The anatomy of the human body has a long history in the annals of science and medicine. An area that had long been the subject of debate prior to the mid-eighteenth century, and would continue to be, was the dissection of the human body. The practice was defended in terms of the pursuit of knowledge for the long-term benefit of the living but faced difficulties in the form of superstition and fear regarding the fate of the corpse. Historians have placed their investigations of dissection within wider beliefs about the body and the disposal of it in death to shed light upon fears over its use for anatomical study. Attention has also been given to the difficulties faced by the medical profession in obtaining cadavers and the problem of body-snatching, which reached its pinnacle in the early nineteenth century.1 Richardson’s *Death, Dissection and the Destitute* placed the anatomical corpse and popular beliefs about the dead body within an extensive study of the passing of the 1832 Anatomy Act.2 More recently, Hurren has provided a rereading of the act in order to investigate more thoroughly the trade in the dead poor in its wake.3 However, the sentencing of a murderer to the post-mortem punishment of dissection between the 1752 Murder Act and the Anatomy Act has received relatively little in-depth investigation until recently.4

Due to the medical demand for the supply of dead bodies, legislation was passed in 1505 that granted the Incorporation of Surgeons and Barbers in Edinburgh the body of one executed criminal per year. Similar provisions were made in London in 1540 to allow the newly united Companies of Barbers and Surgeons the bodies of four executed felons.

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In 1636 William Gordon of King’s College, Aberdeen, successfully petitioned the Privy Council for the bodies of two executed men or those dying in hospitals with “few friends or acquaintances that can take exception.” However, it was with the passing of the Murder Act that post-mortem dissection took a more central place in the criminal justice system. The act stated that the bodies of criminals executed anywhere in Britain other than London, where they were to be given to Surgeon’s Hall, would be given to a surgeon as directed by the judge and provided a clause to protect against attempts to reclaim the bodies. Although it provided much needed cadavers at a time of increased demand, the act was primarily intended as a punitive measure and made no explicit mention that the criminal corpses were to be used in the pursuit of medical advancement. This is further evidenced by the fact that the act also gave hanging in chains as another penal option. Its preamble pointed to the necessity for some “further terror and peculiar mark of infamy” to be added to the punishment of death. This chapter will investigate the use of post-mortem dissection and question its capacity to act as the effective punishment sought by the Murder Act.

The first half of this chapter will explore some of the various beliefs and fears surrounding the dead body in this period, particularly those over its disposal. Furthermore, it will highlight instances where criminals and their relatives were more preoccupied with the fate of their body than with the execution itself. In 1829 Sir Walter Scott commented that dissection as a punishment was certainly not without effect as “criminals have been known to shrink from that part of the sentence which seems to affect them more than the doom of death itself.” Alongside popular beliefs about the dead body and dissection we must also question those of the men within the medical profession who carried out the dissections. An interior knowledge of the human body, and practical experience of dissecting it, was deemed to be a vital part of medical education for the ultimate benefit of the living. Within this, it is evident that, for the professors of anatomy receiving the criminal corpses, and their students, the dissections were largely a means to an end in the acquisition of knowledge rather than the punitive measure sought by the Murder Act.

The second half of this chapter will explore the conjunction between medicine and punishment, and the preservation of life with the ending of it. A reading of the available university records shows that, often, criminal corpses were used as subjects for investigation and demonstration as part of courses on anatomy. Cunningham argued that, by the late
eighteenth century, the discipline had undergone several changes constituting what he called “the end of old anatomy.” Within this transition, the practice of dissection was increasingly used as a means to learn and teach about the interior workings of the body. Rather than solely serving to provide the retributive justice sought by the Murder Act, some criminal dissections, and the findings taken from them, contributed to medical knowledge more widely and offered the opportunity for original research. The final part of this chapter will provide a more in-depth study of the dissection of the infamous William Burke. His case is a fitting conclusion to the chapter as it embodied popular fears over dissection, especially heightened due to the prevalence of body-snatching at the time. However, the excitement generated by the whole case reached fever pitch by the time of Burke’s dissection and the very abhorrence felt for the practice contributed to the creation of a mass public desire to see his corpse laid out in Monro’s anatomy theatre. His dissection, perhaps more than any of the others performed in Scotland, served to add the infamy sought by the Murder Act.

**Belief, Anxiety and the Dead Body**

In questioning the capacity of dissection to act as a post-mortem punishment, it is first useful to explore contemporary beliefs and anxieties over the disposal of the dead body. Richardson argued that confusion and ambiguity concerning the definition of death meant an uncertain balance existed in the eighteenth century between solicitude and fear towards the corpse. In stipulating that the bodies of executed murderers were to be subject to post-mortem punishment the Murder Act prevented the bodies from receiving a conventional Christian burial. Sawday highlighted that in the Early Modern period, in popular belief, the denial of a Christian burial was thought to affect the deceased person’s soul, despite the fact that neither the Protestant nor Catholic religion stated that “intact burial was a prerequisite for posthumous grace.” Indeed, a central element of Protestant doctrine was that the soul was beyond earthly control. Similarly, beliefs about the importance of the body for the Resurrection were contradictory but there is little documentary evidence to suggest that people believed dissection would compromise future Resurrection. Wilf argued that popular fears of dissection were rooted more in visceral, rather than ideological, trepidation whereby the conjuring up of images of “sharpened knives and lacerated flesh” served
to centre fears upon the body rather than the soul. Between sentencing and execution, condemned Scottish criminals had up to a month to contemplate their death, and the fate of their body was evidently a cause for concern in some cases.

Following his capital conviction for murder in 1820, David Dobie shouted to the presiding judge, “my Lord it is a grand thing that you cannot dissect the soul.” However, this seeming lack of fear over the disposal of his body was far from typical among convicted criminals. Kenneth Dow Kennedy, executed in Inverness in 1750 for cattle theft, called out from the scaffold for any MacDonalds or Camerons present to take hold of his body and see it buried in the churchyard. Four came forward and he was placed in a remote corner “appointed for such malefactors.” In addition, some criminals and their relatives feared that their executed bodies would end up in the surgeon’s dissection room. Linebaugh described the dealings between criminals, scaffold authorities and the surgeons at Tyburn in the first half of the eighteenth century which often resulted in scuffles over the possession of bodies. A similar situation existed in Scotland in this period. The body of Alexander Cheyne, executed in Aberdeen in 1748 for robbery, was finally given over to his relatives after an altercation with the surgeons at the scaffold. There are other examples of executed criminal bodies being handed over to sailors to be disposed of at sea to prevent their falling into the hands of the surgeons. This was the case with James Millar’s corpse in 1753, despite the Aberdeen authorities ordering it to be buried at the foot of Gallows Hill. Following the execution of John Worthington in 1815 for robbery, his body was lowered into a coffin and carried to Kilmarnock for burial. Prior to interment his friends, “anxious to accelerate the consumption of the corpse”, had poured a quantity of vitriol on it which had caused “a fume to rise in volumes from the grave.” The motive behind this was to make the corpse an unsuitable candidate for resurrection men.

