

BOOK REVIEW

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Review of: *Brogdon's Forensic Radiology*, 2nd edn

REFERENCE: Thali MJ, Viner MD, Brogdon BG, editors. *Brogdon's forensic radiology*, 2nd edn. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2011, 630 pp.

Brogdon's Forensic Radiology updates the first edition of this book, which was published in 1998. The new edition is 30% longer, and the number of contributors has nearly tripled. The application of radiology to forensic concerns is astonishing in its breadth, and *Brogdon's Forensic Radiology* presents all this information in a straightforward, lucid prose that is a pleasure to read.

As is true of any well-written text, the core of this book remains intact from edition to edition. Sections cover the history and scope of forensic radiology, identification of remains (both individual and commingled), evaluation of gunshot wounds and of abusive injuries, and the facilities, equipment, techniques, and organization necessary for good practice. Fascinating chapters describe the use of radiology in the study of antiquities and mummies and in the investigation of nonviolent crimes (smuggling, larceny, and art forgery). The text is filled with tips and practical advice, such as the brand of hair spray most efficacious and inexpensive for use in removing ink marks from old radiographs.

The changes that computed imaging have brought to radiology account for much of the new material in the second edition. The illustrations throughout the book are excellent and show the astonishing capabilities of modern computed imaging. These images have been created by machines and software that did not exist when the first edition was published, so one cannot help but wonder what advances will be presented in a third edition in 2025. It is good to see that some of the radiologic images are shown beside a

gross photograph of the corresponding lesion, a visual reminder that a necessary component in harnessing new technologies is the work of validating those technologies against known standards.

Whatever promise new technologies hold, human interaction with the legal system is an essential component of any forensic practice. *Brogdon's Forensic Radiology* has a section on "Coping with the Courts" that is beneficial to anyone practicing in any discipline within the forensic sciences. A judge provides his perspective of expert witnesses and of the role that expert witnesses properly play in court. Another chapter provides excerpts from court transcripts. Some transcripts illustrate expert witness testimony that is egregiously bad in and of itself. Other transcripts illustrate testimony that is delivered indifferently, undermining the value to the court of the expert's opinion. One transcript illustrates a radiologist who skillfully maneuvered through a series of traps and snares during cross examination, expressing himself with enviable clarity.

It is obvious that *Brogdon's Forensic Radiology* will be a useful reference to any physician, whether radiologist or pathologist. But this beautifully written book should not be confined to the libraries of physicians. Valuable though the section "Coping with the Courts" is, *Brogdon's Forensic Radiology* can teach much more about serving as an expert witness. Page after page is an excellent example of how an expert explains his field to others so that anyone can understand the subtleties of the expert's field. The truth is that the entire book is a lesson on how to be a capable, conscientious, curious, and articulate forensic expert. For this reason, *Brogdon's Forensic Radiology* will be a welcome addition to the bookshelf of practitioners of forensic science of any sort.

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