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Introduction to Paleobiology and the Fossil Record ...

Michael J. Benton University of Bristol, UK David A. T. Harper University of Copenhagen, Denmark

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This book presents a comprehensive overview of the science of the history of life. Paleobiologists bring many analytical tools to bear in interpreting the fossil record and the book introduces the latest techniques, from multivariate investigations of biogeography and biostratigraphy to engineering analysis of dinosaur skulls, and from homeobox genes to cladistics. All the well-known fossil groups are included, including microfossils and invertebrates, but an important feature is the thorough coverage of plants,

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vertebrates and trace fossils together with discussion of the origins of both life and the metazoans. All key related subjects are introduced, such as systematics, ecology, evolution and development, stratigraphy and their roles in understanding where life came from and how it evolved and diversified. Unique features of the book are the numerous case studies from current research that lead students to the primary literature, analytical and mathematical explanations and tools, together with associated problem sets and practical schedules for instructors and students. New to this edition The text and figures have been updated throughout to reflect current opinion on all aspects New case studies illustrate the chapters, drawn from a broad distribution internationally Chapters on Macroevolution, Form and Function, Mass extinctions, Origin of Life, and Origin of Metazoans have been entirely rewritten to reflect substantial advances in these topics There is a new focus on careers in paleobiology

This book presents a comprehensive overview of the science of the history of life. Paleobiologists bring many analytical tools to bear in interpreting the fossil record and the book introduces the latest techniques, from multivariate investigations of biogeography and biostratigraphy to engineering analysis of dinosaur skulls, and from homeobox genes to cladistics. All the well-known fossil groups are included, including microfossils and invertebrates, but an important feature is the thorough coverage of plants, vertebrates and trace fossils together with discussion of the origins of both life and the metazoans. All key related subjects are introduced, such as systematics, ecology, evolution and development, stratigraphy and their roles in understanding where life came from and how it evolved and diversified. Unique features of the book are the

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numerous case studies from current research that lead students to the primary literature, analytical and mathematical explanations and tools, together with associated problem sets and practical schedules for instructors and students. “ ..any serious student of geology who does not pick this book off the shelf will be putting themselves at a huge disadvantage. The material may be complex, but the text is extremely accessible and well organized, and the book ought to be essential reading for palaeontologists at undergraduate, postgraduate and more advanced levels—both in Britain as well as in North America. ” Falcon-Lang, H., Proc. Geol. Assoc. 2010 “ ...this is an excellent introduction to palaeontology in general. It is well structured, accessibly written and pleasantly informativeI would recommend this as a standard reference text to all my students without hesitation. ” David Norman Geol Mag 2010 Companion website This book includes a companion website at: <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/paleobiology> The website includes:

- An ongoing database of additional Practical 's prepared by the authors
- Figures from the text for downloading
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- Updates from the authors

One of the leading textbooks in its field, *Bringing Fossils to Life* applies paleobiological principles to the fossil record while detailing the evolutionary history of major plant and animal phyla. It incorporates current research from biology, ecology, and population genetics, bridging the gap between purely theoretical paleobiological textbooks and those that describe only invertebrate paleobiology and that emphasize cataloguing live organisms instead of dead objects. For this third edition Donald R. Prothero has revised the art and research throughout, expanding the coverage of

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invertebrates and adding a discussion of new methodologies and a chapter on the origin and early evolution of life.

The study of dinosaurs has been experiencing a remarkable renaissance over the past few decades. Scientific understanding of dinosaur anatomy, biology, and evolution has advanced to such a degree that paleontologists often know more about 100-million-year-old dinosaurs than many species of living organisms. This book provides a contemporary review of dinosaur science intended for students, researchers, and dinosaur enthusiasts. It reviews the latest knowledge on dinosaur anatomy and phylogeny, how dinosaurs functioned as living animals, and the grand narrative of dinosaur evolution across the Mesozoic. A particular focus is on the fossil evidence and explicit methods that allow paleontologists to study dinosaurs in rigorous detail. Scientific knowledge of dinosaur biology and evolution is shifting fast, and this book aims to summarize current understanding of dinosaur science in a technical, but accessible, style, supplemented with vivid photographs and illustrations. The Topics in Paleobiology Series is published in collaboration with the Palaeontological Association, and is edited by Professor Mike Benton, University of Bristol. Books in the series provide a summary of the current state of knowledge, a trusted route into the primary literature, and will act as pointers for future directions for research. As well as volumes on individual groups, the series will also deal with topics that have a cross-cutting relevance, such as the evolution of significant ecosystems, particular key times and events in the history of life, climate change, and the application of a new techniques such as molecular palaeontology. The books are written by leading

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international experts and will be pitched at a level suitable for advanced undergraduates, postgraduates, and researchers in both the paleontological and biological sciences. Additional resources for this book can be found at: <http://www.wiley.com/go/brusatte/dinosaurpaleobiology>.

