Folia primatol. 1980;34:140

Book Review

F.S. Szalay and E. Delson Evolutionary History of the Primates

Academic Press, New York 1979 XIV + 580 pp., 263 fig.; US \$ 45.00 ISBN 0-12-680150-9

This book is an extraordinary accomplishment. The authors provide a well illustrated, systematic review of the entire primate fossil record from the late Cretaceous Purgatorius ceratops to Homo sapiens. There is no comparable book in the English language, and the only similar text, Piveteau's (1957) volume 7 of the Traité de Paléontologie, is very outdated.

The authors have tried to deal with both phylogeny and adaptation in their considerations of fossil taxa. They have placed particular emphasis on identifying and interpreting the derived features of each taxonomic group. Nevertheless, their approach to systematics is clearly evolutionary and eclectic rather than a strict cladistic or phenetic approach. As a result, their taxonomic conclusions depart from those of other workers primarily at the species and genus level where Szalay and Delson tend to lump taxa which other workers would accept. The most radical taxonomic changes offered here are in their adoption of Rosenberger's (1979) division of platyrrhine monkeys into cebids (including Cebus, Saimiri, Callimico and the caecitrichines) and atelids (all others), and the purely nomenclatural extension of Hominidae to include apes and dryopithecines as well as living and fossil humans.

At a price of \$ 45.00, this book is a real bargain for anyone interested in primate and human evolution. It is both an invaluable reference work, and by virtue of its completeness, the starting point for all future work in the systematics of fossil primates.

John G. Fleagle, Stony Brook, N.Y.