



Guido T. Poppe & Philippe Poppe - Since 1994

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June 26, 2025



NEWSLETTER - EUROPE 2025 - BELGIUM - GERMANY PART I

This year goes faster than other years. Difficult to explain, but it's like that. We were hardly back from Japan, or the moment was there to pack for Europe. The shell show was indeed promising, as the management of the club - most are close friends of me - let me understand that the number of participants became staggering. The earlier shell shows in Europe this year got not such a great enthusiasm: little visitors, little sales and the like. But it looked like "Antwerp 2025" should be different. And different it was...

We flew with Qatar airlines. For some reason, after having tried all airliners between Europe and Cebu, we find the hours they fly, the comfort and the fantastic airport in Doha, quite great. And we left Mactan at 2 km from our house and we arrived in Belgium like 35 km from our house. More practical than this is difficult.

On top of this newsletter is the Brilschanspark. In Antwerp where we stay is at 30 m from the Brilschanspark, so we take a walk there soon after the plane: Doha-Brussels is indeed a seven hour flight and one better moves after that.

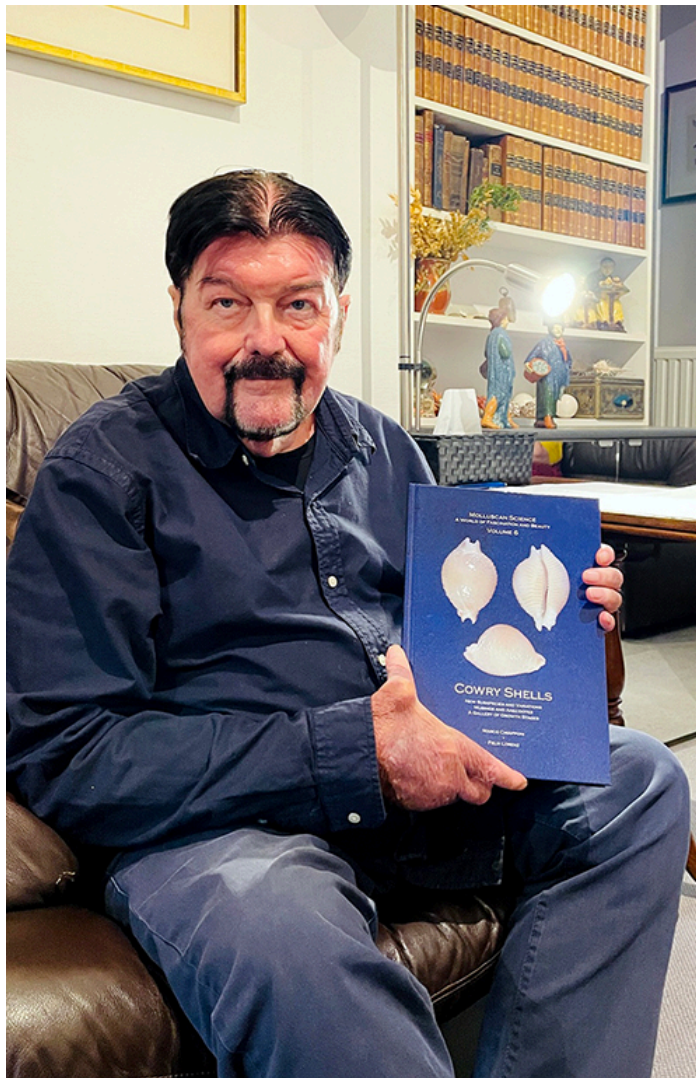
The first thing to do is to look at all what arrived in the Antwerp. Cécile Hoskens our host welcomed us, and after a while I found back the dozen pieces of Art and Curiosities, different from the ones in the Philippines, but same style: much library affairs and tribal arts.