The sentencing of a criminal to post-mortem dissection was not only intended to provide a further mark of infamy to the punishment of death, as made explicit in the wording of the Murder Act, it was also intended to act as a deterrent from crime. However, again this study acknowledges that the issue of deterrence is complex. It is not the argument here that executions or post-mortem punishments served as a successful deterrent to the commission of crime. If someone was intent on committing a premeditated murder or had acted out of extreme anger,
it is unlikely that the possibility of dissection was a sufficient deterrent if the prospect of the death sentence was not. However, in stipulating this post-mortem punishment, and positing it as a means of deterrence, the authorities were clearly attempting to harness some of the contemporary anxieties of the disposal of the dead body. In the early eighteenth century, Bernard de Mandeville defended the dissection of criminals and argued that the strong aversion against the practice was based upon vulgar superstition. He added that dissection “can never be a greater scandal than hanging.” However, while it is more difficult to ascertain whether dissection was a deterrent, it is possible to argue that for some condemned murderers the prospect of dissection caused them greater apprehension than the death sentence itself. The Murder Act did not alter an act that had been passed in 1725 (11 Geo I c.26) which stipulated that executions in Scotland could not be carried out within less than 30 days if the sentence was pronounced south of the River Forth and within less than 40 days if pronounced north of the Forth. While this allowed all capitaly convicted criminals adequate time to send petitions to London, it also meant that the murderers sentenced to dissection would have had plenty of time to contemplate the fate of their body. When Robert McIntosh was convicted of murder in Aberdeen in 1822 his father travelled to London to petition for a remission of the part of the sentence that stipulated that his body would be sent for dissection. However, he returned unsuccessful the day before the scheduled execution and took leave of his son in a “truly affecting scene.” Following her capital conviction for murder in 1823 Mary McKinnon had beseeched the visitors she received in jail to see that her body was decently buried. The *Caledonian Mercury* reported that, when the part of the sentence ordering her body to be sent for dissection was read out, “she was in a state of insensibility.” It added that her attendants had “very humanely kept her ignorant of the circumstance.” This would suggest that a key part of the capacity of dissection to act as an effective punishment was the psychological torment that the prospect caused the condemned criminal.

As well as investigating how criminals viewed the punishment, it is also beneficial to question its effects upon the execution crowd more generally. John McDonald and James Williamson Black were executed in 1813 on the spot where they had robbed and murdered 73-year-old William Muirhead on the highway between Coltbridge and Corstorphine near Edinburgh. The *Scots Magazine* observed that “with the view of impressing the minds of the spectators with more awe” their
bodies remained uncovered in the cart that delivered them to Edinburgh University for dissection. Similarly, the bodies of William Gordon and Robert McIntosh were escorted to Marischal College by the constables following their execution in Aberdeen which created a spectacle that “could not fail to make a deep impression in the hearts of the thousands gathered.” The execution of James Glen in Glasgow in 1827 seemingly passed without incident, with the crowd described as maintaining the utmost order. However, when the body was lowered into a coffin to be immediately conveyed to the Professor of Anatomy at the university, the mood shifted. The driver of the cart that had delivered the body was severely beaten by a great crowd who had followed in procession from the place of execution to the university. Again, the newspapers did not, and could not, accurately report upon whether these scenes were an effective deterrent from crime. However, the fact that people followed the carts and, in the case of Glen, reacted angrily when faced with the delivery of the body for dissection, demonstrates that the punishment did prompt a negative reaction from the crowd in some instances.

The case of Patrick Ogilvie in 1765 raised the question of social class and dissection. He was a Lieutenant in the 89th Regiment of Foot and had recently returned from the East Indies to stay with his elder brother Thomas and his young wife Katherine Nairn, the niece of Lord Dunsinnan. Thomas was poisoned soon after and both Patrick and Katherine were subsequently tried and convicted for incest and murder. The case garnered great attention and debate over their guilt and the trial proceedings were among only a few sensational Scottish cases in the mid-eighteenth century to be printed in Edinburgh, Glasgow and London. Both were found guilty and sentenced to be executed and their bodies delivered to Alexander Monro on 25 September. However, Katherine successfully pled pregnancy and Patrick received four respites of his sentence. The Caledonian Mercury reported that “crimes of so black a dye, charged on persons who, until that time, had preserved unblemished characters” required the most evident proof and pointed towards the circumstantial nature of much of the evidence. However, Patrick was eventually executed on 13 November and his body delivered to Monro at the university. He was dissected over the course of three days as part of Monro’s anatomy lectures. Medical student Sylas Neville noted in his diary that, due to the great attention the case garnered, many believed “the prejudice of the people of this country would have prevented them from dissecting the body of a murderer of superior rank.”
Similarities can be drawn here with the English case of Laurence Shirley, Earl Ferrers, who was convicted of murdering his steward and following his execution his body was dissected at Surgeon’s Hall in London in 1760. His body was exposed to public view for three days before being taken for burial. When reporting upon the punishment, the *Manchester Mercury* assured its readers that “even a nobleman of the first rank could not be exempted from the fatal consequences” of murder.28

The importance of the punishment of dissection and its potential effects upon the relatives of the condemned, more so than the criminal themselves, was evident in the 1804 case of Duncan MacArthur. He was convicted of the murder of his wife before the circuit court at Inveraray but was sentenced to be executed where the body had been found, on the banks of Crinan Canal in South Knap, Argyle. He was described as having acknowledged the justice of his sentence upon the scaffold and there were no reported incidents involving the crowd. However, following the execution, his body was, by an order of the sheriff, handed over to his relatives for interment as John Anderson, the surgeon named in the court’s sentencing, declined to accept it.29 Anderson was seemingly not against dissecting the body of a criminal as he later accepted the corpse of Peter McDougall in 1807 following his execution at the common place in Inveraray.30 We can question if his refusal to accept the body was due to the fact that MacArthur was executed in the immediate vicinity of his home, in front of family and friends who might have become less acquiescent if his body had been cut down and handed over to the surgeon rather than to them. It can be argued that those within the criminal justice system understood both the symbolic and material value of dissection, and the potential effects upon both the condemned and their relatives, and thus how it could be harnessed in further punishing the criminal corpse.

**Medical Beliefs About the Dead Body**

An understanding of the human body was a cornerstone of medical education. A crucial element of the process was the study of anatomy through dissection. In the period between 1700 and 1800 historians have cited a progression from “infrequent, ritualised and moralising dissections” to those more scientifically based and morally neutral, at least on the part of those performing them.31 The Scottish universities had established the positions of Professor of Anatomy in the early eighteenth
century with Alexander Monro *primus* in Edinburgh and John Gordon in Glasgow credited with raising teaching standards within the medical schools. In this period Edinburgh University was fast becoming a renowned centre of medical instruction with Alexander Monro *primus* and subsequently his son and grandson (both also named Alexander), occupying the position of Professor of Anatomy well into the early nineteenth century. As the eighteenth century progressed, a student’s first-hand experience of dissecting a human body was believed to be crucial to their medical training. By the early nineteenth century, it was an indispensible requirement. However, Guerrini argued that the use of dissection to punish criminal bodies “intruded into the anatomy theatre.” This chapter will now turn to question how the practice of dissection was viewed by the people performing it. It will demonstrate that Scottish criminal corpses were used in the teaching of anatomy and to conduct original research, and thus the dissection of these bodies went beyond the enacting of retributive justice.

