



Conchology

Guido T. Poppe & Philippe Poppe - Since 1994

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The banners above: the upper one I repeat here for the last time, as I truly love it. The enjoyable move of the horse represents our company running through the Lunar New Year days. Below: early working days of 2026. A lot of things were going on in December 2025 and January 2026 in Conchology, Inc. as we reorganized part of the stocks. You will get a lot of exciting shells offered in the coming months.

NEWSLETTER: THURSDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2026 - MACTAN ISLAND, CEBU

The end of the year 2025 came fast and before we knew it we were in January. That's a busy month in Cebu and on Mactan, in private as well as in the company. In the Philippines, all are full of enthusiasm and very busy in January, so, before we knew it, that month was gone.

The big event of January was, as usual in the central Philippines, the big Sinulog Festival. And after that all went peaceful again in our little world. With "big" in Cebu, we mean that more than 2 million visitors flock to Cebu that day: it changes for half a week the city. For that small lapse of time our Cebuano-population jumps from 5 to 7 million indeed.

The rest of the month was very much "boulot dodo" as say the French in Europe, but a highlight was on 24 January: the visit of the Czech delegation of shell collectors in the company.



Here the classic "visitor's photo": from left to right: their local guide, then Petr, Guido, Sheila, Jarda, Pepa and Philippe.



They enjoyed much looking in some newly acquired books and shells from our limited collections.



Not so long afterwards, we again got a few visitors from Czechia. This time the collector is young: Dominik Aubrecht collects shells and is 11 years "young". I could see myself busy in him with shells at that age. He came with his father Tomas and their friend Robert Hajny. Their guide was Gevarlyn from Mactan, which we occasionally also cross in shell shows all over the planet.



We enjoyed the meal at noon in Shangri La where we befriended one of the top Chef who listens to the name "Chef Davide". It's one of my lucky stars that guided Davide to us. He is of Thai-Italian nationality, had an adventurous life, and among many other things, had even a restaurant in Paris. He can cook like a God and we became friends... He apparently also liked this visiting family and went out of his usual good cooking to switch into "excellent" mode for that meal. We all enjoyed it and stayed quite some time.



And here after donating a 1000 Shells book to the growing enthusiastic young collector...

A WORD ON CHANGING PHILIPPINES AND CHANGING CEBU

Our company started 23 years ago on Mactan Island, which is situated in front of Cebu. Cebu is the second most important city in the Philippines and has a population of slightly more than 5 million people. We saw growing this mushroom city, from 2003 on, where there were slightly over 1 million people only. This is including Mactan Island.

Since the pandemic things went only better for the Philippine economy and the city is now as expensive to live in as for example Belgium in Europe... This is certainly nice for the locals, but for companies it means also expensive people to give a job to, which puts us in a weaker position financially.

The shell trade feels the impact of the "modern times" arriving and the shell dealers became less, the supply of shells is frankly speaking quite weak at present. We hope it will change in the coming months.

Economically there is still room for amelioration in many fields, but the essential things such as financial services, medical access and so on, are all fulfilled. The plans

to link Mactan Island better to the mainland Cebu are huge: here two "plans". One is already reality: the left photo is now reality with the third bridge linking Mactan to Cebu.



Left: The third Cebu-Mactan bridge, full name is the Cebu-Cordova Link Expressway, called CCLEX links Mactan with the Southern part of Cebu. We use it several times a month: it's still paying, but all is "automatic", with a special "tag" on your car, the bank transfers money to the bridge owners - I guess the government. One doesn't even have to stop. Right: The plans are to add an additional highway exit to link CCLEX with the northern part of Cebu. Visibly, the can-afford population loves high-tech affairs.



Our company functions in an Industrial park that enjoys government protection. It's near the airport and the two runways start and/or end only a few hundreds of meters away. Here a plane landing just over the entrance of the Industrial park, going to the newest runway. This park gives government protected working space to more than 50 companies and over 25000 workers. Of all these companies, we are the oldest surviving one with 23 years, but we are also the smallest.

MORE SHELL NEWS

The fakes are offered in bigger and more dangerous quantities to visiting collectors to Mactan Island. They even dare infiltrate the material offered to us, and we were trapped by buying about 30 pieces of excellent grade *Epitonium scalare*, one of the most famous and historical species on the planet... In the past, two centuries ago, fakes of this species were made in rice.... The modern fakes are not made in rice, but their ultimate top whorls are completely fake. We were trapped and only saw the fraud after looking with attention to our photographs.



Here a fake E. scalare, with remade top whorls. We enlarged the top whorls on the right, so you can see the unnatural shape of the very top....