One of the great things hanging there is a poster by our local artist James Ensor. Cécile could acquire it on an antique fair a few years ago, it's in perfect condition and dates from 1931. While until quite recently mainly a local celebrity, Ensor made it at present in the top 20 of the most important painters of his time (1860-1949). He is well present in the biggest museums of the planet and the Guggenheim Museums in the USA documented him extensively. I want to point out that the mother of Ensor was a local shell dealer in Oostende... and that's why drawings of shells are not rare in the oeuvre of James Ensor. You can see a few in this poster.



Another one I miss in the Philippines is one out of 3 "Mummuye dolls" that are always around my desk. They measure about one meter in height, come from Nigeria, where most were collected in the 1960... The expression of the faces and the position: it's as if they are almost alive.



And finally, lots of things for our "shell affairs" arrive in Antwerp, so I get half a day going through all the new literature, shortly after arrival. Here a new book from two of our great cowry relations: Marco Chiapponi and Felix Lorenz. I'll present this later in this newsletter. In my back an Encyclopedia on animals, about 140 volumes, which contains the 6 important Volumes of Pierre Denys de Montfort from 1801 or 1804... including the "Poulpe colossal" which you can see here:

<https://www.biomes.be/product/polypus-monstrosus>

BEFORE MOVING ON TO IMPORTANT SUBJECTS OF THIS EMAIL, WE ATTRACT YOUR ATTENTION TO SOME ONGOING ISSUES, SUCH AS THE AUCTIONS AND NEW PUBLICATIONS.

AUCTION RESULTS

SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PRESTIGIOUS AUCTION THAT ENDED ON MONDAY 23 JUNE

We were slightly surprised with the result, as usually our auctions, either the 21 prestigious shells or the 100 regular shells sell out. However, in the present auction, two specimens remained unsold for some obscure reasons. The auction came during a time world events were shaken by the bombing of Iranian nuclear sites, and that may have had a negative influence indeed. I want to remind our dedicated public that the purpose of shell study, shell collecting and shell auctions as part of that, are there to enlighten our minds, especially during hard times. Reason the more to bid happily.

***Terebra guttata* GIANT**

With a giant size of 177 mm combined with a very nice saturated orange-brown and an absolutely stunning pattern, this is definitely a Museum piece. The shell went through 14 bids to a lucky bidder for 421 euro. This is in accordance with a 170 mm piece that went for 360 euro in 2008.

***Afonsoconus tamikoeae* SPECIAL COLOR**

What we have here is an extraordinary colored *Afonsoconus tamikoa* from deep water, taken in Balut. As far as I could see, the color is unique. On porcellaneous white discrete broad yellow bands, with a pointillé line mid-whorl and another one on the shoulder. Definitely a museum piece, rare and prestigious in any collection, and this *tamikoa* went to the lucky bidder for a very reasonable 140 euro. Talking about good luck.

Tropidophora deburghiae



This is a fine example of "the *deburghiae*" from Madagascar, a species only found on particular spots in the rainforests of Madagascar. I estimate there are about 200 pieces in collections worldwide, and shells coming to the market are now scarce. This is an operculate land snail with a great shape, in this case a red lip, and in fine+ condition. Better than this is very rare. The shell went to a Belgian collection and we congratulate the winner with the good choice. This *deburghiae* went through five bids and reached 92 euro.

**HERE THREE HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE ONGOING REGULAR AUCTION
ENDING ON JUNE 26, 2025 AT 2 pm CET.**

For newcomers: regular auctions all start the bidding at 1 euro per shell. Prestigious auctions start at a set amount.

***Melo broderipii* YOUNG**



The *Melo broderipii* is a shallow water Volute, living between a few meters in the shallow to about 50 meters in deeper water. The species feeds on burying sea urchins such as *Spatangus*. It is amazing that out of this colorless *Spatangus* urchin shells the *Melo* develops in a solid and elegantly shaped species. Here a youngster in which the young pattern, very dark, is visible on the ventral side, while the more adult pattern, on the back appears as oblique dark brown lines, set in a very beautiful way. Chosen for its beauty out of several, the best.

