Thomas Gibson was born in England, but little is known of his early family life. He attended Leiden University where he received his medical degree in 1675. He was appointed physician-general to the British Army in 1719. His second wife, Anne, was the granddaughter of Oliver Cromwell.

The Anatomy of Humane Bodies Epitomized is of no great importance in its own right, as it does not contain much in the way of new anatomical findings. Gibson relied heavily on the works of other anatomists such as Alexander Read, Thomas Bartholin, Francis Glisson, William Harvey, and Marcello Malpighi, to name but a few. However, it is illustrative of the continued impact of Vesalius’s anatomical drawings which were used throughout Gibson’s book.

The Anatomy of Human Bodies Epitomized was published in eight editions, with each new edition being slightly improved and expanded. Gibson based his extensive text on Alexander Read’s Manuall of Anatomy (1634). However, as the content was extensively revised and supplemented, Gibson claimed authorship. He did list his principal sources—27 anatomists were credited with text drawn from 33 titles—which was an uncommon practice at the time.

The plate on display shows the base of the human brain and the cranial nerves.