Whether the fossil record should be read at face value or whether it presents a distorted view of the history of life is an argument seemingly as old as many fossils themselves. In the late 1700s, Georges Cuvier argued for a literal interpretation, but in the early 1800s, Charles Lyell ' s gradualist view of the earth ' s history required a more nuanced interpretation of that same record. To this day, the tension between literal and interpretive readings lies at the heart of paleontological research, influencing the way scientists view extinction patterns and their causes, ecosystem persistence and turnover, and the pattern of morphologic change and mode of speciation. With *Stratigraphic Paleobiology*, Mark E. Patzkowsky and Steven M. Holland present a critical framework for assessing the fossil record, one based on a modern understanding of the principles of sediment accumulation. Patzkowsky and Holland argue that the distribution of fossil taxa in time and space is controlled not only by processes of ecology, evolution, and environmental change, but also by the stratigraphic processes that govern where and when sediment that might contain fossils is deposited and preserved. The authors explore the exciting possibilities of stratigraphic paleobiology, and along the way demonstrate its great potential to answer some of the most critical questions about the history of life: How and why do environmental niches change over time? What is the tempo and mode of evolutionary change and what processes drive this change? How has the diversity of life changed through

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time, and what processes control this change? And, finally, what is the tempo and mode of change in ecosystems over time?

In the wake of the paleobiological revolution of the 1970s and 1980s, paleontologists continue to investigate far-reaching questions about how evolution works. Many of those questions have a philosophical dimension. How is macroevolution related to evolutionary changes within populations? Is evolutionary history contingent? How much can we know about the causes of evolutionary trends? How do paleontologists read the patterns in the fossil record to learn about the underlying evolutionary processes? Derek Turner explores these and other questions, introducing the reader to exciting recent work in the philosophy of paleontology and to theoretical issues including punctuated equilibria and species selection. He also critically examines some of the major accomplishments and arguments of paleontologists of the last 40 years.

Palaeontology, a fundamental topic in geology and evolutionary biology, has undergone exciting and rapid change in recent years. Contemporary debates on mass extinctions and the origin of life have had profound implications for our understanding of how life evolved. Basic Palaeontology is a comprehensive and accessible introduction to palaeontology. With in-depth analysis of basic principles and all the main fossil groups, this fully illustrated text presents new and exciting research on the origin and history of life. The text focuses on traditional topics such as marine invertebrate palaeontology and biostratigraphy, but also provides unique and unparalleled taxonomic coverage from microfossils to plants and vertebrates. Key Features include: - Covers important recent

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developments in macroevolution and mass extinctions - A strong focus on a statistical and quantitative approach, emphasising the vital importance of both applications and theory - Full coverage of the evolution of vertebrates and plants - Over 600 highly detailed illustrations - An accessible format with extensive boxed material and bullet points

Basic Palaeontology is essential reading for undergraduate students of geology, environmental science and biology, taking courses in palaeontology, palaeobiology, palaeoecology or evolution, and will also be of interest to all those who have an interest in the origin of life and human evolution. Michael J Benton is a Reader in the Department of Geology, University of Bristol, UK. David A T Harper is a Lecturer in Geology at the Department of Geology, University College Galway, Ireland.

Explains in a clear and concise manner the factors involved in the description and classification of fossils and the practical applications of paleontologic data

Although fossils have provided some of the most important evidence for evolution, the discipline of paleontology has not always had a central place in evolutionary biology. Beginning in Darwin's day, and for much of the twentieth century, paleontologists were often regarded as mere fossil collectors by many evolutionary biologists, their attempts to contribute to evolutionary theory ignored or regarded with scorn. In the 1950s, however, paleontologists began mounting a counter-movement that insisted on the valid, important, and original contribution of paleontology to evolutionary theory. This movement, called "paleobiology" by its proponents, advocated for an approach to the fossil record that was theoretical, quantitative, and oriented towards explaining the broad

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patterns of evolution and extinction in the history of life. Rereading the Fossil Record provides, as never before, a historical account of the origin, rise, and importance of paleobiology, from the mid-nineteenth century to the late 1980s. Drawing on a wealth of archival material, David Sepkoski shows how the movement was conceived and promoted by a small but influential group of paleontologists—including Stephen Jay Gould and Niles Eldredge, among others—and examines the intellectual, disciplinary, and political dynamics involved in the ascendancy of paleobiology. By emphasizing the close relationship between paleobiology and other evolutionary disciplines, this book writes a new chapter in the history of evolutionary biology, while also offering insights into the dynamics of disciplinary change in modern science.

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