Leporicypraea geographica geographica



From Bohol. A very dark specimen with on the left a close to perfect dorsal line, on the right a stary night pattern. All set on a beautiful brown fine pattern that mainly consists of axial lines. A Bohol shell, collected in the shallows. As a "form" very rare as such.

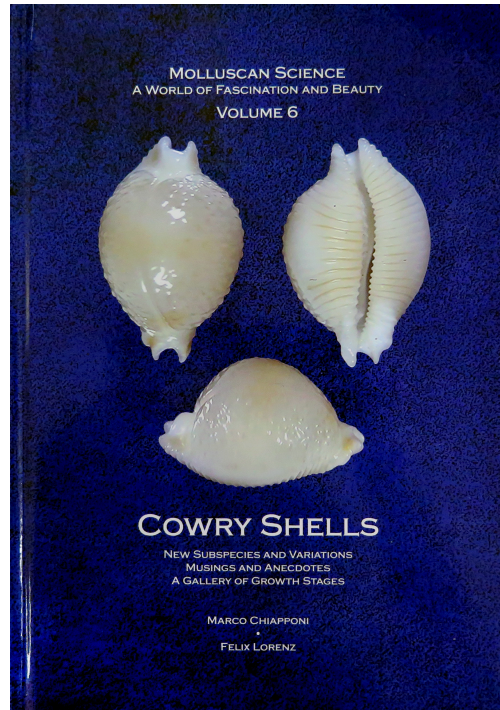
Strategoconus krabiensis



From the "*generalis*" group, a species now called *krabiensis*, and here a specimen from a very seldom seen locality: remote Nias Island. Apart from the people with a

special ancient culture, Nias has also many endemic variants and subspecies and species in the malacological fauna. Most *krabiensis* known came from Thailand, although the species has also been collected in Western Australia and we know of one shell from the Maldives. Rare in general. A fine+ piece of beauty.

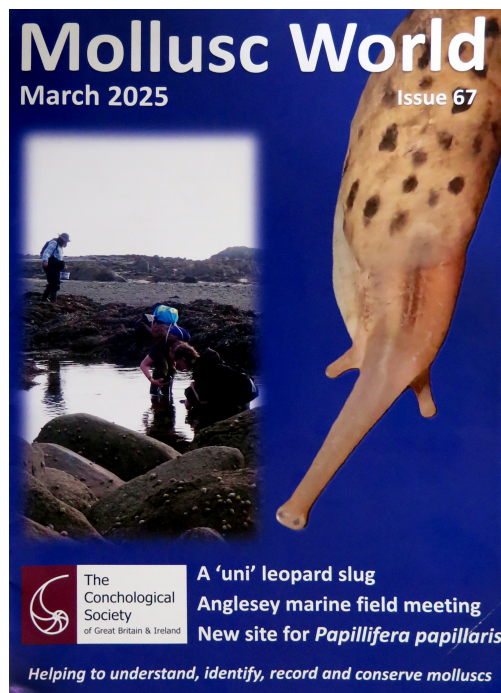
TWO NEW PUBLICATIONS THAT ARRIVED IN CONCHOLOGY, INC RECENTLY



From the hands of Marco Chiapponi and Felix Lorenz, the Volume 6 in Molluscan Science: "A world of fascination and beauty - Cowry Shells".

In this well done volume, the expert Cypraeologists Lorenz and Chiapponi present us with new subspecies and variations in the family CYPRAEIDAE. With "musings and anecdotes", as the complete title indicates.

This is definitely a MUST HAVE book for all involved with cowries...



The British "Mollusc World" of March 2025 surprises. On the cover this leopard slug with one eye stalk only or "fused ocular tentacles". By Jade Taft.

Apart from that, in typical British style indeed a lot of information on lands and freshwater snails from Great Britain, well documented by photos here and there. Also a report on their "marine week" from September 2024 in Anglesey, and very interesting an overview of recent publications in the Journal of Conchology.

