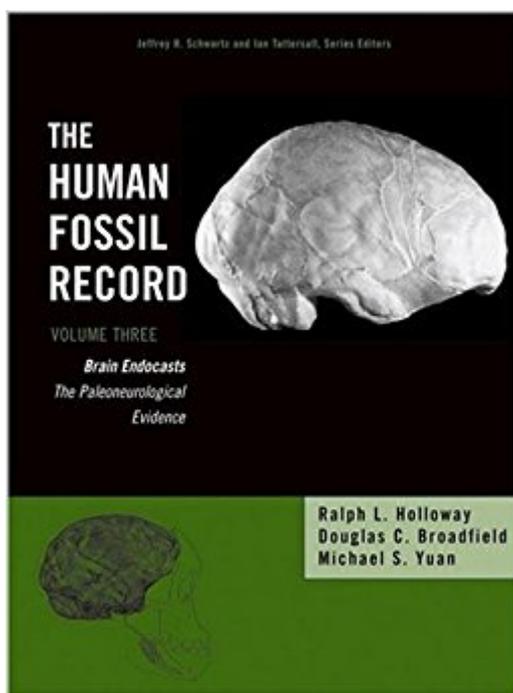


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The Human Fossil Record, Brain Endocasts: The Paleoneurological Evidence, Volume 3



Synopsis

Brain Endocasts is the only comprehensive, single-volume work dealing exclusively and uniformly with fossil hominid brain endocasts. Never-before-published photographs come together with easily accessible, coherent descriptions to create a detailed reference on the paleoneurological evidence for human evolution. Each entry offers essential information related to the location, dating, associations, and morphology of a given endocast. The text also covers the latest methodologies and techniques available for studying endocasts. In addition, a concise summary shows how these fossil records contribute to our understanding of human evolution and behavior.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Human Fossil Record Brain Endocasts--The Paleoneurological Evidence, Volume 3 is an overwhelmingly comprehensive source for paleoneurological methods and existing cranial fossil evidence. The extreme specialization of the content presented itself as an extended journal article rather than a textbook. However, Holloway, Broadfield and Yuan use language that is both scientific and technical yet accessible to those who are not familiar with the field, making it very pleasing to read. What follows should give the purchaser an excellent idea of what to expect while reading this book by providing key excerpts that illustrate the strong writing style as well as thorough and balanced analysis by the authors. "For brain size in [primate] species, we regard the correlation, however crude, with behavior to be self-evident. We also tend to believe that organs that vary in

size and that have some relationship to behavior follow a Darwinian evolutionary model. Indeed, this is basically how we tend to view our own braininess, that our brains became larger, and our larger brain sizes were selected for as we evolved because we were capable of more complex and intelligent behavior." -- This statement would lead the reader to believe that there is a positive correlation between increasing brain size and increasing intelligence. The authors rebuke this idea, however, by illustrating that extant Homo sapiens have brains that vary from 900-2000 grams without any noticeable impacts on intelligence and make criticisms of those who believe that a difference of 50 grams in brain volume between ancestral species correlates directly to an increase in brain function. What the authors do support is that differences in brain size across generations do serve as a way to quantify natural selection.

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