

Donald Glut's *Dinosaurs: The Encyclopedia* appeared in 1997, the same year that Academic Press published *The Encyclopedia of Dinosaurs*, edited by Kevin Padian and myself. We had been aware of each other's book projects for several years before that, and in fact, Don was kind enough to write an excellent treatment on dinosaurs in "Popular Culture" for our book. In a field with so much public demand for information, this could easily have ended up in books that heavily overlapped because the number of people working within the discipline is actually relatively low.

Fewer than 150 living people worldwide have published scientific papers on dinosaurs, and of those, only a minority of these (fewer than 50) are specifically employed to do research on these fascinating animals. But the subject matter is so extensive that there was more than enough room for two encyclopedias on this subject. And the books had fundamentally different approaches, and consequently became complementary to each other. In fact, along with *The Dinosauria*, edited by Weishampel, Osmólska and Dodson (1990), just about anything you would ever want to know about dinosaurs is available to anyone in these books.

It is so different now than when I was younger. Fifty years ago, there was virtually nothing available for a person seriously interested in dinosaurs. I had to work hard on my newspaper route to save up enough money to buy Fenton and Fenton's *Fossil Book* and Roy Chapman Andrews' *All About Dinosaurs*. These books were great works in their time, but they have been vastly eclipsed in "the information age" by books that are both more technical and more informative. And the public is ready for it with a more solid foundation of basic knowledge about dinosaurs.

There have never been so many television programs, newspaper and magazine articles, popular books, and even movies about dinosaurs. Although we do not think of movies as being educational, I had to change my opinion after the release of the movie *Jurassic Park*. The "Dinosaur Renaissance" had begun in the mid-1970s with the publication of Robert T. Bakker's article in *Scientific American* and Adrian Desmond's *Hot-Blooded Dinosaurs*. Research on dinosaurs and public interest in these animals has always been intimately linked in a mutual feedback system. As scientists learn more, the public displays more interest. When the public shows more interest, more funds and support become available, making it possible to do more research.

In spite of the ever-increasing interest in dinosaurs during the 1970s and '80s, dinosaur researchers continued to get the same kind of questions as our colleagues must have been getting since the release of the motion picture *King Kong* in 1933. But that changed overnight in 1993 with the release of *Jurassic Park*, which never made any claims to being an educational film. But both the author of the book, Michael Crichton, and the movie production crew of Steven Spielberg made more than a half-hearted effort to bring a more up to date version of our understanding of dinosaurs to the public. And overnight, the questions we paleontologists were being asked about dinosaurs took a quantum leap ahead. All of the subtle ideas introduced by *Jurassic Park*, including warm-bloodedness, complex behavior and intelligence in dinosaurs, and the dinosaurian ancestry of birds, were picked up by the public. And the level of questions we received finally pulled away from the 1930s Hollywood understanding of dinosaurs.

Along with the ready availability of information on the Internet, people are better informed than they ever were in the past about dinosaurs (and everything else, of course). And the desire for more current, more accurate, more detailed information is insatiable. Don Glut's *Dinosaurs: The Encyclopedia* has met the need for information so admirably that even I use it frequently as a first point source for information.

The author and publisher, recognizing that it is difficult to stay current with the research that is going on, made the wise decision to publish regular supplements to the main volume. Other books, in the meantime, have become out of date. In addition to being comprehensive and up-to-date, *Dinosaurs: The Encyclopedia* and its supplements are beautifully balanced—they are detailed but readable, contain a healthy dose of information on the cultural aspects of the Dinosauria, provide the keys to access more detailed sources of information, and are beautifully illustrated.

My hat is off (although I hate to admit that this is with some eagerness as I do not like wearing hats) to both Don Glut and McFarland for the vast service they have performed for both professional paleontologists and anyone interested in dinosaurs. Thank you, thank you, thank you...

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