

XVII.—*Description of Uriëchis microlepidotus, a new Snake from South Africa.* By Dr. A. GÜNTHER.

[With a Plate.]

PROFESSOR PETERS of Berlin has made known* a genus of *Calamaridæ* with entire subcaudal shields, to which he has given the name of *Uriëchis*, and which is distinguished from *Elapops*, Gthr., by having a long, grooved, posterior maxillary tooth. In describing the latter genus† I took the opportunity of showing the frequent occurrence of snakes with entire subcaudals in the Palæotropical Region; but I then overlooked *Uriëchis*, the two species of which (*U. nigriceps*, and *U. lunulatus*) have been found, up to the present time, in Mozambique only. I have the pleasure of adding a third species from Port Elizabeth, in Algoa Bay, presented by F. H. Gurney, Esq., to the British Museum.

Uriëchis microlepidotus. (Plate IX.)

Diagnosis.—Scales in twenty-five longitudinal series; præ-orbital united with the frontal. Colour uniform blackish ash.

Description.—This snake is in general appearance very similar to *Elapops* or *Atractaspis*. The rostral is broader than high, and reaches just to the upper surface of the head, terminating above in an obtuse angle. The exterior frontals are subquadrangular, half the size of the posterior ones, which, being united with the præ-orbital, are bent downwards and extend to the orbit and the third upper labial. The vertical is five-sided, with a posterior right angle, with the anterior side longest, and the two lateral edges shortest: the shield is about as broad as long. The occipitals do not show any peculiarity in form. The superciliary is small, not much longer than broad. There is one elongate nasal only, with the nostril at its upper margin; a groove below the nostril appears to divide the shield into two, which, on a closer examination, is found to be single. One small posterior ocular. Seven upper labials, the third and fourth of which enter the orbit, which is very small; the fifth touches the occipital in the adult specimen, being separated from it in the young one. There are three temporal shields, the anterior being the largest; another shield is situated on the posterior edge of the occipital. The first pair of the lower labials forms a suture behind the median one, which is very small; there are two pairs of chin-shields, the posterior being rather smaller than the anterior. Eight lower labials. The trunk is surrounded by twenty-five scales; there is a series of larger scales along the middle of the upper part of the tail, but not yet distinct in the

* Wiegman. Archiv, 1855, p. 52.

† Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist. 1859, ser. 3. vol. iv. p. 161.

young specimen*. There are 166 ventral, 1 entire anal, and 50 caudal plates.

The colour is uniform blackish-ash, or black if the epidermis is lost.

The series of teeth are very short; that of the maxillary bone is formed by three smaller ones and a very long and grooved posterior one.

The larger of the two specimens is an adult female, 3 feet 1 inch long; the head is 13 lines, the tail 6 inches. It contained mature eggs, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch long, without any trace of an embryo.

Mr. Gurney's correspondent adds the following note:—

"The Caffre name for this snake is 'Amafoosamanzi'; it was ploughed up by my man, and the eggs were ploughed up close to it; but whether both† or either of them belong to the snake I cannot say. The Caffres say that it is one of the most poisonous here (?), and that a person bitten by one would die in a few minutes, unless strong remedies could be applied."

XVIII.—*Description of Leptodeira torquata, a new Snake from Central America.* By Dr. A. GÜNTHER.

