

informal writing style, with many colourful analogies, which aims to make the subject matter accessible and entertaining. The book starts with a brief, though nevertheless interesting, history of epidemiology.

Chapter 2 addresses the shortcomings and biases of burial assemblages that hinder palaeoepidemiological interpretations from archaeological remains; Waldron suggests that the phrase “study-base” should be used to describe such assemblages which are neither “samples” nor “populations” in the epidemiological sense. Chapter 3 focuses on “outcome variables” and emphasizes the importance of operational definitions in the diagnosis of disease, along with the importance of intra- and inter-observer error tests. Chapters 4 to 7 deal with the fundamentals of analysis, and Waldron explains the various epidemiological methods used in modern clinical practice before identifying which of these (sadly not that many) are of use for the study of archaeological human remains. These chapters include information on the recording and interpretation of disease prevalence within populations, how to deal with missing data, methods of comparing prevalence between two burial assemblages, and analytical palaeoepidemiology. Over all it is easy to read and the mathematical elements are not too imposing for the uninitiated, although a few areas are a little confusing and could have been explained more clearly. Chapter 9 on “planning a study” will be of particular use to undergraduate and postgraduate students when producing research designs for dissertations. It presents a useful summary and check-list of steps. Waldron also recommends contacting a statistician before starting research and, as so few students of archaeology now have any in-depth statistical training, this suggestion is a sensible one.

Most of the chapters are successful, but Chapter 8, which deals with the use and abuse of joint disease data for inferring occupation in the past feels incongruous and

superfluous—this subject having been amply covered in numerous publications (e.g. Robert Jurmain, *Stories from the skeleton*, Amsterdam, 1998). Joint disease is obviously an area of expertise for Waldron and almost all the examples in the book relate to this subject. Given that Waldron clearly has a long career of skeletal analysis, it is disappointing that a greater variety of examples and case-studies were not used.

The discipline has moved on since the decade in which *Counting the dead* was published and this earlier book no doubt played a part in this. Waldron must be heartened to see an almost complete elimination of the use of “incidence” in place of “prevalence” in publications over the last decades. A number of issues that are raised in *Palaeoepidemiology* are currently addressed in most studies of disease published in international peer-reviewed journals. Nevertheless, *Palaeoepidemiology* provides an extremely useful synthesis of the appropriate methods with which to analyse human skeletal data, and the problems and pitfalls to watch out for, and as such should be a recommended read for students of osteoarchaeology.

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Karol K Weaver, *Medical revolutionaries: the enslaved healers of eighteenth-century Saint Domingue*, Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 2006, pp. xii, 164, £38.00, \$50.00 (hardback 978-0-252-03085-7); £12.99, \$20.00 (paperback 978-0-252-07321-2).

The French colony of Saint Domingue and the slave revolution that transformed it into Haiti have attracted an upsurge of scholarly attention in recent years. Historians increasingly recognize Saint Domingue’s salience in the Atlantic world and claim for the Haitian revolution a role in the making of

modernity. Karol Weaver's compact and concisely written study takes an unusual approach to the topic by focusing on the colony's medical practitioners. It includes brief chapters on colonial life, European medicine in Saint Domingue, sorcery, the impact of mesmerism, and three chapters on slaves as healers, herbalists, and veterinarians.

A revised PhD thesis, the project is well conceived and contains useful information, but the scholarship is lightweight and the tone jejune. Use of archival sources is rather limited and many endnote citations lack page references. A sprinkling of factual errors, undocumented statements, and minor mistranslations further detract from the book's value, but its chief blemish is the author's tendency to exaggerate various aspects of her topic. She writes of Saint Domingue's "massive medical bureaucracy" and "massive medical establishment" (pp. 25, 40), yet it had only twenty-six licensed physicians and twenty-four apothecaries in a population of some 560,000. Enslaved nurses and midwives hardly occupied "the most respected positions within the slave hierarchy", second only to slave drivers (pp. 3, 43). She cites the cash value assigned to one such woman, but a fuller acquaintance with plantation records would have shown that female domestic servants were often more highly priced and that drivers and male craftsmen were frequently worth twice as much. Such medical personnel, moreover, were common only on the large sugar estates where no more than one-third of the slave population lived. Their importance is also difficult to reconcile with the population's extremely low birth rates and high mortality rates. When planters belatedly began to take population growth seriously, some blamed slave midwives for infant deaths and excluded them from practising.

Weaver claims her subjects were revolutionaries in two senses. They helped to create an enduring Afro-Caribbean medical system and, through varied acts of rebellion,

to lay the foundations of the Haitian Revolution. The first thesis is stronger than the second. The participation in the revolution of magico-religious specialists in minor leadership roles is well known, as is the mobilizing use of amulets, but there is no attempt here to measure the importance of such factors against other ones, nor to consider how the pursuit of supernatural solutions might have diverted slaves away from political activity. The author's definition of "resistance," is generous enough to include "providing infant care to expectant mothers" (p. 59) and the meaning of "healers" is extended to sorcerers who traded in maleficent or beneficent amulets and spells. Most famous of these was Makandal, executed for poisoning and sacrilege in 1758. Weaver's account of his career, like that of most historians, ignores the contemporary judicial investigation and relies on a novelette-like rendering published in a Paris newspaper thirty years after his death. The discussion of *kaperlatas* and related figures is similarly weakened by the fact that the author omitted to consult Drouin de Bercy's *De Saint-Domingue* (1814), which attempted a crude sociology of such social types.

Nocturnal gatherings of slaves in Marmelade parish in the 1780s were confused by colonists with the mesmerist craze then sweeping the white population. Writing of "enslaved mesmerists", Weaver perpetuates this confusion. She correctly links these events to Vodou's Petro cult but, misdating the latter's emergence, she mixes up cause and effect. She also gives credence to baseless claims regarding Amerindian influence on these activities and overlooks the evident Kongolese influence. It is unlikely they were "training grounds for revolution" (p. 112) since during the slave uprising Marmelade remained a bastion of white power.

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