

Preface

Dinosaurs dominated the Earth for 140 million years and this book provides the most comprehensive survey of these ruling reptiles. *Dinosaurs* will serve as an encyclopaedia of dinosaurs to be used as a reference source for anyone with an interest in these animals. The first chapters give an account of the early discovery of dinosaur remains and then go on to discuss their origin and evolution. This introduction summarises the latest results of research into the behaviour and physiology of dinosaurs.

The colour section illustrates all the major types of dinosaur including many that have never previously figured in books, especially the recent discoveries made in China. Special attention has been paid to showing the probable colour patterns that the dinosaurs exhibited in life. Although the exact details of colour cannot be known with certainty, it is possible to work out the likely coloration and patterning by using modern analogues.

One of the important features of the illustrations is that on each double page all the species are shown to the same scale. A metre scale is included on each spread. As the aim of the book is to provide accurate details of the different dinosaurs, they are shown as isolated individuals in life positions. There has been no attempt at reconstructing environments or of showing them in landscapes. There are no restorations of interactions among the different kinds of dinosaur; such imaginative restorations are readily available in the numerous other popular dinosaur books. The bulk of the book provides a detailed classification of the dinosaurs with introductory paragraphs of all the major groups: two orders, six suborders and 32 different families. Over a hundred representative genera are described and illustrated. For every main group a detailed drawing of a skull is given and in a few instances complete well preserved skeletons are shown.

As well as the accurate figuring of all the main types of dinosaur, there are colour photographs of excavations as well as mounted skeletons, and such kinds of fossil as skin impressions, footprints and eggshells.

The book closes with a critical review of the various theories that have been put forward to account for their extinction 64 million years ago.

Dinosaurs is intended to be the major reference work on the different kinds of dinosaur that are known. Discoveries, particularly those made during the 1970s and in 1980, have been incorporated. Much of the material in this book and the restorations are based on the examination of dinosaur remains in many museums in the world, including those in Berlin, Chicago, London, Moscow, Paris, Peking, Tübingen and Washington, together with experiences on expeditions collecting fossil reptiles, especially in Africa.

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