

the outer edge descends steeply from the front margin to about midway, and rises from thence backward, but less steeply. Thus the upper surface is a shed-roof falling backwards, and curved down on either side, lowest about the middle, less and less toward the ends. The arch from side to side is somewhat flattened on the top for nearly the whole length of the back. The base, or flattened part of the lower surface, upon which the body rests, is very small; it is but little below the lowest part of the outer edge; it extends lengthwise from near the front end of the body under the whole dorsal vertebral column and a part of the sacrum, not reaching the hind end of the body; it is widest about midway, where it includes between a third and a half of the width of the lower surface; from thence it narrows to a point behind, and to a blunt but narrow end in front. Thus the space around it, that is, between it and the outer edge of the body, is very broad, including the greater part of the whole lower surface; it is high and steep in front, lower and more horizontal behind. The carapace projects beyond the attached surface of the body all round, except where it passes over the neck, and where it is joined to the plastron. At the suture with the plastron it is turned somewhat down.

The plastron is fixed, on either side, to the outer edge of the carapace where it descends the lowest, about midway between the front and hind ends, from the arch of the fourth to that of the sixth pair of ribs, sometimes extending a little beyond, and sometimes not quite reaching, these bounds; from thence inward it descends a little, and narrows very fast toward the base, or flattened part of the lower surface, where it lengthens again much faster, and spreads out under the whole of that surface, and as the free edges do not project, they take its form and size. Thus the whole plastron is small. The bridge which passes from its lower flattened part to the carapace is extremely narrow; the openings in the shield for the protrusion of the head and limbs at the ends of the body are large, including much the larger part of the whole lower surface; the front opening is high and exposed, and the hind one low under the body, and protected; these two openings are separated from one another on each side only by a narrow isthmus.

The shield in the adult is completely ossified, and the bony derm is regularly divided into plates, and more intimately connected with the true skeleton than in the Trionychidae. In the carapace, the eight costal plates, the vertebral row, and the marginal rim, are constant. The vertebral row is continuous from one end of the carapace to the other; it consists of twelve plates in all, eight of which correspond to the costals, and lie between them, being fixed to the vertebra below; one reaches from the first of these forward between the first pair of costals into the marginal rim, terminating it in front; three more carry the row back to its hind end, the last one entering into the marginal rim, and terminating it behind.