

who outlines the book's scope and limitations. He quite rightly discusses the problem of multifocal pathologies, which are severely limited by the regional approach presented in this book. Having established the possible cause of skeletal change and whether it is indeed pathological and not a non-metric variation, a researcher would therefore be prudent to complement Mann and Hunt's descriptions by consulting more comprehensive books dedicated to pathological conditions. A wide ranging list of recommended literature is provided for this very purpose.

A series of illustrations of annotated complete skeletons showing, from different angles, the main muscle attachments to the skeleton is included. The drawings are somewhat crude, but serve as an overview that can be followed up by more detailed literature on the subject.

Great emphasis has been placed on the interpretation of the conditions noted and on how, in the past, erroneous interpretations were made through a lack of understanding and an absence of solid research techniques. The authors stress that research in modern clinical literature may help to explain, and aid the understanding of, the patterns which occur in past populations. They offer examples and references to work carried out on different skeletal conditions.

As a fundamental overview of the skeleton, Mann and Hunt's book should be available to all novice osteologists. It is certainly a work I wish had been available to me during my university degree and primary years in the field as an osteoarchaeologist.

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Miguel de Asúa and Roger French, *A new world of animals: early modern Europeans on the creatures of Iberian America*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005, pp. xviii, 257, illus., £50.00 (hardback 0-7456-0779-8).

This publication, which focuses on European depictions of New World animals in

the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is unique in the history of science and the history of the Americas. Although other histories exist of European interpretations of Iberian American natural history, often focusing on the eighteenth-century "dispute of the New World", this is the first devoted exclusively to the depiction of animals in the pre-Enlightenment period. It is carefully researched, clearly written, and includes a valuable primary source bibliography of many of the most important early modern European texts dealing with Iberian American nature. Each account also begins with a detailed discussion of the author and text examined, further contributing to the book's value as a reference work.

A new world of animals begins with a brief introduction that lays out the chronology of the text as well as an important theme of the book: the Aristotelian and Plinian models for describing animals that many of the writings followed in the early years of discovery, and then moved away from in later centuries. It then goes on to survey various texts that treated the subject of New World animals, moving in a roughly chronological order from the late fifteenth century to the end of the seventeenth. Chapters are organized by the type of sources examined: the first one focuses on accounts from the earliest explorers such as Columbus, Vespucci, and Cabral; the second turns to mainly soldiers' accounts of New World animals, as well as indigenous descriptions and interpretations of them. These accounts, for Asúa and French, make up a first phase of animal descriptions that they call the "jigsaw-puzzle" approach, in which the writer deals with the newness of the animal by "decomposing" it into various parts and comparing each part with that of an animal known to Europeans (p. 14).

Chapter 3 turns to the more academic and learned accounts of animals in the Americas, such as the natural and moral histories of Oviedo and Acosta as well as the chronicles of members of the Spanish court. These works constitute a second phase

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of animal descriptions in which the authors grappled with the “newness” of the creatures found by using an empirical approach, describing what they experienced or urging their readers to trust the information presented because it had come from eyewitness accounts. Chapter 4 turns to the more “utilitarian” genres of medical encyclopaedias of both Spanish and Dutch origins that would provide useful and strategic information, while chapter 5 treats various Jesuit texts, such as those of Nieremberg, Kircher, and Schott, that sought to explain New World nature and the wonders it included with mystical or natural theology. Finally, chapter 6 turns to a final phase of natural history writing in which mainly British and French naturalists made a decisive move away from earlier attempts to explain the newness of New World animals in terms of ancient models, natural theology, or Scholastic philosophy. Rather, these authors came up with a new method that eschewed the Aristotelian search for causes and developed a fully empirical, observational, and experimental method by which to record data and form new plant and animal taxonomies.

In its careful attention to detail and exhaustive sources, this work is a valuable contribution to the history of science and the history of the Americas. However, its encyclopaedic organization makes it more valuable as a reference work. It would have greatly benefited from more engagement with recent publications in the history of science, particularly those treating the history of wonder and curiosity in early modern Europe (that of Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park in particular), and those focusing on Spain’s contribution to the Scientific Revolution, especially that of Antonio Barrera. In particular, reference to Barrera’s work on the development of an empirical method in sixteenth-century Spain would have helped to clarify the significance of their findings and contextualize their discussions of empiricism. It might even perhaps have pointed to a somewhat different conclusion than the one they reach: that the later English and French methods were not so

decisively different, but rather built upon earlier Iberian precedents.

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Emilie Savage-Smith, *A descriptive catalogue of Oriental manuscripts at St John's College, Oxford*, with contributions by Geert Jan van Gelder, Peter E Pormann, Samira Sheikh, Tim Stanley, Edward Ullendorff, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. xix, 155, 21 colour plates, 16 black and white plates, £60.00 (hardback 0-19-920195-1).

The word “Oriental”, as applied to the cultures of the East, has in recent years declined in usage, and been replaced by “Asian”, a term which does not, however, fully reflect European scholarly tradition. “Oriental” encompasses all the cultures of Asia and Africa. In many instances Asian and African cultures were interconnected, and used the same languages as, for example, Arabic Islamic culture on the Arab peninsula and in Egypt. This new catalogue is in fact a continuation of the traditional British Orientalist “*catalogues raisonnés*”, reflecting both the diversity of Oriental cultures and the “Orientalist” approach to them by European manuscript collectors.

The catalogue describes in detail twenty-six completely uncatalogued or partly catalogued manuscripts preserved in the Library of St John’s College, Oxford. Written in Arabic, Persian, Syriac, Hebrew, Ethiopian, Turkish and Gujarati, the manuscripts came to the College library through various avenues. In general they were donated by the Fellows of St John’s or other people connected to the College. Fifteen, for example, were donated by the statesman and theologian, Archbishop William Laud (d. 1645). Of these fifteen, eight belonged previously to the physicist, naval commander and diplomat Sir Kenelm Digby (d. 1665). The rest belonged to other scholars and clergymen, such as Edward Bernard