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Book Review

Aufderheide AC: The Scientific Study of Mummies, 626 pp, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002 (\$150.00).

Arthur C. Aufderheide, Professor of Pathology at The University of Minnesota (Duluth) and co-author of *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Paleopathology*, has given us, in this clearly written and very well-researched book, a fascinating, multifaceted study of mummified bodies throughout the ages.

After some introductory material concerning a historical survey of mummy studies, the intended purposes of deliberate (anthropogenic) mummification are discussed, as well as mechanisms of mummification. We then are introduced to a worldwide study of the geographical distribution of mummies, with correlation of the environmental, geophysical, and climatological factors involved in the mummification process, followed by the numerous cultural aspects of this subject. One reads about the discoveries of mummified bodies, which is written in such a clear and enthusiastic style that the reader feels that they themselves are a part of the archeological team.

It is the section on Paleopathology that a majority of *Modern Pathology* readers will most likely find of greatest interest. Here we have very concise but comprehensive coverage of various pathologic conditions that have been discovered in mummified bodies, including congenital, degenerative, inflammatory, and neoplastic processes. Numerous gross (black and white) pho-

tographs accompany the textual material, and some histopathologic photomicrographs are included in various other chapters.

The last two sections cover “The Museology of Mummies,” in which the various preservation methods are discussed. The text ends with a section titled “The Use and Abuse of Mummies.” In this chapter we read of numerous anecdotal tales concerning unusual ways in which mummies have been treated throughout history, such as using mummified tissue as a medicine, as ornamental jewelry, as a curse, and as subject matter for both film and literature.

This text is well-referenced, and as is to be expected from a work of this nature, references are gathered from numerous fields of study, including archeologic, anthropologic, historical, biochemical, bacteriologic, forensic, medical, and paleopathologic resources.

This is an enjoyable read. Professor Aufderheide’s love of this subject comes through in each chapter. Even the lay reader, without any significant background in science, will gain from this book because of the author’s lucid style, and I would recommend *The Scientific Study of Mummies* to anyone with even a fleeting interest in this subject.

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