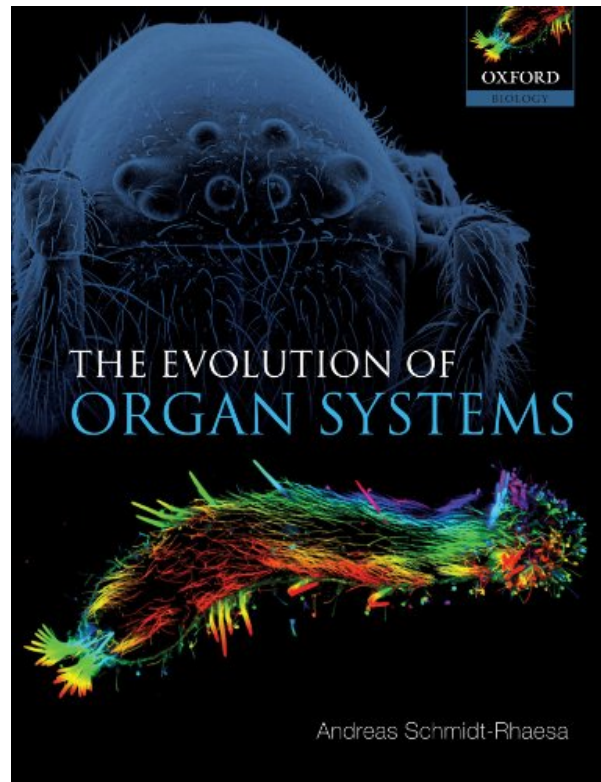
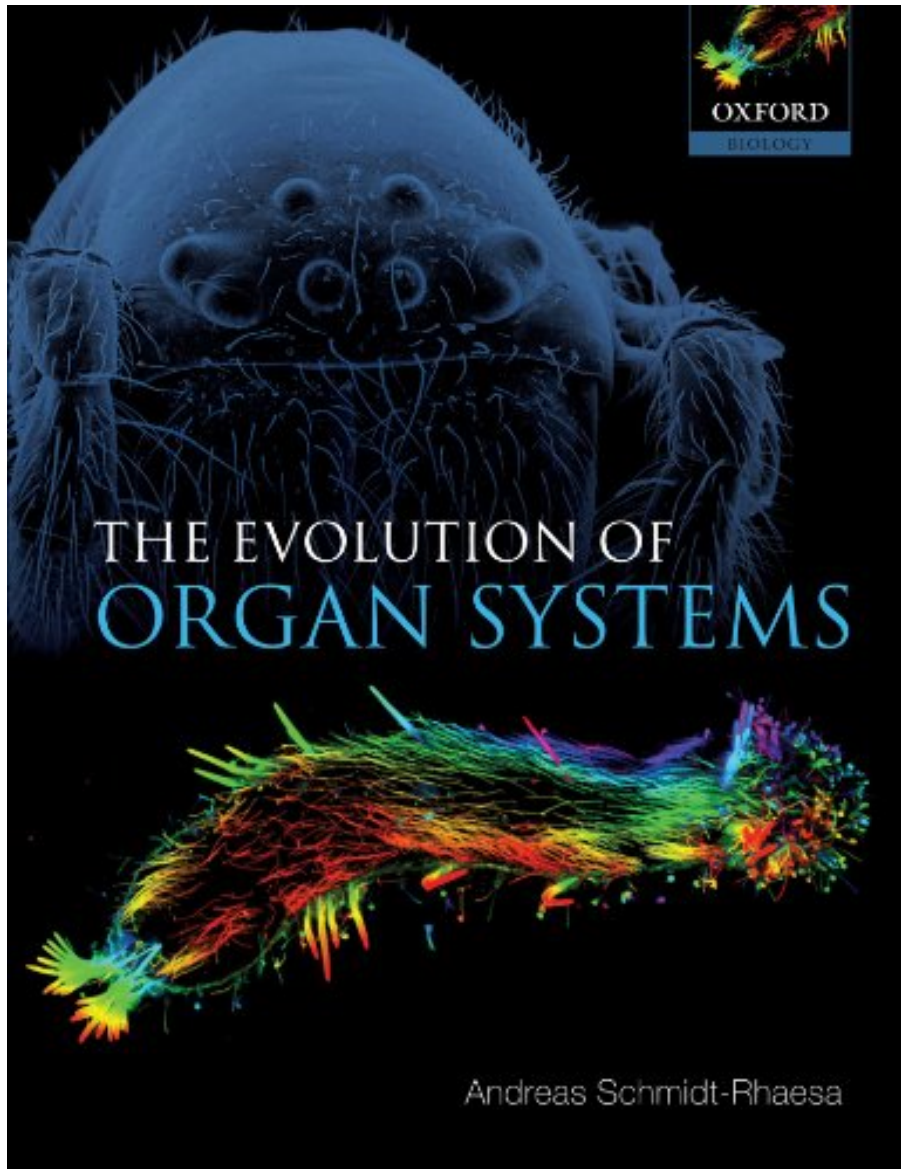


