

The early phylogeny of Anguimorpha as implicated by craniological data

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The problem of homology versus analogy of different craniological character states shared by Anguimorpha and Scincomorpha is analyzed. Only two character states, if any, may be tentatively considered as synapomorphies in both taxa. These are: low, tubular skull shape and broad, flat frontals. Other craniological features displaying similar states in both infra orders are regarded as parallel structures. Morphoclineal sequences of states of different craniological characters are proposed. The derived pattern of tooth replacement is regarded as the earliest and the most important achievement of the anguimorph lizard which is probably the only autapomorphy of this infra order. A certain pattern of the brain case is regarded as synapomorphic in the Platynota and Diploglossa, the two superfamilies that probably do not cover the range of the infra order.

Key words: Sauria, craniology, cladistics.

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