

A Synopsis of the Genera of Reptiles and Amphibia, with a Description of some new Species. By John Edward Gray, Esq. FGS. &c.

(To the Editors of the *Annals of Philosophy*.)

GENTLEMEN,

British Museum, July 12, 1825.

THE reptiles have been comparatively neglected by recent zoologists, perhaps on account of the popular prejudices against this interesting and curious class of animals which Linnæus designates "*Animalia pessima tetra nuda*." It is only necessary to overcome these prejudices, and to examine them even superficially, and we cannot but be struck with the beauty of their colours, the wonderful nature of their structure, and the peculiarities of their habits and manners. Indeed I do not know any class of animals better calculated to excite the wonder and astonishment of a student of nature.

With the hopes of inducing some inquiry into, and examination of, this department of natural history, I have attempted to bring together into the form of a synopsis, the labour of the preceding writers on this class, and have also thrown into it my own notes formed on an examination of the specimens at present under arrangement in the British Museum, which are exceedingly interesting to me in several points of view, first, as containing several undescribed species, and specimens of interesting or obscure genera; and secondly, the older specimens having been examined, and most carefully named by my late uncle, who paid great attention to this department of zoology, and several of whose manuscript species still remain unpublished.

I need not dwell on the distinctness of the two classes of reptiles. I have the pleasure to inform you that the first volume of my *New Series*, VOL. X,

Testudo, *Lin.* **Sternum 11 or 12 scaled, broad. *E. centrata*, *Merrem.* *T. concentrica*, *Shaw.* ***Toes 4-4; sternum 13 scaled. *E. longicolis*, *Gray.* *Testudo*, *Shaw.*

The plastron of the last subgenus is covered with 13 scales; that is six pair marginal, and an unequal sided hexangular, one in the middle of the anterior lobe. I have only observed an approximating distribution of the plates in a species of *strenotherus*; all the other *Emyda* that I have seen have had only the six pair of marginal plates, the first pair sometimes soldered so as to form only 11 plates.

Beak horny; sternum transversely sutured. Terraphenina.

2. TERRAPHENE, *Merrem.* *Cistula*, *Say.* *Tortuis a boit*, *Cuvier.*

Body convex; sternum of 11 or 12 plates, moveable; the two central plates united to the carapace by ligament; the posterior lobe broad fixed, the anterior one, of five or six plates, separated by a transverse ligamentous hinge.

T. clausa, *Merrem.* *Testudo*, *Gmelin.*

This genus forms the pass between the *Emyda* and the *Testudinida*, for it has the convex form and solid shell of the latter, and the feet and general characters of the former. It is also intermediate in point of habits, for it is often found in hot dry places.

Mr. Bell observes, that *Testudo Europea* is a species of this genus; if so the name of it should be changed, as that was certainly the *Emys* of the ancients.

3. STERNOTHERUS, *Bell, MSS.* *Tortues a boit* ***Cuv.*

Body depressed; sternum of 11 or 12 plates; the central part of two plates united to the carapace by two long processes fixed; the anterior lobe moveable, separated by a transverse ligamentous hinge; the posterior lobe narrow, fixed.

S. odorata, *Gray.* *Testudo*, *Latr.* *S. pennsylvanica*, *Testudo*, *Gmelin.*

Obs. *Cuvier* describes the anterior and posterior lobes of the sternum of these species to be moveable; but the hinder was fixed on the specimens which I have examined, which were all dry.

4. KINOSTERNOM, *Spir.*

Body depressed; sternum central part fixed; anterior and posterior lobes moveable; throat bearded.

K. longicaudatum.

**Beak soft.* *Chelidina.*

5. CHELYS, *Dumeril.* *Matamata*, *Merrem.*

Claws 5-4; body depressed; lips soft; nose produced.