In the first lecture of his course on anatomy entitled ‘How to open a dead body’, Monro *primus* instructed the class that in this “you are to observe to do everything with the greatest decency.” His son, Monro *secundus*, echoed this sentiment and added that dissection should always be “conducted in a skilful manner.” This scene of clinical precision, decency and even respect for the body presents a stark contrast to the punitive and retributive justice intended by the Murder Act. In 1775 James Johnston, a student of Monro *secundus*, commented with apparent elation that the class were now moving on to a more accurate examination of the interior of the body having already studied the basic structure through text. He commented particularly upon the opportunity to examine the organs in “a more entertaining light...as several parts conspiring to form a machine.” To those within the medical profession the dead body was a subject for investigation or indeed a machine, the mechanics of which were to be studied as a means of advancing knowledge. In 1795 William Rowley argued that an in-depth knowledge of anatomy was vital to the successful performance of surgery to all classes of society, including His Majesty’s army and navy, as well as during childbirth. A recurring justification of the use of the dead for the benefit of the living was, and continued to be, characteristic of the arguments of those defending dissection.

Andrew Duncan, a Professor of Medicine in Edinburgh, exalted the benefits of morbid anatomy, the opening of the body to investigate the
cause of death. He detailed cases where he had opened the corpses of those who had died of certain diseases, sometimes in the presence of their relatives who had given their consent. Similarly, Risse highlighted that the Royal Edinburgh Infirmary regulations meant that autopsies could be performed upon the bodies of patients with permission from relatives and the consent of hospital managers. In terms of the medical profession and its links with the criminal justice system, there are numerous examples throughout this period where surgeons attested to the cause of death in murder cases. In many of these cases the victims’ bodies had been examined internally as well as externally. In suspected poisoning cases the stomach was subject to more detailed examination and removed from the body. Similarly, in suspected infanticide cases the infant’s lungs were removed to conduct a test to see if they would float as it was believed that this would indicate whether the child had taken a breath. There were some instances where the surgeon’s evidence was pivotal in securing a conviction. Upon the scaffold, Edward Moore claimed the surgeons had “swore his life away” after they confirmed to the court that his wife had died of a severe and deliberate beating rather than by accident as he had claimed. In these cases the inspection of the body was a necessary and useful practice and, perhaps crucially, was viewed primarily as an investigation into the cause of death through autopsy. However, dissection was distinct from autopsy and involved the cutting open of the body for examination and was both a research and a pedagogical process. Although the line between the two was not always clear, it was the practice of dissection which seemed to cause greater anxieties. Despite this, it is the argument here that it was often the case that the body of the murderer, unless it belonged to someone of great infamy such as William Burke, was treated in a similar manner to many others upon the dissection table. Therefore, the punitive aims of the Murder Act were largely met due to public anxiety over the thought of dissection rather than any distinctive manner in which the process was conducted in Scotland.

Throughout this period, particularly in the early nineteenth century during widespread concern over grave-robbing, men of science continually defended and justified the need for dissection, showing contempt for the ignorance and superstition thought to be characteristic of popular beliefs surrounding the fate of the dead body. Incidentally, it was these beliefs that prompted a fear of dissection, thus aiding in its capacity to act as an effective punishment. In defence of dissection in 1819, Dr Barclay addressed the issue of burial. He stated that many thought it
unchristian not to decently bury the body. However, in making a comparison with the Egyptian belief that is was profane not to embalm the body, or the necessity of burning in Far Eastern practice, he argued that in any of these methods of disposal the body was reduced to atoms. When reporting upon the prospective legislation as a result of Henry Warburton’s Select Committee on the supply of bodies for the anatomy schools in 1829 an article in the Caledonian Mercury discussed the opposition to the use of the unclaimed bodies of those dying in hospitals, workhouses and penitentiaries. It described a “great clamour” raised by “foolish and ignorant people” on the issue and defended the proposal by stating that these people had no kin to care what became of their bodies or to have their “feelings wounded” by the dissection. It was their disconnection from the living that made these people ideal candidates, again demonstrating that the disposal of the corpse was just as much a concern for the living as the dead.

The study of anatomy had long faced popular contempt and, despite receiving a supply of bodies as per the stipulations of the Murder Act, Monro tertius summed up the position of the surgeons when he stated, “in this country anatomists teach rather by the forbearance than by the countenance of the government.” The legal supply of criminal corpses was not sufficient to sustain the growing demand for cadavers and thus the medical schools obtained bodies from other sources. In 1742, the raising of the dead from their graves for profit was formally made a criminal offence in Scotland to tackle the problem of grave-robbing. In addition, the early nineteenth century has been called the ‘Golden Age of Bodysnatching’ due to the increased use of professional grave-robbers by the medical schools. Monro tertius obtained cadavers in this manner and his supply extended beyond Scotland alone. At least one of his shipments of bodies from Dublin had been confiscated and buried by customs officials. However, the Lord Advocate, Sir William Rae, sent a letter to the head of the Scottish customs hoping to direct against any future “unnecessary impediments being thrown in the way of the conveyance of dead subjects.” This suggests that the practice, although unsavoury, was an acknowledged necessity. Dr Robert Knox, infamous for his part in the sensational Burke and Hare case of the late 1820s, received around 15 cadavers per year from body-snatchers in Edinburgh and his surviving accounts show that he also had agents in Glasgow, Manchester and Ireland from whom he collectively obtained up to a further 20 corpses annually.
The problem of bodysnatching and its explicit links to the medical schools meant that the main driver behind the eventual passing of the 1832 Anatomy Act (2 & 3 Will. IV c.75) was a desire to end the practice by providing a more adequate supply of cadavers for dissection. The Lord Advocate, Sir William Rae, gave evidence in support of Henry Warburton’s ‘Bill for Preventing the Unlawful Disinterment of Human Bodies, and for Regulating Schools of Anatomy’ in March 1829. His involvement in the bill was likely driven by the fact that William Burke had been executed in January 1829 and his case was still very much a cause for national public concern. Charles Bell, a future Professor of Surgery at Edinburgh University, was a member of an early nineteenth-century anatomical society formed to call for changes to the law regarding the legal supply of bodies to the medical schools. Granville Sharp Pattison, a Glasgow anatomy lecturer, also reported upon the difficulties in obtaining first-hand experience of dissecting a human body to Warburton’s Select Committee. He admitted that when he was a student himself, groups of around eight would take part in grave-robbing to gain the valuable experience of dissection. Thus, the recommendation of the Select Committee, namely that the bodies of those who died and were unclaimed in public institutions such as hospitals and workhouses should be given over for dissection, received the support of the medical profession.

