

BOOK REVIEW

VITA-FINZI, C. & FORTES, A. D. 2013. *Planetary Geology: An Introduction*. 192pp. Dunedin Academic Press. Price £25. ISBN: 978 1 780 460154 (PB). doi:10.1017/S0016756813000915

This is a good introductory textbook for anyone with a solid background in geological sciences to the field of planetary geology. This book is the second edition and the authors have done an excellent job in making all the materials bang up-to-date; they even include information that must have been released just prior to the book going to press. The illustrations and figures are outstanding, and, used in addition to the data tables, make a handy reference for those wanting to quickly extract basic facts (e.g. gravitational acceleration, internal structure) about the planets or other solar system bodies. Unfortunately, the book does assume some prior geological knowledge (e.g. Milankovitch cycles, basic mineralogy or petrology), so those without a geology background would find the book hard to follow in detail. Contrary to many books on the planets, which treat each body separately, this book is divided into themes, for example 'orbits and cycles', 'volcanism' and 'oceans and ice caps'. In some ways this is a good idea, because the reader can easily compare and contrast different bodies in the solar system. It also means that no chapter depends on any other, thus allowing the reader to dip

into the book wherever they like. However, this structure can lead to overcrowding, with a single section jumping from comets to Jupiter's moons and back to Mars. As a result, a reader who is unfamiliar with any one of these bodies may get a bit lost. After reading this book one is left with the feeling that the authors would have preferred to have made a book-sized work for each of the chapters, so have squeezed the material in, rather than leaving some things out. On the other hand, the breadth of material covered is comprehensive and does give a keen amateur or budding student a very good, rapid overview of our current geological understanding of and geology's contribution to planetary science. Any teacher, student or enthusiast of planetary science should buy this book to serve as a synthesis of the many complementary, multidisciplinary facets of their subject.

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Reference

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