

S. Colum Gilfillan, PhD

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For next 2 weeks at Pensione Fontane
all/Mare, Via N. Tomasseo 14, Naples;
Italy. Nov. 29, 1963.

Dr Robert A. Kehoe,
Kettering Laboratory;
Cincinnati College of Medicine,
Cincinnati 19.

Dear Dr Kehoe:

As a writer on lead poisoning, and director of the lead metabolism studies in the Kettering Laboratory, outstanding on the saturnine metal, I turn to you for hoped for and kind help, on a project ^much beyond my experience, which yet no one else has attempted, nor thought of, and which might well interest you and perhaps some of your colleagues in lead research;

I am collecting bone samples from the Roman imperial period, to have them analyzed for lead. If I find that the rich individuals (identifiable by their tombs) were so heavily leaded that their women could have borne and raised but few or no children, and if the poor were not too badly poisoned, that will be the conclusive, simple and striking proof for my thesis explaining the fact, abundantly recorded in history but never satisfactorily explained nor heeded, that the Roman aristocracy of that period had very few children and continually died out, continually replaced by freedmen and other able parvenus from the lower ranks, who in turn died out on becoming wealthy. The abundance of lead poisoning in ancient Greece and Rome was proved as much as 80 years ago by Karl B. Hofmann and Rud. Kobert, German pharmacologists; but they missed the class angle which gives the fact its whole interest and importance (the fact that it was the rich who were poisoned). Also the Chemistry of their day (ending 1906) could not measure the lead, but only detect it as a trace, as Rosenblatt did.

The social import they missed, which gives my thesis its large significance, is clear and simple: If for 15 successive generations everyone who could make or marry money was bred out of the race; so that the meek inherited the earth, as promised in the Beatitude, that would explain for the first time plausibly why Roman culture, science, art and progressiveness went down to the ruin and Byzantine stagnation of the Dark Ages. The same thing apparently happened a little earlier in the sudden Greek decline of genius. And the like is happening today, not thru lead but thru birth control selective against intelligence.

After many years of interrupted work on this problem I have gone to Europe to gather about a hundred bone specimens divided between rich and poor, 20 by now from 3 countries, taking such bones as the archeologists will let me have, but preferring parts of the adult scapula, vertebrae, ^{also} long bones, sternum or teeth, with their sex and age when pos-

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know is how to equate one bone or bone-portion with another, how to take account of the personal age factor (tho I have one graph), how large samples I must have, in terms of very dry but not ash weight, and what process were best and cheapest for the analysis, and who might best perform it;. I have obtained proposals from the Geochemical Laboratories of ~~Barn~~ Bromley, Kent;, England, who would use colorimetry (dithizone I suppose) at perhaps \$15, and from McCreath in Harrisburg, who would use their new atomic flame/absorption equipment, at \$14.50 per sample in series. Prof. Sandell would prefer the dithizone method of accuracy, or the spectrographic method for cheapness; and I think its $\pm 10\%$ would be sufficient. Prof. Moorbath of Oxford would prefer (1) dithizone, (2) polarography, (3) Emission spectroscopy or spectrography. Copper and tin will be present in the bones, often, and must be eliminated if using dithizone.

The lead in the rich diet came in many ways, but especially thru their wine and their grape sirup.

I should be glad to obtain the continuing and formal co"operation of a physician known for his work on lead poisoning:.

I have been unable to find in the medical libraries of London or Rome your own Spectrochemical study of the Normal Ranges, nor your Lead Absorption and Excretion in Relation to Diagnosis. But I have made notes from hundreds of other articles and books.

My training has been in the social sciences, with but a course in Chemistry. I can read all the important languages. My principal life work has been in the social science aspects of invention; it may be looked up in Amer. Men of Sci., Soc: Sci: vol. currently, and in 1951 and earlier eds. in Who's Who in Am.

Much hoping that you can assist a fellow student on some of the above points, and that my thesis will interest you and prove worthy of assistance. I remain

Most sincerely yours,



P.S. Pardon this foreign typewriter; which won't behave.