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Review of “Forensic medicine of the lower extremity” by Rich, Dean, and Powers

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At first sight, it seems to be an unusual idea to write a book dealing with Forensic Medicine of the lower extremities as an isolated topic. Accordingly, the authors rhetorically ask “What makes the lower extremity different enough from other anatomic regions that it merits a separate text?” The authors conclude by stating that the lower extremity can provide a plethora of useful forensic information, starting from the identification and ending up with a wide array of biomechanical perspectives. Major chapters are Anthropological Analysis (Part I), Trauma Analysis, and Reconstruction (Part II). The anthropological chapter contains numerous formulas for the determination of gender, race, and stature from skeletal elements of the lower extremities. As a deficiency in the references, the European experts might miss the book by Leopold. Special emphasis has been placed on traumatological and biomechanical chapters including—as major themes—detailed discussions of findings in traffic accidents and child abuse. The illustrations are excellent, specifically in

the chapter on the Radiology of the Lower Extremities. Part III of this study deals with the role of feet and footwear in medicolegal investigations. These chapters, apart from being really informative, contain amusing case reports. I assume that reading this book will both be a useful and a pleasurable experience for experts in medicolegal and criminal investigations. Are there questions that may be omitted in a book like this one? Let us bear in mind that this is merely a small (though by no means unimportant) section of the more general field of Forensic Medicine. Perhaps this would apply to the first chapters, which concentrate on the decomposition of Human Remains and the Skeletal Anatomy of the lower extremities. All in all the book is—if I may quote Kathleen Reich—“a major step forward, certainly in the radiological, traumatological, and biomechanical chapters.” It will greatly enhance day to day work for experts in this specific field of forensic medicine.

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