

## Ariel attack: welcome weapon

A review of:  
**Origins — linking  
science and Scripture**  
By Ariel A. Roth  
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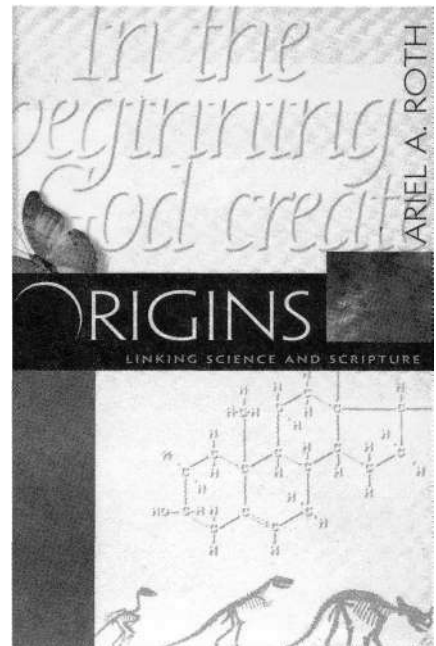
*Origins — linking science and Scripture*, is an excellent addition to the burgeoning creationist literature. It should boost the Christian's faith in a literal creation, the global Flood, and the reliability of the Bible. It covers a variety of topics in five main parts and a concluding part. Each chapter ends with a summary and a large list of references, which I found helpful. These are almost exclusively from non-creationist sources which ensures his work is fully up to date and all the more penetrating. The book is well written, easy to read and, remarkably, I found no typographical errors. As a general overview, but with plenty of details — some new — the book would be a good first purchase for someone who knows little about creation/evolution and Flood/uniformitarian issues. It would also be a challenging book for skeptics against creationism, Christianity, or the Bible. It is even suitable for the atheistic and agnostic scientist seriously inquiring into the issues, since the tone of the book is not disparaging to their position, and a number of issues are not stated dogmatically, but leave room for further research — an admirable scientific position.

The first of five parts shows that the creation/evolution question is still unresolved, and sets the scientific stage by outlining the controversy surrounding that question. In the

second chapter, Roth illustrates how philosophical and sociological fashions influence the scientific enterprise and how the currently ruling paradigm endangers the search for truth. Based on a historical perspective, Ariel Roth concludes that truth can be difficult to find, and our search must often reach beyond prevailing opinion. Concluding the first part, the third chapter discusses how science originated from the biblical worldview and that no fundamental antagonism need exist between science and Christianity. Part of the perceived conflict between science and Christianity is due more to definitions of terms, attitudes, and interpretations, rather than basic principles.

Leaving behind the philosophical issues, the author in part 2 links science and Scripture (his subtitle) in the field of biology. Of course, the most important question is analyzed first: Did life evolve or was it created? The creation explanation for the origin of life is strong, while the evolutionary explanation is weak. Our understanding of the staggering complexity of the cell is growing — daily. It is impossible that a living cell could evolve by chance. Why any biologist would remain an atheist or agnostic is difficult to conceive (apart from Rom. 1:18 ff.) because intricacy and vast complexity, the results of intelligent design, abound in the biological world. It seems that God is grabbing the attention of biologists, saying, 'I am here.' Ariel Roth not only delves into the difficulty of any abiogenetic origin of life, but shows how some of the newer ideas, like the RNA model, are like climbing the first micron of Mt Everest in the quest for the origin of life.

Although evolutionists still believe the feeble mechanisms of mutations and natural selection can achieve the



impossible, Roth shows in Chapter 5 how weak these really are. He concludes:

*'Their general failure [to find a viable mechanism], however, raises a sobering question: Is evolutionary thought more a matter of opinion than of hard scientific data?' (p. 91).*

The title of chapter 6 is fitting: *'From complex to more complex'*. Here, Roth spells out what science has demonstrated: that life is extremely complicated, even at the simplest level. Focusing on the eye, he concludes that the data overwhelmingly favour an intelligent designer.

Of course, human origins, the topic of chapter 7, is important in any survey of biology. Roth shows how the evidence for the evolutionary explanation of human origins is sparse, controversial, and tainted with the personal prejudices of the scientists — so much so that he considers that firm conclusions cannot yet be made. Roth ends the biological issues of part 2 with a number of modern controversies, such as the molecular evolutionary clock, cladistics, and the complexities revealed by molecular biology. He delivers a challenge for rationality on the part of scientists:

*The creation alternative suggests that a variety of organisms with*

*limited adaptability were purposefully designed. Creationists do not have all the answers, but the different opinions and the number of scientific problems for evolution can suggest that the creation model deserves serious consideration.*' (p. 142).

