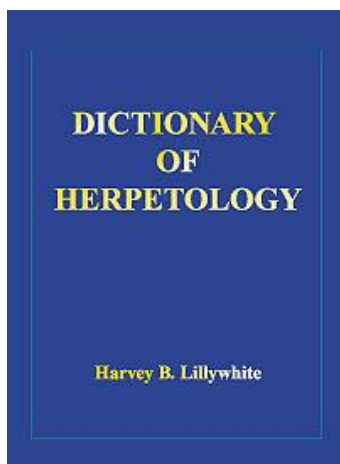


Book review

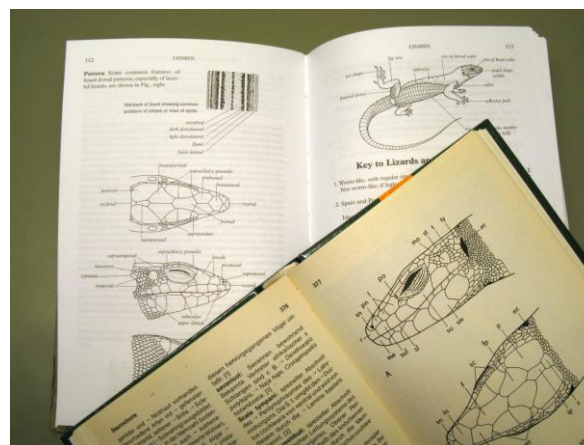


LILLYWHITE, H.B., 2008. Dictionary of herpetology. Krieger Publishing Company, Malabar (FL), USA. ISBN 1-57524-023-8
384 pages, 41 b&w figures, 3 tables
Price: €112.50

Any author's working day will not pass without consulting a lexicon in some form. A herpetologist's life is no exception and would include dictionaries like PETERS (1964), and the more recent book of KABISCH (1990) for those who understand German. The latter includes more illustrations than the former and a list of references, which is completely absent from PETERS (1964). The work being reviewed here falls somewhere between these two dictionaries as there are some references in-text, as well as Peters'-like outlined drawings. A simplistic comparison of the three dictionaries would be to count and compare the number of entries in each. Lillywhite certainly wins with over 11,000 entries, with the other two averaging 3,500 – although the reality is that what really matters is the kind of terms included. Peters is certainly the purest as it focuses primarily on herpetological terms, while Kabisch incorporates a fair number of (mainly European) genera and species names plus some terms useful to the vivarium keeper. To a lesser extent, KABISCH (1990) also integrates general morphological terminology. LILLYWHITE (2008) adds even more non-herpetological terminology related to anatomy, physiology, systematics, evolution, and other disciplines. Even our webzine is included with its URL (thank you!), although the journal's name should be spelled with an @.

I could not resist testing the *Dictionary of herpetology* with some terms that have either confused me over the years, or that seem to have different meanings to different people. The terms I chose to use were pileus

and gular fold. 'Pileus' in European, certainly in German, herpetology denotes the top of the head of especially the Squamata, commonly referring to its pholidosis, the constellation of the scales. According to Lillywhite, pileus is "A black, cap-like marking on top of the head". Although the head scalation in lizards is fairly similar to those in snakes, it would have been good to include drawings with explanatory terms as in, e.g. ARNOLD (2002: 112-113) or KABISCH (1990: 377) (see figure below), which would immediately

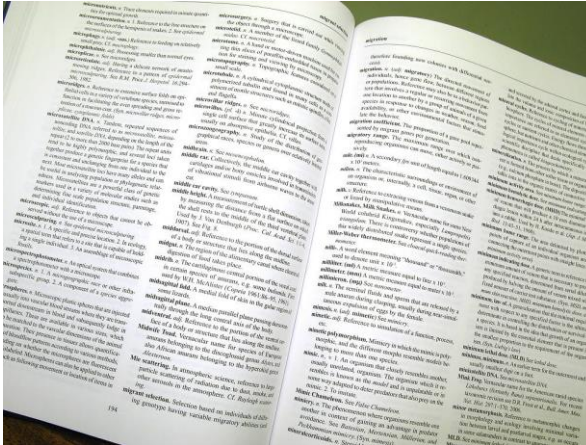


Examples of ARNOLD (2002) and KABISCH (1990) respectively.

clarify the placement of the occipital scale (which is not the interparietal in lizards), frontoparietal (which is not necessarily "Syn. Interparietal"), and supraciliary granules (absent in LILLYWHITE (2008) although his fig. 16 shows "superciliaries").

As I explained in an earlier paper (IN DEN BOSCH, 2005: 11) a 'gular fold' is not necessarily "a fold of skin running transversely

across the throat immediately anterior to the insertion of the forelegs", the definition given by Lillywhite, because in Lacertidae that is where we find the collar. A gular fold in this family would automatically become syntopic with the collar. More logically, the 'gular fold' is the transverse fold found under the throat of many lacertids running more or less from ear opening to ear opening. KABISCH (1990) employed 'sulcus gularis'. Alternatively, the term 'jugular fold' could be used in this context.



LILLYWHITE (2008: 194-195).

The format of the present work is somewhat surprising as it not only is a fairly large tome (22x28.5 cm) and thus bulky on one's desk – PETERS (1964) and especially KABISCH (1990) were more pocket book-sized – but it exists solely as a book. The dictionaries that I use each day, range from modern languages to etymology, and are almost all available in electronic form, even the rarer etymological ones – some of which are over a century old. My herp ones, an ethological lexicon, and two classical dictionaries are all well-printed and within easy reach, but used much more sparingly, I reluctantly confess, only because they are not immediately under one's fingertips. Apart from economic motives (fear of illegal copying), it is incomprehensible that Krieger did not also publish the *Dictionary of herpetology* in digital format in this computer age.

Should one buy the book? I am undecided. For around \$30 - \$40 Peters' dictionary is readily available second-hand, as is Kabisch's for half that price. If you do not also have access to anatomical or medical lexicons, or do not want to clutter your desk, and money is not an object, you certainly should. If in future the publisher decides to include a CD or DVD, I would then recommend that we all order it immediately.

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