Anybody infected by the humour of Ash and Lake's Bizarre Books (particularly Chapter 4, "The Right Person for the Job") will be continually on the lookout for similar bibliographic anomalies. Working in a medical library, I have developed the habit of collecting references in which the author's name fits like a surgical glove onto the title of his work.

Thumbing through Garrison and Morton's medical bibliography and Bowker's books in print, I discovered that Soranus, the second-century Greek author of On Midwifery, was one of the first to discuss inflammation of the rectum during pregnancy. The German Ernst Von Bumm did research on the gonococcus in venereal disease, and his contemporary, Ernst Finger, was a pioneer in gonorrheal discharge of the vagina. The anatomist Adolf Fick (allow for the Middle High German vocalic sound shift) studied heat production during muscular activity, and his namesake, Rudolph Fick, concentrated on the myological action of the pelvis in males. In England, Alfred Tubby published his Deformities while William Little wrote "On the Nature and Treatment of Deformities of the Human Frame". One of the first psychiatrists was William Battie, who issued his Treatise on Madness in 1758. Timothy Bright composed a Treatise of Melancholie, and Thomas Trotter wrote the first book on alcoholism and its effects on the human body. Fielding's friend, John Freke, is remembered for his article on "A Case of Extraordinary Exostoses on the Back of a Boy". In America, Karen Horney published her Feminine Psychology, Gene Starbuck his Models of Human Sexuality, and Julius Fast The Body Language of Sex, Power and Aggression.

In modern times, significant research appears not in monographs but in the vast maze of published journal articles. A search of the MEDLINE database of the world's medical literature reveals there is a British gynaecologist Raper, an Australian midwife Ripper, a Dutch obstetrician Naaktgeboren (born naked), a Russian infertility specialist Semenova, a German cancer therapist Quack, husband and wife geneticists P. and T. Rabbitts, a bacteriologist Buggs, a dermatologist Boyle, a haematologist Blood, an orthopaedist Bone, a gastroenterologist Gut, a neurologist Brain, and an Italian stomatologist called Orefici. There is a Chinese obstetrician K. Cong, a Baltimore surgeon A. Munster, a behavioural psychologist Frankenstein, and even a medico named Mengele, studying blood levels of kidney transplant patients in Switzerland.

I have unearthed some forty articles in which the surname of the author or co-author seems appropriate to the title itself:
Preparation of Sex Education Programs at a Local Level, by Y. Fukuhara and K. Fukuda

Morphometric and Radiographic Characteristics of Tibial Bone of Broiler Chickens With Twisted Leg Disorders, by J. J. Cruickshank

Smoking and Lung Cancer, by C. R. Ash

Single-Dose Prophylaxis in Gynaecological Surgery, by G. J. Pricker

Ventilation in Operating Rooms, by R. Blowers

The Use of Drugs in Swimming, by J. C. Puffer

Staging and Surgery in Testicular Cancer, by O. Schmucki

Testicular Syphilis, by F. Wart

WASPLEG AND OTHER MNEMONICS

Why WASPLEG? Well, suppose you are challenged to name the seven deadly sins and don’t have a reference book handy; this mnemonic reminds you of the initial letters of Wrath, Avarice, Sloth, Pride, Lust, Envy, and Gluttony. Bart Benne’s 1988 book with the above title, issued in paperback by Taylor Publishing of Dallas for $7.95, contains hundreds of such memory aids, including the astronomical one I sprung on my wife-to-be during an early date: O, Be A Fine Girl, Kiss Me Right Now (listing the spectral types of stars from hot to cool). (She wasn’t amused.) Famous mnemonics include the memorization of pi using sentences whose word-lengths mimic its digits (Sir, I send a rhyme excelling...), the I-before-E-except-after-C spelling rule, and the R months for eating oysters.

The mnemonics in this book seem mainly of use to students cramming for a test or contestants preparing for Jeopardy. Why learn them up? What in this book seem mainly of use to students preparing for Jeopardy. Why learn them up? What is needed in the field of mnemonics is the systematic development of methods for building your own, for remembering telephone numbers and the like. In crafting a mnemonic, one must balance efficiency (the ratio of the number of letters in the mnemonic to the number of letters in the item to be recalled) against memorability; most acrostics favor the latter, requiring whole sentences to commit a handful of letters to memory. (If the order doesn’t matter, one can often anagram the letters and achieve a more compressed format, as WASPLEG demonstrates.) Are initial letters enough, or should two or three letters of each word be placed in the mnemonic? If several letters, which ones? What sort of information other than word-lists or number sequences lend themselves to mnemonics? How should one tailor the mnemonic to the type of information? In the field of mnemonics there are many more questions than answers.