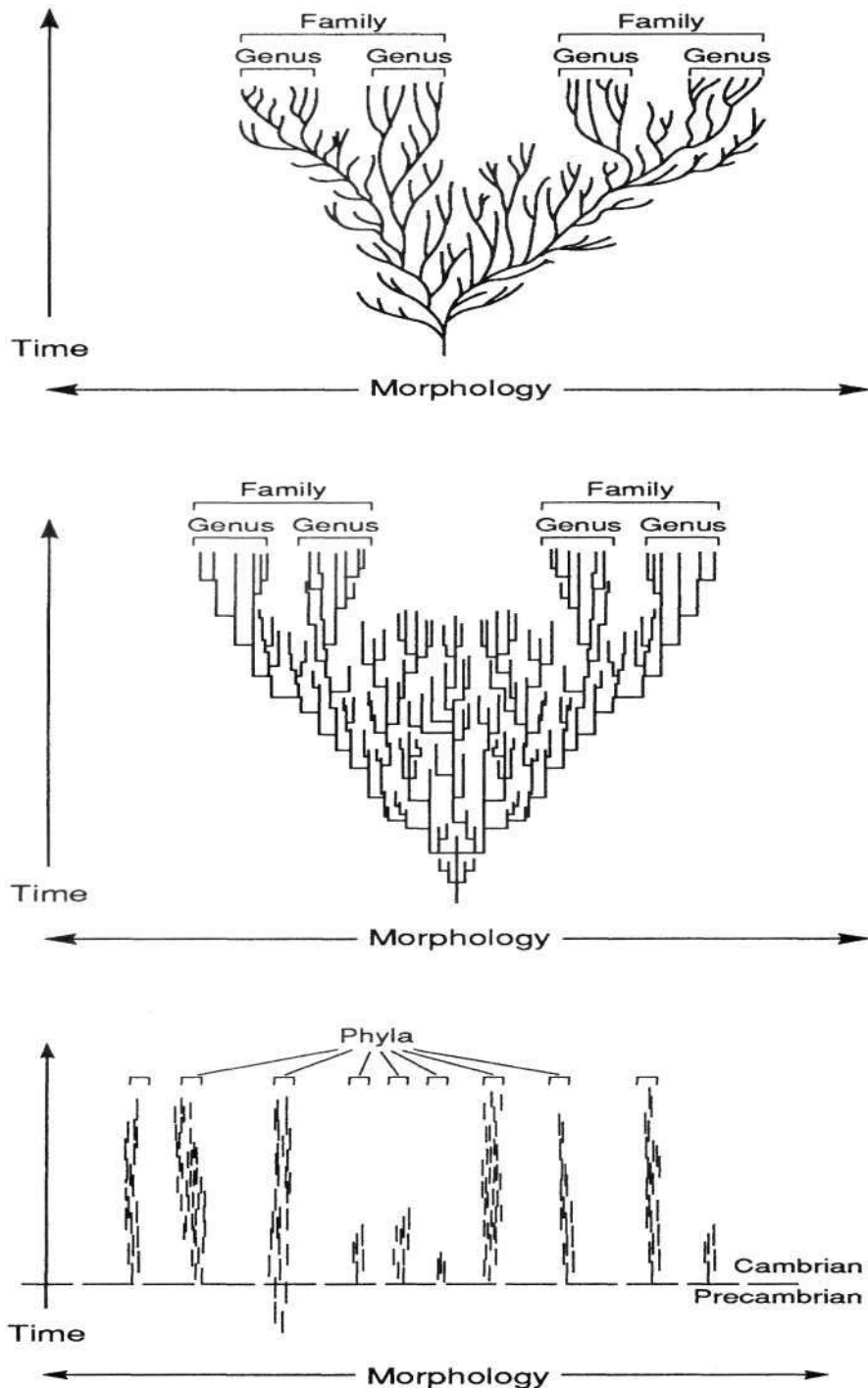
Parts 3 and 4 on the fossils and the rocks, respectively, especially interested me. I am always eager to explore new ideas in the earth sciences that advance the Flood model. The contrasting explanations for the fossils and the rocks highlight the difference between the creation and evolution models and I agree with the author's assessment. Mainstream uniformitarians have spent much time and tax money developing their models, while we creationists are only at the beginning stages in developing Flood models. Already we have made great progress but there is much to do, both in the field and in the library. Much in these two parts refutes the geological models based on evolutionary/uniformitarian philosophy. We have powerful data that point to the Flood.

Fossils are discussed in three chapters in Part 3. Topics include the difficulty of making a fossil, the pseudofossil problem, the gaps in the fossil record, claimed missing links, the Cambrian explosion, and the questionable rates of evolution required by the geological column. Ariel Roth leans towards accepting the geological column as a Flood sequence. Consequently, he uses part of chapter 9 and all of chapter 10 to explain how the Flood could produce the order of fossils in the geological column. These mechanisms, all of which I consider plausible, are: 1) the motility of animals, 2) variable buoyancy in water, and 3) ecological zonation. Undoubtedly other ordering factors applied during the Flood, as acknowledged by Roth (p. 168).

