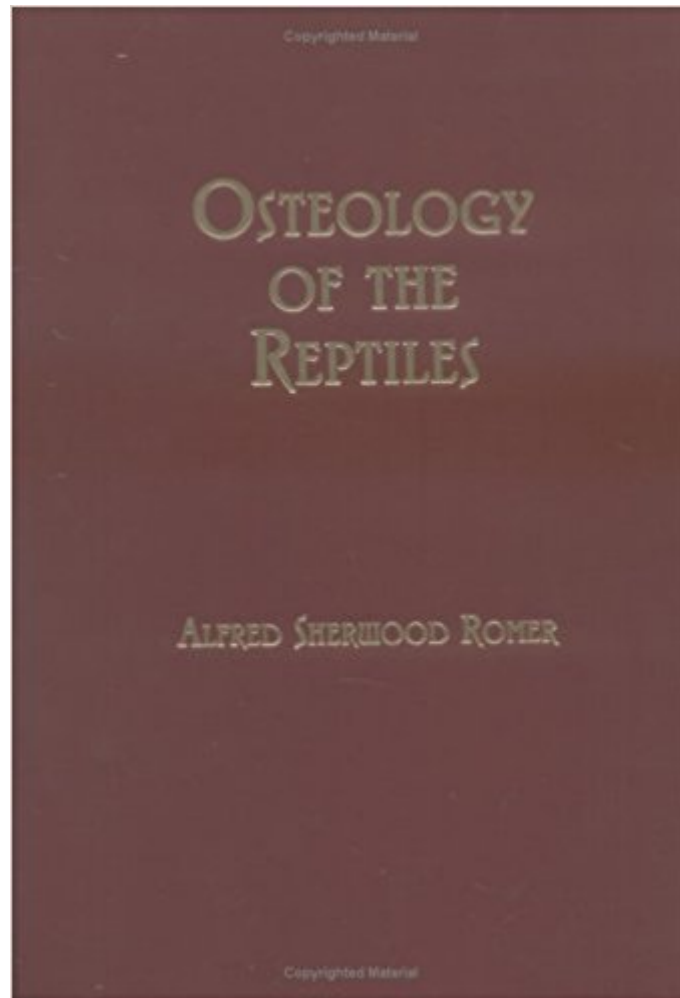




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Osteology Of The Reptiles



Synopsis

Based on the work of Samuel Wendell Williston and Dr. W.K. Gregory, author and editor of the original title published in 1925, this volume consists of two major parts - a structure-by-structure account of the reptile skeleton, followed by a classification of the various reptile groups based on osteological characters. This update is designed to give, in outline form, an account of the nature of the skeletal system of numerous reptile types both living and extinct.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starting off as a mere revision of Samuel Williston's 1925 book and turning into a full blown rewrite, Alfred S. Romer's *The Osteology of the Reptiles* is still the most comprehensive book on this subject ever written. This book features 707 pages (excluding bibliography & index) of information on the wide variety of osteological features found in the reptilia, with notes on how they evolved and their possible evolutionary roots. The book is divided into two parts. The first part, and by far the most useful, is that on the osteology of all the known reptilia. Romer starts off with a quick intro into the muscular, cardiovascular and nervous systems of the reptilia along with how it affects the skeleton and then dives head first into the wide variety of osteology found in this amazing group. He divides the skeleton into various parts (e.g. skull, axial, limb girdles etc.) and goes at it from there. To keep the book from becoming too humongous, Romer focuses on representatives of each major order. What one is left with is a well documented piece of work that makes a wonderful reference book for those interested in reptiles and a must have for any budding herpetologist, zoologist or vertebrate

paleontologist. The second part of the book is Romer's classification and systematic grouping of all the members of the reptilia. He continues to be very extensive as he brings relationships all the way down to the family level. Still, regardless of how hard he worked on it and how detailed he was, this portion of the book is painfully dated. This is the inevitable fate of all books taxonomical as nomenclature and relationships continue to change faster than books can be published on them. Romer himself knew that this would be a problem and admits to it ahead of time in the foreword of the book. And even though Dr. LaDuke attempts to point out areas where names have changed and families have moved (such as the redistribution of the Cotylosauria into many separate groups along with the abandonment of such orders as Eosuchia and Thecodontia) even his changes will one day be obsolete (if they're not already). So the second half, regarding the relationships of the reptilia, is more of a historical piece than anything else. There are some saving graces to this portion though. For instance, one can see the torture involved in trying to show evolutionary relationships using the standard Linnean taxonomic system. Another one is Romer's attention to detail. Now living in a time where creatures are shown their evolutionary relationships to one another mostly through the simplistic use of most recent common ancestor, it is nice to look back to a time when diagnostic features actually meant something. If one ever wanted to know what makes a python a python or a crocodile a crocodile, Alfred Romer's work will tell you that and then some. Finally the forward of the book really gives one an idea of just how much attention the reptilia is given as Romer astutely points out when he states that "I am impressed by the fact that we know less about many modern types than we do of many fossil groups." Nearly half a century later and this statement still rings true.

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