

and united all the others under the name of *Aspidonectes*, supposing that the soft marginal dilation of the shield assists in swimming, which is only true in as far as it forms a sharp cut-water, for it is not moved up and down, as are the wings of the Skates.

The two genera proposed by Wagler have since been adopted by all modern herpetologists, who have vied with one another in changing their names, although not to the real advantage of science. Thus Duméril and Bibron, discarding entirely the old generic names, call *Gymnopus* the genus which Wagler had named *Aspidonectes*, and *Cryptopus*, that for which he had retained the name *Trionyx*.<sup>1</sup> J. E. Gray, on the contrary, restored the name *Trionyx* to the genus which Wagler had called *Aspidonectes*,<sup>2</sup> and gave a new name, *Emyda*, to Wagler's *Trionyx*. In 1836, Fitzinger<sup>3</sup> introduced further generic distinctions in this family, calling *Trionyx* the same genus for which Wagler had retained that name; *Aspidonectes*, the *Trionyx javanicus* and *ægyptiacus* of Geoffr. and the *Trionyx indicus* of Gray, and proposing three new genera, one under the name of *Platypeltis* for the *Tr. ferox*, *Schw.*, and *spinifer* and *ocellatus*, *LeS.*; another under the name of *Pelodiscus* for the *Tr. sinensis*, *Wieg.*, and the *Tr. labiatus*, *Bell.*; and a third one, for which Fitzinger revives the old name *Amyda* for the *Tr. subplanus*, *Geoffr.*, and the *Tr. muticus*, *LeS.*<sup>4</sup> But all these new genera are founded upon delusive characters, as Gray has already stated, which depend only upon the progress of the ossification of the shield, and may be observed in specimens of different ages of one and the same species, as my numerous skeletons of these Turtles clearly show. Moreover the difference in the length of the tail is only sexual; the tail

<sup>1</sup> *Erpét. génér.* vol. 2, p. 472 and 475, on the ground that *Aspidonectes* and *Trionyx* have both three nails to their feet. With such principles half the names introduced in Zoölogy or Botany might be changed. The new names proposed by Duméril and Bibron for *Trionyx* and *Aspidonectes* may themselves serve as an example. Now that it has become necessary to subdivide into distinct genera the species which Duméril and Bibron refer to *Gymnopus*, that name would be inappropriate, according to their own views, since all these new genera have equally naked feet; and the genus *Cycloderma* of Peters would render a change for *Cryptopus* necessary, as it has retractile feet, like *Cryptopus*.

<sup>2</sup> It may be said that Wagler ought to have retained the name *Trionyx* for the species longest known; but he undoubtedly had the right to name

as he pleased the genera he first recognized; and as he chose to apply that of *Trionyx* to the species which have the marginal bony plates and a broad hind lobe of the plastron, later writers have only introduced confusion in the nomenclature of this family by reversing his arrangement, which, according to the law of priority, must in the end be adopted, in spite of every objection. The name *Emyda*, which is also synonymous with *Cryptopus*, Dum. and Bibr., appears for the first time in Gray's *Syn. Rept.*, appended to Griffith's *Transl. of Cuvier's Règn. Anim.*, 1831.

<sup>3</sup> *Systematischer Entwurf einer Anordnung der Schildkröten*, in *Annalen des Wiener Museums*, 1836, 4to.

<sup>4</sup> To these genera Fitzinger adds *Potamochelys* for *Tr. javanicus*, in his *Systema Reptilium*, published in 1843.