

## BOOK REVIEW

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### A Review of *The Anatomy and Biology of the Human Skeleton*

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**REFERENCE:** Steele, D. G. and Bramblett, C. A., *The Anatomy and Biology of the Human Skeleton*, Texas A&M University Press, College Station, TX 77843, 1988, 291 pp., \$55.00 cloth, \$29.50 paper.

This book discusses human skeletal anatomy from an anthropological perspective. It is written by two students of the late Thomas W. McKern, in part as a tribute to their mentor. The basis for this book is the lab manual developed by McKern for his osteology class and then elaborated on by Steele and Bramblett as they went on to teach their own classes.

After two concise introductory chapters on basic terms and procedures and bone biology, nine chapters are devoted to particular regions of the skeleton. For each bone, a discussion of landmarks, ossification and age changes, variations, and pathologies is presented. Excellent black-and-white photographs show each bone in many views, using a biological supply house specimen as the model. There are nearly 400 photos in all.

I noticed very few typographical errors, but there are a number of slips, some more serious than others. Three photos (parietal, articulated hand and foot) are not labeled as to side. This could cause confusion, since the articulated hand and foot are the left side while the individual bones of the hands and feet are right. The anthropometric instrument is a coordinate calipers, not a coordinating calipers (p. 61). Actually, in this instance, the authors may be referring to a simometer, a modified coordinate calipers.

There is a critical misstatement on p. 228, where it is written that the epiphyses of the knee fuse before that of the femoral head. This is simply not true, as McKern (1970:44) attests. The authors bear an understandable bias towards McKern's system of pubic aging, but mention should have been made of the research Suchey has been doing over the past few years. By the time this manuscript would have gone to press, she had already begun to report on her research. Suchey is referenced here only for her work on dorsal pitting in pubes.

There is a confusing discussion of discriminant function on pp. 55-56. The authors demonstrate how to apply Giles (1970) functions for sex and choose a function which requires "measurements 1, 2, 5, and 9." The first problem is that they do not refer the reader to Table 3.7 (pp. 66-69) for a listing of landmarks and measurements. The second problem is that, in this table, the landmarks are numbered while the measurements are not. One has to count down the list to find the appropriate measurements. The third problem is that measurements 1, 2, 5, and 9 as counted are not the ones required in the chosen function; those would be 1, 2, 7, and 18. The authors do, however, maintain a good balance between the value of quantitative and qualitative observations.

The text is followed by a glossary and bibliography; the only entries post-1985 are those of Steele. In all, this is a well-organized, nicely done book which should prove to be a useful lab manual for students and professionals.

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