The last chapter moves from inhumed to cremated bone, and gives a very valuable summary of the conditions of cremation, the taphonomic variables, which differ strongly from inhumed material, and the basic methodology of sorting, identification and recording. The inferences possible from cremated material are surveyed, including firing temperature (Mays' own experiments are included), and selection/deposition practices, and in only a few pages the humble cremation is shown to be an informative, if an unbeautiful, thing.

Throughout, Mays' writing style is clear, jargonfree and therefore unintimidating to the student. Some sections are particularly concise and elegant, for example, that on anaemia in the US southwest briskly summarizes current opinion on the various contributory factors in the aetiology of porotic hyperostosis, with several examples of socio-economic interpretations. The 16 pages of references are modern and well-chosen. Unfortunately, the illustrations let the book down: the drawings are reproduced 1:1, using a ludicrously disproportionate amount of space and revealing imperfections which would disappear on reduction; type is over-large and intrusively bold and styles are not standardized; the photographs are excellent, although also sometimes over-large.

This book can stand alone as the one textbook on human-bone studies for archaeology students, and combined with a good bone atlas and basic 'howto-do' text, could form the invaluable basis of a teaching course in osteoarchaeology. It now tops my own students' reading list, and experienced osteoarchaeologists could use it for reference with pleasure and profit.

CORINNE DUHIG Wolfson College, University of Cambridge

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