

## BOOK REVIEWS

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*A Colour Atlas of Forensic Dentistry* by D.K. Whittaker and D.G. Macdonald, Wolfe Medical Publications, London, 1989.

This 286-page atlas continues the Wolfe tradition of superb colour pictures, in this case aided by the excellent photography provided by the medical illustration departments of the two authors, one in Cardiff, the other in Glasgow. There can be no doubt that these are the best photographs in any forensic dental book yet published.

The pictures are accompanied by concise, yet extremely helpful text notes which give the non-specialist a detailed overview of the whole spectrum of forensic odontology. The book does not claim to be a text-book for forensic dentists, but rather a summary of what the discipline can offer, for the benefit of practising dentists, forensic pathologists and physicians as well as police and lawyers.

After discussing and illustrating general matters, such as the scope of the subject, the equipment required and the practical procedures to collect evidence, the rest of the book covers the three major aspects of forensic odontology, namely, identification, mass disasters and bite marks. The text is simple enough to be easily comprehensible to non-dental and non-medical readers, yet is not patronising. Each chapter starts with a short introduction and then every picture has a caption which is self-sufficient in explaining the point being made. Dental records, methods of recording autopsy dental data and the broad outlines of mass disaster correlation are given. There is enough on dental archeology to whet the appetite and a useful section on the presentation of dental evidence in court.

Though there are more detailed textbooks for the practising forensic odontologist, this most attractive and useful book should be available to every coroner's pathologist and Scenes of Crime detective officer, as well to every dentist who may become involved in the legal aspects of his profession.

B.P.

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*Pathologie Medico-Legale* by M. Durigon, Masson, Paris, 1988.

This is one of the histopathological monographs published by Masson and is a relatively small book of 175 pages, which packs an extraordinary amount

within the limited space. It is really a compact synopsis of the whole range of contemporary forensic pathology, a somewhat unusual book for the French language. Its strengths include a really-up-to-date appreciation of the literature, especially that in the English language, as the selected but very useful chapter reference lists show.

The spectrum of topics is conventional, ranging through autopsy techniques, iatrogenic lesions, wounds and then the usual sub-divisions of trauma and death. Toxicology is dealt with from the pathologist's viewpoint and the pathological aspects of sexual assault, infant death and physical agents are well-covered.

The illustrations are all monochrome, but well-produced and well-captioned. The majority are photomicrographs, emphasising the primarily pathological expertise of the author. Michel Durigon, who is Professor of Legal Medicine at one of the Parisian medical schools. For those who read French, this book is an excellent modern review of the whole field of forensic pathology, as opposed to the wider and more geographically-constrained medical jurisprudence. There is no such compact book on the subject in English and perhaps the publishers might consider the commercial viability of a translation.

*B.K.*