

Finch & C^o



A MOUNTED ANATOMICAL SPECIMEN OF A GREEK MARGINATED TORTOISE

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THE HINGED CARAPACE OPENING TO REVEAL THE SKELETON

WITH OLD LABEL READING 'TESTUDO MAURITANICA EUROPE'. MUSEES SCOLAIRES, EMILE, 23 RUE DE LA MONNAIE, PARIS.

19TH CENTURY

SIZE : 27.5 CM HIGH – BASE : 15 CM WIDE, 10 CM DEEP – 10³/₄ HIGH – BASE : 4³/₄ INS WIDE, 4 INS DEEP

LITERATURE

TORTOISES AND TURTLES HAVE AN UNUSUAL SKELETON. THE RIBS AND SOME OF THE VERTEBRAE ARE FUSED TO THE INNER SURFACE OF THE CARAPACE AND THE PELVIC AND SHOULDER GIRDLES ARE IN AN UNUSUAL POSITION INSIDE THE RIB CAGE. THE SKULL IS HEAVILY BUILT BUT WITH NO OPENINGS BEHIND THE EYE SOCKETS AS THERE ARE IN OTHER REPTILES. THE LENGTH OF THE NECK VARIES GREATLY BETWEEN SPECIES AND DETERMINES HOW THE HEAD IS WITHDRAWN INTO THE SHELL. BASED ON THIS PHYSICAL DIFFERENCE TORTOISES AND TURTLES ARE DIVDED INTO TWO MAJOR SUB DIMSIONS : STRAIGHT OR SIDE NECKED.

THE SHAPE OF A TORTOISES OR TURTLES SHELL REFLECTS ITS WAY OF LIFE. TERRESTRIAL SPECIES HAVE HIGH DOMED SHELLS THAT ARE DIFFICULT FOR PREDATORS TO BITE OR CRUSH AND AQUATIC SPECIES TEND TO HAVE LOW STREAMLINED CARAPACE THAT HELPS THEM SLIP EASILY THROUGH WATER.