



# Conchology

Guido T. Poppe & Philippe Poppe - Since 1994

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## NEWSLETTER - EUROPE 2025 - BELGIUM - GERMANY PART III

On top of this newsletter is a detail of the river Rhine in Remagen, Germany. In the early 1970's, at school we were obliged for a couple of years to dissect in detail films - learn how to read films in fact. One of the films we got as subject was "The Bridge at Remagen". A war story based on real events. The film is from 1969, made shortly after the WWII and it is considered an important film until today. The film is witness of heroic actions by both American and German soldiers, in the end the bridge in Remagen was destroyed, and the remains are monuments today.

For some reason, the beautiful name "Remagen" stayed in my head, and usually when I pass the highway nearby, this is my first stop, at about 300 km from Antwerp already. Today, there is still half a dozen restaurants in Remagen, rather good quality, for visiting war tourists, and I use these to take a coffee, a snack or a meal, depending on the hours I pass. This time was no exception, so I asked Philippe to leave the highway, so we could eat in Remagen indeed.

As always, the River Rhine is impressive there. Huge boats pass once in a while, and all is peaceful, the villages have been neatly rebuild and on the other side of the Rhine they are all white and black, beautifully done.

We passed Remagen, because it is on our way with final destination Bad Dürkheim, where Christina and Klaus Groh lived. Christina passed away in Madeira, and we all agreed to join Klaus in a ceremony where her ashes are put to rest in a big forest in Germany. Christina was very instrumental and a decision maker in the publishing of my two best-selling books European Seashells I and II: they sold out at 5000 copies each, years ago. A huge success. So, we owe her a lot...

Two dozen more friends and couples joined for the event. We made first a stop with the Renker family, the present owners of Conchbooks, who also became prime sellers of books on insects not so long ago. Anke and Carsten are indeed close to us: they continue once in a while to publish my land snails series, touching almost to the end. They also visited in the Philippines and we meet always on major shell shows or eventually in their place near Mainz.

We walked around, near the remains of the bridge. The Rhine water was relatively clear with a visibility of about 30 cm... but I didn't find anything worth noticing. So, after one and a half hour, we continued our trip to Mainz, where we were very well received by Anke and Carsten Renker. It was like 7 years ago we visited them, so this time the garden was full of game tools and resting corners. The youngsters from before in their household are adults or almost adults at present.

They also introduced us to one of their neighbors who surprised us with a big indoor koi pond, about the size of our largest pond in the Philippines, and also with about 20 magnificent big koi's. But he made things complicated, the pond was surrounded by machines, each designed to fix a different potential problem with the water quality. Nice to find out such things in the middle of Germany!

We stayed mainly with the Renker family, as Klaus was very busy with the many expected guests coming. The next day, Carsten took us for a special visit in the Museum of Natural History in Mainz (=Naturhistorisches Museum in Mainz), where he works. That was indeed very interesting and Carsten for the occasion changed in a perfect guide. We were happy to meet with his director and colleagues, one could feel the good atmosphere amongst the museum people. Behind the scenes were collections of stuffed animals, a bewildering quantity and all well-protected against deterioration. Great to see.



*The Museum, seen from outside, well decorated with shells and some sorts of animals...*



*Carsten is an excellent guide and one feels he loves the museum where he is daily. Here he brought me to the Poppe-books stored in their museum library. We got a lot of fun with him guiding us from one wonderful thing to another.*



*The behind the scene stocks of the museum are staggering. To exhibit all what they have, the museum could use ten times the space it has now.*

One of the highlights there, at this very occasion, was that at present the Gutenberg Museum loaned some bibles for exhibition in the Naturhistorisches Museum. There were 4 huge first printings of real Gutenberg bibles on display. They look amazing, large and impressive: the first books ever printed. It made our day, and for Philippe, Sheila and me, even our week. These books date back to 1454 or 1455. Thinking that my oldest printed shell book is from about 1580, that's still 130 years later...

It is thought that only 21 complete Gutenberg bibles survived. However, copies with a substantial portion of the entire bible number 49 at present: that is out of 158 or 180 copies that were made in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

As for me, just a glance on these books was worth the trip... For our readers here: Wikipedia has a splendid overview, very detailed, on these fantastic first books: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gutenberg\\_Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gutenberg_Bible)



*Of huge size, here Gutenberg bibles, exhibited in the Mainz museum.*

After all these nice events and a great stay with the Renker family, we moved to Bad Dürkheim, where we spend an evening with Klaus and his close friends at the occasion of remembering Christina. This was well organized in an old wine cellar place, very romantic. I got lucky as I was placed next to Eike Neubert, the curator emeritus for mollusks at the Natural History Museum Bern. He traveled extensively the middle east and is an expert of the land snails of that region....



*A common meal and evening in honor of the late Christina Groh.*



*Christina wished her ashes to be dispersed under an old tree in one of Germany's biggest forests. So, we all moved there. It was raining, but this did not diminish the immense beauty of that pristine forest, and the nice place where her ashes now rest.*



*Part of our group walking through the forest, and Christina's ashes were dispersed under a 48 year old oak tree.*



*And this is the view we got a major part of the next day, almost all day long: perfect German and Belgian highways bringing us back to Antwerp.*

Before we decided to pack all things ready for the big flights to Asia, we took out one day to visit the daughter of my brother. My brother passed away a dozen or so years ago. He left a daughter and a son, both brilliant people, luckily. His daughter

Kathleen bought the house of my grandparents near Oudenaarde, which dates from 1915, and she is renovating that one, with much courage and even much more work... we combined it with a short visit to the church of priest Eduard Poppe, our family saint.



