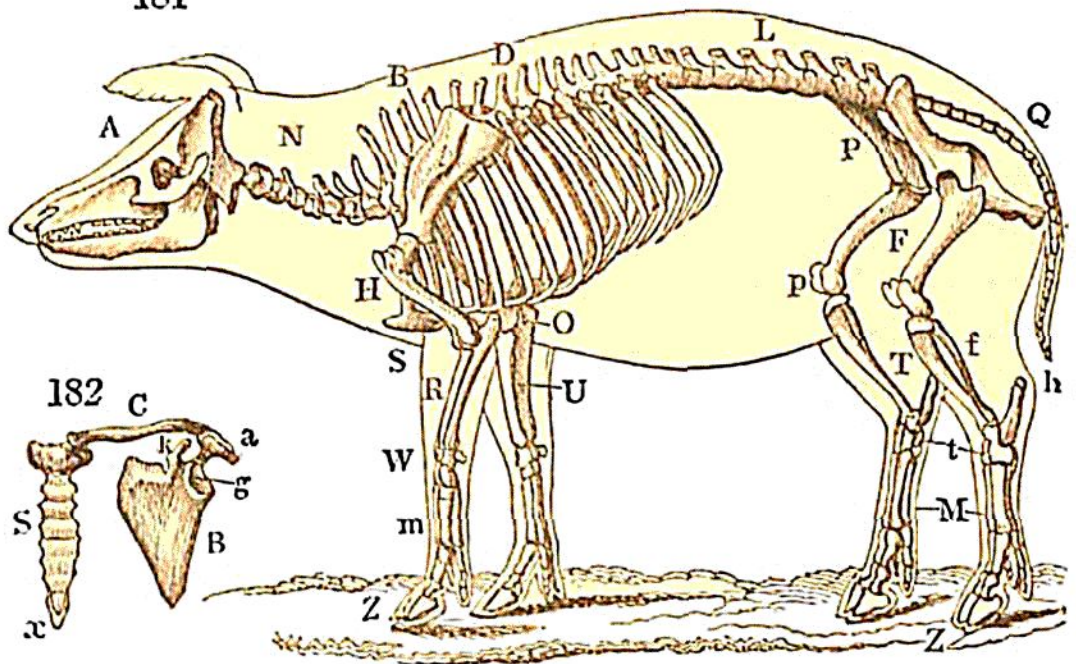


in process of time, the posterior half of the sphenoid bone, which lies in the middle of the basis of the skull; the temporal bones being formed by its leaves, and the parietal bones by the lateral halves of its spinous process. The third cranial vertebra is constituted by the anterior half of the sphenoid bone, which is its body, and the frontal bones, which are its leaves. This theory, which originated with Duméril, and was extended by Oken, has been farther applied to the bones of the face, by Geoffroy St. Hilaire, who conceives them to be likewise developments of several other supposed cranial vertebræ;* but the analogies by which the hypothesis is supported become more feeble and confused, as we recede from the middle of the spinal column.

All the other parts of the skeleton may be regarded as accessory to the spine; and they are far from exhibiting the same constancy either in form or number, as the vertebral column. In some instances, as in serpents, these accessory parts are altogether wanting; in others, they exist only in rudimental states; and it is but in a few that they can be considered as having reached their full development. In order to obtain a standard of comparison by which to estimate all their gradations of evolution, it will be best to consider

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* In this theory of G. St. Hilaire, the number of cranial vertebræ is seven, each composed of nine elementary pieces.