Fritts's detailed ecological and numerical analyses of tree rings provide an excellent model to be followed by other researchers attempting to calibrate biological and geological data in climatic terms.

This sequence of research is the main topic of Tree Rings and Climate, in which Fritts draws his many studies together into a coherent description of the biological, meteorological, technical, and statistical knowledge that has underlain his work. The first chapter provides a thorough summary of the major concepts and the types of studies to be described later in the book. Fritts then shows his roots as a biologist and forester by presenting three chapters describing the morphology and physiological ecology of tree-ring growth from the cellular level up. A vast amount of literature is reviewed in these chapters, including the results of his own physiological studies of tree growth. The fifth chapter synthesizes the details of the earlier chapters by introducing three qualitative models relating temperature and precipitation changes to variations in ring width. Chapters 6 through 9 go on to describe Fritts's major work in statistically analyzing and climatically calibrating dendrochronological data. Α nonquantitatively oriented reader will want to consult standard texts for descriptions of the statistical techniques used here, but applied mathematicians will find many good examples of the use of such techniques as analysis of variance, multiple regression analysis, principal components analysis, and canonical correlation analysis.

The book is well organized, and a series of well-designed drawings, graphs, maps, and photographs illustrates it. Its biological chapters will appeal to foresters and botanists, but its main aim is not to be the definitive review of the subject but rather to provide a comprehensive progress report on a rapidly developing field. The research presented is current, but in some cases its newness precludes a high order of synthesis in its presentation. In chapter 9, for instance, Fritts not only discusses the methods for mapping past climates but also describes an initial feasibility study, the lessons learned from it, and a climatological study needed for interpreting the maps derived from the tree rings. Were this work less current, the climatic reconstructions might have been discussed more directly.

Tree Rings and Climate illustrates an important application of biological data to climatic studies and presents a challenge to palynologists and micropaleontologists to produce as fine a description of their own research in applied paleoclimatology. From Fritts's work, biologists and ecologists can learn how holistic thinking about biological processes can focus attention on the broadscale variations in tree growth, which are readily interpretable in climatic terms. This approach yields not only valuable results but also a whole new field for research.

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