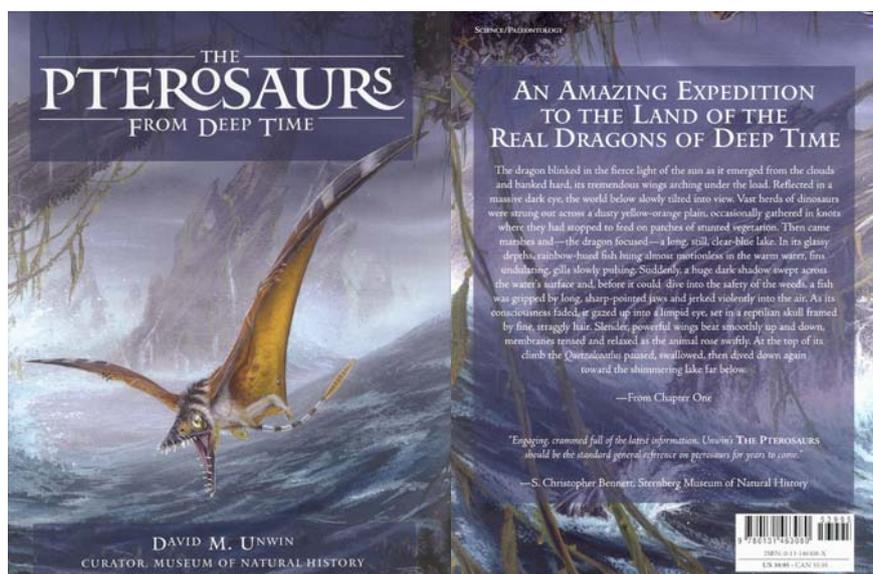


Unwin, D.M. 2005. The Pterosaurs from Deep Time. – New York, Pi Press.

Book review by H.J.M. Meijer & A.J. Veldmeijer



David Unwin's first book is a great attempt to cover all research done on pterosaurs, certainly a daunting task. The text on the cover, a quote from Chris Bennett, even comments that this book will be the next standard work on pterosaurs for years to come. However, whether this book can live up to its expectations remains to be seen.

In his attempt to cover all pterosaurs, Unwin unfortunately remains rather superficial on detailed information on various interesting genera and species. The contents are mostly up to date but, not surprisingly, skewed towards his own theory and views. Due to this, a certain amount of scientific literature, which shows a different point of view, is lacking. For instance, the illustrations on page 80, 199 and 200 depict *Anhanguera*'s lower jaw with a distinct crest terminating well before the anterior tip of the jaw, whereas it has been firmly established that the mandibular crest terminates at the exact tip, as in *Coloborhynchus*. Also, Unwin largely neglects the Ornithocheiridae vs. Anhangueridae debate (as discussed in Kellner & Tomida, 2000, and Veldmeijer *et al.*, 2006). The colour reconstructions of pterosaurs add a lively touch to the large body of text, even though the use of colour, especially the 'eyespot' on the wing of *Batrachognatus* on page 242, is speculative.

The interested layman can get easily captivated by the storyline of amazing heroic dragons struggling to survive all the hazards and perils of everyday life in the tough prehistoric era. It is exactly this type of narrative language that eventually becomes annoying to the professionally interested reader. Especially the short dramatic introductions to each chapter are more suitable for scenes in Jurassic Park. The use of narrative, dramatic language makes it hard to find specific information (in contrast to Wellnhofer's 'The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Pterosaurs'), and, in combination with the aforementioned lack of specific species-related information, 'the Pterosaurs from Deep Time' provides a good and extensive overview of pterosaurology for the interested layman, but lacks the potential of becoming the next standard general reference. It should be noted however, that Unwin's book is very up-to-date, obviously, because of the enormous amount of research conducted after 1991.

Unwin, D.M. 2005. The Pterosaurs from Deep Time. – New York, Pi Press. 347 pp. ISBN 9 780131 463080. Price \$ 39.95 (hardback).

Cited literature

- Kellner, A.W.A. & Y. Tomida. 2000.** Description of a new species of Anhangueridae (Pterodactyloidea) with comments on the pterosaur fauna from the Santana Formation (Aptian-Albian), Northeastern Brazil. – Tokyo, National Science Museum (National Science Museum Monographs 17).
- Veldmeijer, A.J., H.J.M. Meijer & M. Signore. 2006.** *Coloborhynchus* from the Lower Cretaceous Santana Formation, Brazil (Pterosauria, Pterodactyloidea, Anhangueridae); an update. – PalArch's Journal of Vertebrate Palaeontology 3, 2: 15-29.
- Wellnhofer, P. 1991.** The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Pterosaurs. – New York, Crescent Books.