

practice of these surgeons, or indeed the prevailing diseases they encountered and treatments they employed, will be disappointed. This book is less a history of disease than an examination of the professional progress of the surgeons and the administrative arrangements of the VOC's medical department. Bruijn examined a sample of three thousand surgeons (roughly one quarter of the total employed by the VOC over its two centuries of existence) taken from the financial books kept by each vessel to enable the company to keep track of all crew members' rank and pay. These records were used to create an extensive database, and the identified surgeons then pursued through other government and VOC records principally held in Amsterdam and Jakarta. Through this painstaking work, Bruijn has been able to establish a comprehensive portrait of the typical VOC surgeon; his education, geographic origin, social status, period of service with the Company, subsequent career trajectory, wealth, and (miserable) life expectancy within the service.

These findings allow Bruijn to ask and answer some important questions about the motivations of those men who served with the Company, including their likely reasons for joining up and the wealth they could expect to accumulate. In direct contrast to the aforementioned 'black legend', Bruijn establishes that VOC surgeons were well educated, and more likely to join in times of financial security than out of desperation or necessity. Her important claims that the VOC developed a professionalised 'fully fledged maritime medical service' and that, in Batavia, the company established a centralised health service with modern hospitals are well supported, if not representative of developments as unique as she maintains. Her findings respecting the development of modern hospitals adds further weight to the growing evidence that hospital medicine originated on colonial and military ventures.

Ship's Surgeons is a valuable resource for historians of maritime medicine, and provides

a much needed fresh perspective on a field which has, to date, been dominated by investigation of the British experience.

Catherine Kelly,

Wellcome Unit for the History of
Medicine, Oxford

A.W. Bates, *The Anatomy of Robert Knox: Murder, Mad Science and Medical Regulation in Nineteenth-Century Edinburgh* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), pp. x + 228, £39.95, hardback, ISBN: 978-1-84519-381-2.

As in all other re-runs of Knox's troubled life, this book relies, in large part, upon Henry Lonsdale's 1870 biography. It is a pity, therefore, that one has to go to the secondary source bibliography to get its full title. However, in a way, Lonsdale has had the last laugh, albeit posthumously. Bates refers to a judgement by John Struther that *A Sketch of the Life and Writings of Robert Knox, The Anatomist* was 'reliable as to facts' (p. 9), thereby capturing the most likely critical judgement of this book by historians of medicine.

Struther, another anatomist, like Knox and Lonsdale, made his comment on a postcard now in the archives of the Royal College of Physicians of London. Although this and other manuscript material are footnoted in abbreviated form, the primary source bibliography is restricted to printed works only. This leads to difficulties for any reader wishing to follow up manuscript references. For example, census information about Knox's household is referenced as 'GROS 1841...' (p. 193) but this acronym (General Register Office for Scotland) does not appear in the list of abbreviation for archives in the bibliography. Other references are inconsistent (GU and GUL for Glasgow University Library).

Small matters one might contend; however, they are symptomatic of a fairly widespread disregard for post-1970

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historiography of the history of medicine. Reading Bates on Knox, we do not know how scholars have characterised: medical culture in nineteenth-century Edinburgh, Paris and London; the market driven exigencies of city-based medical careers; the position of anatomy in the medical curriculum; the role of Royal Colleges in professionalising medicine; the relationship between medicine and science, etc. We know something about the background to transcendental anatomy and the arrangements for bodies following the Anatomy Act, but probably not enough. These are important omissions for a book that professes to deal primarily with Knox's professional life and to 'set his work as a scientist and teacher in context' (p. 10). Without such historiographic engagement, all we are really left with are judgements about anatomists by anatomists, past and present. This phenomenon may well interest future historians of modern medicine but the absence of a historiographic perspective, combined with the well-known insufficiency of primary sources to shed new light upon Knox's life, career and writings, make it unlikely that this book will ever replace Lonsdale's.

The last chapter, 'Science Run Mad', discusses fictional representations of Knox in novels and on film from the 1830s to the early 1960s. This contains interesting material, but the author's treatment falls well short of the book's promising sub-title. We are told that representations of 'Knox the villain' continue to characterise public perceptions of anatomy (p. 161) and that there is still a 'chasm' today between professional and lay people in this respect (p. 173). The so-called chasm is actually far greater than the author imagines. As presented by him, it is an unbridgeable one between fact and myth, science and society, nature and culture. However, it is also entirely of his own making; and nowhere more so when Bates states that he has 'particularly avoided any speculation on whether Knox knew or believed the

bodies he purchased were those of murder victims' (p. 10).

Michael Barfoot,

Lothian Health Services Archive,
Edinburgh University Library

Heather Wolfram, *The Stepchildren of Science: Psychological Research and Parapsychology in Germany, c.1870–1939*, Wellcome Series in the History of Medicine/*Clio Medica* 88, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), pp. v + 342, €70.00/\$109.00, hardback, ISBN: 978-90-420-2728-2.

Whereas in France, the UK and the US a number of influential studies have been published over the past thirty years which analyse the emergence and impact of occult movements, spiritualism and parapsychology in western societies, these topics have received less scholarly attention in Germany. Until recently, the history of psychical research – although widely conducted in Germany during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – had remained largely neglected. Heather Wolfram's groundbreaking study, in which she investigates the emergence and decline of psychical studies from the *Kaiserreich* to the beginning of the Second World War, attempts to fill this research gap. Her analysis incorporates a wide range of sources, including theoretical writings, experimental protocols, correspondence, court records and photographs that had long remained untouched and shelved away in German archives.

The Stepchildren of Science embarks on an exploration into the history of psychical research that became known as parapsychology from the 1920s onwards in six illuminating chapters. The author's objective is to examine the development of parapsychological endeavours embedded within a larger socio-cultural, political and scientific context. In contrast to earlier works by the historians of science Matthew Brower, Sofie Lachapelle and Alison Winter, in which