ANIL AGGRAWAL'S
Internet Journal of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology
The world's first online journal devoted entirely to forensic medicine and toxicology · Published 1 January and 1 July

VOL. 15, NO. 1
Downloaded from www.anilaggrawal.com · ISSN 0972-8074 (Online) · https://www.anilaggrawal.com/ij/vol_015_no_001/reviews/tb/page002.html

Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

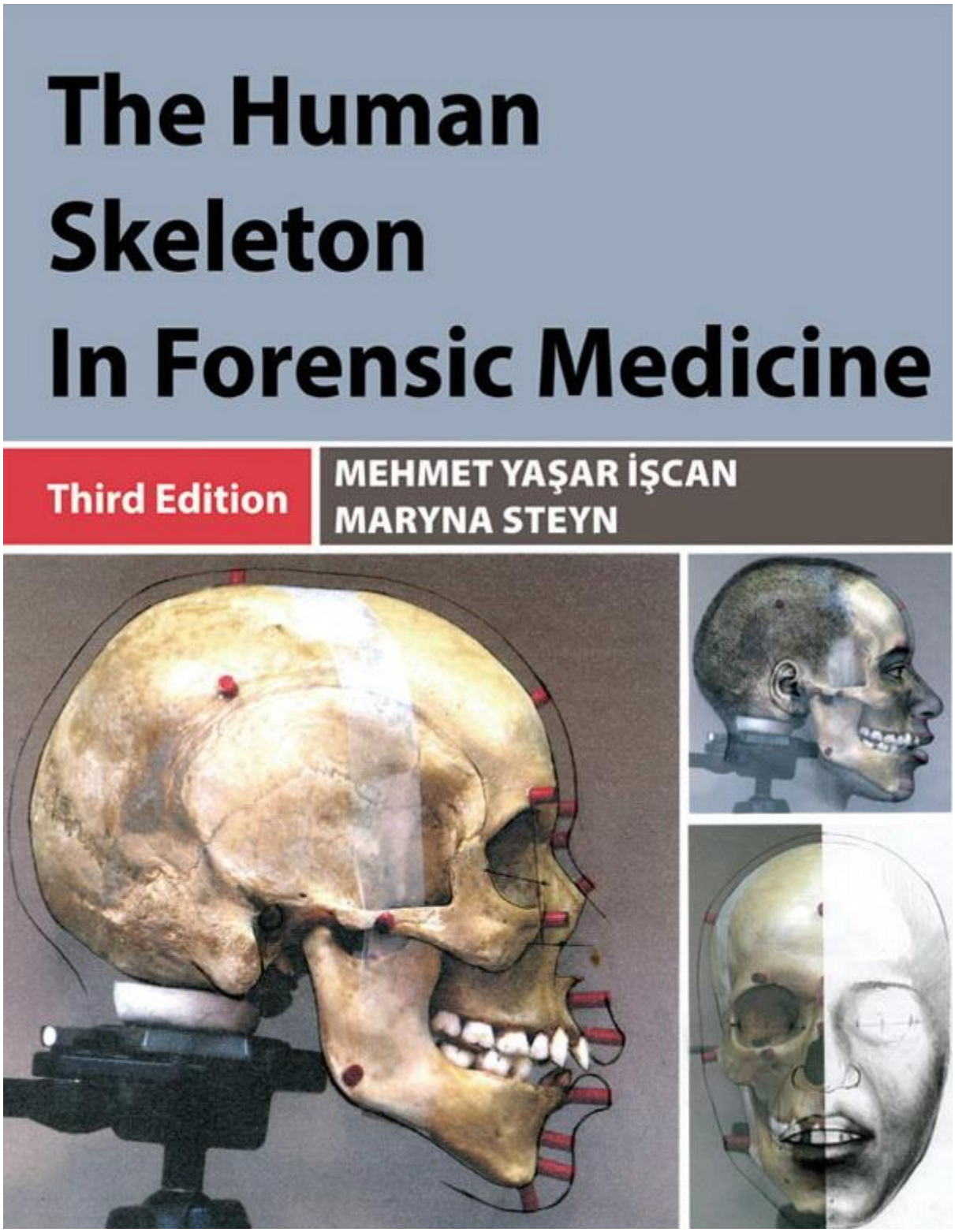
...3 rd EDITION OF ANTHROPOLOGISTS' BIBLE IS HERE! ...this is an excellent addition to forensic literature. It is world wide in its scope, very well written and understandable. Given the breadth of the field, the authors have done an excellent job of covering most of the important aspects of forensic anthropology. Highly recommended to everyone connected with forensics... Rating : 10/10...

The Human Skeleton in Forensic Medicine, 3rd Ed, by Mehmet Yasar Iscan and Maryna Steyn. Hardcover, 11.2" x 8.7" x 1.1".
Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 2600 South First Street, Springfield, Illinois 62704. Publication Date 2013. 516 pages, 263 il., 88 tables, ISBN-10: 0398088780; ISBN-13: 978-0398088781. Price – Hardcover: $74.95; eBook: $64.95.

