Mondino De’ Luzzi

The name Mondino was probably an endearing form of Raimondo. The Luzzi family was prominent in Florence, but Mondino’s father, Nerino Frazoli de’ Luzzi, and his uncle, Liuccio, had moved to Bologna by 1270, where Mondino was born about 1275. Little is known of his youth, but since his father was an apothecary and his uncle, who made him his heir, taught medicine, it seems probable that he early became interested in the subject of medicine. Mondino attended the University of Bologna, where he studied under Alderotti (Thaddeus of Florence), and received his doctorate in 1300. He probably joined the faculty of the college of medicine and philosophy shortly after his graduation, but the earliest inscription of his name that has been found there is 1321.

Mondino’s chief work is his compendium of anatomy, Anatomia Mundini, completed in 1316, which made him, in Castiglione’s words, “the first outstanding anatomist worthy of the name.” Mondino’s book dominated anatomy for over two hundred years. The major reason for Mondino’s great popularity was the simplicity, conciseness, and systematic arrangement of his book, which is divided into six parts: (1) an introduction to the whole body and a discussion of authorities; (2) the natural members including the liver, spleen, and other organs in the abdominal cavity; (3) the generative members; (4) the spiritual members, the heart, lungs, trachea, esophagus, and other organs of the thoracic cavity up to the mouth; (5) the animal members of the skull, brain, eyes, ears; and (6) the peripheral parts, bones, spinal column, extremities. This organization was not the result of any philosophical approach to the subject but rather derived from the necessity of dissecting the most perishable organs first.

There is some scholarly discussion over whether Mondino dissected human cadavers himself, even though he spoke of a female cadaver that he anatomized in January 1316, who had a womb “double as big as her.” George Sarton and Charles Singer felt that Mondino must have done his own dissection, but Moritz Roth was convinced that he utilized a dissector to perform the manual operations. Regardless of what Mondino himself did, it seems likely from the way in which his book was written that he intended it to be read aloud while others were doing the actual dissection. For example, in describing the chest, Mondino stated, “After the muscle, the bones.

Now the bones of the chest are many and are not continuous in order that it may be expanded and contracted, since it has to be ever in motion.... The bones are of two kinds, namely the ribs and the bones of the thorax....”

Illustrations from the last part of the fourteenth century usually indicate a professor on an elevated platform reading from a book (probably that of Mondino), while an ostensore points to the part and a dissector, a barber or surgeon, performs the actual manual operation. Guy de Chauliac described the same sort of method in his Chirurgia when he talked about his master Bertruce, a student of Mondino. The subjects for Mondino’s dissections were apparently criminals, since he stated that anatomization begins by placing the body of “one who has died from beheading or hanging” in a supine position.
Mondino was not a particularly accurate observer of the actual results of his anatomies, perhaps because his purpose was not so much to enlarge knowledge through dissection as to memorize the works of the Arabic authorities. His book added very little to knowledge and instead repeated many old errors, thereby giving them new currency. He described the five-lobed liver (derived from dog anatomy), although he did say these were not always separate in man. Mondino reported black bile as coming from the spleen and being conducted to the stomach by a vein; his description of the heart was crude and also erroneous as was most of his physiology, which was that of Galen modified by Aristotelian or pseudo-Aristotelian notions. Surprisingly, his descriptions of the bones, muscles, nerves, veins, and arteries were also very inadequate, perhaps because physicians held that medicine should be concerned primarily with curing internal afflictions; consequently they gave their greatest attention to the viscera. Even though he performed anatomies on at least two women, his female anatomy seems to have been based almost entirely upon either that of animals or the erroneous notions of his predecessors; he described the womb as having seven chambers. He did give an interesting account of the sexual organs and tried to establish analogies between the male and female organs. He was also at some pains to emphasize the differences between the anatomy of the pig (as in Copho’s Anatomia porci) and that of human beings.

Although Mondino regarded Galen as an almost infallible authority, he made errors that Galen did not. The trouble may have been that Mondino relied upon an abbreviated Latin translation of the De juvanmentis membrorum, an incomplete Arabic version of the first nine books (of a total of seventeen) of Galen’s De usu partium. This mixture of Arabic and Greek sources also helped create the confusion in terminology evident in Mondino’s work. The sacrum, for example, is variously identified as alchatim, allanis, and alhavius. The pubic bone is called os femoris and pecten. On the other hand the same terms are used for different parts; pomum granatum can refer to either the thyroid cartilage or the xiphoid process, and anchae can mean the hips in general, the pelvic skeleton, the acetabulum, or the corpora quadrigemina of the brain. Much of Mondino’s difficulty over terms was caused by the lack of standardization of anatomical nomenclature. Mondino himself seems to have introduced the words “matrix” and “mesentery” into anatomy.

