

# Book Review

*The Fossil Record 2* by M. J. Benton, 1993, Chapman & Hall. The Fossil Record 2, edited by M.J. Benton, is in fact an updated version of the Fossil Record (edited by W.B. Harland) published by the Geological Society of London in 1967. It contains time-range charts and diagrams of all families of fossil animals and plants, giving some idea about their diversity fluctuations through time. It is indeed an invaluable palaeontological reference that documents first and last records of families of each group of animals and plants, their stage-level time units, localities, etc., all within a precise taxonomic framework. The volume includes 45 chapters which have been organized into four main parts in accordance with the major taxonomic groupings: Basal Groups (Monera, Fungi and Algae), Animals: Invertebrates, Animals: Vertebrates and Plants. All the chapters have been authored by palaeontologists with considerable experience. In all, ninety contributors have made their joint effort to produce the text for this gigantic volume, a task of stupendous dimension in my reckoning.

It is, however, felt that a few analytical papers, thought unnecessary by editor, on aspects of taxonomic diversity, palaeobiogeography and large-scale evolutionary patterns would have made the text of this book very interesting. Also, each chapter could have ended with a summary of the evolutionary history of each group as seen through its fossil record. Though the authors defend the family and stage combination for this volume, the families of some marine fossil groups can now be referred to units of relatively high stratigraphic resolution, a fact duly taken note of in most modern texts on these fossil groups. I, therefore, personally feel that time distribution of the families in such groups should have been presented with precise substage or zonal limits. Despite these criticisms, the volume offers a useful database for pursuing research in phylogenetic patterns, palaeogeographic distributions and taxonomic diversity patterns through time.

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I, R.S. Tiwari, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(Sd.) R.S. Tiwari  
Secretary  
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Signature of Publisher

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