Bergman’s Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Human Anatomic Variation
As the reader sees from the title of this textbook, it is dedicated to Dr. Ronald Bergman.
Dr. Bergman was not the first to collect and publish on the variations of the human anatomy
(e.g. Henle, Macalister, Adachi). However, he was the first to publish on this topic at such an in
depth and comprehensive scale. My first introduction to Dr. Bergman's *Compendium of Human
Anatomic Variation* was as a graduate student. As any dissector will eventually do, I came across
something unusual in one of our cadavers during a routine dissection. I asked by my mentor,
Dr. George Salter, about this who said, “You know there used to be a book in the lab office that
focused on the anatomic variations of the body.” After some digging, I was delighted to find this
book, which I set out to memorize as best as I could. From that day on, Dr. Bergman's book and
Gray's Anatomy were my main resources for studying anatomy. Therefore, this current text is not
only an updated resource but also a tribute to the pioneering efforts of Dr. Ronald Bergman who
reminded us that no two bodies are the same!

R. Shane Tubbs
I would like to dedicate my work on this enormous project to my son, Isaiah. Isaiah you are the light of my life! To my wife, Susan, you are the best. Many thanks to Drs. Rod Oskouian and Johnny Delashaw for their encouragement. Also, Dr. W. Jerry Oakes has supported this project and my other academic endeavors and I sincerely thank him. Lastly, I thank Dr. E. George Salter for persuading me to take on a career in anatomy and for first introducing me to the *Compendium of Human Anatomic Variation*!

R. Shane Tubbs

To Susan and Shane Tubbs, a very beautiful couple.

Mohammadali M. Shoja

To the love of my life, my wife Joanna Loukas

Marios Loukas
## Contents

List of contributors, xi  
Preface, xvii  
Foreword by Stephen W. Carmichael, xix  
Foreword by Ronald A. Bergman, xx  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Skull</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Selcuk Tunali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hyoid bone</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>R. Shane Tubbs and Koichi Watanabe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cervical vertebrae</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Joseph H. Miller, Michael C. Lysek and Mark N. Hadley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Thoracic vertebrae</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Benjamin J. Ditty, Nidal B. Omar and Mark N. Hadley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lumbar vertebrae</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Ross Dawkins and Mark N. Hadley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sacrococcygeal vertebrae</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>R. Shane Tubbs and Marios Loukas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Scapula</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Peter Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Clavicle</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Z.J. Daruwalla, R. Malhotra, P. Courtis, C. Fitzpatrick, D. Fitzpatrick and H. Mullett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Humerus</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Peter Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Radius, ulna, carpals, metacarpals, and phalanges</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Munawar Hayat and Marios Loukas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ribs and sternum</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>R. Shane Tubbs and Koichi Watanabe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pelvic bones</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Alper Cesmebasi and Marios Loukas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Bones of the lower limb</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Matthew Haffner and Michael Conklin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Temporomandibular joint</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>Toral R. Patel and Jarrod A. Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Shoulder joint</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>Brion Benninger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Elbow joint</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Giuseppe Giannicola, Federico Maria Sacchetti, David Polimanti, Gianluca Bullitta, Marco Scacchi and Pietro Sedati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Wrist and hand joints</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>Benjamin Todd Raines and Jean Oakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Sacroiliac joints</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>Niladri Kumar Mahato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Hip joint</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>Robert Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Knee joint</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>Brion Benninger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Ankle and foot joints</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>Takamitsu Arakawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Orbital muscles</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>Necdet Kocabiyik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Middle ear muscles</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>José Francisco Rodríguez-Vázquez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Facial muscles and muscles of mastication</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>Koichi Watanabe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Anterior neck muscles</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>Hye Yoon Lee and Hee Jun Yang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Pharyngeal muscles</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>Yujiro Sakamoto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Soft palate and tongue muscles</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>Swetal Patel and Marios Loukas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Prevertebral and craniocervical junction muscles</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>Yujiro Sakamoto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Laryngeal muscles</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>Eva Maranillo and Jose Sanudo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Back muscles</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>Barclay W. Bakkum and Nathan Miller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Scapulohumeral muscles</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>Clare Lamb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Arm muscles</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>Keiichi Akita and Akimoto Nimura</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
33 Forearm muscles, 298
   Keiichi Akita and Akimoto Nimura

