

BOOK REVIEW

Erzinçiođlu Z.: MAGGOTS, MURDER AND MEN. (MEMORIES AND REFLECTIONS OF A FORENSIC ENTOMOLOGIST). Colchester, Essex, UK, 2000, 256 pp., semi-hard cover, ISBN 0-946589-65-8. 23,2 × 15cm. Price GBP 13.95.

The birth of "*forensic entomology*" and the revival of this subject after almost one hundred years resulted in the recent publication of two books on this theme. One is Goff's "Fly for the prosecution", which was previously reviewed in the EJE (98: 200, 2001). The mentioned book and the one to be reviewed have a feature in common. They are written by top experts, intimately familiar with the subject, and based on their experiences. This kind of presentation is invaluable.

Erzinçiođlu's book presents a dead human body as a magnificent and highly nutritious resource for various kinds of insects. It discusses the succession of species of insects that attack corpses, the biology and habits of the flies and analyse the criminal cases in which the author has assisted and others. From the description of the crimes it is clear the author has compassion for the victims (often children) and understands the circumstances in which crimes are committed. He does not present the luxurious environment of criminal TV series or whodunnit, but rather the dirty dwellings of a deprived area of London, in which the victim's body is hidden under the floorboards. Victims buried outside are frequently found by a man walking

his dog. And on the basis of the insects present a forensic entomologist (in the same way as a forensic pathologist) tries to help answer the most basic question: "When was the crime committed?"

The book relates the author's experience of contacts with people involved in investigating crimes, of prejudice, attempts to misuse the service, (not often does an entomologist hear encouraging words "Well done, boys!"), adverse effect of league tables for police forces based on the rate of recorded to resolved crimes, on miscarriages of justice, on "muddy-water" consultants, totally unqualified "experts" used to refute evidence presented by the prosecution and many, many others.

The book contains so much information that it is not possible to refer to all of it. Erzinçiođlu is a learned man. This is evident throughout the book. Every chapter begins with a citation from the literature and an illustration by Michael Robert, a former doctor, now a professional scientific illustrator. Each chapter has a section on "sources and further reading" and the book ends with an excellent "index". It is written in a popular, but relevant professional style. It is highly recommended for all those interested in this subject. It is written in very readable way and if it were not for the grim nature of the subject matter would be recommended for recreational reading.

J. Chalupský