

Comment

Early Obstetric Atlas

The *Obstetric Tables* by George Spratt was published in many editions in both Great Britain and the USA

This fascinating early obstetric atlas is remarkable in that some of the illustrations incorporate lift up sections or flaps

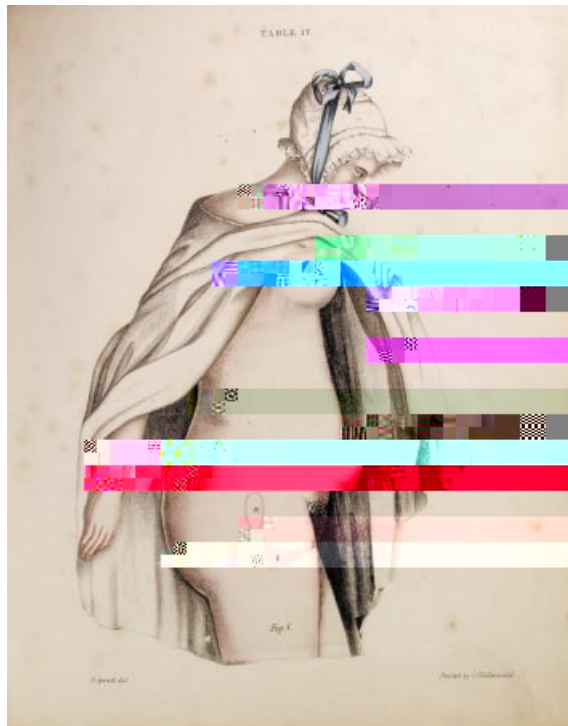


Figure 1 The flaps unopened

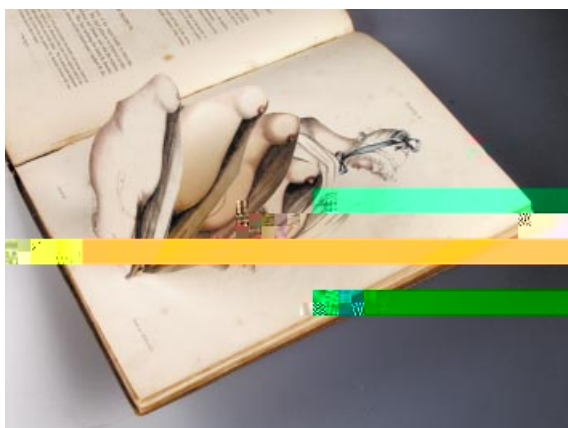


Figure 2 Depiction of the flap technique used by Spratt to represent the stages of gestation

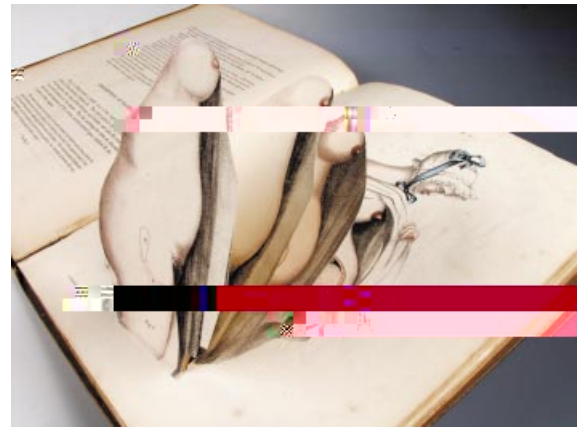


Figure 3 Detail of the flap technique

or what we now know as pop up books. Many of the illustrations in Spratt's volumes have been found in earlier obstetric texts. George Spratt used these illustrations with the enhancement of the addition or superimposition of layers of paper.

The first medical text to use these movable pieces of paper was *Tabulae sex* by anatomist Vesalius in 1543. The technique has since been used by many other disciplines.

Little is known of the author George Spratt although he is listed on the title page of the book as being a Surgeon Accoucheur. The books are dedicated to Sir Charles Mansfield Clarke Bart, Physician to the Queen. An extensive list of subscribers to the volumes is also included.

The Rare Book Collection of the Frank Forster Library is fortunate to have in its collection both this second edition (1791) and the third edition (1801) of Spratt's *Obstetric Tables*.

Fay BOYER
Librarian
 Frank Forster Library, RANZCOG

References

Spratt G. *Obstetric Tables: Comprising Graphic Illustrations, with Descriptions and Practical Remarks, Exhibiting on Dissected Plates Many Important Subjects in Midwifery*. 2nd edn. London: John Churchill; 1791.

Maygrier JP. *Nouvelles demonstrations d'accouchemens avec des planches en taille douce accompagnées d'un texte raisonne propre a en faciliter l'explication*. 4to in folio. Paris: Bechet; 1771.

Pena AC. Those marvelous movable books. www.inq.net/lif, apr 2007. <http://www.inq.net/lif>. Accessed 11/11/07.