OUR ACTIVITIES IN THE FIRST WEEKS AFTER ARRIVAL WERE CONCENTRATED ON OUR YEARLY MEDICAL AFFAIRS AND THE SHELL SHOW 2025, KEPT NEAR ANTWERP. HOWEVER, BEFORE THE SHELL SHOW, THERE WAS "BRUNEAF".

If you search internet you will find BRUNEAF, an abbreviation of Brussels Non European Art Fair - not to confused with BRAFA Brussels art Fair. BRUNEAF usually lasts one weekend, and mostly tribal art dealers from all over the planet hire a space in one of the multiple shops on the Brussels "Sablon". Now the event is called "Civilisations Brussels Art Fair". You can read the "about" on that place here:

<https://www.google.com/search?q=brussels+sablon>

Today I'm a rather passive collector of some aspects of the vast spectrum of tribal arts, and my main specialty were/are ancient African knives. I still have that collection, ameliorated at present by four dozen more selected pieces of African arts. My love for the knives has never vanished, so, I'm always curious to see what BRUNEAF/ Civilisations Brussels Art Fair brings in as new material.

This year, I met one American collector and one Polish collector, both nice gentlemen and we enjoyed a couple of hours meeting each other. The knives offered were good, but I was struck down when I saw a superb "Teda", or "Teda Musri" knife for offer. Having already two in my collection, these knives, usually made between 1800 and 1900 are rare. The asking price was high, but then, it was to have or not to have, and that beautiful piece ended up in my collection. Here below the set of Teda knives, together with one bird head knife, usually called "Kota".



The Kota and 3 Teda knives. The latter are made in Chad and measure about 55 cm in length. Dream set.

While Philippe, Sheila and me hopped from shop to shop in Brussels - participants on Civilisations Brussels Art Fair got a small red carpet on the street in front of the shop - it was cold, and it was raining. The atmosphere in general was poor and for some reason most dealers were nervous. I met with a few old friends, I want to mention here especially Pierre Loos, with who we got always a fine chats and nice time and after taking, the traditional meal in the "Vieux Saint Martin" restaurant, world famous for its delicious steak tartare, we went back to Antwerp.

THE SHELL SHOW

The organizers of the Shell show - all friends - already informed us that this year was overwhelming in the number of tables hired. Even in the Philippines we always get echoes of shell shows in Europe and starting with Paris shell shows, that news was not very brilliant. Apparently, there was a strong slowdown in sales, not surprising with the negative world news constantly hammering European households. In the Philippines, few watch the news, few believe the news and life goes on happily. What counts is the present jobs and bread on the table: especially a fine mind and happiness are uppermost important. How different deep mindsets of populations can be.

So, for Antwerp, all sellers had put big hopes and I think most of their hopes got fulfilled this year. The meters of table covered with shells from all over the planet, usually well documented and definitely in a quality that is better than before, was staggering: 450 m of tables.



Early morning, the parking lot of the sportshall "Kattenbroek": many cars arriving: a huge job to load off thousands of kg of shells and bring them to the respective tables.

On a personal note: usually shows have like 150-200 m of tables in Europe, and this I can manage: our purpose is always to find the best for our customers of Conchology, Inc. and eventually to find a few pieces of personal interest: shells to describe and so on. But 450 m was too much, and we regret we could in one day and a half not view all the thousands of shells: but we managed about one third, and that was enough shells to have a huge shipment for the Philippines, with excellent materials that you will enjoy in the future. We concentrated mainly on exceptional shells, but some dealers brought especially for us entire local fauna's well determined: this will delight much the experts in even obscure groups amongst you.



Our friend Chino Mitsuo from Japan got lost in Berchem railway station, Yves Terryn asked us to pick him up, what we did. Luckily we found him at the right time. Shortly afterwards, we started with his stand, here at work me and Sheila. Chino got fabulous micro material from northwestern Pacific material seldom seen, so we purchased most.



