

TURTLE POETRY

Defining Turtle Diversity: A Light-Hearted Poetic View

Turtle Origins

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One thought the turtle anapsid
But now perhaps they're diapsid
It's confusing to me
That old turtle tree
What the twigs and branches and sap did.

Turtle Names

ANDERS G.J. RHODIN²

Some have called you Chelonia
or Chelonii, an Order of Reptilia
some have known you as Testudinata
or the long-forgotten Cataphracta

But best you be Testudines
the name used by Linnaeus
the plural of the type Testudo
defines the group with ease.

¹ Composed April 1999, submitted by Martin A. Larson.
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² Composed April 2001, revised November 2007.
Written as a personal poetic reflection on the nomenclatural question of what scientific name to use
for the monophyletic group defining all turtles and tortoises.