divisions of the human body, 2) greater detail, and 3) a growing interest in the purpose as well as the structure of organs. The beginnings of physiology also fall into this period.

While Vesalian drawings such as those in Gibson’s Anatomy of Humane Bodies Epitomized continue to be used, one finds new, highly detailed drawings such as those in Thomas Willis’s Practice of Physick, seemingly a result of new thinking and new standards of art as well as the predominance of copper plate engraving over traditional wood cut reliefs.