Visit the Official site of this book by clicking here

Buy from Amazon by clicking here.

Click above picture to buy from Amazon.



*W*e have all grown up with Iscan's classic "The Human Skeleton in Forensic Medicine" 2nd edition, which came out more than 25 years back in 1986. During this period, considerable changes occurred in the field and forensic anthropology became a distinct specialty in its own right. That necessitated a new edition. We all were secretly wanting the new edition of "Iscan" to come out. Fortunately it is out now!! This is the book under review.

Chapter 1 introduces the subject of forensic anthropology. In this chapter, the authors explain what is forensic anthropology and who exactly is a forensic anthropologist. The authors start with the classical definition given by Stewart in 1979 [the branch of physical anthropology, which for

forensic purposes, deals with the identification of more-or-less skeletonized remains known to be, or suspected of being human], and then take us through several modern definitions. It is the authors' contention that forensic anthropology must necessarily include examination of living beings also. Indeed the authors have added a separate chapter entitled "Forensic Anthropology Of The Living [ch 12]". They go on to describe Iscan's definition ["a multidisciplinary field combining physical anthropology, archaeology and other fields, including forensic dentistry, pathology and Criminalistics.]" and then a few others. But the authors seem to concede that the definition of forensic anthropology is far from settled. Indeed they assert that this lack of clear definition has allowed forensic anthropology to take on different course in different parts of the world. In North America, forensic anthropologists come from a combined archaeology and anthropology background. On the European continent, on the other hand, many are medically qualified. This often includes forensic pathologists or other medical specialists who are experienced at skeletal analyses and practice forensic anthropology as an aspect of their work. In Spain forensic anthropology is mostly practiced as a sub discipline of forensic medicine. In the UK, in contrast, it is often associated with archaeology.

...The book now adds detailed discussions on crime scene investigation, including excavation techniques, time interval since death, human or animal remains, mass graves, and preparation of remains. Existing chapters have all been thoroughly revised. They bring readers in line with the current concepts of skeletal age; determination of sex; assessment of ancestry; calculation of stature; factors of individualization; superimposition and restoration of physiognomy...

In Latin America, practitioners have vast experience but not necessarily high levels of academic training. In Australia and South Africa, most personnel dealing with forensic anthropological casework are based in anatomy departments. The U.S. is the only country with an official system of examination and, following that, accreditation of forensic anthropologists. ABFA board certification requires diplomats to regularly submit case reports to show that they are up to date and their reports of acceptable standard.

A section on "ethics in forensic anthropology" has been added. Such questions were never raised earlier; it is only recently that the issue of ethics in forensic anthropology is being considered.

The book is studded with several illustrative pictures like this. This one from page 14 shows indicators burial pit (disturbed stratigraphy); (G) upcast on the surface; (H) undisturbed surface. Click picture to


C
G
E

With the relatively new role of forensic anthropologists in dealing with living people eg in age estimations, a whole new set of ethical issues arise. Issues such as exposure to radiation with x-rays, disclosure, informed consent, and legality of actions are important. It is gratifying to see that the authors have addressed these questions for the first time.

The book now adds detailed discussions on crime scene investigation, including excavation techniques, time interval since death, human or animal remains, mass graves, and preparation of remains.

