

## Book Reviews

of the great storehouse of material remaining from populations such as the ancient Egyptians. Many thousands of skeletons survive as well. The dividing line between mummy and skeleton is not sharp. Most mummies are poorly preserved, often consisting almost wholly of skeletal material inside the wrappings. Similarly, dry desert environments frequently preserve some soft tissue in addition to skeletons, in burials where no deliberate attempt at mummification has been made.

Well-preserved mummies are a diminishing resource. Unwrappings decrease their number further. But what is impressive, in this book and from work published elsewhere, is what modern radiography can do non-destructively, and what histology, biochemistry, and serology can show from small quantities of mummified tissue. Could these techniques not be used to survey larger numbers of mummies without unwrapping them, to investigate small samples extracted with minimum damage, and to study the far larger collections of less completely preserved human remains?

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CHARLES F. MERBS *et al.*, *Catalogue of the Hrdlicka paleopathology collection*, San Diego Museum of Man, 1980, 4to, pp. xii, 359, illus., [no price stated], (paperback).

This catalogue incorporates versions of the osteological descriptions and pathological diagnoses which Dr. Ales Hrdlicka had compiled for the San Diego Exposition of 1915, revised by Dr. C. F. Merbs. It provides a view of the pathology and cranial surgery of aboriginal America. However, some of the illustrations, unfortunately, are not completely satisfactory.

Collections like this, from a large group of a population, are very valuable in tracing the early history of a disease, or confirming its absence, provided that the diagnosis is based upon acceptable diagnostic criteria (cf. C. J. Hackett, *Sber. heidlb. Akad. Wiss.*, 1976, 4). With this in mind, I examined the illustrations for two diseases in which the bone changes are diagnostic. Of the twenty-three specimens labelled "syphilis" (a treponemal infection), nine are called "historic": of these four had changes diagnostic of the disease (one was from Mongolia), three probably so, and two had none. Another specimen labelled "prehistoric or early historic" showed similar changes. None of the "prehistoric" specimens had diagnostic changes. There is thus no acceptable evidence here of syphilis in the definitely "prehistoric" (pre-Columbian) specimens.

Similarly, there is only one very doubtful example among the forty-five labelled "osteomyelitis" of a specimen with haematogenous pyogenic osteomyelitis, a disease common in Europe before the advent of penicillin. However, two of its bones show similar changes to those labelled "syphilis", and came from the same skeleton which was dated "historic". The pyogenic micrococci that cause the characteristic changes of the disease were thus apparently not present in prehistoric America. In pre-European aboriginal Australian bones there is a similar complete absence of haematogenous pyogenic osteomyelitis, although treponemal (yaws and treponarid) bone changes are frequent (C. J. Hackett, *Rec. S. Aust. Mus.*, 1978, 17 (No. 27): 387-405).

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The interesting information buried in such major collections as this might be made more accessible by grouping specimens according to certain changes in them, i.e., more bone, less bone, dead bone, bent bone. Changes of diagnostic value could be supported by relevant references, while non-diagnostic changes could be simply illustrated.

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W. WUTTKE-GRONEBERG, *Medizin im Nationalsozialismus. Ein Arbeitsbuch*, Tübingen, Schwäbische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1980, 4to, pp. 440, illus., DM. 42.00. (paperback).

As a collection of primary sources, this book is unique. While other authors have assembled related documents only on specialized themes (e.g. on the activities of concentration camp doctors), Wuttke-Groneberg offers a much broader perspective, covering, for instance, health education, Nazi ideals on midwifery and nursing, and health insurance as seen from the Nazi point of view. He also provides us with a bibliography more comprehensive than any I know (although there are, quite naturally, lacunae of which the author himself is fully aware, see p. 7).

One of these bibliographical gaps points to a more significant weakness of the book. Only very rarely, if at all, is the pre-history of "Medicine during the Nazi period" hinted at. Once, p. 334, the author asks rather casually what part the economic position of doctors before 1933 played in their conformism towards the state and their anxious interest in the unity of the medical profession. Following R. Kühnl, one of the most prolific but also most controversial of German contemporary historians, Wuttke-Groneberg envisages this important question merely from the point of view of the monthly income of doctors. The dissertation of W. Ackermann, *Der ärztliche Nachwuchs zwischen Weltkrieg und nationalsozialistischer Erhebung*, Elberfeld, 1940 (mentioned only in a footnote on p. 338 but not, regrettably, in the general bibliography), could have helped to give a broader view. Furthermore, nothing is said about the remarkable fact that (a) there were already three physicians among the first members of the *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (founded in 1919 as the germ cell of what became in 1920 the NSDAP); (b) there were, among the seventy-two Nazi Gauleiters between 1925 and 1932, four physicians (for both points, see A. Tyrell's source-book mentioned on p. 412); (c) there were medical professors who had personal contact with Hitler and his movement from 1920 on (e.g. Sauerbruch, P. Kuhn); (d) there were, before 1933, printed appeals by German university professors to vote for Hitler (on 5 November 1932, the *Völkischer Beobachter* published an interesting declaration, followed by a list of fifty-six names, including twelve medical professors).

The reader must also be warned that the book's very title is misleading and reveals a possible conceptual weakness. The author himself seems to take it in the sense of "National socialist medicine", (see p. 5). However, "Medicine during the Nazi period", which is how a German reader would understand it, did not at all consist exclusively of Nazi medicine. There were doctors whose medical practice as such was in no way tinged with traces of Nazi ideology. Others acted as "silent" helpers of prosecuted people (see H. D. Leuner, *When compassion was a crime*, 1966, now in