



Emys microglyphica.

EMYS HIEROGLYPHICA.—*Holbrook.**Plate XVII.*

CHARACTERS. Shell oval, depressed, ecarinate, smooth, entire in front, elongated and imperfectly serrated behind; sternum oblong, emarginate posteriorly, dingy yellow; head very small; upper jaw slightly emarginate, lower jaw furnished with a tooth.

DESCRIPTION. The shell is oblong-oval, very flat, smooth, ecarinate, entire in front, and imperfectly serrated behind. The first vertebral plate is urceolate; the second and third are hexagonal, the former with its anterior, the latter with its posterior margin, concave; the fourth vertebral plate is very irregularly hexagonal, with the lateral angles prolonged; the fifth is heptagonal. The first lateral plate is irregularly triangular, with the basis rounded, and joined to four marginal; the second and third are hexagonal, with an acute angle above, received between the vertebral plates; the fourth is pentagonal. The marginal plates are twenty-five in number; the nuchal, or intermediate, is nearly a parallelogram, the anterior is irregularly quadrilateral, with its anterior and external angle projecting beyond the second, which is also very irregularly quadrilateral, with its posterior and internal angle much elongated. The remaining marginal plates are all nearly quadrilateral; the posterior and external angle of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh project so much as to give a serrated appearance to the shell.

The sternum is full and entire in front, emarginate behind; the gular plates are regularly triangular, the apex of the triangle directed backwards; the brachial plates are irregularly quadrilateral, the outer margin being rounded and most

extensive; the thoracic are quadrilateral, and narrow in the antero-posterior direction; the abdominal are hexagonal and broad; the femoral and sub-caudal plates are irregularly quadrilateral and large. Of the supplemental plates, the axillary is elongated and quadrilateral, the inguinal is triangular.

The head is remarkably small and narrow; the snout a little pointed; the nostrils are in front, and near together; the eyes are large, and placed near the snout; the pupil dark, the iris golden. The upper jaw is slightly emarginate in front; the lower furnished with a small tooth.

The anterior extremities are long, with a row of large square folds of skin along the superior border of the fore-arm, beginning at the humerus; the anterior surface of the fore-arm is covered with large scales, the posterior surface with smaller; the carpus is broad; the fingers five in number, and palmated, furnished with five nails; the three intermediate are straight, and of very great length; the posterior extremities are long and very flat; the tarsus and metatarsus greatly expanded; the toes are remarkably palmated, and furnished with four long nails.

COLOUR. The shell is olive-brown, tinged with green, and is subdivided by broad yellowish lines into spaces of various shapes and sizes, each space being occupied by narrower concentric lines of the same colour. The marginal plates have each a broad yellowish band extending through the middle in a vertical direction; at each extremity of the plates are yellowish spots, and one or more semicircular lines of the same colour; these meeting with the lines of the adjoining plates form a complete circle, in which are enclosed two yellowish spots. The colour of the sternum is a dirty yellow, with a dusky blotch at the external border of the thoracic and abdominal plates.

The head is dark brown; a yellow line begins at the snout, runs between the eyes, increasing in breadth, and terminates behind the orbit; another line of the same colour begins behind the orbit, small at first, but increasing in size till it forms a large yellow blotch, out of which issues another line, which runs along

the neck. Below these lines are two broad yellow bands, also beginning behind the orbit; these communicate by a vertical band passing over the anterior part of the tympanum, and are afterwards continued along the neck. A small yellow line begins on each side, beneath the nostrils, and is continued to the middle of the upper jaw; another line of similar colour goes from the centre of the chin and extends across the throat, from the posterior part of which is extended, along the lower jaw and neck, another broad band, continuous at the articulation of the jaw with the band passing down from the orbit; on the throat is another large blotch, from which are extended posteriorly one or two yellow lines.

The colour of the anterior extremities is dark brown in front, with a large yellow longitudinal band above, extending throughout, and one or two smaller and less extensive below. The posterior extremities are dark brown, with large longitudinal yellow bands along the nates and posterior part of the thighs, and smaller ones on the superior surface of the thigh and leg; on the inferior surface of the thigh and leg are several very extensive yellow bands and blotches, all ending at the tarsus; the membrane between the toes is marked with a longitudinal yellow line; the tail is dark brown above and below, with two longitudinal yellow lines.

DIMENSIONS. Length of shell, 12 inches; of sternum, $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches; breadth of shell, 7 inches; elevation of shell, 3 inches; length of tail, 3 inches; length beyond the vent, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION. It is found in our western waters. Professor Troost, of Nashville, Tennessee, furnished me with a beautiful living specimen from the Cumberland river.

HABITS. I know but little of the habits of this animal, but from the form of its extremities, it appears to be eminently aquatic.

GENERAL REMARKS. I have been led to give the specific name hieroglyphica, to

this Emys, from the peculiar disposition of the yellow lines and spots on the marginal plates, which at a first view bear a strong resemblance to hieroglyphic characters.



Holbrook, John Edwards. 1842. "Emys hieroglyphica – Holbrook." *North American herpetology; or, A description of the reptiles inhabiting the United States* 1, 111–114. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.326763>.

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