

B O O K R E V I E W S

Anne L. Grauer (Editor), *A companion to Paleopathology*, Wiley-Blackwell New York 2016, pp. 626 (Euro 195,00).

This book will be appreciated by many students and professional workers in the field for both its structure and its content, being at the same time very clear and scrupulous in such a way as to be scholar-friendly and very extensive and comprehensive in the interest of researchers. The discussed topics, thanks to their variety and multidisciplinary, shall be of interest for paleopathologists, physical anthropologists, biologists, genetists, epidemiologists and other scientists from different backgrounds. In particular it combines the characteristics of a companion to the subject matter, as stated by the editor herself, with the merits of a handbook, an information source and a review of the discipline. The advantage of the book is to have reached an interdisciplinary cooperation between paleopathology and its neighboring disciplines and it appears as a result of a painstaking work, including consultations with a large number of experts in order to provide a thorough review on the subject and a synthesis of the key points of paleopathology. Through the chapters it provides a bird's-eye view on a large number of questions and arguments on the discipline, since as is said by the editor: *<<each contributor to this volume has been asked to provide a snapshot of a topic, and to expose issues and controversies together with their vision of a particular aspect of paleopathology. Their voices are varied, but their own: ranging from dense and detailed, to more casual and introspective. They reflect the discourse in our field>>*.

Starting from the framing of paleopathology, its objectives, its history and changes through time and controversies, the volume treats about the discipline's current and ever-evolving approaches to new directions and interpretations and its relationships with archaeology on one hand and clinical medicine on the other. As the purpose

of paleopathology is to diagnose and to place diseases into an evolutionary, environmental and healthiness context in order to understand variables and to create new questions, it is important to promote cooperations and interdisciplinarity. The chapters of the book progress gradually from the general to the particular: beginning from the near and related sciences which supply multiple approaches to paleopathology contributing to its research, as ethics, genetics, epidemiology, parasitology and archaeozoology (Part I), it proceeds to discuss methods and techniques of inquiry (Part II), mostly lent by afferent fields as radiology, clinical medicine and statistic. In Part III the dissertation comes finally to the subjects proper to paleopathology, offering different voices from a large number of authors and researchers based on their own specialization: tumors, developmental disorders, trauma, infectious diseases, metabolic disorders, joint diseases and oral health. In this chapter they all speak about general problems that the discipline deals every day with: how the human body and the bone tissue react to pathological stresses, how the different diseases occur at the skeletal level and the way to recognize the global onset of a pathology on the skeleton to reach a more probable diagnosis.

Very interesting is the Chapter 2 on ethics in the use of human skeletal remains by P. Lambert, which offers a review on the codes that guide researchers to conduct ethical studies on human remains and the Chapter 4 in which R. Buzon speaks about advantages of a bioarchaeological approach to paleopathology to develop a more in-depth analysis of the human illness and morbidity; remarkable is also Chapter 14 for its global usefulness to the researchers, where D. J. Ortner discusses the important matter of differential diagnosis in diseases classification, providing an important dialogue between modern clinical data and paleopathology.

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