



Joan Dahr Lambert

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Evoking the narrative sweep of *The Clan of the Cave Bear* and the spiritual resonance of *The Celestine Prophecy*, Joan Dahr Lambert creates an extraordinary novel of prehistoric life...

In this compelling adventure, the stories of three wise women -- each called Zena, yet born thousands of generations apart -- unfold in a compassionate and moving saga that celebrates the remarkable growth of the human spirit.

Ranging from the African savanna more than one million years ago to the fertile shores of the Red Sea to the magnificent limestone caves of the Pyrenees mountains -- where the first artists painted the firelit wonders of their existence -- scene after breathtaking scene draws us into their lives as they negotiate a world they do not understand. In this world, an ostrich eggshell becomes a wondrous device for carrying water and the earth's upheavals reveal a lush, lifesaving oasis to a starving tribe.

With striking detail, *Circles of Stone* reinvents the incredible lives of our distant ancestors. As the human heart and soul emerge in a volatile dance of experience, language, and meaning, *Circles of Stone* becomes an unforgettable, supremely entertaining read.

Circles of Stone Details

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Author : Joan Dahr Lambert

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From Reader Review *Circles of Stone* for online ebook

Holly says

Well written and researched.

Well written, extensively researched, and wonderfully descriptive. Any lover of history, archaeology, pre history, sociology, anthropology, and religious mythology will be well satisfied

Christen says

I read this so long ago, but I remember really liking it. It was along the lines of "Clan of the Cave Bear" meets "The Red Tent".

Iset says

I've been struggling about how best to review this book, because it has genuine qualities to recommend it, and yet in some ways it's very problematic.

The book is divided into three parts, each telling the story of a different stone age tribe, separated by thousands of years. It takes us from earlier forms of the genus, around a million years ago, through to the evolution of sapiens and our spread across the globe. The first part of the book, when we're with the pre-sapiens group, was for me the most enjoyable section. It's rare to find fiction in that era, and even harder to write, as you're dealing with characters with a limited degree of understanding compared to our own. As you can imagine, it's difficult to create a good story out of that, and though it's not earth-shattering literature, mainly because the characters are inherently going to be weaker, the author does a solid job of holding interest by weaving a tense survival thriller.

It's in the second and third sections that the book becomes problematic. I've been searching for good palaeolithic fiction since reading Jean Auel's *Earth's Children* series – now there was a series that started out well, had a lot of promise, and disappointingly went downhill. The missed opportunities there gave me the itch for palaeolithic fiction that would fulfil its promise. Well, *Circles of Stone* has one thing in common with *Earth's Children*. The central preoccupation revolves around the secret that men contribute to the making of babies, knowledge of which will thus cause the downfall of humanity, war, oppression, poverty, environmental pollution, socks that inexplicably go missing in the washing machine... you get the idea.

I get the impression that the first four *Earth's Children* novels, released in the 80s, and *Circles of Stone*, released in the mid-90s, were part of some kind of wave of New Age feminism that envisioned the stone age as a utopia of Mother Earth worship until it was ruined by the possessiveness and aggression of men. This book specifically states – several times so you don't miss or misinterpret it – that men's aggressiveness comes from a fluid inside them that they must release into women otherwise they get violent. As other reviewers have noted, all the antagonists in the book are men, whilst women are depicted as never experiencing such unreasonably violent tendencies, which is why they are the leaders and wise ones of the

tribes.

This is insulting and just plain wrong, and I say that as a female, a feminist, and an archaeologist. Neurologically the evidence for differences between male and female is flimsy, and the overwhelming weight of evidence highlights our equivalence (I recommend *Delusions of Gender* by scientist Cordelia Fine for those wanting to know more). As a female I can report experiencing competitiveness, anger, and lust on a regular basis, as an integral part of my humanity, and I find the suggestion from some quarters that I ought to be without them to be utterly laughable. Certainly archaeologically the notion that goddess worshipping cultures were conquered by male-dominant invaders has been long since overturned. Domestication of food sources, driven by climate change in the mesolithic era was a far more important trigger for sedentism and civilisation. Scarcity of food prompted people to find ways to obtain more; domestication of food prompted people to settle more permanently and caused a population explosion, which in turn necessitated specialisation of skills. Specialisation freed up some people to do things other than obtain food, and some skills were valued above others, resulting in the stratification of society and an imbalance of wealth; creating a need for a system of inheritance. And it's worth noting that this hasn't always resulted in patriarchies; there have been other social systems throughout history. Apart from being incorrect, the book's notions deny the intelligence and responsibility of men, and the roundedness of women as complete humans.

