SOME GENERIC NAMES OF TURTLES.

BY LEONHARD STEJNEGER.

I.

Merrem, in 1820, (Tentamen, p. 27) was the first author to give a generic name, viz: Terrapene, to the Emydine turtles with a movable plastron, which some earlier writers, such as Oppel (1811) and Cuvier (1817), had indicated as a section of the genus Emys. In the genus he included six valid species (his T. boscii being only a synonyme of T. ornata) as follows:

1. T. odorata (+ boscii),
2. T. pennsylvanica,
3. T. amboinensis,
4. T. tricarinata,
5. T. nigricans,
6. T. clausa.

Two years later Fleming (Philos. Zool. II, p. 270) apparently without knowing Merrem’s work, gave the name Cistuda to the same group of turtles, without mentioning any species whatsoever. This makes it an unconditional synonym of Terrapene, a conclusion quite in consonance with Say’s use of Fleming’s name in 1825 (Journ. Phila. Acad., IV, ii, p. 205) for the species C. clausa, C. pennsylvanica, and C. odorata.

In 1824, Spix (Testud. Brasil., p. 17) instituted the genus Kinosternon, thus taking out of Merrem’s Terrapene his T. tricarinata.

J. E. Gray in a paper entitled “A Synopsis of the Genera of
Stejneger—Some Generic Names of Turtles.

Reptiles and Amphibia" (Ann. Philos. (n. s.) X, pp. 193 seqv.) published in September, 1825, subdivided Merrem's genus and fixed *T. clausa* definitely as the type of *Terrapene*, as he spelled it. *Kinosternon* he also adopted as proposed by Spix, and in addition he instituted for *T. odorata* and *T. pennsylvanica*, a new genus for which he used a manuscript name by Bell, viz, *Sternotherus*.

Both of the species which constitute his new genus being congeneric with the type of *Kinosternon*, *Sternotherus* becomes an unconditional synonym of the latter.

Thomas Bell, whose MSS. name Gray had thus been appropriating, scarcely more than a month later (Zool. Journ., II. No. 7, Oct. 1825, p. 305) used the same name (though spelt slightly different, *Sternotherus*) in a somewhat different sense, including in it, besides *T. odorata* and the conspecific *T. bosii*, two new species *S. trifasciatus* and *S. leachianus*. This action ties the name *Sternotherus* down to *T. odorata*, if the latter be considered generically distinct from *Kinosternon*, thus antedating *Aromochelys*.

The genus which is now usually known as *Sternotherus*, therefore, must have another name, and *Pelusios* of Wagler (Nat. Syst. Amph., 1830, p. 137) becomes available with *P. nigricans* for type.*

The synonymies of these genera, as here mentioned, would then stand as follows:

**Terrapene** Merrem.

1820. *Terrapene* Merrem, Tent. Syst. Amph., p. 27 (type, as restricted by Gray, Sept., 1825, *T. clausa*).


*If *Sternotherus* had not been disposed of by Gray in 1825, it would have stood for the genus now known as *Cyclolmys*, since Wagler in 1830 clearly restricted it to *C. trifasciata* a whole year before Gray applied it exclusively to *Pelusios nigricans*. 
Sttjneger—Some Generic Names of Turtles. 237

Kinosternon Spix.

1824. *Kinosternon* Spix, Testud. Brasil., p. 17 (type *K. longicaudatum* + *K. brevicaudatum* = *Testudo scorpioides* = *Terrapene tricarinata* Merrem).


Pelusios Wagler.

1830. *Pelusios* Wagler, Nat. Syst. Amph., p. 137 (type *Emys castanea* + *E. subaigua* = *Terrapene nigricans* Merrem).


Cyclemys Bell.


II.

Gray's generic name *Nicoria* is plainly untenable being ante-dated by the same author's *Geoemyda*.

The type of the latter has been believed to be *G. spinosa*, but as I am going to show, this assumption is entirely erroneous. The type of *Geoemyda*, on the contrary, is undoubtedly *G. spengleri* which is so characterized in the original communication establishing the name in the following words (Proc. Zool. Soc. London, 1834, p. 99):

"Specimens were exhibited of several Reptiles, which were accompanied by notes by Mr. Gray. These notes were read:
"Mr. Gray regards the Testudo Spenleri, Walb., as the type of a new genus of *Emydida*......

"From the beautiful figure of the animal of *Em. spinosa* given by Mr. Bell in his 'Monograph of the Testudinata' Mr. Gray is inclined to believe that this species belongs to the same genus with *Em. Spenleri."

As will be seen nothing could be more explicit. The genus was also so accepted by contemporary authors as shown by Bonaparte's use of the emended name *Geoemyda* in 1837 with *G. spenleri* as the only species.

That Gray himself afterwards (1855) shifted the name to *G. spinosa* has nothing to do with the case, except that it necessitates the coining of a new name for the genus for which the latter species stands as type. As a substitute I would propose *Heosemys* with the three species *Heosemys spinosa, grandis* and *depressa*.

The synonymy of the two genera would then stand as follows:

**Heosemys** Stejneger.


**Geoemyda** Gray.


1876. *Chaibassia* Theobald, Cat. Rept. Brit. Ind. (p. 8) (type *Ch. tricarinata*).

*From εως, East and εμυς, turtle, formed in analogy to ἐωςφόρος.