

## BOOK REVIEW

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# Review of Studies in Crime: An Introduction to Forensic Anthropology

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**REFERENCE:** Hunter J, Roberts C, Martin A. *Studies in crime: An introduction to forensic anthropology*, B.T. Batsford Ltd., London 1996, 174 pages; 25 English pounds.

The subject of this book, written primarily by members of the faculty of Bradford University in England, is the value of archaeological and anthropological techniques in the field of forensic science. Although not a step-by-step guide of procedures, the methods used in forensic archaeology and forensic anthropology are thoroughly discussed. Though most case examples are from the United Kingdom, the information may have world wide application. This book could be useful to a university anthropology department library, especially one called upon by law enforcement agencies to aid in locating and/or recovering and identifying human remains. It might also be a useful reference for medical examiner/coroner offices.

This interesting and informative book has extensive references. There are nine chapters, most with at least 50 references and two with over 100. Many of these references are to publications by American scientists. Unfortunately, in at least two of these a name has been misspelled: Cambell for Campbell, pp. 50 and 56 and Mimaio for Dimaio, pp. 129 and 137. There is an index, but its brevity is a drawback to locating specific entities in the text.

The book begins with an historical review on the background of forensic archaeology and forensic anthropology in both the United Kingdom and the United States. Another chapter entitled, "The police and judicial structure in Britain," although well written, is only of academic interest to the American reader.

There are three chapters (3-5) devoted to buried remains. The first covers the recovery of buried remains and includes detailed discussions of stratigraphy, graves, states of decay, recording and excavating. Janaway's chapter, "The decay of buried remains and their associated materials" is the longest and possibly the most

interesting one in the book. Such topics as autolysis, *rigor mortis* and putrefaction, for example, are described in detail and explanations of the chemical processes involved are included. Factors that accelerate decay are discussed, as well as those that tend to preserve soft tissue. Most of the examples given are archaeological rather than forensic. The archaeologist's primary input is considered to be the examination of the landscape in order to determine the feasibility of burial, how best to detect such burials, and the most appropriate method of recovery. These topics are covered in the chapter entitled "Locating buried remains."

Forensic anthropology is covered in two chapters (6 and 7) beginning with an examination of forensic anthropology in the United States and the detailed aspects of skeletal analysis in a forensic situation; human or non-human, minimum number of individuals, age, sex, stature, and race. The second deals with the positive identification of the individual and dentition, the value of radiography, pathological lesions, and facial reconstruction are well covered. The possibilities of biochemical methods such as blood typing from bone and DNA identification are considered.

Not surprisingly, the chapter, "Dating the time of death," is as thorough as the rest of the book and begins with the background of dating techniques in archaeology. Among the forensic techniques using bone to estimate time since death are loss of nitrogen, loss of amino acids, bone fluorescence and benzidine staining. These are well described and include the chemical reactions involved. The writer covers biochemical and inorganic traces from decaying bodies that can be detected in the surrounding soil. In the valuable four page appendix to this chapter, the chemical structures of bone, amino acids, and proteins are discussed in detail. The final chapter explores the relationship between archaeological science and forensic science and covers both the similarities and differences. Major differences are the time frame and forensic science's requirement to interpret findings and to present them in a court of law.