The Caledonian Mercury reported upon the findings of the Select Committee in great depth. In April 1828, the newspaper estimated that the number of unclaimed bodies in public institutions in Edinburgh alone numbered around 400 annually. An article in November 1828 focused upon the difficulties faced when attempting to “abate the dislike of the public to dissection.” It argued especially for the removal of the clause within the Murder Act directing bodies to be dissected. The article pointed to the insufficient number of bodies yielded but also stated that the act had failed to adequately prevent the crime of murder. It further claimed that those within the medical field were unanimous in wanting the act repealed as the use of criminal corpses had heaped disdain upon the practice of dissection. The following section will demonstrate that, for those carrying out the criminal dissections, the practice served as a means to an end in the acquisition of knowledge and no reference was made to its capacity to act as a judicial punishment as per the stipulations of the Murder Act.
Dissection and the Criminal Corpse

The Murder Act stipulated that the bodies of those executed in London or within the county of Middlesex would be conveyed to Surgeon’s Hall to be publicly dissected. In all other parts of Britain, the judges appointed the surgeon who would receive the corpse. Hurren has shown that criminal corpses were highly sought after, as they could serve as a lucrative means for medical men to practice dissection before paying audiences made up of both those within the medical profession and also the wider public.52 However, in Scotland the bodies of executed murderers were predominantly sentenced to be dissected within one of the country’s biggest universities before a predominantly medical audience. Table 6.1 demonstrates that, between the passing of the Murder Act in 1752 and the Anatomy Act in 1832, a total of 110 murderers were sentenced to the post-mortem punishment of dissection in Scotland: 85 men and 25 women.53 It is evident that in any given decade there were no more than 25 cadavers made available to the medical schools, with the number in some decades falling below ten. The eighteenth century witnessed a marked increase in the numbers of medical students and, as discussed above, an increasing demand for bodies to be dissected as part of anatomy courses. The numbers provided through the legal channel of convicted murderers were not nearly enough to sustain this demand and many corpses were procured, often through illegal or illicit means, elsewhere. However, the focus here is upon the criminal corpses yielded for dissection and the first question to be investigated is where the bodies were sentenced to be dissected.

Table 6.1 Breakdown by decade of murderers sentenced to dissection between 1752 and 1832

| Decade       | Men | Women | Total |
|--------------|-----|-------|-------|
| 1752–1759    | 2   | 6     | 8     |
| 1760–1769    | 4   | 6     | 10    |
| 1770–1779    | 7   | 2     | 9     |
| 1780–1789    | 5   | 1     | 6     |
| 1790–1799    | 9   | 1     | 10    |
| 1800–1809    | 12  | 2     | 14    |
| 1810–1819    | 11  | 1     | 12    |
| 1820–1829    | 21  | 4     | 25    |
| 1830–1832    | 14  | 2     | 16    |
| Total        | 85  | 25    | 110   |

Source Figures compiled using the Justiciary Court records
If a murderer had been executed in Edinburgh or Glasgow, their bodies were delivered to the Professor of Anatomy at the respective city’s university. Similarly, by the late eighteenth century, those executed in Aberdeen were sentenced to be dissected within Marischal College. Therefore, in over 76% of the total cases the criminal corpses were sentenced by the courts to be dissected at one of the three universities. In terms of those executed elsewhere in Scotland, in the early part of the period their bodies would be delivered to a local physician or surgeon named in the court’s sentencing. However, as the period progressed, the bodies of those executed outside of Scotland’s biggest cities were largely sentenced to be conveyed to either Edinburgh or Glasgow Universities as opposed to being given over to a local medical man. In the 1760s, following executions in Paisley and Lanark, the court ordered the bodies to be delivered to Glasgow University. Similarly, despite being executed in Perth in 1775, Alexander Husband’s corpse was to become the first of a few sentenced to be dissected over 50 miles away by Monro secundus in Edinburgh. There are also examples where bodies were sentenced to be handed over to local surgeons following execution, but ended up in Edinburgh or Glasgow instead. For example, Robert Keith was executed in Jedburgh in 1772 and instead of being delivered to Dr Thomas Rutherford as sentenced, he became a subject in the anatomy lectures of Monro in Edinburgh. Following her execution in 1784 in Stirling, Sarah Cameron’s body was cut down from the scaffold, put in a coffin and immediately conveyed to Glasgow University despite having been sentenced to be handed over to Thomas Lucas, a surgeon in Stirling.

The decision to send bodies executed elsewhere in Scotland to Edinburgh became even more frequent in the early nineteenth century. Following executions in areas of northern Scotland such as Dundee, Montrose, Cpar, Kinghorn, Forfar and Inverness, some of which were closer to Aberdeen, as well as areas in the west of Scotland that were geographically closer to Glasgow, such as Stirling and Ayr, the bodies were conveyed to Edinburgh for dissection by Monro tertius. This further attested to the monopoly that the main universities, particularly Edinburgh, had over the supply of criminal corpses. Often, the bodies had to be conveyed miles from the place of execution and we can question the condition of the cadavers upon arrival, particularly in the summer months. Similarly, the Professor of Anatomy at Glasgow University would sometimes receive the bodies of those executed in its surrounding areas. However, a case in 1823 caused contention. James Anderson
and David Glen were tried in Edinburgh for murder but sentenced to be executed in Ayr before their bodies would then be delivered back to Edinburgh. Duncan MacFarlane, the Principal of Glasgow University, wrote to the Lord Justice Clerk, David Boyle, to petition against the decision as, despite trial in Edinburgh, the practice had previously been that the bodies of those executed in the west of Scotland were directed to go to Glasgow. He called the decision of the court to send Anderson and Glen to Edinburgh a mistake and asked that Boyle intervene to prevent this becoming a precedent. By the early nineteenth century, although the number of students continually increased in Edinburgh, the percentage who attended Monro tertius' anatomy class had fallen since the time of his father. Rosner attributed this, at least in part, to competition from private anatomy lecturers such as John Barclay and John Bell, but also to the increasing prominence of anatomy teaching under James Jeffray at Glasgow University. In turn, this would have increased competition for cadavers and possibly explains the above petition.

As noted above, criminal corpses had been used for anatomical demonstration prior to the passing of the Murder Act. In 1702, as per the agreement made in the late seventeenth century regarding the procuring of bodies in Edinburgh, the body of David Myles, executed for incest, was publicly dissected over the course of a week. Different medical men from the Royal College of Surgeons demonstrated upon it each day. They began with a general discourse of the body before moving on to an inspection of key organs such as the stomach, intestines, liver, kidneys, parts of generation, the brain and finally the muscles of the extremities and the resulting skeleton. A vote was subsequently taken to determine if the assembled College masters were satisfied with the standard of the dissection. To use a contemporary term, the body had been ‘cut to its extremities’ yet it was to conduct an in-depth demonstration rather than solely to serve the ends of criminal justice.

