

To the Knowledge of the Fossil Lizards

by

Dr. Franz Baron Nopcsa

Zur Kenntnis der fossilen Eidechsen

Beitr. z. Pal. & Geol. Oestr.Ung. **21**: 33-62, Pl.III (1908)

(Trans. 2000 John D. Scanlon, Department of Zoology,
University of Queensland, Brisbane 4072 QLD, Australia)

In proportion to what we know about the other orders of fossil reptiles, our knowledge of the fossil lizards is to be regarded as quite deficient.

The lines now before you aim to give a short overview of the lizards which have so far been made known, to illuminate the deficient working up of sparse material, and eventually to somewhat increase our knowledge of the Mesozoic dolichosaurs. Apart from the aigialosaurids and dolichosaurids, the fossil lepidosaur material which has so far been made known is palaeontologically almost unusable; indeed most of the names which have been given have no value beyond that of a catalogue number. Of how much systematic value is a species of *Pseudopus* based on an isolated premaxilla, or several *Varanus* species which each relate to a single isolated vertebra, any man can judge who has had some lepidosaur skeletons in the hand, or to whom Boulenger's illustrations of the vertebrae of the male and female of *Heloderma suspectum* are known.

If in the following overview, nevertheless, all lizard remains are taken up, however fragmentary, this is not at all to recognise the right of all the numerous species present to exist, but rather simply to spare successors the work of bothering themselves with such forms and remains which, for scientific work, might as well not exist. After what has been said, it is easy to see why in the following synopsis I prefer to list the fossil lizards alphabetically and not in systematic arrangement. An attempt to arrange them systematically is also given, all the same; moreover I believed it would be possible to read out something from a chronological arrangement of the material. The description of new observations made in London on *Dolichosaurus*, *Adriosaurus* and *Coniosaurus*, so as not to disturb the plan of the work, is given in a second part. In order to avoid the continual repetition of source data in the synopsis, this part is divided into a literature list provided with consecutive numbering, and the synopsis itself.

