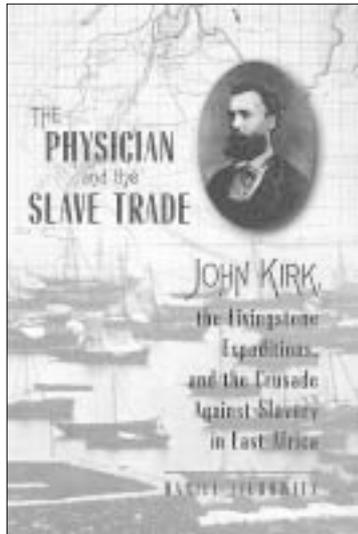


## NEW TITLES\*



W H Freeman and Co: New York; 1999.  
ISBN 0716730987

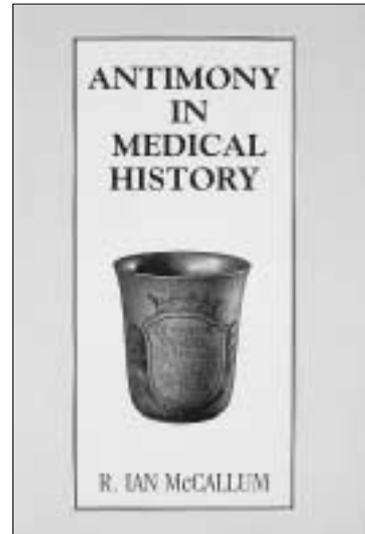
The name of Dr David Livingstone will always be associated with African exploration, opening up the 'Dark Continent' to the Christian gospel (often at great cost to him and his followers) and with a lifelong commitment to the abolition of slavery.

How many of us have heard of John Kirk, the Edinburgh medical graduate who accompanied him for years, who had to live and work through Livingstone's manic depressive mood swings, and who probably did much more than Livingstone or anyone else to eradicate slavery there?

This fascinating book, written by a physician, recounts how Kirk tolerated the famous explorer idolised by the British public in his lifetime even when he witnessed at first hand his arrogance, the deliberate lying about his achievements and his self-opinionisation. Kirk's fascination with Africa and its peoples, together with his detestation of slavery, then took him to Zanzibar, initially as a junior Foreign Office official. He proved himself to be a gifted linguist, a botanist, and an outstanding diplomat at a time when the Belgian king, Germany, Portugal and his own country were all dividing up Africa. If all that was not enough he had to contend with Henry Stanley and his megalomania.

Those who both knew him and Livingstone described Kirk as the greatest man of his age, a description most readers will agree with when they read this well-written, disturbing, but clinically fascinating book. Perhaps like the reviewer they will wonder why they have not heard of him before.

Dr Derek Doyle

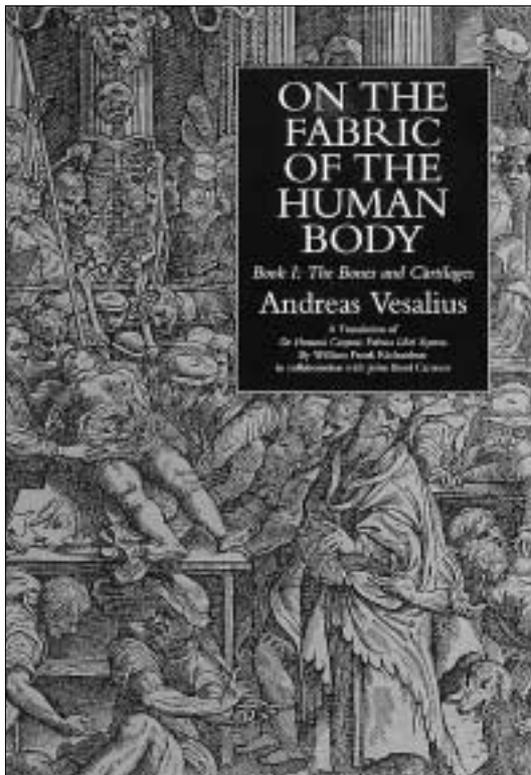


Pentland: Edinburgh; 1999.  
ISBN 1858216427

This is a fascinating book. In the short space of 100 pages, the author describes the intriguing story of the use of antimony from ancient times to the present day. Antimony (anti monie means against monks) was also known as monksbane (or poison to monks). It is a brittle metal of bright bluish-white colour and flaking crystalline structure. Known to the Sumerians in the third century BC it was of great importance to the alchemists and the gnostics as it was used to separate the two precious metals, silver and gold. At a later stage it was used as an alternative to venesection to produce vomiting and diarrhoea. Eventually it was found to be such a vicious poison that it had to be regulated by the Parliament at Paris. In 1611 the President and Censors of the College of Physicians at London condemned, as dangerous to life, any medicine that contained antimony as one of its ingredients. Nevertheless its use persisted into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the form of Tartar Emetic. Edward Jenner used it as a salve for mental illness and Jonathan Hutchison employed it in the treatment of lichen planus in the 1890s. Trivalent and pentavalent antimonials were also used in the treatment of trypanosomiasis and leishmaniasis.