In consulting the available records of criminal dissections conducted within the universities following 1752 it is evident that the bodies were often used as subjects during anatomy lectures and to educate those witnessing the dissection rather than merely acting as a post-mortem punishment. Following his execution in 1772, Robert Keith became a subject for Monro secundus. He was used particularly to conduct demonstrations on parts of the eye. Monro had, for several years, devoted much attention to the anatomy of the eyeball and published a treatise on the subject. Similarly, when dissenting from the views of others regarding
the effects of sudden death upon the stomach, namely that it caused a
dissolving of the mucous coat, Monro argued that, from his own exami-
nations of executed criminals, he had found no uniformity of appearance
of the mucous membrane. When Margaret Shuttleworth was executed
in Montrose in 1821 her body was subsequently delivered to Monro
tertius. Her dissection formed part of his lectures on the congestion of
blood in the brain. Upon removing the membranes, it was found to be
of a paler colour than usual and so soft that he could not demonstrate
more internally. As this was something he had not previously encoun-
tered he sent notes of the dissection to Dr Kellie, who had experience in
dissecting the brain.

Monro secundus primarily conducted his anatomy course using
only the titles of lectures, as he taught from memory and experience.
However, it is possible to ascertain the contents and structure of the
course from some of his notes, now catalogued at the university, and a
volume of his lectures based upon his essays and correspondence with
others in the medical field published by his son, Monro tertius. A spe-
cific area of interest here is his accounts of the dissections of criminals,
more specifically his attempts to ascertain the primary cause of their
death, which he placed within wider subject areas of his anatomy course.
Different opinions were offered in this period as to the cause of death by
hanging with some citing dislocation of the cervical vertebrae and oth-
ers the effusion of blood within the brain as the primary cause of death.
From his examinations of the criminal corpses delivered to him, Monro
claimed that he never detected a dislocation of the neck nor internal
congestion alone to be the main cause of death. Instead he argued that
death was to be imputed to a stoppage of respiration.

Hurren argued that the wording of the Murder Act sentencing the
criminal corpse to be anatomised and dissected was carefully chosen as
each practice presented a distinct medico-penal stage. She stated that the
hanging of a criminal was their legal death, the anatomisation performed
by the surgeon was their medical death, and the dissection was the post-
mortem part of the sentence. Hurren identified cases where it was the sur-
geon, and not necessarily the hangman, who was the final executioner of
the law. Upon receiving the bodies there were cases where the surgeons
found the heart still beating and removed it from the body, thus commit-
ting euthanasia. In the early eighteenth century there were spectacular
tales of criminals experiencing a complete revival hours after their execu-
tion. The most famous Scottish case was that of ‘Half Hangit Maggie’
who was executed for the murder of her illegitimate infant in 1724 but woke up in her coffin en route to her burial. She was pardoned and lived for another forty years. The Scottish records consulted here do not explicitly detail instances of surgeons finding criminals alive on the dissection table. However, in cases where the bodies were conveyed directly to the universities, as opposed to being held for a short time in a lock-up house as was sometimes the case, it is evident that the effect of hanging on the body and the eventual cause and timing of death was an area of debate.

In this period apoplexy referred to death that was caused by a sudden loss of consciousness, but it could also refer to certain forms of internal bleeding. Monro secundus argued that in some cases of executed criminals, though sensation and voluntary motion may have been suspended, secretion, the process by which substances were produced from organs such as the heart, was not necessarily affected. During his demonstrations on blood circulation and observations on the causes of sanguineous apoplexy on the brain, Monro demonstrated that, while the carotid arteries and jugular veins of hanged criminals were compressed by the rope, the vertebral arteries, being less obstructed, could continue to transmit blood to the brain if the action of the heart continued. Therefore, for minutes after suspension and loss of consciousness, the blood could flow to the brain via the vertebral arteries but its return was interrupted by the pressure on the jugular vein. When lecturing upon the inflation caused by the momentum of the blood flow, and attempts to alleviate this in the living patient, Monro cited the possibility of opening a large vein or artery. In terms of the use of criminal corpses to demonstrate this, if they were immediately conveyed to the dissection theatre from the scaffold, as were John Brown and James Wilson in 1773, incisions were made to the jugular to show the blood flow. This was similarly the case in 1829 when husband and wife John Stuart and Catherine Wright were dissected side by side. Incisions to both of their jugular veins caused profuse bleeding and their bloodshot eyes, locked jaws and clenched fists attested to the manner of their death.

Galvanism, when performed upon the dead human body in the early nineteenth century, was used as an attempt to stimulate the body with an electric current. Professor Giovanni Aldini, a famous proponent of galvanism, claimed that, for the experiment to work, he needed access to the bodies of those who had died very recently, although not of any disease. Thus, the executed criminal was an ideal test subject. In 1803, he performed a demonstration on the body of an executed murderer in
London which lasted over seven hours and produced a quivering of the jaw and convulsions of the face. Experiments in galvanism were also carried out on a few Scottish criminals immediately following execution in the early nineteenth century, the most spectacular of which was that performed upon the body of Matthew Clydesdale in 1818. Clydesdale’s body was left to hang upon the scaffold for the usual hour before it was cut down and conveyed immediately to James Jeffray, the Professor of Anatomy at Glasgow University. Jeffray had invited Dr Andrew Ure to assist in the demonstrations and five minutes prior to the arrival of the body he charged the galvanic battery in preparation. The success of the experiments was believed to depend upon the speedy transmission of the body from the scaffold to the commencing of the demonstration. Various incisions were made to apply the galvanic power. Strong convulsions caused Clydesdale’s limbs to be thrown in every direction. Furthermore, after connecting rods to the left phrenic nerve and the diaphragm, his chest heaved and fell as if breathing. The scene caused several of those present to turn away and one man to faint. Dr Ure wrote up an account of the experiment and delivered it in a lecture to the Glasgow Literary Society, demonstrating the wide dissemination of his findings.

In 1771, medical student Sylas Neville recorded that “the melancholy nature of my present studies increases the lowness of my spirits.” His evident trepidation at commencing his studies was to be further exacerbated by the dissection of the first female subject before the class in Monro’s lecture theatre. Medical knowledge of the female body, particularly the internal anatomy of the reproductive system, was still an ambiguous and difficult field within the profession, as the primary source of practical investigation was the dead female body. As discussed in Chap. 4, the capital punishment of women was quite a rare event and, in terms of the supply of their bodies for dissection, there were only 25 murderous women given the sentence. In addition, Table 6.1 shows that the highest number of female criminals dissected in any one decade was six and, after the mid-eighteenth century, the figures could be as low as one per decade. The situation was similar south of the border as, of the bodies received by the College of Surgeons in London between 1800 and 1832, only seven were women. Of these, five left the College in relatively pristine condition having only received an incision over the sternum labelled a “theatrical cut.” Their bodies were then gifted to surgeons in London’s hospitals or private anatomy schools and, as four of these
women were deemed to be of reproductive age, their bodies were valuable subjects for dissection. In terms of female criminals dissected within Scottish universities, it is to the dissection of Barbara Malcolm in 1808 that we now turn in order to demonstrate how her body was utilised by Monro tertius for the acquisition of knowledge of the female anatomy.