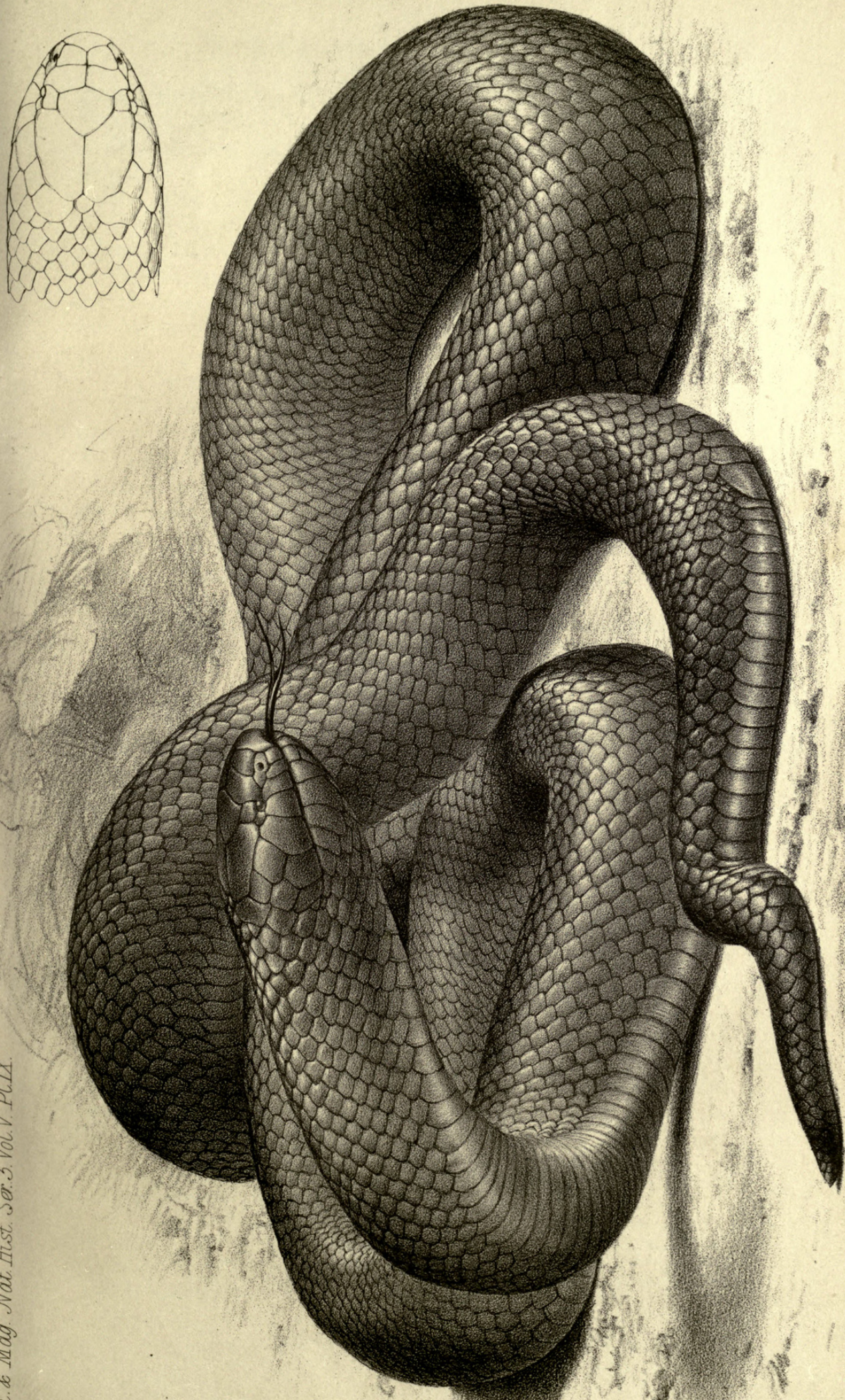
[With a Plate.]

Two subdivisions may be distinguished among the snakes which I have comprised in the family of *Dipsadidae*: the one has the body elongated and slender, evidently living chiefly on trees; whilst the other more nearly approaches the *Coronellidae*, having the body rather stout, and not compressed, and these live on dry ground.

The genus *Leptodeira*, in which I have grouped *Coluber rufescens*, Gm., from South and West Africa, and *Coluber annulatus*, L., from the tropical parts of the American continent, is that which is truly intermediate between the two families mentioned, having entirely the habit of *Coronella*, but with the head remarkably broad and depressed, and the pupil elliptical and erect, as in *Dipsas*, like which they are probably nocturnal animals. Though always directing my attention to the generic differences which exist between animals from different geographical regions, I have not been able to find any between the African and South American species of *Leptodeira*. It is true that Duméril has

* The presence of a series of larger scales on the back of the tail cannot form a generic character.

† The eggs sent with the snake belong to two species, different in size. The larger ones, apparently belonging to the present species, contained embryos in the first stage of development.



C.H. Ford.

URIECHIS MICROLEPIDOTUS. *Gthr.*

W. West imp.



Günther, Albert C. L. G. 1860. "Description of Uriechis microlepidotes, a new snake from South Africa." *The Annals and magazine of natural history; zoology, botany, and geology* 5, 168–170.

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