



Mummies, Cannibals and Vampires: The History of Corpse Medicine from the Renaissance to the Victorians

Richard Sugg

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Mummies, Cannibals and Vampires charts in vivid detail the largely forgotten history of European corpse medicine, which saw kings, ladies, gentlemen, priests and scientists prescribe, swallow or wear human blood, flesh, bone, fat, brains and skin in an attempt to heal themselves of epilepsy, bruising, wounds, sores, plague, cancer, gout and depression. In this comprehensive and accessible text, Richard Sugg shows that, far from being a medieval therapy, corpse medicine was at its height during the social and scientific revolutions of early-modern Britain, surviving well into the eighteenth century and, amongst the poor, lingering stubbornly on into the time of Queen Victoria.

Ranging from the execution scaffolds of Germany and Scandinavia, through the courts and laboratories of Italy, France and Britain, to the battlefields of Holland and Ireland, and on to the tribal man-eating of the Americas, *Mummies, Cannibals and Vampires* argues that the real cannibals were in fact the Europeans. Picking our way through the bloodstained shadows of this remarkable secret history, we encounter medicine cut from bodies living and dead, sacks of human fat harvested after a gun battle, gloves made of human skin, and the first mummy to appear on the London stage. Lit by the uncanny glow of a lamp filled with human blood, this second edition includes new material on exo-cannibalism, skull medicine, the blood-drinking of Scandinavian executions, Victorian corpse-stroking, and the magical powers of candles made from human fat. In our quest to understand the strange paradox of routine Christian cannibalism we move from the Catholic vampirism of the Eucharist, through the routine filth and discomfort of early modern bodies, and in to the potent, numinous source of corpse medicine's ultimate power: the human soul itself.

Now accompanied by a companion website with supplementary articles, interviews with the author, related images, summaries of key topics, and a glossary, the second edition of *Mummies, Cannibals and Vampires* is an essential read for anyone interested in the history of medicine, early modern history, and the darker, hidden past of European Christendom.

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