

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Readers are invited to submit reviews of current literature relating to origins. Mailing address: ORIGINS, Geoscience Research Institute, 11060 Campus St., Loma Linda, California 92350 USA. The Institute does not distribute the publications reviewed; please contact the publisher directly.

BONE PICKING

BONES OF CONTENTION: CREATIONIST ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN FOSSILS. M.L. Lubenow. 1992. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Co. 295 p. Paper, \$12.99.

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The human fossil record is strongly supportive of the concept of Special Creation. On the other hand, the fossil evidence is so contrary to human evolution as to effectively falsify the idea that humans evolved.

So begins the preface to this fascinating (and thoroughly referenced) book, which challenges much that most of us have believed about paleoanthropology, while confirming some things that we have only suspected. Lubenow is on the conservative end of the creationist spectrum, and his purpose for the book is to:

... demonstrate that even when the human fossils are placed on time charts according to the evolutionist's dates for these fossils, the results do not support human evolution but conflict with it.

The book serves as an extremely accessible introduction to the field of paleoanthropology, with terms and concepts defined, the important fossils placed in historical and taxonomic context, and scientists identified and associated with their respective institutions. The problem of the radiometric dating methods are dealt with in an appendix, where the story of the 10-year attempt to fix the proper date on Richard Leakey's KNM-ER 1470 is told.

After several chapters of introduction, Lubenow dedicates chapters to Neanderthal man, to archaic *Homo sapiens*, and seven chapters to

Homo erectus, which he considers “the key to the proper understanding of the human fossil material.” In Chapter 16 he then synthesizes his arguments, using the “most comprehensive human fossil charts to be found anywhere in the scientific literature.” What Lubenow does is to put species on the X axis and radiometric time on the Y axis. He then lists the known fossils from each species at the proper time level. Doing this reveals that anatomically modern *Homo-sapiens*-like fossils coexist with *Homo erectus*, *Homo habilis*, and at least two species of *Australopithecus*. Perhaps his most electrifying claim is that anatomically modern humans existed at 4.4 million radiometric years, but he substantiates this from the literature.

A full chapter is devoted to explaining why Christians should be interested in human origins. His vehicle is the Baby Fae story. Then comes a chapter on the Big-Bang and its relevance to the question of human origins, followed by a fascinating “proof” of an early date for Genesis, with Moses as redactor or editor. The early date is held by conservative Christians in contrast to a later date for the view that Genesis is a compilation of tradition. I would like to see someone with appropriate expertise respond to this chapter. Finally, in his last chapter Lubenow deals kindly but firmly with fellow Christians who adopt a non-literal view of Genesis.

The book ends with a major appendix on radioactive dating, 20 pages of endnotes arranged by chapter, and three indices: of persons, fossils, and topics. This book should be read and re-read by everyone interested in being informed on the subject of paleoanthropology.