Finch & Co



THE COMPLETE MOUNTED SKELETON AND SHELL OF A LARGE AFRICAN LEOPARD TORTOISE

THE COMPLETE MOUNTED SKELETON AND SHELL OF A LARGE AFRICAN LEOPARD TORTOISE
'GEOCHELONE PARADALIS BABCOCKI'
THE SHELL LIFTING TO REVEAL THE INNER CARAPACE AND SKELETON, MOUNTED ON AN EBONISED BASE
LATE 19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 20CM HIGH, 40 CM WIDE, 23CM DEEP – 8 INS HIGH, 16 INS WIDE, 9 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 RIBCAGE. THE SKULL IS HEAVILY BUILT 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 THE LENGTH OF THE NECK VARIES GREATLY BETWEEN SPECIES AND DETERMINES HOW THE HEAD IS WITHDRAWN INTO THE SHELL, AND THEREFORE IF THE TORTOISE IS SIDE OR STRAIGHT NECKED.
THE SHAPE OF A TORTOISES OR TURTLES SHELL REFLECTS ITS WAY OF LIFE. TERRESTRIAL SPECIES HAVE A HIGH DOMED SHELL THAT IS DIFFICULT FOR PREDATORS TO BITE OR CRUSH, AND AQUATIC SPECIES HAVE A LOW STREAMLINED CARAPACE THAT HELPS THEM SLIP EASILY THROUGH WATER.