

A NEW TORTOISE FROM TRAVANCORE.

BY

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(WITH 2 PLATES.)

*(Read before the Bombay Natural History Society on
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Shortly after leaving India, Mr. H. S. Ferguson drew my attention to a Tortoise which occurs near Trivandrum, along with the well-known *Testudo elegans*, and which agrees with it in the absence of a nuchal shield. A shell which he brought me about a year ago indicated a species more nearly allied to the Burmese-Siamese *T. elongata*. I requested Major Dawson, Mr. Ferguson's successor at the Trivandrum Museum, to procure complete specimens, and through his kindness I have now received two living adult individuals, from which, together with the shell above mentioned, I have drawn up the following description:—

TESTUDO TRAVANCORICA.

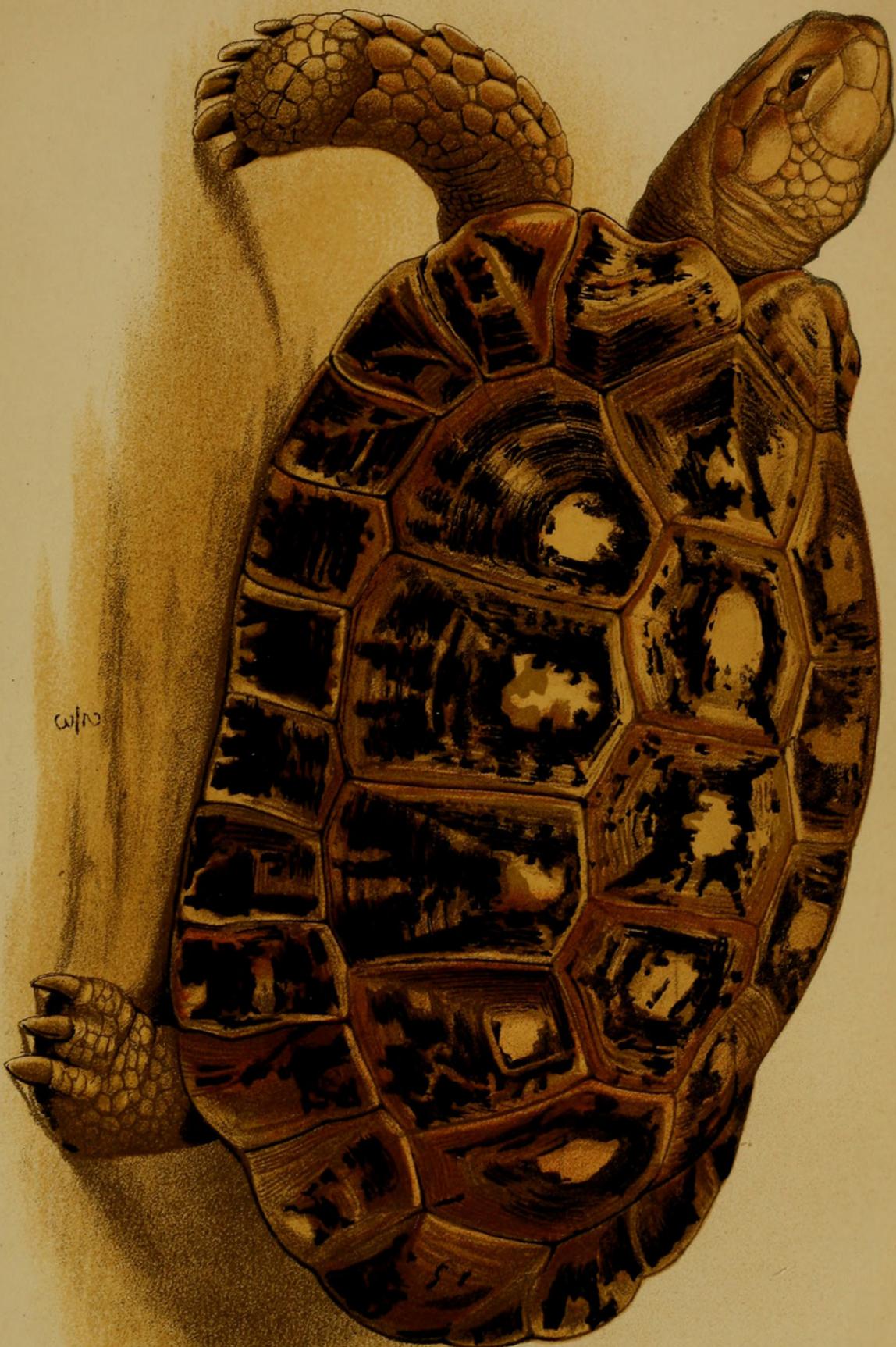
Shell much depressed once and two-fifths to once and three-fifths as long as deep, with flattish or feebly convex vertebral region; anterior and posterior margins very distinctly reverted, slightly serrated; shields concentrically striated; nuchal absent; supracaudal undivided, incurved or not; first vertebral shield a little broader than long, the others much broader than long and as broad as or broader than the costals. Plastron large truncate anteriorly, deeply notched posteriorly; suture between the pectoral shields shorter than, but at least three-fourths the length of, that between the humerals; suture between the gulars as long as or shorter than that between the pectorals; anals forming a very short suture; axillary and inguinal moderate. Head moderate; a pair of large præ-frontal shields, followed by a much larger frontal, which is broader than long; beak feebly hooked, tricuspid. Anterior face of fore limb with large, unequal-sized imbricate scales; no enlarged tubercles on the thighs; tail ending in a claw-like horny tubercle.

Carapace olive or reddish-brown above, the shields with a yellowish central area surrounded by black blotches, which may extend over the greater part of their surface; plastron yellowish, with small black blotches. Head yellowish, tinged with orange; limbs olive, the large scales yellowish; iris dark-brown.

Length of shell 290 millimetres.

This new species may be said to be intermediate between *Testudo elongata*, Blyth., which inhabits Bengal, Burma, and Siam, and *T. forsteni*, Schleg. and Müll., from Celebes and Gilolo, being on the whole nearer to the latter, from which it is distinguished by the greater extent of the median suture between the pectoral shields of the plastron, whilst it differs from the former in the lesser extent of that suture, in the absence of a nuchal shield, and in the much larger frontal shield.

Mr. Ferguson informs me that this Tortoise is very common in the Travancore hills between 500 and 1,000 feet altitude, but not higher, so far as he can remember.



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Testudo travancorica.

J. Green del. et Chromo lith.



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Testudo travancorica.



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