Part 4, on rocks, details powerful evidence for a global inundation and was my favourite. By way of contrast, uniformitarian geology suggests only questionable explanations for this

evidence. Starting with the controversy over the Spokane Flood, Roth shows how most geologists after Hutton and Lyell were reluctant to accept that catastrophes play any part in earth history. The picture of the

mature beach on Surtsey Island (p. 202) is worth a thousand words. Taken only five months and two days, after the island was formed from a volcanic eruption in 1963, the photo documents an amazing example of rapid



*Evolutionary predictions about patterns of diversity and disparity through time do not match the fossil records. The above are the patterns a) suggested by Darwinian Gradualism, b) suggested by punctuated equilibrium theory, and c) suggested by the fossil record. From Austin, S.A. 1994. Grand Canyon. Monument to catastrophe. ICR. p. 148.*

geological formation! Then in chapter 12, Roth examines the existing Flood models, prefacing this section with the wise advice: *'However, much more work is needed, and caution would dictate that we consider each model as tentative'* (p. 205).

Chapter 13 briefly examines several powerful geological evidences for a global flood. One of the best is the occurrence of widespread sedimentary layers. An outstanding example is the Shinarump conglomerate that is less than 30 m thick and spreads over 250,000 km<sup>2</sup> of the Colorado Plateau. Another is the ubiquitous lack of any sign of erosion between sedimentary layers, thus negating the supposed time gaps between them.

Chapters 14 and 15 deal with time questions. The first responds to apparent problems for the short time scale of Flood geology, such as the growth of reefs, dinosaur nests in Flood rocks, 'varves', and fossil forests. The creationist interpretation of <sup>14</sup>C dating (based mainly on the work of Dr Robert Brown) is also discussed together with the K-Ar dating system. Although creationists have time problems, so do uniformitarian geologists. These are developed in chapter 15. The big challenges for billion year, long-age geologists are: 1) continents are eroding too fast and could have eroded dozens of times during the Phanerozoic; 2) flat land surfaces, some considered over 100 million years old, display little, if any, sign of erosion; 3) much less evidence of volcanic activity is in the earth's sedimentary layers than one would expect; and 4) mountains are currently uplifting so fast, that they should be hundreds of kilometres high or contain no rocks from early in the geological column.

Part 5, a general evaluation of science and the Bible, shows that although science has performed wonders, it is only a partial worldview. Science and scientists are far from perfect, especially in the historical realm. Scripture, although constantly under attack, has survived the test of

time and has been validated historically, archaeologically, and prophetically. The existence of Flood legends, some closely paralleling the biblical account, is amazing. Roth also tackles the tough challenges for the Bible, such as the existence of evil, suffering, the events of creation week, and the documentary hypothesis.

Part 6 wraps up the book, showing how the philosophy of naturalism has hijacked science, and evolution is a troubled theory. It all points to the dominance of a paradigm with very little evidence:

*'Science often prides itself on being open and objective, but evolution brings into question both attributes. How did science get into the conundrum of defending an idea for which there is little support and for which one finds major scientific problems?'* (p. 333).

For those tempted to compromise between creation and evolution, Roth demonstrates in chapter 21 how neither science nor the Bible support such a position. Compromises are indefensible and lead to a slow drift away from Christianity. His final chapter challenges us to seek truth and resist following the 'climate of opinion'.

Ariel Roth's excellent book is highly recommended for creationists, non-creationist Christians, and unbelievers alike. As with all books that break new ground in the earth sciences, any reviewer can take issue with at least one aspect. Actually, I take issue with very little. Although he diplomatically handles the controversial issues within creationism, such as the geological column, overthrusts, plate tectonics, and the pre- and post-Flood boundaries, I would have liked more concrete evidence for his positions. The traditional creationist, if not skeptical of the geological column, has been only partially accepting. Although the geological column, as a fossil order within the Flood, may be a general principle, this needs to

be demonstrated with more than the 'grand staircase' in the southwest U.S. Those who challenge traditional creationist views should publish their arguments in creationist technical journals for proper discussion and review.

Overthrusts are another controversial issue that creationists have traditionally not accepted. Dozens of alleged 'overthrusts' (including the famous Lewis Overthrust), lie just to the west of where I live. 'Overthrusts' represent out-of-order fossils and are common in mountains all over the world, where it is easy to observe a vertical sequence of fossils. Although I haven't examined the 'overthrusts' of western Montana as much as I would have liked (most contacts are conveniently covered by talus), I have seen little evidence so far to support horizontal or upward sliding of rock over rock for tens of kilometers. Roth says that he has seen evidence for at least some thrusting at the contact of the Lewis Overthrust, grooves and scratches (p. 163). This assumes of course that the direction of motion can be ascertained. However, one needs more than grooves and scratches to demonstrate long-distance horizontal motion of supposed overthrusts. Grooves and scratches are common in the 'overthrust' belt of the Rocky Mountains, but practically all occur on joints.

I was glad that Ariel Roth recommended that creationists exercise caution before accepting plate tectonics (p. 210). In my experience, plate tectonics has many problems that are either ignored, minimized, or rationalized by secondary hypotheses. Also a substantial number in the wider geological community still have reservations about plate tectonics or aspects of that paradigm. Creationists need to consider plate tectonics critically before incorporating it into a Flood or even a post-Flood model. That ends my digression — buy the book.