

Winner of the 2003 Phi Beta Kappa Book Award in Science

Life on a Young Planet

The First Three Billion Years
of Evolution on Earth

Andrew H. Knoll

Australopithecines, dinosaurs, trilobites—such fossils conjure up images of lost worlds filled with vanished organisms. But in the full history of life, ancient animals, even the trilobites, form only the half-billion-year tip of a nearly four-billion-year iceberg. Andrew Knoll explores the deep history of life from its origins on a young planet to the incredible Cambrian explosion, presenting a compelling new explanation for the emergence of biological novelty.

"Knoll is well placed to tell this amazing story, and he does so with verve." —Douglas Palmer, *New Scientist*

"In a book so well written that nonspecialists and specialists alike will find much to savor, [Knoll] captures both the excitement of scientific discovery and the intricacies of scientific interpretation."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"Andrew Knoll is an ideal guide through this early phase of life's history on Earth. . . . [O]ne of the strengths of Knoll's book is that it presents science as the open-ended endeavor . . . expresses better . . . and sheer fun of open-m . . . tson, *Nature*

"A balanced, excellent . . . theories and discussions of the origin and early evolution of life. . . . [Knoll] is a gifted storyteller with a knack for choosing the right anecdote. . . . A browse through [his] book will enlighten both the cognoscenti and those unfamiliar with the complexities of reading a fossil record. . . . Knoll manages to present a multidisciplinary field in an interdisciplinary volume."

—Antonio Lazcano, *American Scientist*

ANDREW H. KNOLL is Fisher Professor of Natural History at Harvard University and a member of the National Academy of Sciences. A paleontologist by training, he has spent more than two decades working to integrate geological and biological perspectives on early life.

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