



The Major Transitions in Evolution Revisited (Vienna Series in Theoretical Biology)

Brett Calcott, Kim Sterelny

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In 1995, John Maynard Smith and Eörs Szathmáry published their influential book *The Major Transitions in Evolution*. The "transitions" that Maynard Smith and Szathmáry chose to describe all constituted major changes in the kinds of organisms that existed but, most important, these events also transformed the evolutionary process itself. The evolution of new levels of biological organization, such as chromosomes, cells, multicelled organisms, and complex social groups radically changed the kinds of individuals natural selection could act upon. Many of these events also produced revolutionary changes in the process of inheritance, by expanding the range and fidelity of transmission, establishing new inheritance channels, and developing more open-ended sources of variation. Maynard Smith and Szathmáry had planned a major revision of their work, but the death of Maynard Smith in 2004 prevented this. In this volume, prominent scholars (including Szathmáry himself) reconsider and extend the earlier book's themes in light of recent developments in evolutionary biology. The contributors discuss different frameworks for understanding macroevolution, prokaryote evolution (the study of which has been aided by developments in molecular biology), and the complex evolution of multicellularity.

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