

## BOOK REVIEW

GOFF L.M.: A FLY FOR THE PROSECUTION (HOW INSECT EVIDENCE HELPS SOLVE CRIMES). Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 2000, 225 pp. ISBN 0-674-00220-2. Price USD 22.95. Hard cover. 23.5 × 16 cm.

After almost one hundred years since Yovanovitch's "*Entomologie appliquée à la médecine légale*" (1888) and Megnin's "*La faune des cadavres*" (1894) the interest of criminal investigators has returned to entomology. This driven by the need to determine by means of insects (and other arthropods) found on human corpses the time that has elapsed since death, whether bodies have been manipulated or moved from the original scene of the crime etc. Renewed interest was stimulated by Nuerteva with his chapter in "*Forensic Medicine*" (1977) and especially by Smith with "*A Manual of Forensic Entomology*" (1987). Recently other books have appeared on this theme. Among them the book of M. Lee Goff, Professor of Entomology at the University of Hawaii. The style of this book is, however, not common. It is a kind of "biography" beginning with author's first case and the story of how he become involved in this rather sad field. Naturally the first chapters are on the history of forensic entomology and general aspects of forensic entomology such as, the description of the succession of insects species that colonize dead bodies. The majority of the book, however, deals with the author's personal and rich experience of individual criminal cases, describing step by step how he solved them and the role of his experience and that of other researchers in the solution. Although written in an easily readable style and it might be seen

as a popular book, it is a work of scholarship. There is a need information on the systematics of "forensic" insects, their biology and life cycles, the importance of the type of soil under a corpse, whether wrapped or burned and the effect of meteorological conditions on decomposition. In addition there are useful descriptions of the results of author's experiments using pig carcasses and the influence of drugs on the development of maggots and the myiasis that develop when maggots invade living human tissues. M. Lee Goff also answers questions he is frequently asked like "how he can deal with it, if he does not have nightmares" etc., how to resist the temptation to be an advocate for somebody rather than testify before a jury, how it is difficult for the average academic to enter the legal system, and is there a need - to establish Boards of Forensic Entomology (1996), as the forensic community regards forensic entomology as a fringe activity. The last chapter deals with social contact and symposia he has attended and demonstrates the author's wit, which was could not be so obvious in preceding chapters.

The book is illustrated with good pen-and-ink drawings, and has a good bibliography and index. It is highly recommendable for all who have, or need to have, an interest in this matter. The reader imbibes information in a very easy and natural way, rather than with difficulty as from many highly scholarly textbooks. The author passes to the reader all his personal experience as an teacher.

J. Chalupský