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Dental Medicine and Dental Health in Ancient Egypt

Thesis submitted for the fulfillment of
MA Degree in Egyptology

By

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Abstract

This thesis discusses the different aspects of dentistry in ancient Egypt.

The first chapter is an introduction including the aim of the work, literature review of the several studies - which mainly were based either on Egyptological studies or anthropological studies and seldom juxtaposing them. The first chapter offers a general review of ancient Egyptian medicine as the context in which the profession of dentistry has been developing.

The second chapter is about dentists of whom we have six persons attributed to this profession, and dental remedies whose ingredients proved to have healing properties being antiseptic, antibacterial, having a soothing effect, reducing painful swellings, analgesic, and some were suitable for temporary teeth filling. The chapter discusses also dental prosthesis of which we have samples made of natural teeth fixed to the jaw by gold or silver wires, and studying also surgical intervention and medical instruments.

The third chapter studies the dental diseases as they are indicated in several anthropological and paleopathological researches. The dental diseases were studied classifying them into five categories: infectious diseases, degenerative diseases, developmental diseases, and genetic diseases. The third chapter also discusses Changes in the patterns of prevalence of these diseases during the different periods of ancient Egyptian history have been also studied together with the role of climate variation between Upper and Lower Egypt on the prevalence of these diseases.

The fourth chapter represents the application of teeth study in archaeology and Egyptology as estimation of age at death for a burial, ancient diet, migrations, and genetic stability.

The thesis comprises appendices providing a map of Egypt, chronological table of ancient Egypt, glossary, figures, and indices.

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