Monro tertius began taking his father’s anatomy lectures in 1808 and thus Barbara Malcolm would have been the first female criminal to arrive on his dissection table and, due to the rarity of the occasion, he would not have another until 1813. From a reading of the lecture notes from the time, it is evident that special preparations were made in anticipation of her dissection. She had been sentenced on 5 January but, as with all capitaly convicted criminals in Scotland, waited over a month before her scheduled execution on 10 February. In the first week of February, prior to Barbara’s dissection, several lectures took place. Those on the first four days looked in-depth at the anatomy of the organs of urine and generation in the female. Interestingly, a lecture on the fifth day changed track to focus more upon the structure of the neck and throat. The dissection of Barbara’s body took place the day following her execution and Monro focused particularly upon the naval arch and abdomen, providing an examination of the crural hernia, a cellular substance larger in women than men. He then moved on to an examination of the kidneys, liver and stomach. Within the records the lecture was entitled ‘Dissection of a Criminal’ and Barbara was not named. Additionally, despite the court having sentenced her to dissection as a form of punishment, the fact that the anatomy course was almost certainly adapted so an examination of gender-specific parts happened at the same time supports the argument that, for the medical men at least, her dissected body was a valuable means to an end in the acquisition of knowledge.

Despite the above cases demonstrating that dissection was used within the universities in the pursuit of anatomical knowledge, the theme of notoriety was often the subject of public debates over the supply of cadavers in the years immediately prior to the Anatomy Act. The discussion now turns to investigate a case that embodied this notoriety and heaped further public disdain upon the practice of dissection.

THE CASE OF WILLIAM BURKE

The case of William Burke and William Hare has been detailed extensively in print and on screen and subject to elaboration and speculation. Although they were murderers their case has come to epitomise the
‘Golden Age of Bodysnatching’ in the early nineteenth century. Over roughly a 12-month period they murdered 16 people to sell their bodies to Dr Robert Knox, an independent lecturer of anatomy in Edinburgh’s Surgeon’s Square. They lured their victims into the Hares’ lodging house in Tanners Close and then waited until they were in a sufficient state of alcohol-fuelled stupor before laying across their chests, covering their mouth and nostrils and effectively suffocating them, a method of killing subsequently known as ‘Burking’. Following their apprehension for the crimes, Hare turned evidence for the Crown and thus escaped standing trial. Burke was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged on 28 January 1829 at the Lawnmarket in Edinburgh and his body, in an ironic instance of poetic justice, was given to Monro for dissection. This case, more so than any other Scottish criminal in this period, captivated the public and received mass press attention with newspapers and pamphlets before, during and after the trial claiming to provide the most authentic account of the murders. This contemporary thirst for extensive details of the case has also facilitated and informed the large body of more recent popular and academic literature and thus it is not the intention here to reiterate the story at length. Instead, this chapter demonstrates the significance of the case within a discussion of public dissection as a post-mortem punishment.

Commenting upon Burke’s execution and dissection, Sir Walter Scott lamented “the strange means by which the wretch made money are scarce more disgusting than the eager curiosity with which the public have licked up all the carrion details of the business.” Burke’s crimes were described as standing out even amongst “the long and black catalogue” of all those before him. They were attributed, not to passion or revenge as others were, but to a “base and sordid love of gain.” As the gallows were erected on the day before the scheduled date of execution the crowds gathered to cheer. The joiners in the shop of tradesmen who were often employed for the task of scaffold-building usually considered the work hateful and cast lots to decide who would have to undertake it. In Burke’s case, many had actively solicited the job. On the morning of the execution Burke was met with shouting and jeering from a crowd that exceeded 20,000 people. When the drop fell, the rope appeared to move and thus he died struggling, with the crowd appearing to “gloat over the dying agonies.” His body was suspended for 45 minutes, then cut down and taken to the lock-up house. It was conveyed to Monro’s anatomy theatre early the next day. On the first day of Burke’s dissection, Monro stated that he would lecture on the brain. It was described
as unusually soft but he acknowledged that this was not uncommon in criminals who had suffered the last punishment of the law.\textsuperscript{80} His lecture lasted from the early morning until two in the afternoon. The anxiety to obtain a sight of the “vile carcase of the murderer” was great. Although Monro had attempted to accommodate as many as he could, a body of medical students, “conceiving themselves to have a preferable title to admission”, began to break the glass windows of the anatomy theatre and the police were sent for. The disturbance lasted until four in the afternoon when it was announced that the young men could go in 50 at a time.\textsuperscript{81}

The wider public were admitted to the lecture theatre the following day and security appears to have been better managed. They entered one side of the theatre, passed the table where the body lay and exited by another set of stairs. By these means no reported inconvenience was felt. A newspaper correspondent counted the numbers who visited and found it to be approximately 68 people per minute and 4080 by the hour. The theatre was open for six hours so the author estimated that the number of visitors was upwards of 24,000.\textsuperscript{82} The top of Burke’s skull had been removed to expose the brain during Monro’s lecture the previous day, but it was replaced for the public viewing. His naked corpse was stretched out on the dissection table with his eyes still half open and instantly recognisable to those who had known him. The whole scene was described as being far from agreeable but justified by the view that it may be “plausibly maintained that the exhibition will be more efficacious in preventing crime than the common spectacle on the gallows.”\textsuperscript{83}

Following this display, the rest of the dissection was closed to the public. Monro arranged for the final dismemberment of the body, including the removal of the skin. He dipped a quill into Burke’s blood to record “this is written with the blood of Wm Burke…the blood was taken from his head 1 February 1829.”\textsuperscript{84}

Following dissection there were cases where parts of the criminal corpse were kept and displayed, such as their bleached skeleton or pieces of skin. Following his execution for murder in Glasgow in 1797 James McKean was given to James Jeffray for dissection after which some local gentlemen, anxious to preserve part of the murderer, successfully obtained the skin taken from his back from Jeffray. They sent it to be tanned and Robert Reid, a merchant in the city, recalled that it was then cut into small circles and distributed as a memento.\textsuperscript{85} Similarly, a police information centre in Edinburgh obtained and displayed a pocket
book made from Burke’s skin. In addition, his skeleton continues to be displayed at Edinburgh University’s Anatomy Museum. In William Hogarth’s *Four Stages of Cruelty* (1751), there are two skeletons belonging to previously dissected murderers hung up as a backdrop to the main dissection tableau. In the 1813 case of Black and Macdonald, when sentencing them to dissection the judges stated that their skeletons would be “preserved to future ages as monuments of youthful depravity.”