34 Hand intrinsic muscles, 315
   Mirtha A. Gonzalez and David T. Netscher

35 Thoracic wall muscles, 335
   Michael Snosek and Marios Loukas

36 Abdominal wall muscles, 369
   Tsuyoshi Saga and Nagahiro Takahashi

37 Pelvic diaphragm and external anal sphincter, 381
   Howe Liu and Yasser Salem

38 Perineal muscles, 384
   R. Shane Tubbs and Koichi Watanabe

39 Gluteal muscles, 386
   Helen Nicholson and Natasha Flack

40 Thigh muscles, 410
   Maira du Plessis and Marios Loukas

41 Leg muscles, 421
   H. Wayne Lambert

42 Intrinsic muscles of the foot, 438
   Rene M. Kafka, Ian L. Aveytua, Regina C. Fiacco,
   Garen M. Ream, Anthony C. DiLandro and Anthony D’Antoni

43 Internal carotid artery and anterior cerebral circulation, 449
   Paul Foreman, Christoph J. Griessenauer, John P. Deveikis
   and Mark Harrigan

44 Vertebobasilar arteries, 461
   R. Shane Tubbs and Marios Loukas

45 Persistent fetal intracranial arteries, 465
   Soner Albay

46 Common carotid and cervical internal carotid arteries, 475
   R. Shane Tubbs and Marios Loukas

47 External carotid artery, 477
   Selcuk Tunali

48 Vertebral artery, 487
   Bernard George and Michaël Bruneau

49 Thoracic aorta, 501
   Veyssel Akgur, Salih Hamcan, Yalcin Bozkurt and Bilal Battal

50 Coronary arteries, 530
   Horia Muresian

51 Pulmonary arteries, 569
   M. Cumhur Sivrikoz

52 Subclavian artery, 575
   Selcuk Tunali

53 Upper limb arteries, 583
   Anthony Olinger

54 Abdominal aorta, 619
   Daisy Sahni, Anjali Aggarwal, Tulika Gupta, Harjeet Kaur, Richa Gupta,
   Kunal Chawla, Narbada Saini, Shallu Garg, Anjali Singla, Arpan Deep, Harsimran Jit Singh,
   Devendra Shekhawat and Megha Rapotra

55 Renal arteries, 682
   Priti L. Mishall

56 Internal iliac arteries, 694
   Richard Tunstall

57 Lower limb arteries, 741
   Akshal Patel

58 Arteries of the spinal cord, 752
   Marius C. Bosman and Albert van Schoor

59 Diploic veins, 770
   Satoshi Tsutsumi

60 Dural venous sinuses, 775
   Shamfa C. Joseph, Elias Rizk and R. Shane Tubbs

61 Cerebral veins, 800
   Alireza Sadighi, Ulâş Cikla, Gregory C. Kujoth and Mustafa K. Başkaya

62 Emissary veins, 817
   R. Shane Tubbs, Koichi Watanabe and Marios Loukas

63 Veins of the neck, 821
   R. Shane Tubbs and Koichi Watanabe

64 Veins of the upper limb, 826
   Teresa Vazquez and Jose Sanudo

65 Intrathoracic veins, 832
   Jonathan D. Spratt

66 Cardiac veins, 854
   Horia Muresian

67 Pulmonary veins, 871
   Yuttaphan Wannasopha and Junthima Euathrongchit

68 Inferior vena cava, portal and hepatic venous systems, 877
   Jonathan D. Spratt

69 Adrenal, renal, gonadal, azygos, hemiazygos, lumbar, and ascending lumbar veins, 890
   Marios Loukas and R. Shane Tubbs

70 Iliac veins, 894
   Deepali Onkar

71 Veins of the lower limb, 900
   Santosh K. Sangari
Venous drainage of the spinal cord, 910
Joel Raborn, Christoph J. Griessenauer, Mohammadali M. Shoja and R. Shane Tubbs

Thymus, 914
Ivan Varga

Tonsils, 919
R. Shane Tubbs and Marios Loukas

Thoracic duct, chyle cistern, and right lymphatic duct, 921
Young-Bin Song

Lymphatics of the lower limb, 935
Shun Yamazaki, Hiroo Suami, Nobuaki Imanishi, Sadakazu Aiso, Minoru Yamada, Masahiro Jinzaki, Sachio Kuribayashi, David W. Chang and Kazuo Kishi

Forebrain, 939
R. Shane Tubbs, Mohammadali M. Shoja and Marios Loukas

Cerebral ventricles, 943
Martin M. Mortazavi, Nimer Adeeb, Mohammad Jaber and R. Shane Tubbs

Pons, medulla oblongata and cerebellum, 954
Dylan Goodrich, Jennifer Yang, Joseph H. Miller and W. Jerry Oakes

