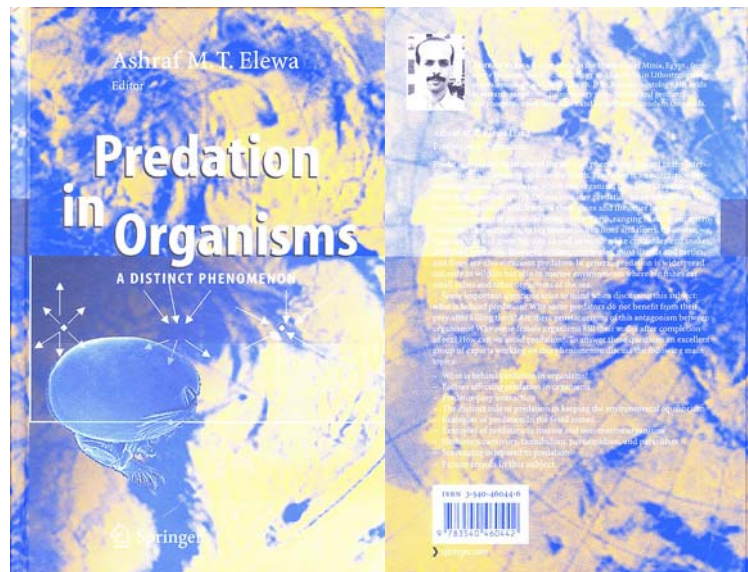


Elewa, A.M.T. 2006. Predation in organisms. A distinct phenomenon. - Heidelberg, Springer Verlag

Book review by C. Wallner



As stated in the introduction the book 'Predation in organisms. A distinct phenomenon' (edited by Ashraf M.T. Elewa), "... most of the published books on predation just focus on limited groups of organisms and could not answer several questions concerning predation philosophy and predator-prey interactions." Elewa's book indeed covers a more diverse set of organisms but fails miserably in answering any new questions, let alone be philosophical.

The book contains a total of 13 chapters. The first chapter gives a short, 4-page, introduction to predation in organisms. The three following chapters, of which two were written by the editor himself, deal with ostracod predation studied in the fossil record. Petrakis and Legakis present a theoretical chapter on the role of predation in shaping biological communities. Although the chapter focuses on insects, it gives a clearly written introduction to the different types of predation. Langerhans, in his chapter on evolutionary consequences of predation, gives an extensive and well-written overview of how predation can influence phenotypic divergence and speciation. Palaeontologists will enjoy Veldmeijer *et al.*'s chapter on predator-prey interaction in pterosaurs. Further the chapters deal with subjects as diverse as 'biological control of mosquito populations,' mathematical modelling of predator-prey interaction dynamics and predator invasion.

The diversity in organisms was supposed to make this book superior to other books on the subject of predation. Most questions given in the introduction are not answered to the reader. If the editor would have written a final chapter in which he summarizes and discusses the different subjects and tries to answer the given questions, the book would have been more successful. However, since the chapters are so diverse and unrelated this would have been an impossible task. As a result, the book is nothing else than a seemingly random collection of manuscripts dealing with predation. Although several chapters are well-written and interesting on their own, the book as a whole misses a clear coherence. I do not recommend this book to readers interested in predator-prey interaction or palaeontology.

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