In spite of the above criticism, Mondino should be regarded as the restorer of anatomy if only because his popular textbook and his experimental teaching were instrumental in preparing the revival of the subject. His text was the first book written on anatomy during the Middle Ages that was based on the dissection of the human cadaver; his efforts consolidated anatomy as a part of the medical program at Bologna and encouraged further study. His book also dominated the teaching of anatomy, and no real improvements were made upon it until 1521, when Berengario da Carpi wrote his famous commentary on Mondino.

Although he is best known for his Anatomia, Mondino wrote at least nine consilia dealing with such ailments as catarrh, fevers, stone, melancholic humors, and so forth. He also wrote a number of commentaries on the collection of classical writings known as the Ars medicinae including Super libro prognosticorum Hippocratis, Super Hippocratis de regimine acutorum, Atmotata in Galeni de morbo et accidenti, and perhaps others. His commentary Lectura super primo, secundo et quarto de juvamentis is on part of Galen’s De usu partium. Another commentary on the. Canones of Mesue the Younger includes material from his Anatomia.; Mondino also wrote treatises on weights and measures, human viscera, prescriptions and drugs, medical practice, and fevers.

NOTES


2. Sarton, Introduction to the History of Science, III, 1, 842.


**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

The first printed edition of the *Anatomia* appeared at Padua in 1476. Other editions in Latin appeared at Pavia, Bologna, Leipzig, Venice, Strasbourg, Paris, Milan, Geneva, Rostock, Lyons, and Marburg. All told there are approximately forty printed editions in Latin and other languages. Only a few of the editions include woodcuts or illustrations, but one or more appear in the Leipzig (1493), Venice (1494), Strasbourg (1513), Rostock (1514), Bologna (1521), and Marburg (1541) editions. A modern facsimile of the 1478 Pavia edition was edited by Ernest Wickersheimer, *Anatomies de Mondino dei Luzzi et de Guido de Vigevano* (Paris, 1926).

There were at least two early French translations, one by Richard Roussat (Paris, 1532), and another by an unknown translator (Paris, 1541). This last was erroneously labeled as the first French translation by LeRoy Crummer, who discovered it and published several interesting woodcuts from it. See Crummer, “La premiere traduction francaise de l’ Anatomia de Mondini,” in *Aesetdape*, 20 (1930), 204 207. An Italian translation by Sebastian M. Romano was included in Joannes Ketham, *Fasciculo di medicina* (1493), and this was translated into English by Charles Singer in the reprinting of *Fasciculo di medicina* (Florence, 1924 and 1925). Another fifteenth-century Italian translation, with a photographic reproduction of a fourteenth-century MS of the *Anatomia*, was printed in Lino Sighinolfi, ed., *Mondino de Liucci Anatomia, Riprodota da un Codice Bolognese del secolo XIV* : volgarizzata nel secolo XV (Bologna, 1930).

Seven of Mondino’s *consilia* were printed by Balduin Vonderlage in his dissertation, *Consilien des Mondino dei Luzzi aus Bologna* (Leipzig, 1922). Mondino’s commentary on the *Canones* of Mesue, *Messuë cum expositione Mondini super canones universales*, was printed at Venice in 1490, 1495, 1497, 1570, 1638, and Lyons in 1525. The following works have not been printed: *Practica de accident thus marborum secundum Magistrum Mundinum de Luciius de Bononis; Tractatus de ponderibus secundum Magistrum Mundinum; De visceribus humani corporis; Super libro prognosticorum Hippocratis; Mundinus super Hippocratis de regimine acutorum; Atnotata in Galeni de morbo et accidente; Super libro prognosticorum Hippocratis; Mundinus super Hippocratis de regimine acutorum; Annotata in Galeni de morbo et accidente; Super libra de pulsibus;Tractatus de dosis medicinae; De medicinis simplicibus; Practicae medicinae libri X; Consilium medicinalia; Consilium ad retentiouem menstruorum, and De accidentibus februm.


Vern L. Bullough

Fonte: [http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Mondino_de_Luzzi.aspx](http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Mondino_de_Luzzi.aspx)