A pamphlet published in Edinburgh in the early nineteenth century talked of the medical schools acquiring human skeletons to further the interests of science, but compared the practice to hanging in chains. These examples of continued display, beyond dissection, raise questions over the point of the legal and social death of these criminals. Whether they were kept as mementos or as reminders of the heinousness of their crimes, we can question if these criminals, particularly Burke, are ever truly socially dead.

**Conclusion**

Historically, the dissection of the human body occupied an ambiguous position within the medical field and garnered fear and suspicion due to popular anxieties. Despite earlier legislation offering a limited supply of cadavers, 1752 saw dissection as a punishment placed squarely within the criminal justice system. The Murder Act was intended to add a further mark of infamy to executions for the crime. However, this chapter has demonstrated the complexity surrounding the capacity of dissection to act as an effective punishment. For the condemned, the prospect of dissection had not deterred them from committing murder, although there were some cases where they appeared to fear this part of the punishment more than the death sentence itself. It was also evident that the use of criminal corpses brought the practice of dissection into public disrepute due to its links with punishment and this was a criticism levelled at the Murder Act during debates over the Anatomy Act.

The study of anatomy had become more established within the Scottish universities in the early eighteenth century with permanent appointments of Professors of Anatomy. As the century progressed, acquiring knowledge of the interior of the human body was defended by those within the medical profession due to its long-term benefit for the living. However, more generally, dissection continued to be viewed with suspicion and sometimes outright contempt. The incidents that occurred
at the scaffold, such as criminals calling out for someone to take possession of their bodies rather than allow it to fall into the hands of surgeons, or, in the case of murderers, showing more trepidation regarding the dissection rather than the execution itself, further attested to the potential effect of dissection as a post-mortem punishment. However, in practice, most criminal dissections in Scotland took place within a university setting as part of lectures on anatomy and most cases were seemingly not open for general viewing by the public.

In the case of William Burke, despite Monro lecturing on his brain and replacing the top of the skull for the public viewing, the great interest attracted by the case reached a climax with his dissection. The motivation for the murders, namely selling the bodies to the surgeon Robert Knox, was a focal point around which much of the press and the crowd’s abhorrence centred. Although he was labelled a most atrocious murderer, we cannot fail to draw the patent link between contemporary fears about bodysnatching and selling cadavers for dissection which reached fever pitch in the late 1820s. Yet, despite the contempt faced by the medical profession, particularly those practicing dissection, the numbers who visited Monro’s anatomy theatre to see Burke’s body were estimated to equal, if not surpass, those who had attended his execution. His body was viewed with fascination, curiosity and horror, with the capacity of dissection to act as an effective post-mortem punishment significantly increased due to the very abhorrence felt towards the motive for his crimes. Burke’s dissection, perhaps more than any other, served the ends of the Murder Act, namely to provide a further mark of infamy to Scotland’s most notorious killer.

Notes

1. See Martin Fido, Bodysnatchers; A History of the Resurrectionists 1742–1832 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988); Jonathan Sawday, The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture (London: Routledge, 1995); Helen MacDonald, Human Remains; Dissection and its Histories (London: Yale University Press, 2006).
2. Ruth Richardson, Death, Dissection and the Destitute (London: Routledge, 1978).
3. Elizabeth T. Hurren, Dying for Victorian Medicine; English Anatomy and its Trade in the Dead Poor, c. 1834–1929 (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012).
4. The post-mortem punishment of dissection following the Murder Act was a key strand of the Wellcome Trust funded project ‘Harnessing the Power of the Criminal Corpse’. See the work of project member Elizabeth T. Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse: Staging Post-Execution Punishment in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016).

5. G. A. G. Mitchell, “Anatomical and Resurrectionist Activities in Northern Scotland”, *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* IV (1949): 417–430, 418.

6. *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers* [accessed 25 April 2015] House of Lords Papers, *A Bill intituled an Act for better preventing the horrid Crime of Murder* (5 March 1752).

7. David Douglas (ed.), *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott, Vol. 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1890), 219.

8. Andrew Cunningham, *The Anatomist Anatomiz’d; An Experimental Discipline in Enlightenment Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 384.

9. Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*, 7.

10. Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, 280.

11. Sarah Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 36.

12. Steven Wilf, “Anatomy and Punishment in Late Eighteenth-Century New York”, *Journal of Social History* 22 (1989): 507–530, 510.

13. NAS JC8/25/59; *Fife Herald*, Thursday, 15 July 1820, 2.

14. *Derby Mercury*, Friday, 20 July 1750, 1.

15. Peter Linebaugh, “The Tyburn Riot Against the Surgeons”, in *Albion’s Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. by Douglas Hay, Peter Linebaugh, John G. Rule, E. P. Thomson and Cal Winslow, 65–117, London: Allen Lane, 1975.

16. *Derby Mercury*, Friday, 16 September 1748, 4.

17. *Caledonian Mercury*, Monday, 26 November 1753, 3.

18. *Caledonian Mercury*, Monday, 20 February 1815, 3.

19. Bernard de Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Frequent Executions at Tyburn* (London: 1725), 26–27.

20. *Aberdeen Journal*, Wednesday, 5 June 1822, 3.

21. *Caledonian Mercury*, Thursday, 17 April 1823, 3.

22. *Scots Magazine*, Thursday, 1 July 1813, 44.

23. *Aberdeen Journal*, Wednesday, 5 June 1822, 3.

24. *Caledonian Mercury*, Saturday, 15 December 1827, 4.

25. *Caledonian Mercury*, Wednesday, 9 October 1765, 1.

26. The lengthy trial proceedings can be found in NAS JC7/33–4. It was reported to the High Court that Katherine Nairn gave birth to a baby girl.
However, she failed to appear in court and in March 1766 it was reported that she had escaped and was never apprehended.

27. Basil Cozens-Hardy, *The Diary of Sylas Neville 1767–1788* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), 147.

28. *Manchester Mercury*, Tuesday, 13 May 1760, 2.

29. *Caledonian Mercury*, Saturday, 10 November 1804, 3.

30. NAS JC13/35/46.

31. Johanna Geyer-Kordesch and Fiona Macdonald, *Physicians and Surgeons in Glasgow; The History of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow 1599–1858* (London: Hambledon Press, 1999), 172.

32. Helen Dingwall, *A History of Scottish Medicine* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 117.

33. Anita Guerrini, “Alexander Munro Primus and the Moral Theatre of Anatomy”, *The Eighteenth Century* 47 (2006): 1–18, 3.

34. Edinburgh University Centre for Research Collections [hereafter ED CRC] Lectures of Professor Alexander Munro primus, DC.5.129, 56.

35. ED CRC Papers of Alexander Munro secundus, Gen 579, 1.

36. ED CRC Papers of Alexander Munro secundus, Gen 570, 1.

37. William Rowley, *On the Absolute Necessity of Encouraging Instead of Preventing or Embarrassing the Study of Anatomy* (London: 1795), 5.