Professor McCallum has had 50 years of experience as an advisor to the antimony industry as is demonstrated by this scholarly monograph. It is well written and profusely illustrated. It also has a table of antimony compounds, appropriate references and a useful index. It is an excellent source book. Any physician (or scientist) interested in medical history, occupational medicine, the heavy metals or poisoning should have this volume on their shelves. I was reluctant to return my review copy to the College. I have since bought a replacement!

Professor M Lee



Norman Publishing: San Francisco; 1998.  
ISBN 0930405730

This represents the first of a limited edition of four volumes that provides for the first time in English a full translation of the text of Vesalius's *De Humani Corporis Fabrica Libri Septem*. The full text comprised a total of seven Books. We are informed that Book I alone comprised approximately one-quarter of the roughly 400,000 words that make up the entire *Fabrica*.

Most readers will be familiar with many of Vesalius's illustrations. These are undoubtedly the most famous anatomical illustrations ever published, and must have been earth-shattering when they first appeared. Only the best artists were employed to illustrate the *Fabrica*, and while none of these individuals have been identified, they are said to have emanated from the workshop of Titian. The *Fabrica* heralded a new era of scientific thought, because for the first time an author felt confident enough to question the authority of Galen. It was an encyclopaedic tome, but written in Latin and thus accessible to an international audience of learned men of all disciplines. While many contemporary readers will marvel at the quality and artistry of Vesalius's engravings, few will have had the opportunity of handling a first edition of the *Fabrica*, or even one of the many subsequent editions. Readers who have only seen copies of the Plates, even associated with an accurate translation of the legends<sup>1</sup>, will, I strongly suspect, be staggered at the immensity of the original tome. Only by handling one of these editions is it possible to appreciate the scholarship involved in its preparation. It is even more staggering to learn that the author was only 29 years old when the *Fabrica* first appeared in 1543.

While only a few specialist medical libraries will be able to afford this set, I suspect that there are likely to be far fewer Latin scholars with a sufficient knowledge of

anatomy, or anatomists with a sound knowledge of Medieval Latin, who would be able to criticise the English translation presented here. I was extremely surprised to note that the publishers decided to reproduce all of the illustrations from a facsimile copy of the 1543 edition. As first editions in excellent condition are not that uncommonly encountered, particularly in the United States, it would surely have justified the additional expense involved in taking apart and rebinding one of these copies, many of which have in any case had to be rebound over the years. This has certainly been done in the past when expensive facsimile copies of original artwork have been reproduced, so why has this not been done here for what must have been a no expenses spared exercise? If I could afford to pay in the region of \$5,000 for the full *de luxe* set of these volumes, hand bound in Nigerian goat skin, I would have preferred to spend a little more on an original copy of one of the later editions of the *Fabrica*.<sup>2</sup> Had I limitless funds, I would have put in a bid to Christie's New York<sup>3</sup> when they sold the only known contemporary fully coloured copy of the first edition of the *Fabrica*. Vesalius presented this copy to the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, in the autumn of 1543. An absolute bargain at only \$1,652,500. This series nevertheless represents a major work of scholarship from two leading authorities in their field, and will undoubtedly be the definitive work on the subject in English.

Professor M Kaufman

<sup>1</sup> Saunders JbdeC, O'Malley D. *The Anatomical Drawings of Andreas Vesalius*. New York: Bonanza Books; 1982.

<sup>2</sup> McGrath AF. *Bookman's Price Index. A guide to the values of rare and other out of print books*. Detroit: Gale; 1996. A rebound 1568 fourth edition of the *Fabrica* in good condition sold in 1996 for £4,750 (p. 685). Another copy of the 1568 fourth edition was sold at Christie's, South Kensington, in 1995 for £1,400, and a 1555 Folio copy sold at Sotheby's in 1996 for £7,800. On average one or two copies of the *Fabrica* are sold each year.

<sup>3</sup> The sale of the Haskell F Norman Library of Science and Medicine, Part I, Wednesday 18 March 1998. For further details, see Christie's New York Sale Catalogue.

#### \*NEW BOOK FEATURE

Readers of the *Proceedings* will know that the journal underwent major changes during 1999. In keeping with these improvements, *Proceedings* will be devoting more attention to new and recently-published titles. The 'Book of the Quarter' section has now been replaced by a new feature: 'New Titles'. This section will contain reviews of a number of books, covering a wide range of topics, each quarter. These reviews will be more succinct than the more expansive 'Book of the Quarter'.