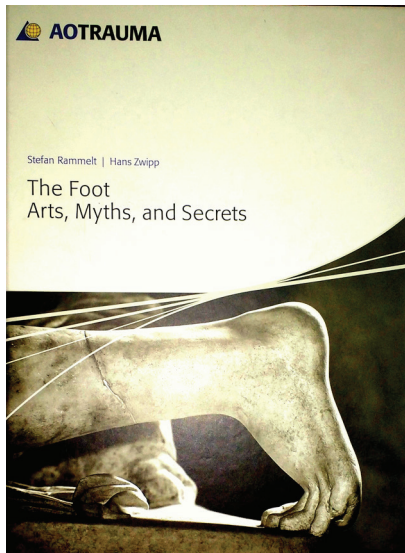


Book Review



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The Foot—Arts, Myths, and Secrets

History, arts, and philosophy are fun subjects! While this topic is debatable, especially among surgeons, Dr Stefan Rammelt and Dr Hans Zwipp have put in an extraordinary effort to compile a unique and one-of-its-kind book about a very unique structure of our body—the *foot*! As you waft through the pages of this informative as well as entertaining book, you can feel the deep passion that the editors and authors of this book share about the foot. Although orthopedic surgeons are highly knowledgeable about the anatomy, pathomechanics, and surgical treatment of various foot disorders, it is surprising how much we don't know about the evolution of the foot from prehistorical times to the modern times and the importance of foot in history, language, arts, and folklore!

The chapters of this fascinating book have been compiled by leading AO foot and ankle trauma surgeons from across Europe—Dr Jan Bartonicek (Czech Republic), Dr Patrick Cronier (France), and Dr Kaj Klaue (Switzerland); it has been edited by world-renowned foot surgeons Dr Stefan Rammelt and Dr Hans Zwipp from Germany.

The book has five main sections which are interwoven in a graceful and smooth manner:

1. *Symbolism and Language*: Hans Zwipp takes us across time in this section about the role of feet in different languages; in proverbs, allegories, and aphorisms; in synonyms and as eponyms; across various ancient cultures and civilizations to the modern times. Also, he throws light on how the foot is consciously and unconsciously used as a symbol of respect, power, life, and freedom and even as an erotic, sexual part of the body and fertility.
2. *History*: This section focuses on the history of ankle fracture classification and management. The modern era of ankle fracture treatment began with the description of bimalleolar ankle fracture by Sir Pervicial Pott in 1768, which till date is eponymously called Pott's fracture. Light is thrown on several watershed moments and discoveries across history including the vital impact the discovery of X-rays had on the understanding of these injuries. Contributions of eminent foot surgeons and radiologists have been listed in a chronological order. These events have been sewn across in an interesting, continuous narrative description which piques your curiosity, never bordering on being boring (which is so often the case with history chapters!). The authors should be commended for compiling such an exhaustive list of historical events with authentic copies of invaluable pictures and original drawings by eminent master surgeons like Malgaigne, Chaput, Tanton, Danis, Cotton, Lambotte, Ludloff, etc., to name a few.
3. *Art*: This section delves into the remote, exciting world of "artistic anatomy." Here are examples on how precise anatomical knowledge of the foot has been used by numerous artists (including the likes of Michelangelo, Leonardo DaVinci) in famous and infamous paintings and sculptures. Many artists conducted extensive dissection of cadaver feet to replicate the exact anatomy in their works of art, which has contributed to the knowledge of anatomy that we possess today. In fact, the portrayal of tendons of the feet is considered a mark of the measure of the artist's anatomical knowledge. Some famous paintings have depicted various common and uncommon foot

disorders; also, the evolution of the human foot can be observed by studying these paintings in chronological order from prehistorical to modern times.

4. *Mythology*: This section focuses on the tragic story of King Oedipus Tyrannos; it is actually the story of an entire family afflicted with a foot deformity (damned royal family of Thebes). This fascinating story has been described as being essential to the understanding of the basic philosophical ideas of “Tragedy & destiny” and “Malediction & penalty.”
5. *Evolution*: This section compiled by Dr Stefan Rammelt gives a crash course on the evolution of the foot across the ages and we realize that no other part of the human skeleton has undergone such dramatic changes like the foot. What is even more interesting is the idea that the human foot is still in a stage of evolution and the observation that many foot disorders are still related to “atavistic traits” like the hypermobile first ray and a tight gastrocnemius. A notable feature is the detailed description of the anatomy and evolution of accessory bones and sesamoid bones of the human foot.

To summarize, this book describes with great detail and finesse the uniqueness of the human foot, the associated myth, art, legend, history, and its ever-constant evolution. It is both informative and entertaining, which makes it a must have book for all passionate foot and ankle surgeons. This unique textbook-cum-novel can easily find a place in your library as well as on your coffee table!

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