

TITLE PAGE FOR CITATION:

Johann David Schoepff, History of the Tortoises (and/or Turtles), illustrated with pictures. [Published] At Erlangen [Germany], on the premises of Johan Jakob Palm [? CK LoC].1792

PAGE 64:

“Tab. XV” (tab. = tabula, lit. “plank or board,” equivalent to modern “plate”) [YOU MIGHT WANT TO PUT THIS AFTER THE TITLE, ACCORDING TO MODERN CONVENTION]

THE TERRAPIN TORTOISE
(plate 15)

Upper shell sunk down [OR depressed], with the anterior little plates [scutes?] keeled, with a ribbed lateral margin, at back notched [OR serrated?]

Or: ‘The Terrapin,’ at least one-fourth lacustrine, with the fingers [OR nails/claws] of the (front) feet as you please, with four at a time on the back feet [lit, soles of hind feet], with a sunk-down, oval shell. *Brown*: Hist. nat. of Jamaica, p. 466, note 4.

Marsh tortoise. *Linnaeus*: Systema naturalis. The “Gmel.” edition, note 23, p. 1041.

Terrapen, with a rather flat an oval upper shell. *Cepede*: [NO WORK NAMED] page 229, and *Bonaterre*: [NO WORK NAMED], note 26.

Upper shell oblong, very shallow, sunk down, and evenly convex, very little bent on the descending sides of the disk on both sides, in front folded [OR curved, bent], with the lateral margin straight, at the back [the shell] oval, notched [OR serrated; “crenatus” is NOT a Classical word]. Little plates of the disk 13, around the smallest little open space deeply furrowed and widely ribbed; with anterior ribs more broad. Keel of the back blunt, breaking off any intersecting [interconnecting] of the little plates. The *first* little plate of the back, nearly pentagonal; the edge of the anterior third in extent [OR breadth] corresponding to the edges of the little plates; bluntly keeled; the *second* and third [little plates] hexagonal, broader than long, with edges bent backward (chiefly in more grown-up [specimens]), and with anterior angles blunt; the keel, which in the former ones, are certainly more raised, are nonetheless blunt, smooth, and at the back more lowered [OR more sunk down]; the *fourth* is like the former ones, but broader, more sloping, with the rim [OR border] at the back very crooked [OR curved, twisting, bent]; the fifth is

irregularly pentagonal, rather flat, with just the lightest trace/vestige of a very shallow keel.* [FOOTNOTE IN ORIG LABELED WITH “*”]

The little open spaces in younger shells are spotted with a scab [lit., rough or scabrous from disease, like mange], a few, from the very same dorsal keel of the two-part [THIS WORD (adj. meaning literally “two-part” COULD GO WITH SEVERAL IN THE SENTENCE, I’D NEED TO KNOW MORE ANATOMY OF AN ANIMAL TO BE SURE], but in the most shells it is nearly obliterated.

* Beyond the furrows, to/for/by which are produced single little plates, the superficial remains of them is light. Nevertheless, in one of the shells that I have in my possession, the disk beyond the parallel furrows common to call, is distinguished by roving and twining lines, like worms that have gotten out [OR sprung out, become visible, etc.].

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The keel of the dorsal 4 anterior little plates, broader and more distinct, with the structure of the rest of the shell, seems to offer a character of the species scarcely to be rejected.

The lateral little plates are 4 on either side of the disk; more inclining into a level surface than in any other species; the little open space is located toward the posterior margin and middle more, very small, with ribbed sides, and rounded with rather deep furrows; the *first* is a nearly square, not straight shape, bent at the lower side margin; the *second* is pentagonal and greater than the remaining ones; the *third* is irregularly and obliquely pentagonal, the fourth is the smallest and irregularly square.

The margin of the shell, in front curved (like a bow), from that point with the disk with equal declivity, at the sides straight, at the back oval, bluntly notched [OR serrated] and with the extreme rim of the little plates more or less folded back everywhere ribbed. Little plates 25, almost square, narrow, furrowed, with equal declivity to the back. The first is the smallest, square, acute [=sharp (angle), pointed, well-defined?]; the three nearest on all sides, with the extreme edge bluntly folding back; the five lateral ones from above are narrowest, but from below are humped, from the outside puffed up and extended (three with the first ones in between,) are connected with the processes of the sternum, which in this species are more upwardly expanded (or taller, more high); the three at the back are a little broader, with a more acute edge, though it is folded back; the last two are above the tail, downwardly concave, and notching a distinctive suture.

The shells are for the most part a uniform color, but there are variants with dark (black), pale yellow, ash grey; in younger [animals], however (from which number is the specimen depicted), the color is more dilute and becoming yellow to white here and there, it intervenes at the circuit of the dorsal little plates and the edge especially.

The sternum is more narrow and a little shorter than the upper shell; bent upward sharply lopped [OR broken off], at the back notched; it is flat and strong, lying at a great distance and at an equal space everywhere from the “shield” [scutum]. The complete number of sutures in 12 areas is clearly seen. The medial sutures are transverse straight lines. The “wings” [alae] of the sternum are broad, higher, obliquely flexed outward and

upward, at the middle of the symphysis they bind together tightly and firmly both the shells. The color of the sternum for some is all white, for others black, or (as in the depicted specimen) variegated white with black lines.

I have *four* shells personally, of which the largest is 6½ thumbs [pollex was the thumb as a standard of measurement], 4¾ wide; 1½, from the margin of the shield [scutum] high.—The specimen depicted was 4¼ thumbs long,

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3¼ broad, 1 thumb, from the margin high; the wings [alae] of the sternum were ½ thumb high, 1 thumb broad. Thus the height of the shield [scutum] or of the upper shell, to its length is 1 to 4.

It lives in North America. I carried with me two shells from there; two smaller ones the Reverend Henr. Mühlenberg* sent (me). In the same place they are customarily called *Terrapins*, and under this name in the outdoors of Philadelphia, and elsewhere, they are put out for sale. It may be I am deprived of knowledge of the head and extremities, but nonetheless I know for certain that this species is aquatic, because the largest one whose shell I have in my possession was produced [OR fetched out] from an animal captured in the sweetish waters of Long Island.

Whether it is a new and undescribed species, I leave for the moment undecided; to be sure, I readily believe it to be the same as the Terrapin of Brown (loc. cit.); the resemblance at least is probable, beyond the agreement of the names, on account of the smaller stature, the sunk-down, oval shell, and other fitting conditions among them.

In standing waters the Terrapin lives, in meadows it seeks its victim [OR prey] and grows (in Jamaica) to 8–9 thumbs, says Browe, to which Cedepe further adds, “it is a tasty [OR savory] meat and is to be had for one’s health.” The name Terrapen seems to be applied to many species, certainly the Terrapen *T. clausa* also called *Edward*, which nonetheless is different from that one of Brown, which for a long time the illustration of Schneider showed in his *Hist. nat. Test.* [Natural History of the Tortoises/Turtles], p. 335.

* In his most recent letter, the Reverend Mühlenberg added the following: “It lives in “false” [not natural OR concealed] waters; it grows meanwhile to the side of a foot. The feet are leaf-patterned [?]; 5 fingers of the front feet, 4 fingers on the back. The tail is short.”

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Plate 15’s caption “The Terrapin tortoise”