

On the whole, this publication is bound to be a good introduction to those interested in studies in arid regions, looking for methods of initiating and maintaining sustainable development.

1F/1, Ranga Rao St.  
Puduppalayam  
Cuddalore - 607 001  
Tamil Nadu

R. VAIDYANADHAN

**ANCESTRAL PASSIONS : THE LEAKEY FAMILY AND THE QUEST FOR HUMANKIND'S BEGINNINGS**, (1995). By Virginia Morell; *Simon & Schuster*, New York, pp.638, Price : US \$ 30.00.

The Leakey family in East Africa has held the centre stage in the discovery of human fossils and artefacts for well over half a century. This team of husband, wife and son have pursued the quest for human origin with a single minded passion and determination. In this process they were involved in several controversies, including the accusation of unscientific approach and monopolising the research activity as well as the funding for the work on human ancestry.

While this voluminous book is of a biographical nature and aimed at the psychological and social aspects of the making of a scientific family and their personal relationship, it also elaborates upon all the extant theories of human ancestry and evolution of thought in this direction, during the greater part of twentieth century. Coming from a professional journalist without any formal training in Palaeoanthropology, the subject has been dealt in a racy style which makes it absorbing for both amateurs and professionals. There is a lot of information about the origin of humankind and the debate that ranged about the single ancestry from African australopithecids and the adaptive radiation that followed. There are fascinating sidelights on the development of the science of Palaeoanthropology during an eventful half-century.

The book also gives an insight into the functioning of the premier scientific funding agencies like British Museum, Royal Society, Smithsonian Institute *etc.* A sideline is also on the personal and other prejudices that go into the awards and prestigious fellowships of various scientific organizations. Over all, it is a well researched book which is of interest and inspiration to any scientific worker.

Department of Geology  
University of Jammu  
Jammu - 180 001

S.K.SHAH