
Outsourcing in anatomical visualization. Atlas production and the politics of visual cultures in early 20th century Vienna. Outsourcing biomedicine (Birgit Nemec, Lukas Rieppel, Sophia Roosth, Hallam Stevens)

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Abstract

Session: Outsourcing biomedicine (Birgit Nemec, Lukas Rieppel, Sophia Roosth, Hallam Stevens)

When Julius Tandler in 1910 took over the First Anatomical Chair in Vienna he was asked by a renowned publishing house in Leipzig, CW Vogel, if he would be interested in editing his own anatomy textbook. The project promised to be prestigious. The publishing industry was still living well from the prosperous decades of the late 19th century, when it boosted the rise of the Viennese medical university to a leading place for medical education and research worldwide. Tandler and his publisher agreed on content and material aspects of the volumes; the crucial work of image production, however, was finally outsourced to an academic artist who Tandler insisted on. Neither Tandler, a powerful social-democrat politician, nor Vogel or the financially stricken artist Carl Hajek could know the project would take them almost three decades to finish, marked by ongoing negotiations and disappointments on all sides.

In my talk I will examine practices of outsourcing in anatomical atlas production. How were preparations and sketches transformed into working models and final images? What epistemic processes are linked to the single working steps? How could the artist's work be directed in order to meet an anatomist's assumptions about the normal human body, health and society on the one hand, and publisher's aesthetic and financial expectations on the other hand? And finally, what role did outsourcing play in transformations of knowledge, political, social and symbolic orders, related to anatomical image production in early 20th century? I will compare the case of Tandler's project to the second important atlas in Vienna, the Toldt/Hochstetter, and to a Heidelberg based book, the Merkel/Kallius. This allows us to take a closer look at how urban structures, local milieus and their international networks influenced (standards of) outsourcing in anatomical atlas production.

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