

**CATALOGUE OF THE TORTOISES,
CROCODILES, AND
AMPHISBAENIANS, IN THE
COLLECTION OF THE BRITISH
MUSEUM**

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Catalogue of the Tortoises, Crocodiles, and Amphisbaenians, in the Collection of the British Museum by Various .

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VARIOUS .

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INTRODUCTION.

THE chief object of preparing the present Catalogue, has been to give at one view a complete Synopsis of all the specimens of Shielded Reptiles at present in the British Museum collection, and an account of the species known to exist in other collections, but which are at present desiderata to the British Museum, so as to enable travellers, collectors, and others, to assist in completing the national collection.

For this purpose a synoptic description has been given of all the genera and species of the shielded reptiles at present known to exist in the different museums and private collections, and at the end of each description is added an enumeration, stating the state, age, country, and other peculiarities of each specimen of the kind in the Museum collection; or when the species is not at present in that collection, the museum in which it has been observed is added after the general habitat of the species. The different individuals of each species contained in the British Museum collection, are indicated by the letters *a*, *b*, *c*, &c.

When the age of the specimen is not stated, it is to be understood that it is full grown, or nearly so; when otherwise, its state is marked immediately after the letter by which it is distinguished; and if the sexes are known, it is stated to be male or female. These particulars are followed by the habitat, which is given as particularly as the materials possessed by the Museum permit.

Those specimens which have been presented to the Museum have the name of the donor marked immediately after the habitat. When there is no such indication, the specimens have been either purchased, or procured in exchange; and in this case, whenever the place or person from whom they have been received gives authenticity to the specimen, or adds anything

of moment to their history, they are noted as being from such or such a collection.

In the adoption of generic and specific names, it has been thought right to use, whenever it was possible, that which was first applied to the species. As far as regards the specific names, there is comparatively little difficulty in the application of this simple rule; but generic names have been used by different authors in senses so widely different, and the groups which they were meant to designate have been so variously extended or restricted, that it is no easy matter to determine, where several names have been used, which of them ought to be preferred. And as every original observer will constantly make use of characters which others may have overlooked, or not thought of so much importance as he may be inclined to attach to them, even when a generic name is used, it will of necessity be often employed in a different sense, or with a more restricted or extended meaning than its original proposer applied to it.

It is needless, however, to enter into the details of nomenclature, further than to observe that to the name adopted for the genus is appended the specific name under which the animal is believed to have been first described. If the generic name adopted be different from that employed by the establisher of the species, his name immediately follows it as a synonyme; and where the animal has received more than one specific name, these names are also given. But it has been thought unnecessary to load the Catalogue with any other generic names, where no change has been made in the specific, as it has been considered that these names will be sufficient for all the purposes of identification.

In those cases where the two sexes of the same species, or any particular individual state or variety belonging to it, has been differently named, such names (belonging exclusively to the state or individual so described) are placed after the reference to the specimen to which they generally apply.

To determine with accuracy the names and synonymes of the species, the Museums of Paris, Leyden, Vienna, Berlin, Francfort, &c., have been personally examined. Many of the specimens in the Museum collection have been received from the original describers, and most of them have been examined by M. G. Bibron, one of the authors of the *Erpétologie*

Générale, ou Histoire Naturelle Complète des Reptiles, now in the course of publication at Paris. So that there is every reason to believe they are named in perfect accordance with those in the various continental collections.

The specimens presented by

Sir Joseph Banks, may be regarded as the type of the species described by Dr. Shaw.

Thomas Bell, Esq., as the types of species described by him in his various papers, and in his very beautiful Monograph of the Testudinata.

The Earl of Derby,

Sir Everard Home,

Capt. William Chambers, R.N.

Alexander Collie, Esq.

John Gould, Esq.

General Thomas Hardwicke,

Dr. John Richardson,

John Reeves, Esq.

John Russell Reeves, Esq.

Colonel Sykes, and

J. Whitfield, Esq., as the types of the species described by me in the *Synopsis Reptilium*, the *Illustrations of Indian Zoology*, the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society*, and other journals and books of travels.

The Royal Society, as the types of the species described by Pennant in the *Philosophical Transactions*, or figured by Grew in his *Museum*.

Dr. Rüppell, as the types of the species described in his *Fauna of Abyssinia*.

The Hon. East India Company, as the types of the species described by Dr. Cantor, in his *Fauna of Chusan*.

Dr. Richard Harlan, and

Messrs. Edward and Henry Doubleday, as the types of the North-American species described by Say, Harlan, and others.

The specimens purchased or procured in exchange from

The Francfort Museum, as the types of the species described by Dr. Rüppell.

The Leyden Museum, as the types of the species described by Dr. Schlegel in his *Fauna of Japan*, or other works on reptiles.

The Paris Museum, as the types of the species described by M. G. Bibron.

The South African Museum, as the types of the species described by Dr. A. Smith, in his *Illustrations of the Zoology of South Africa*.

The following list exhibits the geographical distribution of the species. When the species is found in two of the larger divisions of the list, on account of its extensive range, it is preceded by an asterisk. The names of the species which are desiderata in the Museum collection, are printed in *Italics*.

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JOHN EDWARD GRAY.

British Museum, July 1, 1844.