*The ancestral house, build by my grandparents in 1915, in the style of that time. In fact, it's my grandmother who build it while my grandfather was in prison in Germany - as he was a "gendarme" in Belgium and it was World War I. I was raised more than half of my youth in that house by the sisters of my father. Right: with Kathleen and Sheila in the 100 m long garden. The house is situated in a 9<sup>th</sup> century village, called "Eine", which is derived from ancient Latin, and means "place near the water", which is the river Schelde in this case.*

## **AUCTION RESULTS**

### **SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PRESTIGIOUS AUCTION THAT ENDED LAST MONDAY, JULY 7.**



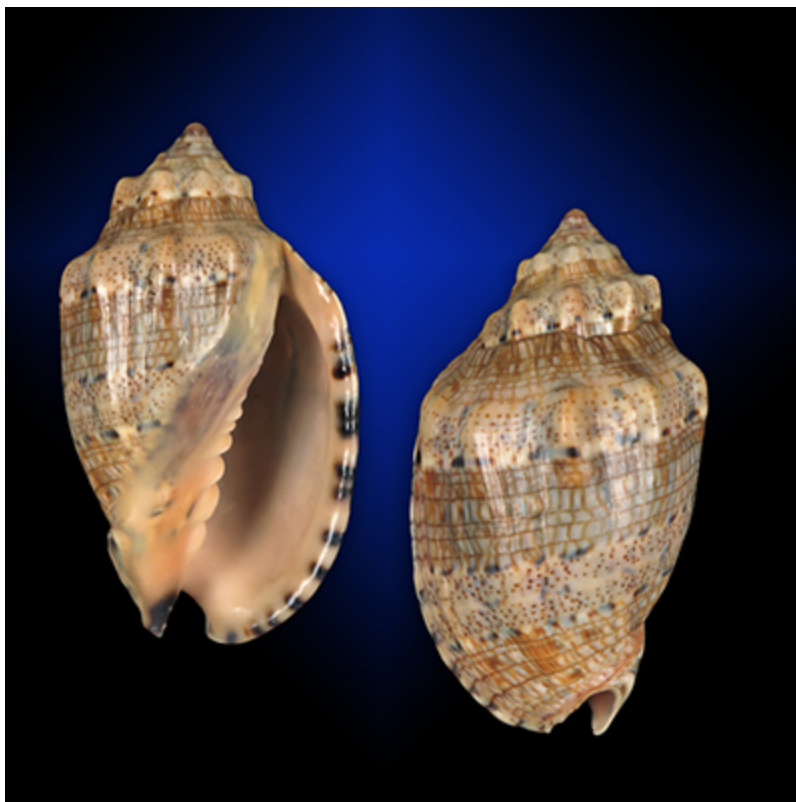
***Leporicypraea mappa mappa***  
**SPECIAL COLOR**

The first time in 25 years and having handled 840 *mappa*, that we have a specimen in which the left and right half have different patterns, separated by a beautiful central dorsal line. SPECTACULAR is indeed the proper terminology. From Talibon, Bohol.  
 This unique specimen raised 604 euro.



***Cypraea tigris pardalis* BLACK**

This 70.4 mm black tiger cowry is one out of 14 pieces we got over 25 years. We could calculate that in the Philippines one gets one black tiger cowry in 533 specimens. So, it takes a lot of diving to produce only one such specimen. This shell is particularly beautiful as very adult and truly perfectly black... it raised a well-deserved 1555 euro.



***Voluta musica f. guinaica***

This 93.4 specimen is large for the form. The population of this Volute on Coche Island, one of the satellite Islands of Margarita Island in Venezuela, is now extinct. A village has been built exactly where the huge pearl oyster bed was, on which these Volutes feed. On my last visit, all the oysters were gone, and so were the Volutes. The amazing dangerous adventures on the diving of these beautiful slender and big volutes have been extensively described in the text online of this specimen (nr. 1224304 on our homepage). This shell went first to the Klinken collection, where it remained for more than a decade. Then back to Conchology, Inc. Large and prestigious and historical. This treasure ended up at 275 euro.

**A FEW HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ONGOING 1 EURO AUCTION**



***Pecten maximus* ORANGE**

Or even better: yellow-orange. The flat valve which is usually dark red colored came all in white covered with beautiful radiating yellow-orange ribs. A very very rare form indeed and a shell with much charms. As usual From the Bay of Saint-Brieuc.



***Pionoconus floridus*  
SPECIAL COLOR**

This 72 mm shell of a well colored and broad shaped *P. floridus*, with a pure white central band is already raising the attention of real *Conus* experts and *Conus* lovers alike. On top of that this shell is from Nias Island, a very remote locality, with interesting shells, amongst many other interesting things like a very special culture...



***Cypraea tigris pardalis***  
**SPECIAL COLOR**

Fantastic pattern and colors in this *pardalis*, with the dorsal line interrupted with the diffused black dots clumped together. Interesting major piece in the set of tigers....

And then, there are 97 other beauties in this auction, all starting at 1 euro.

I hope you all enjoyed this quite diversified news of the last three newsletters, which covered a territory in three countries: the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. We never tire of driving across Europe, as the continent is incredibly diverse and each region has something interesting indeed.

We wish you happy shelling and success in the biddings!

Sincerely yours,

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For Conchology, Inc.

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