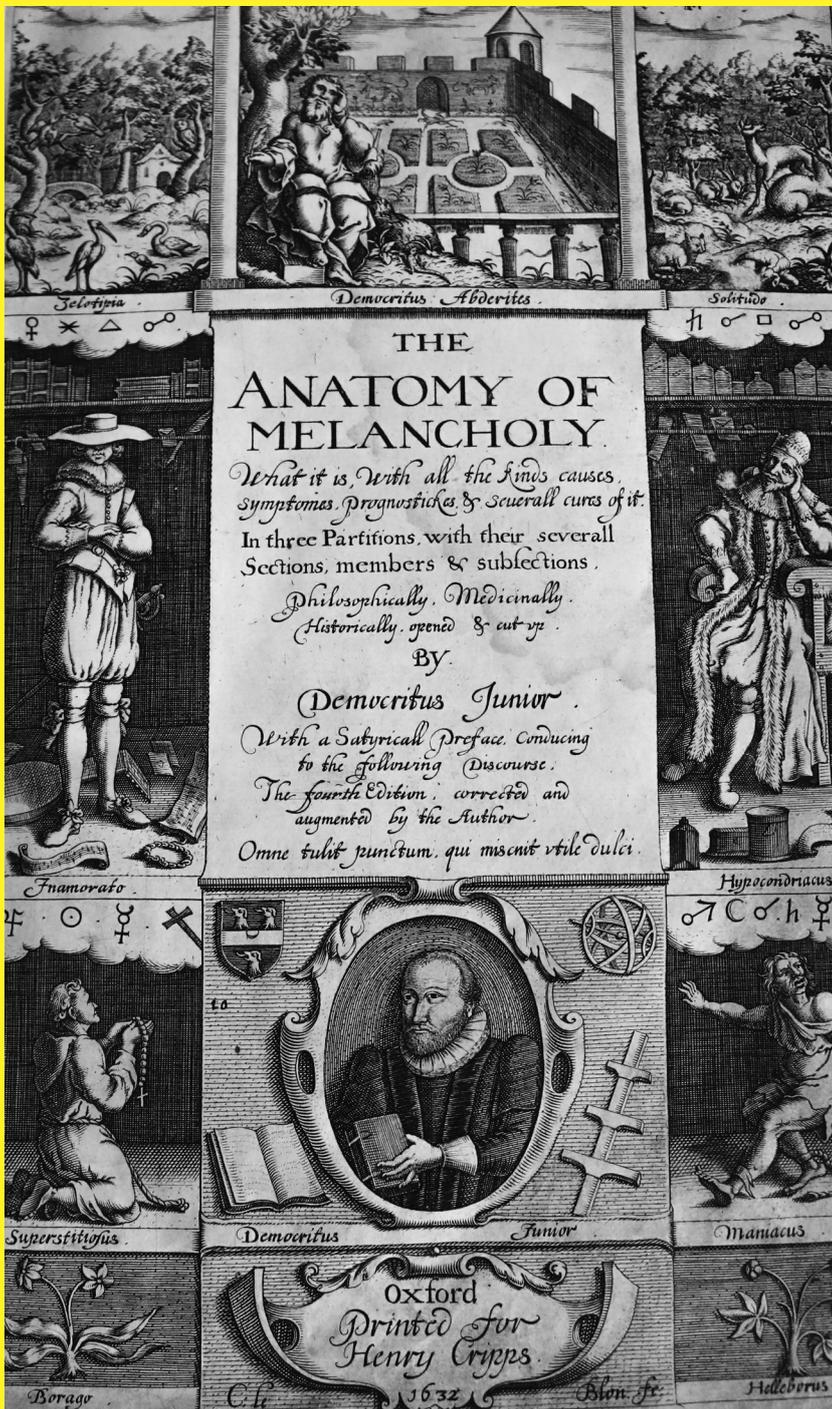


BJPpsych

The British Journal of Psychiatry



The BJPpsych: from asylum to psychiatry by dint of mental science

Malhi

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Cover picture

Anatomy of Melancholy

This image is the frontispiece of the second edition of Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Burton was a clergyman and Fellow of the university of Oxford. He suffered from 'melancholy' and wrote the book to occupy his troubled mind; "this I aimed at ... to ease my mind by writing; for I had graviddum cor, foctum caput [a heavy heart, a full head]." The *Anatomy* is a fascinating volume covering the nature of melancholy, its symptoms and possible cures.

Originally published in 1621 the *Anatomy* quickly became popular and this greatly expanded edition was published in 1632. The RCPsych Library has copies of the original 1621 edition, this 1632 edition, and two others from 1859 and 1904.

The first edition is an octavo, this means the page was folded to create eight leaves (16 pages) making it the closest size to a modern novel. But the *Anatomy*'s popularity meant the new edition was published as a quarto, doubling it in size and making it a more expensive volume, similar to a modern coffee table book. It was also given the decorative frontispiece we see on our *BJPsych* cover.

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Text by Fiona Watson

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