

It written long time ago but worth the time to read it.

FROM: THE REPTILES OF EGYPT p.126-129, 132

J.Anderson, 1898, Zoology of Egypt, vol. 1st Reptilia and Batrachia

Bernard Quaritch, London (Reprint in 1965) Wheldon and Wesley and Verlag

J.Craner.

UROMASTIX

Body depressed, no dorsal or nuchal crest, covered with granular or small smooth scales, smaller than the ventrals, largest on the head ; head short, triangular, canthus rostralis obtuse, the nostril near the end of the snout ; tympanum naked, vertically elongate ; loose folds of skin on the neck ; a gular fold ; no gular pouch. Tail broad, depressed, strongly segmented, each segment consisting of quadrangular, strong, spinose scales, in contact on the upper surface with the neighbouring segments, or separated from them on the upper surface by minute scales. Limbs short and stout, with strong claws ; hind limb with spinose tubercles. Praeanal and femoral pores. No canines ; the incisor teeth disappear with age, their place being taken in the upper jaw by a beak-like growth of the premaxillaries, covered with enamel.

The anterior molars also disappear above and below, and the jaw becomes a sharp cutting-edge immediately behind the premaxillary beak.

The term “Dabb” is applied by the Arabs to the species of this genus.

The African species of *Uromastix* belong to that section of the genus in which the segments on the upper surface of the tail are not separated from each other by interposed small scales. The species are *U. ocellatus*, Licht., *U. ornatus*, Heyden, *U. aegyptius*, Hasselq. & Linn., and *U. acanthinurus*, Bell.

There are two subdivision of this section, viz. one in which the tail is encircled by the segments, which are as long on the under as on the upper surface; and another in which this is not the case, as two or more transverse rows of scales on the under surface correspond to one of the dorsal segments. *U. ocellatus*, and *U. ornatus*, belong to the first of these subdivisions, and *U. aegyptius*, and *U. acanthinurus*, to the second. An Asiatic species, *U. microlepis*, Blanford, also belongs to this subdivision.

The other primary section of the genus, in which the spinose segments on the upper surface of the tail are separated from each other by interposed small scales, is represented by three species, *U. hardwickii*, Gray, *U. asmussii*, Strauch, and *U. loricatus*, Blanf, confined to Asia.

***Uromastix ocellatus*, Licht.**

Ear with no enlarged conical scales at its anterior border. Body-scales very small, quadrangular, flattened; 260 round the middle of the body including the ventrals; about 95 to 100 ventrals between the inguinal and gular folds; no enlarged tubercles on the flanks or on the fore limb, but with a few irregularly shaped pointed scales on the thigh, and enlarged conical tubercles on the tibial portion of the limb.

Tail gradually tapered to a point, much depressed. Caudal segments strongly spines laterally.

In life, the colours are very vivid in the male; in some the entire upper surface of the head and body is rich light red vermiculated with blackish, whereas the head in some is dark olive-green spotted with red, and in others red spotted with green.

Seven or eight transverse bands or chains of round white spots on the back, each spot margined with black and its centre frequently occupied by a dusky yellowish spot. Sides of the neck, body, and tail dark green, which in some males is prolonged upwards on to the back between the chains of spots.

Upper surface of the limbs dusky green. Throat and chest generally light green, or vivid blue from the chin along the throat; the under surface of the body yellow, with the green of the sides prolonged inwards on to the belly in transverse bands, or without markings. Upper surface of the tail bluish green in some, suffused with red in others; spines greenish; under surface of limbs and tail whitish.

In the females the colours are much less vivid, there never being any bright red on the back, and the tail being uniformly dusky yellow and green.

The young animal is dusky brown, and in it the general arrangement of the colour is well seen. Eight dusky bands of varying extent are prolonged inwards towards the mesial line of the back, those on the neck being little more than spots.

They are separated from one another by very pale dusky areas, on which the white black-edged ocelli occur. The tail is paler than the body; the underparts are whitish, spotted with dusky; three black bands radiate downwards from the eye.

Measurements of an adult male;-Snout to vent 150; vent to tip of tail 138 millim.

This is the smallest of the African species of the genus and the most brilliantly coloured. It is very common in some parts of the Suakin plain, judging from the number of specimens brought to me. I kept a few of them alive for some weeks in the Zoological Garden in Cairo, feeding them on which they appeared to thrive.

They were very torpid in the morning, and never made any attempt to feed until they had lain for some time under the full influence of the sun, when they become very active.

I sent one of my specimens to Dr. Tornier, and I am indebted to him for the information that it perfectly agrees with Lichtenstein's type of the species from Nubia, preserved in the Berlin Museum.

The two lizards referred by Gray to *U. ornatus*, Heyden, are identical with the foregoing specimens, which are distinguished from Heyden's species by their smaller scales, by the entire absence of any enlarged scales along the anterior border of the ear, by their more elongate and more spinose tails, shorter caudal whorls, and by their coloration. It is impossible to say in what part of Egypt Burton obtained his specimens; but as he made more than one journey in the Eastern desert, that is to the east of the Nile, it is likely that they came from that region, as it is known that other species found around Suakin spread northwards along that area.

From Suakin it extends to Wadi Halfa, whence Peters recorded it, in 1862; and among my specimens there is one from the same locality presented to me by Major Harkness. Peters mentions its presence also in the island of Socotra. It is known to the Hadendowahs as the Kurfeefanope.

Uromastix ornatus, Heyden.

Ear with enlarged conical scales at its anterior border. Body- scales much larger than in the previous species, flat, smooth, and almost subimbricate, 220 round the middle of the body including the ventrals; ventrals large, 80 to 85 between the inguinal and gular folds; no enlarged tubercles on the flanks or on the fore limb, but very large

spinose scutes on the hind limb. Tail broad and rather abruptly pointed, not round, depressed ; segments rather long antero- posteriorly, not markedly spinose. Head dark grass- green in life, somewhat yellowish on the side and marbled with darker ; body green, tinged with reddish violet ; 6 or 7 irregular, broad, entire or broken up citron- yellow cross- bands, the scales of these areas with dark points ; tail greyish green shading into reddish ; limb dark grass- green marbled with yellow. Digits greyish brown. (Heyden.)

. Snout to vent 210 millim. ; vent to tip of tail 175 millim.

The specimen of this lizard in my possession came from an altitude of 500 metres in the granitic region of mount Sinai.

Dumeril and Bibron in their description of *U. ornatus* say erroneously that the type of the species was from North Africa, whereas its author, Heyden, not Ruppell as stated by them, mentions that it came from Mohila, on the east coast of the Red Sea.

They also record that in the Paris Museum there were two magnificent examples sent from Egypt by Botta, the travelling naturalist to the Museum.

According to the dimensions given by them, it would appear, if their identification of Botta's specimens with *U. ornatus* was correct, that this species attains to a very great size, viz. to nearly three feet in length.

Its presence in Egypt has yet to be verified. It occurs not only in the Sinaitic Peninsula and Arabia proper, but extends also into the southern desert of Palestine according to Canon Trisrtam. In appearance it is remarkably like *U. (Aporoscelis) benti*.

Synopsis of African Species.

Caudal segments in contact with each other on the upper surface.

Segments forming regular annuli above and below.

Body – scales small.

Ear without denticulation *U. ocellatus*, Licht

Body – scales larger.

Ear denticulated in front *U. ornatus*, Heyden.

Segments not forming regular annuli above and below.

Body-scales almost granular.

Enlarged tubercles on the flanks *U. aegyptius*, Hasselq. & Linn.

Body-scales well-defined.

No enlarged tubercles on the flanks *U. acanthinurus*, Bell.