

relationships as *Kamasutra/suture, five/Punjab, rose/julep*. In fairness, some etymologies in this volume open new vistas. One traces the word *kangaroo* back to Guugu Yimidhirr, an aboriginal language from Australia.

RHD II is good for modern words (including all the off-color ones) and as a general, not-too-deep reference work. But for scholars, this cannot be the only source.

Science & Technology

DINOSAURS

Past and Present

edited by Sylvia J. Czerkas
and Everett C. Olson
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Scientists once pictured dinosaurs as huge, cold-blooded animals lumbering heavily through lush jungles while bat-like creatures flapped about overhead. But according to leading American and Canadian paleontologists, this scenario no longer fits the facts.

According to the authors, evidence suggests that not all dinosaurs or pterosaurs (those that flew or, rather, glided) were cold blooded. Cold-blooded animals move slowly, constantly occupied with maintaining their body temperature. More than 225 million years ago, crocodile-like reptiles became outnumbered by warm-blooded dinosaurs, whose tracks show them to have been gregarious, variegated, and surprisingly light on their feet.

Far from lumbering, huge quadrupeds placed their feet daintily close together, while bipedal *tyrannosaurus*, *dryptosaurus*, and *deinonychus antirrhopus* sped along like ostriches with lunging, claw-footed strides.

Nor were all dinosaurs big. The forebears of birds, probably more numerous than previously thought, were chicken-sized, sprightly, and covered with proto-feather scales.

In 1979 and 1984, Louis and Walter Alvarez offered a new theory about the dinosaurs' extinction: When a huge asteroid collided with the Earth, the resulting dust cloud blocked out the sun. Dinosaurs disappeared abruptly with the end of the tropical Cretaceous era, and the subtropical Paleocene era began. But while the collision is confirmed by abnormally high levels of the heavy metal iridium (found in asteroids) in certain sediments, vertebrate paleontologists now question whether it was not the final straw in the dinosaur's slow demise, rather than the cataclysmic

cause of their extinction. In any case, some dinosaurs survived. They left their bones in Montana's Hell Creek Formation 40,000–250,000 years after the collision.

**THE HEALING BRAIN:
Breakthrough Discoveries
About How the Brain Keeps
Us Healthy**

by Robert Ornstein
and David Sobel
Simon & Schuster, 1987
301 pp. \$19.95

The more disrupted a person's life, psychologist Ornstein and physician Sobel found, the more likely he is to develop "a staggering variety of medical conditions," from influenza to leukemia.

R. W. Barthrop's 1975 study of bereavement and immune function indicated that fewer infection-fighting T-cells were at work in the blood of grieving spouses. The brain sends neurological signals to receptors now known to exist in organs of immunity (e.g., the thymus gland, spleen, and bone marrow) and can affect a person's ability to fight off disease. By the same token, people can enhance their immune responses by "purely psychological methods, such as suggestion, hypnosis, conditioning"—or even laughter. After hypnosis, for example, warts resistant to medical treatment may go away when the immune system wages an "all-out assault."

Patients' expectations also affect how fast a treatment works. In one study, half the subjects taking relaxation training were told their blood pressure should come down immediately, the other half, that results would show only after the third session. Those who expected quick results got them: Their systolic blood pressure fell seven times faster than that of the control group.