Subarachnoid space, 959
Martin M. Mortazavi, Nimer Adeeb, Fareed Rizq and R. Shane Tubbs

Meninges, 974
Nimer Adeeb, Martin M. Mortazavi and R. Shane Tubbs

Spinal cord and associated structures, 984
Shoko M. Yamada, Daniel J. Won, Pedro B. Nava, R. Shane Tubbs and Shokei Yamada

Cranial nerves N-VI, 989
Jenna R. Voirol, Kelley A. Strothmann, Anthony Zandian and Joel A. Vilensky

Facial nerve, 1005
Mohammadali M. Shoja and R. Shane Tubbs

Vestibulocochlear nerve, 1034
Mohammadali M. Shoja and R. Shane Tubbs

Glossopharyngeal nerve, 1036
Mohammadali M. Shoja, Marios Loukas and R. Shane Tubbs

Vagus, accessory, and hypoglossal nerves, 1041
Mohammadali M. Shoja, Christoph J. Griessenauer, Marios Loukas and R. Shane Tubbs

Autonomic nervous system, 1050
Paul Anthony Irwin, R. Isaiah Tubbs and R. Shane Tubbs

Spinal nerves, 1057
R. Shane Tubbs

Cervical plexus, 1062
Necdet Kocabiyik

Nerves of the upper extremity, 1068
Mark A. Mahan and Robert J. Spinner

Lumbosacral plexus, 1113
Nihal Apaydin

Facial asymmetry, 1130
Senem T. Ozdemir, Marios Loukas and R. Shane Tubbs

Eyelids, eyelashes, and eyebrows, 1133
Candace R. Wooten and Marios Loukas

Eye and lacrimal apparatus, 1145
Frederic J. Bertino

Lateral nasal wall and paranasal sinuses, 1158
Amr E. El-Shazly

Ear, 1167
Aman Deep, Martin M. Mortazavi and Nimer Adeeb

Salivary glands and ducts, 1182
Louise Wing and Tarik F. Massoud

Thyroid gland, 1189
Bulent Yalcin

Parathyroid glands, 1205
Bulent Yalcin

Laryngeal cartilages, 1209
Arán Pascual-Font and Jose Sanudo

Trachea, 1212
Koichi Watanabe

Lungs, 1217
Koichi Watanabe

Heart, 1234
Maira du Plessis and Marios Loukas

Esophagus, 1247
Koichi Watanabe

Stomach, 1253
Koichi Watanabe

Gallbladder and extrahepatic bile ducts, 1261
Mark D. Stringer

Liver, 1272
Koichi Watanabe

Pancreas, 1278
Koichi Watanabe
110 Spleen, 1282
Koichi Watanabe

111 Small intestines, appendix, and colon, 1285
Koichi Watanabe

112 Sigmoid colon, rectum, and anus, 1308
Thandinkosi E. Madiba and Mohammad R. Haffajee

113 Kidney, urinary bladder, and ureter, 1315
Mohammad Reza Ardalan

114 Adrenal gland, 1332
Gülñur Özgüner

115 Male genitourinary system, 1335
Courtney L. Shepard, Dustin T. Gayheart
and David B. Joseph

116 Female genital system, 1364
Sedat Develi

117 Placenta and umbilical cord, 1387
Sedat Develi

118 Breast, 1390
Matthew Rubacha

Index, 1398
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Since the beginning of time, differences between humans have made us identifiable to those around us. Some extreme forms of morphological variation have even resulted in individuals being either unique or outcasts. For example, dwarfs have been revered in various cultures and even represented in royal courts and some cultures have bestowed a god status on children born with multiple limbs. Other variations, however, have been viewed as “different” enough to warrant being ostracized. Children being born with a caudal appendage (tail) who were considered offspring of Satan exemplify this.

Human anatomic variation can be defined as human form that is outside of the normal. However, what is normal? This question is often very difficult to answer. For example, most would agree that having two breasts is normal but what about a woman with accessory breasts? Is this normal, abnormal or even pathologic? Is it a variant or an anomaly? Sometimes, the answer to these questions is based on cultural norms or societal acceptance.

