OBITUARY: DENISE FEREMBACH (1924 – 1994)

Denise Ferembach, one of the representatives of French anthropology well-known among her European colleagues, died in Paris on January 8, 1994. In 1961 she attended (together with Profs. V. Correnti and G. Olivier) the 5th Congress of Czechoslovak Anthropologists in Mikulov, and there met specialists from Czechoslovakia and other Central and Eastern European countries. She kept these professional and personal contacts alive until the end of her life.

In today’s changed among us the value and importance of these contacts, which represented an exceptional opportunity for communication among specialists during the era of the so-called cold war. Denise Ferembach was, moreover, outstanding for her sense of friendly cooperation. These qualities of hers were particularly stressed at the end of some sessions. A few Egyptian mummies in their coffins from the collection of the Zentrum Anatomie or from the Senckenberg Museum in Frankfurt were demonstrated by M. Schulz. The most exciting day, however, was Friday 2nd September, when seven workshops were organised. The first was actually a general lecture on microscopic techniques used in paleopathology, the second was devoted to scanning-electron microscopy of tumours in ancient bones, the third on light microscopy of the same disease and the fourth on radiological diagnoses in paleopathology. The fifth workshop concerned diseases in infancy and childhood, and the sixth joint diseases, and the seventh diseases of the teeth and tooth sockets. All workshops were organized by M. Schulz in collaboration with specialists from Göttingen or abroad.

The social program of the meeting was also rich and varied. There was an unofficial get-together of the participants which culminated in a banquet organized by the Institute of the Göttingen University as well as by the Blechschmidt collection of human embryos in the Zentrum Anatomie. Moreover, those who were interested could take part in a Saturday 3rd September excursion to Hildesheim for visits of the Roemer-Pelizaeus Museum with its interesting Ancient Egyptian, Chinese and Peruvian exhibitions, of the largely reconstructed historic centre of the city and of its castle Plees.

The tremendous work in preparing such a large, long-lasting, extremely well organized congress, richly endowed with social program, by M. Schulz and his colleagues should be highly appreciated and thanked. Future organizers of European paleopathology meetings will have to face this high standard which will not be easy to reach or to surpass.

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189