

BOOK REVIEW

A Companion to Dental Anthropology. Joel D. Irish and G. Richard Scott., editors. Published in Oxford by Wiley-Blackwell, 2016. pp. xviii + 540. Illus. Indexed. ISBN 978 – 1-118-84543-1, Price: US\$195.00; Can\$215.00, Ebook Can\$172.99.

As the 29th addition to the book series, “Blackwell Companions to Anthropology”, this is a welcome and much needed inclusion to the burgeoning fields of dental anthropology. With an illustrated hard cover depicting the late Christy G. Turner II at work, two Neolithic male crania and dental pathology in a Swazi skull from the renowned Dart Collection at the University of the Witwatersrand, the book’s comprehensive encompassment of components of dental anthropology in nine parts and 31 chapters is a tour de force in hominin odontology.

With a list of 41 authors that comprise the “whose who” of the dental anthropology canon, this work is destined to become a cornucopia of odontological inquiry. The contents of this book transcends Brothwell’s “Dental Anthropology” (1963), Kelly and Larsen’s “Advances in Dental Anthropology” (1991), and Hillson’s “Dental Anthropology” (1996) by the incredible advances in instrumentation and imaging techniques, isotopic, DNA and genetic analyses and the paleoanthropological discoveries made in the past quarter century.

The nine parts of the book deal with Context, Dental Evolution, The Human Dentition, Dental Growth and Development, Dental Histology, Dental Morphometrics, Dental Health and Disease and finally, the future of dental anthropology. Each chapter concludes with an extensive list of references that range from Retzius (1837) to among the most current (Irish JD et al., 2014), constituting an absolute treasury of the odontognathic masticatory literature. The continuing expansion of dental anthropology into related fields is exemplified by the affinity of diets to dentitions (Forshaw, 2014; Morin et al., 2016).

Readers of this tome should be aware that, as much as the contents are current, the rapidly developing expansion of dental relevance in related fields of diets, genetics and paleo-odontology (Hlusko, 2015; Zinc and Lieberman 2016) is mandatory for contemporary study of this discipline. A

whole new archeological source of paleodietary investigation of ancient dental calculus allowing for paleogenetic analysis of mitochondrial genomes providing maternal lineage ancestry is being revealed (Ozga et al., 2016).

The book is unreservedly recommended for students and scholars of odontology, dental evolution, masticatory anatomy, forensics, and related fields.

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