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Review

It succeeds in providing an integrative view on this important but often neglected aspect of metazoan evolution...highly recommend this volume as an introduction to the evolution of animal organ systems. Thomas Boehm The Quarterly Review of Biology

About the Author

Andreas Schmidt-Rhaesa was born in Königstein, Germany in 1966. He followed his passion for zoology by studying in Gießen and Göttingen (Germany), where he received his PhD in 1996. He worked as a PostDoc in Pittsburgh and Tampa (USA) and as assistant researcher at the Universities of Bielefeld and Braunschweig. Currently in the Department of Evolutionary Biology at the University of Bielefeld, he is about to take up a position as the Curator at the Zoological Museum at the University of Hamburg.

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Systematics has developed rapidly during the past two decades. A multitude of new methods and contributions from a diversity of biological fields including molecular genetics and developmental biology have provided a wealth of phylogenetic hypotheses, some confirming traditional views others contradicting them. Despite such inconsistencies, it is now possible to recognize robust regions of a 'tree of life' and also to identify problematic areas which have yet to be resolved. This is the first book to apply the current state of phylogeny to an evolutionary interpretation of animal organ systems and body architecture, providing alternative theories in those cases of continuing controversy. Organs do not appear suddenly during evolution; instead they are composed of far simpler structures. In some cases it is even possible to trace particular molecules or physiological pathways as far back as pre-animal history. What emerges is a fascinating picture, showing how animals have combined ancestral and new elements in novel ways to form constantly changing responses to environmental requirements. The Evolution of Organ Systems starts with a general overview of current animal phylogeny, followed by review of general body organization including symmetry, anteroposterior axis, dorsoventral axis, germ layers, segmentation, and skeletons. Subsequent chapters then provide a detailed description of the individual organ systems themselves - integument, musculature, nervous system, sensory organs, body cavities, excretory system, circulatory system, respiratory system, intestinal system, gonads and gametes. Generously illustrated throughout, this accessible text is suitable for both upper level undergraduate and graduate students taking courses in animal evolution, organogenesis, animal anatomy, zoology and systematics.

- Sales Rank: #2277199 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Oxford University Press, USA
- Published on: 2007-10-18
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.30" h x .80" w x 9.60" l, 1.74 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 368 pages

Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

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Peerlessly Detailed Survey of Comparative Morphology

By Ulrich

If you're looking at this book, you probably already know what you're in for. This is a tremendously detailed text on comparative morphology that seeks to trace the origins of organ systems from the original metazoans on downward. Each chapter takes a separate organ system -- nervous, circulatory, excretory, and so forth -- and discusses how it is structured with respect to the phyla (ALL of the phyla). It then concludes with the author's analysis of the implications of the morphological discussion for evolution -- which features were original to a shared ancestor (thereby indicating relationships between the phyla), and which are instead likely just the product of convergent evolution.

Not being an introductory text, this book will probably be incomprehensible if you do not already know a fair bit about all the metazoan phyla and some of the competing theories regarding their origins and differentiation. But that being said, it's not overly complex otherwise, and is a very interesting read. The illustrations, moreover, are well done and plentiful.

If I had a criticism, it would be that the text gets a little dull and rote, mechanically following its organizational scheme without as many digressions and charming anecdotes as I'd like. But you can't have everything. There's really no other book out there in English, to my knowledge, that is as detailed on this subject. So if you are at all interested in comparative morphology of the phyla, this is the one for you.

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A must have zoology book

By A. Hejnol

Andreas Schmidt-Rhaesa did an excellent job in writing this textbook. The idea of organizing the chapters in organ systems is innovative and very useful. One can realize that the author is an experienced teacher in zoology - its very well written and the numerous tables in which the type and structure of the organ systems in different animal taxa give a quick overview.

It combines all recent morphological studies and discussed them in the light of recent phylogenies. Always open minded, never dogmatic it gives a balanced view of common hypotheses about the evolution of the different organ systems.

I use this book nearly daily and I just have the paper back edition and think about getting the hardcover.

This book earns attention, its excellent as a reference and for teaching zoology.

Hopefully there will be a second edition!

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