

X. *An Account of a Book, Entituled,*
 Joh. Conradi Beckeri, Phil. & Med. D. *Tractus*
Alsfeld. Medici Ordin. Paradoxum Medico-Legale de
submersorum Morte sine pota Aqua, aliquot Cadave-
rum sectionibus detectum, & e principiis mechanicis
illustratum. Cui adjicitur Dodecas Observationum
circumstantiis curaq; rarissimarum. Gießæ-Hasso-
 rum. A. MDCCIV.

THis Author having made several Experiments about Drowning, and being dissatisfied with the various Opinions that were held concerning it, was induced to write this present Treatise, in which he relates these following Cases, as Matters of Fact.

Having catch'd a Cat, (says he) and designing to make some sport with her, I took a Board with a hole in the middle, and putting the Tail through, I fastned her very well to it, then put her afloat into the River, and by a String held the Board from being carried down by the rapidity of the Stream; afterwards I sent in a well mettled Cur after her, who made very pleasant sport; but the Dog being tired with worrying of the Cat, was suckt into a Whirlpit, sunk down, and never came up again alive. By the help of a Boat, after an hours search for him, we found him, and then carried him home to Dissect him. The *Abdomen* appeared to be a little extended, as did likewise the Stomach and Intestines in a small measure; but that which was the greatest cause of our wonder, there was no Water found in either of them. The Lungs were likewise extended, but in no greater a degree than the Stomach
 or

or Intestines, and lookt exactly as those do in Dogs that are hang'd. We made an Incision into the *Trachæa*, whereupon they sank down immediately. This at first made a great noise, the Physicians were amaz'd at it, and, in short, every one much wondred how a Dog could be drowned without Water. This our Author tells us was the first occasion of his dissenting from the Antients in Cases of Drowning.

The next Observation he gives us, is of a Country-man, who having been missing for some weeks, was afterwards found drowned in a very shallow place. The Body being clean'd from Mud, some Livid Spots appear'd externally, tho we could not perceive any violence had been used; Then we proceeded to open the *Abdomen* and *Thorax*; in the *Abdomen* the Intestines appeared to be full, after we had tyed up the *Gula* and *Duodenum*, that we might more easily judge of the Contents of the Stomach, we took it out, and by the weight of it judg'd there must needs be a very considerable quantity of Water in it; neither were we mistaken in the quantity, but upon cutting into it, it appear'd to be the Liquor he had been too freely drinking of; we thought there might be much about the same quantity in the Lungs, by reason of their great extension; but it happen'd we were out in our guessing, for nò sooner did we cut into the *Trachæa*, but the Wind rushed out, and the Lungs sunk down that very moment. Now had I perceived that any violence had been used, I should certainly have concluded that the Person had been killed, and after he was dead was thrown into the River; but we understood by some present with us, who told us, that they saw the Deceased at a Fair very much in drink (which was the last time that ever he was seen alive) and fancied, that in passing over that River (which he could not avoid) in his way home, he unfortunately fell in; and indeed the contents of his Stomach proved what they said to be true. This Observation did not only throw down the *Hypothesis*

of the Antients, but made me believe that those were in the wrong, who deny'd any person to be suffocated under Water, without they find a quantity in the Lungs or Stomach; it appear'd as certain as could be, that this person went into the Water alive, and yet there was no Water found either in the *Trachea* or Substance of the Lungs. The Liquor he had been too freely drinking of an hour or two before he dyed showed itself plainly in the Stomach and Intestines.

The next Subject the Author tells us of, was a Woman who unfortunately fell into a Well; after the Body was taken out there appeared several large Contusions, there were two upon each Arm, about the breadth of two Fingers, but longer, which lookt as if they had been made with a Stick; the Blood was extravasated between the *Os Bregmatis* and *Panniculus Carnosus* on the Left Side. There were two Fissures on the *Os Frontis*, and one on each Orbit of the Eye. Under the *Pia Mater* of the Left Side we found some black Grumous Blood; the Stomach and Intestines were distended, which upon Incision sunk down; the Lungs were cut into in several places, but not the least drop of Water was found in them. Now if this Woman did tumble into the Water alive, it's plain she dyed for want of Respiration; but if the Fall occasion'd her Death, it proves those to be mistaken, who think that Water can get into the Passages after Death.

A man after 5 days search was found standing upright in the bottom of a Fish-pond; he was carefully taken out and viewed, and not the least mark of any violence appeared. I my self, with the assistance of a Surgeon, opened the *Thorax* and *Abdomen*; the Intestines were very much distended, and contained in them a whitish Liquor like Chyle: The Stomach was so swelled as induced the Spectators to think it was full of Water; we tyed up both the Orifices, and took it out, that we might more easily measure the Contents: It was so very light, that none but those that handled it could ever have imagin'd it; afterwards

wards we opened it, and a great blast of Wind rushing out, it sunk down again immediately; neither was there any more than six ounces of a whitish Liquor in it. The Lungs were so distended with Wind as to fill up the whole Cavity of the *Thorax*; we prickt, and cut into them, but not a drop of Water came from them. The Man had the Character of a poor honest harmless Fellow, and therefore could not well be suspected of being murder'd, and the posture of his standing made every one conclude that it was the darkness of the Night that occasioned his losing his Way and Life at the same time. And as we have all the reason in the World to believe that this person was stifled alive under Water, so we may see how fallacious that standing Rule of the Antients is, who allowed no person to be drowned, without considerable quantities of Water, both in the Lungs, Stomach and Intestines.

After the Author hath given us these Experiments, he proceeds to answer the Objection that was made, of persons recovering by being set upon their Heads; and afterwards to show why it happens, that in drowned persons the Water is seldom found either in the Lungs or Stomach. For which we refer you to the Book itself, containing besides twelve uncommon Observations of different Cases.

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E R R A T A,
In *Philosoph. Transact.* Numb. 302.

PAge 2077. line 21. read *explicasse sibi*. line 25. r. *inde extra*. line 28. r. *legatum*
line 30. r. *indagator*.