Obviously, hair color is certainly varied among individuals with many having a color that doesn't fit into the classic brown, black, red, or blonde categories. But are various hair colors that one of these terms does not apply to have a variation or is this simply an issue of definition e.g. red in the broader sense would include auburn, strawberry, etc.? In other words, our definition of normal is the gauge by which an anatomic trait is considered a variation or not. Some have tried to shed light on this by using such words as “borderlands.” Beyond the “border” a trait is thereby considered a variation. To confuse these issues, the term anomaly is and has been used interchangeably in regard to both variation and pathology. Herein, we have attempted to avoid pathologic anatomy but often, the line between an anatomic variation that is pathologic or predisposes one to pathology and one that is just a trait that is outside of what is considered normal is very gray. Moreover, as the term “anomaly” is often used to denote a variation that results in dysfunction or disease, we have tried to avoid this term when possible. However, the form of a structure may cause dysfunction in one person and not another. Therefore, “anomalies” do not always result in dysfunction or disease. The terms “abnormal” and “aberrant” have each been used loosely in the medical literature to describe anatomy that is non-pathologic or results in dysfunction.

Confoundedly, there are variations within variations. Where does one draw the line between a variation that is accepted as “normal” (the so-called normal variant) and a variation that is considered “abnormal”? In this text, we have attempted to be more inclusive than not. If the majority of individuals do not have an anatomic trait, then we have considered it a variation. With this however, the definition of majority has to be defined.

A quarter of a century ago, Dr. Ronald Bergman set forth to collect and publish a compendium of human variation. His textbook soon became the gold standard in human anatomic variation. As anatomists, we consulted this text almost daily. However, in the interim since its publication, radiologic technology and improved optics such as the surgical microscope have allowed us to see into the body with better accuracy than ever before. As a result, many more variations have come to the anatomist's and clinician's attention. Therefore, an updated textbook devoted to human anatomic variation seemed timely. However, as no single text on human anatomy can include all of the intricate details and structures of the body, so too can no single text on human anatomic variation capture all known or reported variants of the body, although we have tried. This tome will attempt to capture many of the known variants of the human form.

Nothing is pleasant that is not spiced with variety.

Francis Bacon

Through every rift of discovery some seeming anomaly drops out of the darkness, and falls, as a golden link into the great chain of order.

Edwin Hubbel Chapin

Variety is the very spice of life that gives it all its flavor.

William Cowper

The essence of the beautiful is unity in variety.

W. Somerset Maugham

I have called this principle, by which each slight variation, if useful, is preserved, by the term of Natural Selection.

Charles Darwin

Variety of mere nothings gives more pleasure than uniformity of something.

Jean Paul

The gifts of nature are infinite in their variety, and mind differs from mind almost as much as body from body.

Quintilian
To such an extent does nature delight and abound in variety that among her trees there is not one plant to be found which is exactly like another; and not only among the plants, but among the boughs, the leaves and the fruits, you will not find one which is exactly similar to another.

Leonardo DaVinci

The catalogue of forms is endless: until every shape has found its city, new cities will continue to be born. When the forms exhaust their variety and come apart, the end of cities begins.

Italo Calvino

R. Shane Tubbs
With the possible exception of a few pairs of identical twins, the anatomy of every human being on this planet is unique. That means that there are as many anatomical variations as there are people! Obviously, only a small percentage of these variations are of clinical significance. There are subtle variations in facial anatomy that will allow a clinical anatomist to tell one person from another, but that is not the type of variation that this textbook is about. Instead, this textbook is a resource for the clinical anatomist who needs a single comprehensive source for all the variations that have been published in peer-reviewed journals or web sites.

This new text is the first of its kind since *Compendium of Human Anatomic Variation: Text, Atlas, and World Literature* by Ronald A. Bergman, Sue Ann Thompson, and Adel K. Afifi published in 1988. There have been many published accounts of variations since that time. In fact, this text contains thousands of published variations. This update is clinically important in view of recent advances in surgery and radiologic imaging. For a surgical example, endoscopic surgery makes what was previously an insignificant variation now necessary for the surgeon to recognize in order to perform a procedure safely. Improved resolution of radiologic images in all modalities makes it more important to be able to recognize what is pathologic and what is a normal variation.

Bergman’s “Compendium” was the “gold standard” of its day. This text will soon become the new gold standard. Even Dr. Bergman would agree with that!

Respectfully submitted,
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This book, with great personal pride for me, provides elegant confirmation of the proven fact that the human body (as well as every living thing) is not created without variability. To paraphrase a profound statement by Sir William Osler, “variability is the rule of life”! The present book complements and extends a previous compendium, and an internet edition of human anatomic variation. Dr. Shane Tubbs conceived and developed this revision. He and his co-editors expand our knowledge and are to be very highly commended for keeping the concepts fresh in the minds of all who are interested in the structure and function of the human body.

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