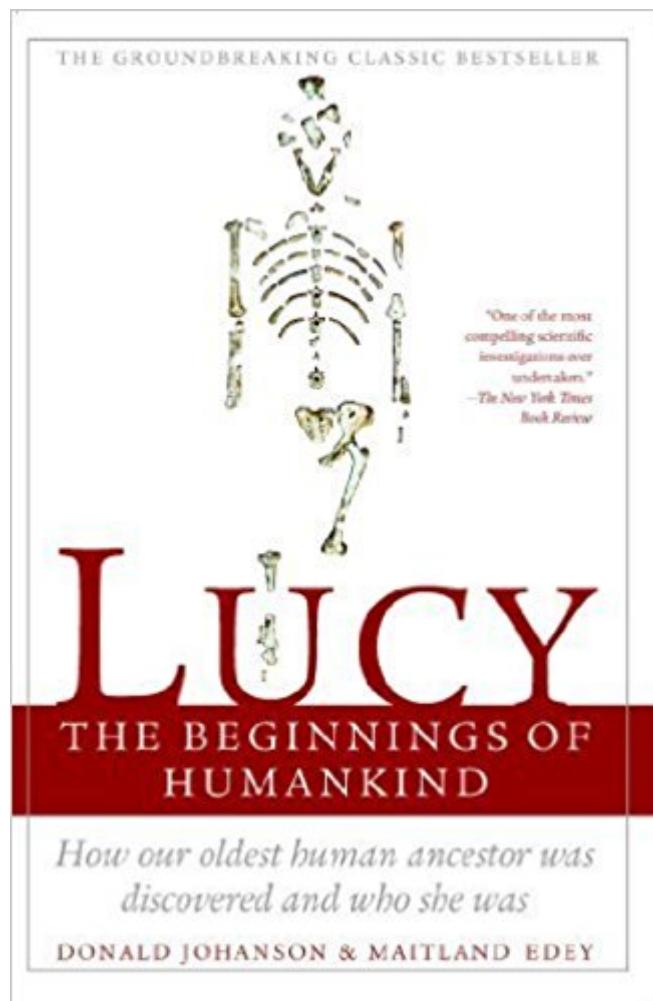


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Lucy: The Beginnings Of Humankind



Book Information

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Everyone should read this

Donald Carl Johanson (born 1943) is an American paleoanthropologist; he has also written Lucy's Child: The Discovery of a Human Ancestor, From Lucy to Language, Ancestors: In Search of Human Origins, and Lucy's Legacy: The Quest for Human Origins. [NOTE: page numbers refer to the 409-page hardcover edition.] He wrote in the Prologue to this 1981 of his team's discovery of the "Lucy" fossil: "There was no bone duplication. But a single individual of what? On preliminary examination it was very hard to say, for nothing quite like it had ever been discovered. The camp was rocking with excitement. That first night we never went to bed at all. We talked and talked. We drank beer after beer. There was a tape recorder in the camp, and a tape of the Beatles song 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds' went belting out into the night sky, and was played at full volume over and over again out of sheer exuberance. At some point during that unforgettable evening... the new fossil picked up the name of Lucy, and has been so known ever since..." (Pg. 18) Of the arguments of Sir Solly Zuckerman, he notes, "With Zuckerman kicking up more and more biometric dust, Le Gros Clark thought it appropriate to challenge him to produce a full set of chimpanzee teeth that bore any resemblance to australopithecine teeth. Zuckerman could not. He ignored the challenge and continued to fire off statistical salvos until professional statisticians began pointing out that his figures had not been calculated properly." (Pg. 76) He notes, "[C. Owen] Lovejoy does not have a good explanation for the condition of Lucy's hand or arm. Compared with a human arm, hers is rather long, so he again asks the question: what did she use

the long arm for?... Lucy's sexual strategy had turned her into a biped. Did she climb at all? If so, how much?... how does one explain her hand? It should have long, apelike fingers, but it does not. They are rather short. Furthermore, although it has the fully opposable thumb of humans, the muscles of the base of the thumb appear to have been small. This means that ... power gripping which involved the thumb and the entire hand was poor. This is exactly opposite to what scientists hitherto have thought... Lovejoy admits that it may take years to unravel that problem." (Pg. 348-349)For anyone wanting to know about how "Lucy" was discovered, and its immediate aftermath, this book will be of great interest.

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Oh no Richard E. Leakey move over for Donald Johanson, who discovered Lucy (AUSTRALOPITHECUS AFARENSIS) opening up a whole new chapter, or book on the History of the human species. The book its self has a small section of color pictures. There are black and white illustrations of key points and charts. Peppered throughout the book there are monochrome pictures. I found chapter 3 the most intriguing on what is Lucy. The pull the John the teeth apart put them back together pull them apart again until you know what Lucy really is. There's an extensive index and a useful bibliography. You will want to own this book just for technical literacy and to be able to compare and contrast to other writers on the subject.

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