



## Background story of the cover picture

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The cover image shows the anatomy lesson of Dr. Frederick Ruysch (1638–1731), one of the pioneers in disclosing the anatomy of the lymphatic system. The painting was made by Adriaen Backer in 1670 in Amsterdam, depicting Ruysch (third from the left) during an anatomical demonstration of the inguinal lymph nodes. He was the first to show these nodes and also the valves in the lymphatic vessels. Ruysch is surrounded by surgeon-governors of the Amsterdam Surgical Guild, who had commissioned the artist to make this painting of themselves as a group portrait, while attending the anatomy lesson. The corpse was of a criminal who was sentenced to death and after the execution, was handed over to the surgeons for this anatomy lesson. Frederick Ruysch was a famous Dutch, 17<sup>th</sup> century physician and anatomist who was appointed by the city council to teach anatomy to the members of the Surgical Guild. Ruysch was internationally renowned for his great anatomical skills and his innovative techniques to preserve anatomical specimens. With his work on visualization of the lymphatic system, he contributed to the early history of ‘lymphatic anatomy’.

The painting (canvas 168×244 cm) is exhibited in the Amsterdam Museum in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

For further reading, see: IJpma FF, van Gulik TM. “Anatomy lesson of Frederik Ruysch” of 1670: a tribute to Ruysch’s contributions to lymphatic anatomy. *World J Surg* 2013;37:1996-2001.

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