
Preface

Publication of this book, in 2009, was timed to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *The Origin of Species*. Darwin's work changed the entire course of modern biology, and his *Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871) was also, in its way, a pioneering work on sexology and evolution. Thus, Darwin attempted to apply his insights concerning evolution by sexual selection in animals to problems of human origins, sex differences in morphology, and behaviour.

The current volume addresses many of the issues first raised by Darwin (as well as some new ones) and examines them in the light of modern ideas concerning human sexuality, reproduction, and evolutionary biology. The approach taken is a comparative one, incorporating information from many fields of biology, in order to produce a credible picture of the origins of human mating systems, patterns of mate choice, and copulatory behaviour.

Many people have helped me, either directly or indirectly during the three years I spent working on this book. My wife Amanda helped with the manuscript, and in particular with typing and checking the bibliography. Our son Barnaby drew many of the graphs and histograms for me using a computer (as I still draw everything by hand and am technologically challenged). We also conducted collaborative, cross-cultural research together on various aspects of human morphology and mate choice. Senior colleagues at the Victoria University of Wellington, and especially Professor

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