Durch ein innovatives Forschungskonzept und den Zugang zu sehr umfangreichem Quellenmaterial ist es der Autorin gelungen, bedeutende Perspektivenverschiebungen zur deutschen Psychiatrie- und Zeitgeschichte anzustossen. Ihre Arbeit ist daher insbesondere für alle Wissenschafts- und AlltagshistorikerInnen richtungsweisend, die in diesen Bereichen forschen.

Judith Kälin, Forschungsstelle für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte,
Universität Zürich (CH)

Decamp, Eleanor Sian: **Civic and Medical Worlds in Early Modern England**. Performing Barbery and Surgery. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. XII+277 p. (Early modern literature in history). \$ 95.–. ISBN 978-1-137-47155-0 (e-book: 978-1-137-47156-7)

The various meanings of facial hair and barbering have provided rich pickings for historians in recent years, with works by Will Fisher and Mark Albert Johnston exploring the contexts in which beards have been understood in literature, and their symbolic power within tropes of masculinity. Eleanor Decamp's *Civic and Medical Worlds in Early Modern England* adds a new dimension to this area with a fascinating exploration of the semiotics, practices and performance of barbering in the 16th and 17th centuries. Drawing on an impressive range of source material, including early-modern texts, plays and images, and even instruments recovered from the wreck of the *Mary Rose*, it surveys the landscape of representations of barbers and surgeons.

The book is arranged thematically, each chapter exploring a different facet of barbering, including material culture, shop space and tools, constructions of the barber, and the performative nature of their tasks in literature, as well as the soundscape and experience of the barbershop as described in popular culture. Decamp's launch point is the onomastic complexity of barber terminology which, she argues, literary historians in particular have been slow to appreciate. In her introduction, Decamp suggests that, although the boundaries between types of practitioners have been eroded in medical historiography, early modern audiences understood distinct differences between barbers, barber surgeons and even barber-surgeons (hyphenated), each of whom had their own distinct identities and meanings.

Chapter one, for example, explores the material culture of the barbershop through a study of its tools and practices and argues that the cultural identity of barbers and surgeons was embedded within both. Here barbering was a performance (both conceptually and literally, within theatrical performance), set within the scene of the shop, with the highly visible and recognizable tools as props. As Decamp suggests, barbers, unlike surgeons, occupied an identifiable workspace, rendering them useful as stereotypes.

The place of the barber as “the orchestrator of false appearances” and identity shaping is explored in chapter two, along with the vexed issue of the barber's social status in theatrical performance, whilst the third chapter studies the “linguistically complex and thematically composite semiotics” of depictions of barbers and sur-

geons, and their premises, in Shakespeare's *King Lear* and *Titus Andronicus*. Despite not being included amongst the *dramatis personae*, it is argued, the audience would understand not only the richness of the allusion to the practitioners, but also the division of practice between them.

Turning to the sensual experience of the early modern barbershop, Decamp examines the "sound-marked, cultural site of acoustic performance and practice" of the shop, and the close association with certain "sites" of the body, including ears and teeth. The "snip-snap" of the scissors, the notorious chattiness of the barber and even the clicks and snaps of their fingers are brought vividly to life. But, echoing Margaret Pelling's landmark works on early modern barber surgeons, the chapter also highlights the importance of barbershops as social spaces, where music was a constant component of the soundscape.

The strong literary methodology and focus of the book, however, may well give medical historians some cause for argument. Despite its title, the book is largely London-centric, and this causes problems in terms of its broader application. It is very doubtful, for example, whether the distinctions between barbers and barber surgeons drawn here can safely be applied outside London, or indeed even outside the *London Company of Barbers and Surgeons*. Across provincial England and Wales, as recent work is amply demonstrating, medical occupational titles were not fixed, and individual barbers/barber surgeons could be described in multiple ways across different sources. Even in barber companies elsewhere in England, such as Chester, Shrewsbury and Newcastle, it is by no means clear that there were any firmly defined or fixed boundaries between barbering trades, and certainly no evidence for a distinction drawn between the barber surgeon, and the hyphenated 'barber-surgeon', as is suggested here. Apprenticeship records also reveal the lack of specificity between and within the company as to the occupational identities of masters and the career path of apprentices. Although the book acknowledges the interchangeability of barbering tasks, it may be that the literary and theatrical allusions and tropes described may not have held the same meaning for audiences outside the city.

Also, whilst the discussions of shop instruments and fittings, including signal items such as the chair, are useful, and generally well done, there is a danger in assuming that they are representative, since the examples are, by their nature, idealized. Evidence from *actual* barber shops reveals a broad spectrum of environments, fittings and equipment from small, poorly-equipped chop-shops to high-end business more in line with the imaginary barber of Randle Holme's inventory. It is indeed by no means certain that barbers even always kept a shop, as visiting wealthier customers in their own home could provide a lucrative source of income.

Despite these reservations, however, the book provides a compelling new study of the complexities and performance of early modern barbering and the panoply of meanings that could be attached not only to the individuals themselves, but to their shops, practices and tools. It will make an important and welcome contribution to both the literary and medical histories of this sometimes neglected group of practitioners.

Alun Withey, University of Exeter (GB)