

expertise; if I had a criticism it would be that the tectonic applications chapter occupies only a modest 20 pages of the whole book while most people involved in the subject will find themselves involved with this part of the subject at some time or another. Overall this is an extremely useful, up to date and well thought out introduction to the subject of palaeomagnetism and should be on every student's booklist if they undertake a project in the subject at undergraduate or postgraduate level. Indeed, in my opinion, it should be on the bookshelf of anyone who calls themselves a palaeomagnetist.

Graeme K. Taylor

PICCARDI, L. & MASSE, W. B. (eds) 2007. *Myth and Geology*. Geological Society Special Publication no. 273. 350 pp. Geological Society, London. Price £90.00, US \$180.00; GSL members £45.00, US \$90.00; other qualifying societies £54.00, US \$108.00 (hard covers). ISBN 978 1 86239 216 8. doi:10.1017/S0016756810000531

The unpredictable and sometimes catastrophic natural phenomena of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, megafloods and storms along with comets and other extraterrestrial events have all been disturbing and sometimes lethal for our ancestors. Understandably our ancestors have dealt with such phenomena by producing explanations from within their specific cultures, which we now call myths and legends, that is until the advent of science and its methods of investigation provided a more universal understanding with predictive power.

Over several decades now geologists have realized that such myths and legends often recount specific details of events and locations, which are not fanciful creations of the imagination, but can have a 'ring' of geological veracity. As a result, geologists have led the scientific investigation of such myths, whilst other academic disciplines have been jumping through all manner of theoretical hoops derived from philosophy, psychology and sociology in their attempts to explain these ancient and powerful 'stories'. W. Bruce Masse and his co-authors provide a perceptive and well-informed introduction, in which they set the scientific effort in its wider intellectual context. They show just how complex myths can be with their wonderful multi-layered mixtures of naturalism and psychological insight, which can also carry universal truths, despite being set in localized geographical and temporal frameworks.

Masse's essay is just one of 25 contained within this fascinating collection, which describes the search for the underlying geological truths behind a global array of myths. Within the western world we are mostly familiar with the mythology of the classical world of the Mediterranean, although this collection reflects the increasing attention given by geologists to other world-views such as those of the numerous Asian ethnic and religious groups, Native Americans, Australians and Pacific Islanders. These reveal a remarkable amount of information derived from different cultures of corroborative evidence between geological and legendary or mythological events, especially earthquakes in tectonically active regions such as the western 'Cascadian' seaboard of North America and the Japanese islands, tsunami in the Australo-Pacific regions, and volcanism in South America as well as the somewhat better known phenomena of the Mediterranean region. The latter is particularly well served by the innovative CLEMENS database which documents environment and natural hazards in Roman and medieval texts.

Apart from the intrinsic value of the individual contributions, the volume also serves as a useful introduction to the scope of the subject and its literature, which otherwise can be difficult to source as it is scattered through journals in a variety of disciplines.

Douglas Palmer

BENNETT, M. R. & GLASSER, N. F. 2009. *Glacial Geology. Ice Sheets and Landforms*, 2nd ed. xii + 385 pp. Wiley-Blackwell. Price £85.00, €97.80, US \$129.95 (hard covers); £29.95, €34.50, US\$ 54.95 (paperback). ISBN 978 0 470 51690 4; 978 0 470 51691 1 (pb). doi:10.1017/S0016756810000543

It has been thirteen years since the first edition, which has always been popular with undergraduate students, was published. Considerable progress has since been made in the field of glacial geology, and it would thus seem timely that this second edition has come out. The book contains a logical progression of topics; an introduction to glacial geology sets the scene quite nicely, especially for first-year students. Individual overview chapters on glacierized regions and key concepts (mass balance and glacier hydrology) precede chapters on processes of glacial erosion, entrainment and deposition. Chapters on deposition are split into terrestrial and subaqueous environments. The book is richly illustrated with photographs and diagrams in full colour. An approach that will make this a popular textbook for revision with undergraduates, especially those starting out on the subject or those wanting information at-a-glance, is the use of boxes within the main text. These boxes are self-contained case studies or relevant additional information that would have interrupted the flow of the main text too much. For example, there are useful boxes with brief descriptions of the basics and the use of numerical dating techniques such as optically-stimulated luminescence and cosmogenic nuclide surface exposure dating, but also case studies on direct observations of subglacial processes such as quarrying or sediment deformation. The text is written in an easily-accessible style and contains between one and three pages of references to some key papers, arranged as separate bibliographies after each chapter, which again would help a targeted reading and revision style.

There are, however, a few negative points from both a lecturer's, but also student's perspective. Firstly, the focus of this book is somewhat selective: some new sections, for example on palaeoglaciology, are focused on only one aspect of that field, in this case ice sheet reconstruction. Glacier and palaeoclimate reconstruction is surprisingly omitted, despite the rapid development of these fields in the last c. 15–20 years. Secondly, the book rarely provides clear and up-to-date definitions: the different types of glaciers (e.g. cirque, valley, ice cap etc.) are not introduced with clear conceptual diagrams and photographs, but are covered in a section on global glacier distribution (chapter 2); a case-study approach attempts to introduce fairly complex relationships between altitude, latitude and climate fairly early on to explain this distribution, but this does not seem to work too well. In other cases, for example the section on direct glacial sedimentation (8.1) or the ice-marginal moraine section (9.1), the authors introduce rather ambivalent and/or perpetuate dated terms (e.g. lodgement till, supraglacial till, glaciotectionic moraines), which are not usually used in the literature and thus bound to lead to confusion amongst undergraduates when matching this to the current literature.

Those criticisms aside, the book is written in an accessible manner and well-illustrated; undergraduate students will thus