

Böhme, W. (2014): Herpetology in Bonn. *Mertensiella* 21: 256 pp.

The impressive book reviews the history of herpetological research and herpetological collections in Bonn in unexpected details. It starts with the old Prussian university, which hosted the former natural history museum. This chapter also includes biographic sketches about important researchers, who worked in the field of herpetology and were based in Bonn, or worked with the Bonn collection. This includes e.g., well known persons like Georg August Goldfuss, Franz von Leydig, and Georg Jan. This chapter ends with a short summary about contemporary institutions involved in research about amphibians and reptiles, like the Federal Agency of Nature Conservation which is based in Bonn.

However, the most important chapters of the book are about the Zoological Museum Alexander Koenig (ZFMK) and its herpetological research. At this point I have to say that the book could be easily an auto-biography, because Wolfgang Böhme is by all means the person who is responsible for the international reputation of the ZFMK herpetological collection. However, it is very enjoyable that the person who has the best knowledge about this collection wrote about the history and the involved former researchers and recent students, instead about primarily himself. The part about the ZFMK collection starts with a historic sketch about the foundation of the herpetological department and its first curator, Karl F. Buchholz. It is followed by sketches about the succeeded curators, but most importantly by the history, including important researchers, of the four main collections which were donated to the ZFMK collection. This includes specimen donation from the University of Kiel and Heidelberg, as well as the Göttingen collection and the Paul Müller collection. This historic part is followed by a complete type catalogue of the ZFMK herpetological collection, a chapter about national and international herpetological symposia held at the ZFMK, and is rounded down by a chapter on herpetological teaching at the ZFMK, and its “scientific output”.

Although the last type catalogue was published lately ago (BÖHME 2010), the type catalogue herein is more than just an update. It includes not only also detailed information also about secondary types, but also to specimens erroneously considered as types, and lost type specimens, which are mainly from the Göttingen collection. Moreover, many important comments are given to problematic specimens. Therefore, this type catalogue is not only the most current catalogue, but also the most detailed one of the ZFMK herpetology collection.

By several points this book is an important contribution to herpetology. It is the first detailed review of herpetological research in Bonn, also including other institutions than the ZFMK. It includes a detailed history about the ZFMK collection and the researchers, as well as students who are involved in the “evolution” of this collection, with a strong international reputation, and it includes the most updated type catalogue of primary and secondary types. All of this is written by the person who has not only an excellent knowledge about the ZFMK itself, but also the



best overview regarding herpetological research in Bonn. Under the authority of Wolfgang Böhme, the collection has grown from about 10.000 specimens to one the largest collections in Germany. Therefore it is hard to find any critical points or mistakes. There are some minor details in the type catalogue, e.g. that it could be mentioned that the recent name of *Lacerta stellio* is *Stellagama stellio*. Moreover I am very sure that, even that the book is published in 2014, the type catalogue was out of date by the time of its publication, largely due to ongoing research of its author.

Summarizing I can say that everybody who is interested in the history of the ZFMK collection, or in the history of German herpetological research, should have this book. It is full of details and historic herpetological knowledge, and it serves some enjoyable early photographs of important recent herpetologists like e.g., Frank Glaw, Ulrich Joger, Jörn Köhler, Andreas Schmitz, Miguel Vences, Thomas Wilms and Thomas Ziegler.

## REFERENCES

Böhme, W. (2010) A list of the herpetological type specimens in the Zoologisches Forschungsmuseum Alexander Koenig, Bonn. *Bonn zoological Bulletin* 59: 79–108

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