38. ED CRC Andrew Duncan, Contributions to Morbid Anatomy, p. 46, X:1, 11.

39. Guenter B. Risse, *Hospital Life in Enlightenment Scotland; Care and Teaching at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 263. In 1993, human bones were discovered following excavations in Edinburgh. They showed signs of post-mortem dissection and were identified as belonging to ‘unclaimed’ bodies of patients who had died in the Royal Infirmary. See David Henderson, Mark Collard and Daniel Johnston, “Archaeological Evidence for Eighteenth-Century Medical Practice in the Old Town of Edinburgh: Excavations at 13 Infirmary Street and Surgeon’s Square”, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquities of Scotland* 126 (1996): 929–941.

40. *Caledonian Mercury*, Saturday, 23 May 1829, 3.

41. Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead*, 78.

42. ED CRC Dr Barclay, *The Medical School of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: 1819), p. 46, X: 1, 11.

43. *Caledonian Mercury*, Monday, 12 January 1829, 3.

44. Glasgow University Archives Special Collections [hereafter GUA] MS Murray 663/5.

45. R. A. Houston, *Punishing the Dead? Suicide, Lordship and Community in Britain, 1500–1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 246.
46. Lisa Rosner, *Anatomy Murders: Being the True and Spectacular History of Edinburgh’s Notorious Burke and Hare and the Man of Science who Abetted Them in the Commission of Their Most Heinous Crimes* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2010), 42.

47. Rosner, *Anatomy Murders*, 37.

48. Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*, 146.

49. Rosner, *Anatomy Murders*, 37.

50. *Caledonian Mercury*, Saturday, 26 April 1828, 3.

51. *Caledonian Mercury*, Saturday, 15 November 1828, 3.

52. Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse*. See also Richard Ward, “The Criminal Corpse, Anatomists and the Criminal Law: Parliamentary Attempts to Extend the Dissection of Offenders in Late Eighteenth-Century England”, *Journal of British Studies* 54 (2015): 63–87. Ward discussed an attempt made by William Wilberforce in 1786 to extend the punishment of dissection for a wider range of crimes. The bill, he argued, originated with Wilberforce’s close friend William Hey, a senior surgeon at Leeds Infirmary, who made considerable monetary gains from charging the public for tickets to the criminal dissections he carried out.

53. There were five women convicted of the murder of their infants who did not receive any post-mortem punishment within the courts’ sentencing. The cases occurred in the 1750s and 1760s and it is unclear what happened to their bodies after execution as there were no reports of them being conveyed to the place of dissection as was normally the case.

54. Cozens-Hardy, *Diary of Sylas Neville*, 191.

55. *Caledonian Mercury*, Saturday, 30 October 1784, 3.

56. GUA Special Collections MS Gen 1717/3/1/26.

57. Lisa Rosner, *Medical Education in the Age of Improvement: Edinburgh Students and Apprentices 1760–1826* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 49.

58. Helen Dingwall, *Physicians, Surgeons and Apothecaries: Medical Practice in Seventeenth-Century Edinburgh* (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 1995), 75–76.

59. Cozens-Hardy, *Diary of Sylas Neville*, 191.

60. Alexander Monro tertius (ed.), *Essays and Heads of Lectures on Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology and Surgery by the Late Alexander Monro secundus* (Edinburgh; 1840), 28.

61. Monro, *Essays and Heads of Lectures on Anatomy*, 97.

62. Monro, *Essays and Heads of Lectures on Anatomy*, 97.

63. Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse*, 16.

64. Monro, *Essays and Heads of Lectures on Anatomy*, x1vii.

65. Monro, *Essays and Heads of Lectures on Anatomy*, x1v.

66. Cozens-Hardy, *Diary of Sylas Neville*, 205.
67. Aberdeen Journal, Wednesday, 26 August 1829, 4.
68. MacDonald, Human Remains, 17.
69. Experiments in galvanism were carried out on at least two further executed criminals in Aberdeen and Glasgow respectively, but with mixed success due to the dropping of the body temperature. In 1824 Jeffray blamed the failed experiments conducted on the body of William Diven on the placement of the rope for his hanging which, he claimed, had destroyed the nerves in the neck and thus defeated the purpose of galvanism. See Morning Post, Tuesday, 27 July 1824, 2. In addition, when John Campbell’s executed body was cut down from the scaffold in Stirling in 1824, his father rushed it to a surgeon in St Ninian’s in the hopes of restoring life. Experiments in galvanism were attempted, but they failed. However, the surgeon stated that he was confident that, if the body had been delivered to him ten minutes earlier, he could have restored life. See Coventry Herald, Friday, 4 June 1824, 4. In this case the body had been hung for about 30 minutes but there were varying times reported across this period which, combined with knowledge of experiments that had been conducted elsewhere, perhaps explains the belief, on the part of Campbell’s father and the surgeon, that his body could be delivered in enough time for galvanism to work.

70. Caledonian Mercury, Saturday, 7 November 1818, 3.
71. Northampton Mercury, Saturday, 16 January 1819, 4.
72. Cozens-Hardy, Diary of Sylas Neville, 143.
73. MacDonald, Human Remains, 12.
74. MacDonald, Human Remains, 20.
75. ED CRC Lectures and Letters of Professor Alexander Monro tertius, Coll 441, D.C.7.120, 234–247.
76. NAS JC8/23/29.
77. For a recent in-depth investigation of the case, see Rosner, Anatomy Murders.
78. MacDonald, Human Remains, 46.
79. Caledonian Mercury, Thursday, 29 January 1829, 3.
80. In the early nineteenth century proponents of the science of phrenology argued that the brain was not a single organ but instead made up of 35 organs each representing a specific aspect of someone’s personality. Phrenological observations were carried out on at least 17 Scottish criminals, including murderers such as Burke, to attempt to determine why they had committed their crimes. Examinations, drawings and casts could be done prior to execution and then reflected upon following dissection in the case of murderers. See George Combe, A System of Phrenology, Third Edition (Edinburgh: 1830). During the dissection of John Stuart, who was executed in August 1829, Monro noted that the great breadth
across his cheeks, his sunken eyes and the acute angle of his chin were as remarkable as in the cases of other infamous murderers including Burke, which again led to debates as to whether a person’s facial features and head structure could be used as an indication of their propensity to commit crime. See *Aberdeen Journal*, Wednesday, 26 August 1829, 4.

81. *Caledonian Mercury*, Saturday, 31 January 1829, 3.
82. *Caledonian Mercury*, Saturday, 31 January 1829, 3.
83. *The Scotsman*, Saturday, 31 January 1829, 6.
84. See Rosner, *Anatomy Murders*, 244.
85. David Murray, *Memories of the Old College of Glasgow, Vol. 1* (Glasgow: 1927), 180.
86. NAS JC8/9/232; *Scots Magazine*, Thursday, 1 July 1813, 44.
87. ED CRC *The Haddington Cobbler Defended or the Doctors Dissected*, p. 46, X: 8.

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