

Archaeopteryx. Der Urvogel von Solnhofen

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Archaeopteryx. Der Urvogel von Solnhofen.—Peter Wellnhofer. 2008. Verlag Dr. Friedrich Pfeil, Munich. 265 pages, numerous figures, and 4 tables. ISBN 978-3-89937-0760-8. Cloth, 78 Euro.—*Archaeopteryx* is still the most important avian fossil and perhaps the most studied, but the available information is scattered widely throughout the literature. Although it was discovered almost 150 years ago, *Archaeopteryx* remains the best-known intermediate, or “missing link,” between major groups of organisms. Wellnhofer has done a great service to ornithologists and paleontologists by summarizing the information about all 10 known *Archaeopteryx* specimens in this oversized book. All known specimens of this fossil bird are described and illustrated in detail, together with associated information about persons associated with their discovery and study, their quarries and depositories, and an extensive bibliography. Great care has been taken in the production of the illustrations, which are large and sharp and show morphological details clearly. Basically, if some factual information about *Archaeopteryx* is not covered in this volume, it does not exist. A long chapter summarizes what is known and speculated about *Archaeopteryx*; care has to be exercised in accepting some of these interpretations that have been taken from the literature. It is my understanding that an English edition is being prepared, but I would not wait until its publication; get this book now. Dr. Wellnhofer should be thanked sincerely for all the work he has done in making available this valuable resource, a volume that should be in the library of all institutes and researchers interested in birds and their evolution.—WALTER J. BOCK, Department of Biological Sciences, 1212 Amsterdam Avenue, Mail Box 2428, Columbia University, New York, New York 10027, USA. E-mail: wb4@columbia.edu