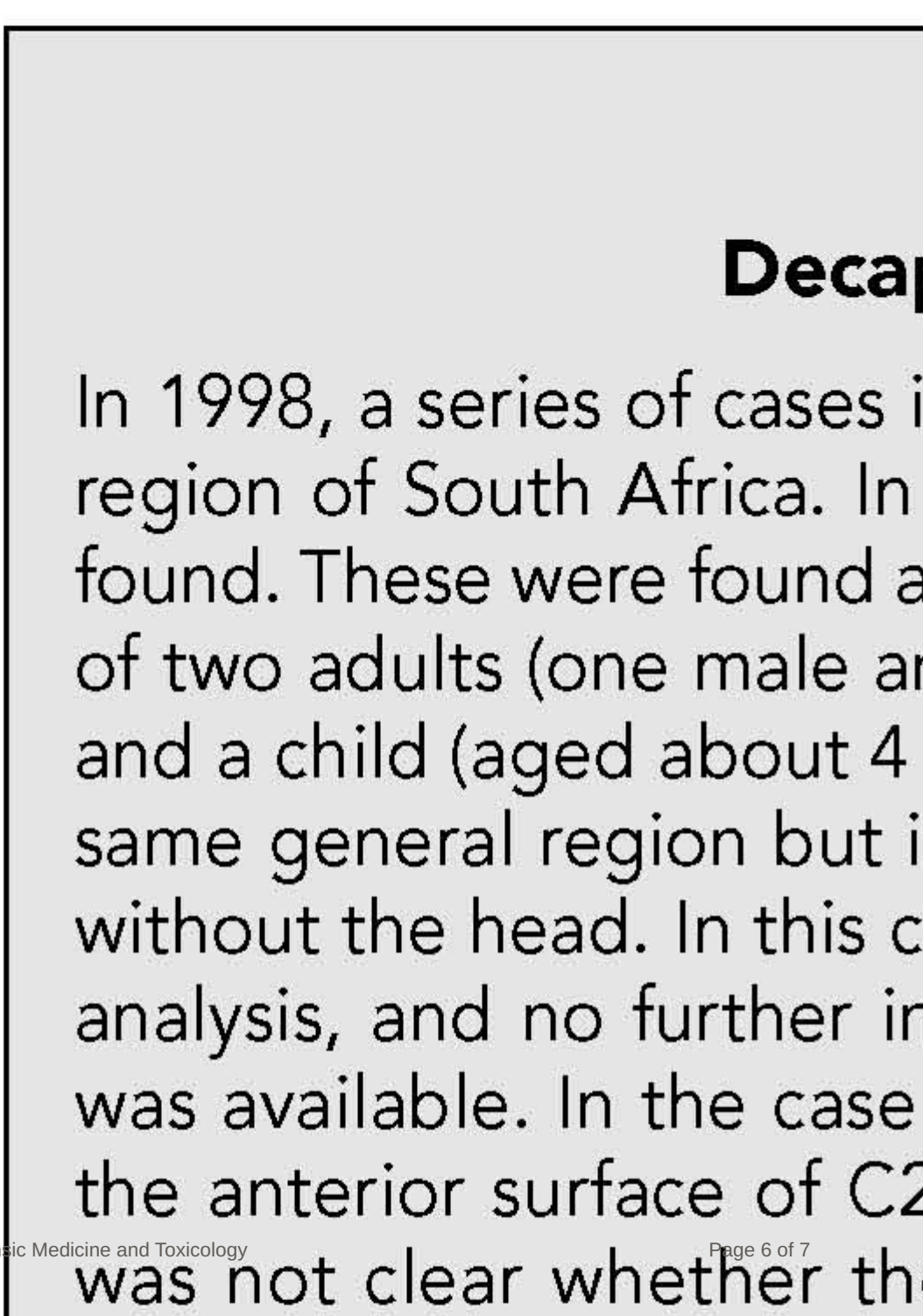
Existing chapters have all been thoroughly revised. They bring readers in line with the current concepts of skeletal age; determination of sex; assessment of ancestry; calculation of stature; factors of individualization; superimposition and restoration of physiognomy.

There was no mention of the word “taphonomy” in the earlier edition, for the simple reason, this word did not exist at that time. Now the authors have devoted a whole new chapter to it. **Chapter 2** is entitled “**Forensic archaeology and taphonomy**”. Among other things, this chapter tells us about techniques to locate buried bodies ranging from simple observation to the use of sophisticated equipment. In general, surface changes in soil and vegetation may indicate a grave as in the accompanying diagram.

The book gives several illustrative case studies like this. This one from page 333 shows how one can stu

Decap

In 1998, a series of cases i
region of South Africa. In
found. These were found a
of two adults (one male ar
and a child (aged about 4
same general region but i
without the head. In this c
analysis, and no further in
was available. In the case
the anterior surface of C2
was not clear whether th



Other chapters deal with aging and sexing of skeleton and determination of ancestry and stature. I found at least five new chapters which were not there in the earlier edition. these are ch 8 [bone pathology and antemortem trauma], ch 9 [perimortem trauma and thermal destruction], ch 10 [facial approximation and skull-photo superimposition], ch 11 [DNA analysis in forensic anthropology] and ch 12 [Forensic Anthropology Of The Living]. Each chapter is a pleasure to read and is studded with good pics and diagrams.

There is a chapter on dental analysis, which examines such topics as dental anatomy, nomenclature, estimation of age in sub adults and adults, determination of sex and ancestry, and pathological conditions.

Every chapter ends with “summarizing statements” so the reader can recapitulate easily what exactly has he learnt from that chapter.

The previous edition had 2 appendices. Even the current edition has 2; but what the authors have done is that they have removed one appendix entitled “Osteology” and in its place have added a new an more relevant appendix called “Dental anatomy and identification.” The authors give excellent drawings of deciduous and permanent dentition in this appendix.

Although all of the sections of the book have been updated significantly, the authors have retained some sense of history to recognize the many pioneers that have shaped the discipline.

The text will assist forensic anthropologists and forensic pathologists who have to analyze skeletons found in forensic contexts. This book has a global perspective in order to make it usable to practitioners across the world. Short case studies have been added at numerous points to illustrate the diverse aspects of the work.

I enjoyed reading the book thoroughly and feel that this book would increase its hold among practitioners of forensic medicine and forensic anthropology. I for one would certainly keep it with me as a ready source of information, whenever I have to solve some difficult case of forensic anthropology.

View this book on Amazon

Request a PDF file of this review by clicking here. (If your screen resolution can not be increased, or if printing this page is giving you problems like overlapping of graphics and/or tables etc, you can take a proper printout from a pdf file. You will need an Acrobat Reader though.)