



Dinosaurs Of Utah

Frank DeCourten

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Picture the Mesozoic world of 150 million years ago. It has a warm and semiarid climate subject to seasonal variations. Vegetation is generally sparse; however, along stream banks and lakes, the plant life is dense. Volcanoes and earthquakes shake the region, but the ground vibrates for other reasons as well: great herds of dinosaurs are constantly on the move across the basin in search of food, water, and mates.

At a plant cluster, a DIPLODOCUS stops for nourishment. It is a majestic creature, thirteen feet high at the hip and weighing seventeen tons. A long, narrow skull with small pencil-like teeth perches atop an elongated neck. Rather than stretching for the topmost foliage, the DIPLODOCUS moves slowly and infrequently, sweeping its head from side to side while nibbling at the leaves of low-growing shrubs. Occasionally, it raises its head to reach a particularly succulent leaf, to scan the horizon for predators, or to check the position of the herd.

Although images of the dinosaurs exist only in our imagination, scientists are able to hypothesize the appearance, size, and habits of the giant reptiles by studying nature's autobiography--the rock record--which contains both fossils and trace fossils (footprints and skin impressions, for example). Because Mesozoic rock covers over 25,000 square miles in Utah, the state is a natural museum of the great age of dinosaurs. *DINOSAURS OF UTAH*, a comprehensive account of "Utah's" dinosaurs, uses extensive research performed in Utah's natural museum to describe dinosaur anatomy, feeding, reproduction, and social behaviors in the context of the changing geological record. Seventy-five drawings help illustrate fossils and dinosaur anatomy while twenty-five color photographs depict the sites and geological environments described in the text. Twenty-two spectacular color paintings commissioned specifically for this book capture the spirit of these animals in the most accurate renditions of dinosaurs to date.

DINOSAURS OF UTAH enlivens our understanding of these amazing creatures by explaining them and their world to us. It moves beyond the superficial representations of dinosaurs so prevalent today to more accurately portray the variety of dinosaurs that once roamed in the region now known as Utah. Through the lens of this book, we can travel backward in time to view a landscape millions of years old.

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