The whole painting civilisation as evil is too on the nose and frankly I consider it to be a tired and simplistic trope. Again, I say that as someone who knows the scientific evidence and is concerned by anthropocentric environment change. Sure, civilisation has brought humanity woes, but the situation is more complex than that. Civilisation is neither evil nor good, and, to name just one pro, this social structure has driven our accelerated technological development to date, fuelling our understanding of the universe.

So I will be declining to read the subsequent books in this series.

Suzanne Schumacher says

This was different than most of the prehistory fictions I have been reading. I really like this author. She is easy to follow, and the detail of her imaging is fantastic. It follows the wise women, in one family, for generations. It seems to portray a truer image of what life must have been like, back then.

You learn how they may have discovered many of the things, including fire, that people relied on, to survive. You follow their travels to find food and water. And you see how they "discovered" their Gods, and why they worshiped them. I intend to follow this author.

Ingi says

This book exhausts me. It has all the sins of the New Age "feminism", plus some others that took me by surprise. It tries to imitate Auel's writing, but only manages a version of it that, while way less dry, lacks strength/fun in the Mary Sue fantasy that made me drag myself through Auel's books.

Beware of this review (if it can be called that; the review was really the paragraph above, this is just me complaining about things that made me especially mad and how they're *wrong*) - there's mentions and short discussion of rape and the violation of women's bodies in general. Oh, will you look at that, just like in the

book!

(view spoiler)

Loraine Kelley says

The book was an interesting take on pre-man. At time the story seemed to ramble on and was hard for me to stay interested in. Not sure if I will read book two.

Tara says

I loved this book. I found it a deeply powerful book of the feminine and the Goddess within.

Roy Cantrell says

Liked the way the story was influenced and shaped by modern archaeological findings. If you believe the modern version of the rise of man, then this gives a good representation of what it may have been like to live in those times.

Lynda says

Loved it. Will be adding her other books to my 'to read' list.

Ryan says

I found this book in the for sale room of my library. I thought it looked interesting and for less than a dollar I figured it couldn't be too bad. What I didn't know is that this book would change my life. From the first page to the last I became a different person. Even though it is fiction, so much of it resounded so deep with in me that I know I had found what I had been looking for all my life.

Jessica Wicks says

I love the tales of prehistoric humans of a time when clans were run by women rather than men. In this first book in a trilogy, the author tells of some of our earliest ancestors in Africa, as she calls them, the Mother People. It's all based on pretty good anthropology and is well grounded in factual science. In this first book we see the people migrate to and beyond the Big Rift. Even in the first book, we see the early beginnings of religion and patriarchy. Awesome series! Reading these books was a pure delight!

Bogormen says

Someone said it was a cross between Clan of the Cave Bear and The Red Tent. I liked both but not this one. Found myself skimming the parts with too much "Goddess babble" by the end to get it over with.

Mattie Castro says

Enjoyed this book.

It is written on a topic that is very interesting to me. I will add this author to my collections and obtain book two asap.

Debby says

Another life changer. All about people who lived a million years ago, then I think it was 50,000 then 10,000 year ago. In Lambert's view, the old civilizations were maternal, led by consensus with the wise women in the lead. It gives a peaceful view of old societies who can't imagine why anyone would hurt another person. Trouble started when the secret got out that men have something to do with birth. Really fascinating and heart-warming. One of my all time favorites.

Sarah says

One of my favorite historical/pagan/feminist fiction novels!