A little more than half the space, all are busy installing. Most stands were really beautifully arranged. Messy stands were the exception on that, but there were luckily few of these. Shells indeed deserve to be well shown.



Cécile Hoskens is a happy collector of shell related items, from stamps to postcards to plastic snails, ceramics, you name it. She takes the opportunity of shell shows to meet with half a dozen collectors of the same subject....

But Shell Shows have for some of us an aspect which is often more important than the shells themselves: socializing, meeting with new friends, re-discovering old friends. This shell show was an excellent opportunity for that. I apologize that these newsletters are not long enough to show all 500 people we met with pleasure.

This year, I was spoiled, there were some exceptional encounters and we met with A LOT of people. Here a selection, I apologize not being able to put all of you.



The encounter which filled my heart the most is the one shown here: I met once more with a life-long friend: Professor George Vauquelin. From the Free University Brussels. George is one of the BIG pioneers in the long history of Conus venoms, a history in which I got mixed up... as adventurer-hunter of these dangerous living animals. By now about 5 decades ago, George and me traveled half the world looking for good specimens. From the deserts in Australia to the jungles in central Africa, we could write separate books on all the stories we lived and survived. As we met after all this time, it was like we never left each other.



And shortly after the start of the show we saw walking in our Chinese friends Dan and Zhou Zhang. Our hearts took a jump: what a pleasure to meet them once again, and

now on this side of the globe. Zhou is a major Chinese artist, both have a lot of artistic gifts and they share great natural history collections.



Belgian friends: Stany Vanderhoydonck, next to Sheila. During my "Belgian time", we shared hundreds of good evenings with scallops and wine together. Arne Ghys, next to Philippe, with his son Simone. Stany and Arne are both the leading scallop people in Belgium.



With top artist Leo Man in't Veld. Leo this year donated the magnificent drawing of a living OVULIDAE that I keep in my hand to Conchology, Inc. It will get a place of honor in our working quarters. Leo's shell art is already world famous, and has an important place already. In our company we display like 30 drawings by half a dozen artists

specialized in "shell art". A difficult discipline. Write Leo for personalized drawings for your shell places....



Some books one uses more than other books. The work of Marco Chiapponi on cowries is important, and he loves tiger cowries.... So do I. We both find it one of the most fascinating marine shell species.



Books are important, and some books are more important than others: here Eric Monnier and Loic Limpalaër. Two of the excellent 3 authors of the most important books on CONIDAE. So, we always have to tell something to each other.



One of the great aspects of shell shows is meeting with correspondents, me and Sheila met Roy in COA, San Diego 2018, and now in the Antwerp show. A name all of us know very well when it comes to South African Shells: Roy Aiken.



Our friend and collaborator Frank Maartense prepared a great talk on "The Shellers". So, a small group gathered to enjoy his talk, but we were deceived by the few interested. Later, I heard the main reason was that the members of the club got already this talk a few months earlier. But for the newcomers as us, a nice and interesting experience.



Shell shows are one thing, activities next to shell shows, another one. Since a decade, we enjoy invitations of Fernand de Donder his evenings in a discrete Italian restaurant, outside Brussels. This year, we got a few newcomers: Frank Maartense and Ron Moylan with his lovely lady Edith. All others are "the classics".



To finish this small chapter on the shell show: Philippe and me were in the jury to choose the "Shell of the Show" and the "Conchology Award". We were happy to give the Conchology Award this year to Olivier Santini for his stunning Mitra rinaldii.

Discovered in 1993 only, and definitely with a fabulous design, great saturated colors and a beautiful elegant shape.

As much happened these months, soon a continuation on this newsletter in PART II. In the meantime we wish you great shelling and bidding on Conchology, Inc.

Sincerely yours,

Guido T. Poppe
For Conchology, Inc.

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