The famous Cypraea tigris pardalis is definitely a darling amongst collectors. The shells are not particularly rare, but almost all are beautiful. The variation is endless, the size of the shells is uppermost pleasing and excellent for displaying them... few shells can display this number of qualities.

Collectors discovered these qualities, and the even the most advanced of collectors made place in their collections for MANY tiger cowries, showing their endless variation. Fakers noticed the demand for exceptional tigers, so they stepped in. One of the easiest fakes is enhancing the natural dorsal line by making it broader. *This is the case in the shell shown here above.* The vast majority of collectors will even not notice this classic fake.

Other faking techniques change color in entire zones, change the blotching and so on. It is at present quite dangerous to buy tiger cowries without a lot of experience in the field...

SOME "THIS AND THAT" SUBJECTS

Cute reptile living near our house

There are many reptiles in the Philippines. Usually we walk every day half an hour, to keep the shape, as we usually work 10 hours sitting behind a screen... On my evening walk I often meet the gentleman here shown below, or is it a female??? He/she is about 25-30 cm long from the nose to the tip of the tail, and appears in the early evening only. Definitely this animal likes the last pieces of sun-warmth before the night covers the area...

I would love to hear about a name and family name of this beauty... There are many big varans in the area, they grow to about 1.50 m here, could it be this is just a youngster?



Big snails seen in the city



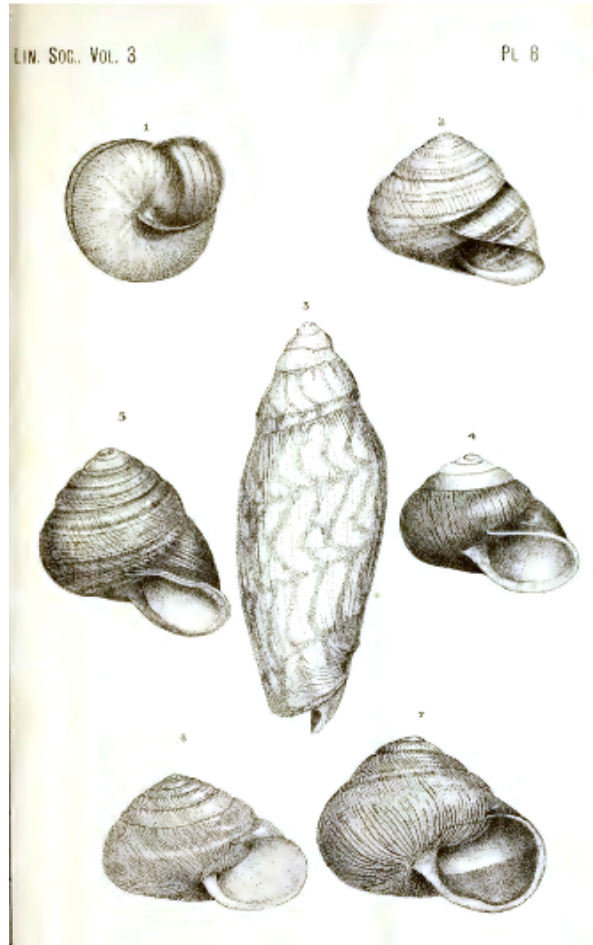
We live on Mactan Island, and even there is "a lot" on this island, which is now completely build and populated, in the city there are things we don't have: this is one out of three huge snails crawling in the center of Cebu in front of a coffee-bar where our family regularly makes a stop when we are there in the morning: they have French croissants almost the same quality - but bigger size - as you can get in northern France... I'm there on the photo, to guide you to understand the correct size of the beasts.... No name for these - as yet.

The first colored figures of "the *bednalli*".

The *Volutoconus bednalli* is definitely one of the most beautiful marine shells. No doubt in the "top one hundred". It is in the top five of the most desirable species in the famous and uppermost prestigious family VOLUTIDAE.

But few collectors will know that the original description, by Brazier, 1879; was poorly done and based on an immature specimen. There, the figure of the holotype has been drawn squeezed between land snails that have nothing to do with it, and it's in black and white. The old masters of plates with animals were so good, and this

plate is so bad in composition... I was wondering what happened there and I suppose the pressure to publish such a special fantastic new species was that big that the authors preferred to squeeze it, rather than waiting months for the next publication.



*The Angas plate in the Proc. Lin. Soc. Vol. 3 of 1879, with the first drawing and the original description of the *Volutoconus bednalli*. It is visible that the shell has been squeezed "last minute" between the land snails.*

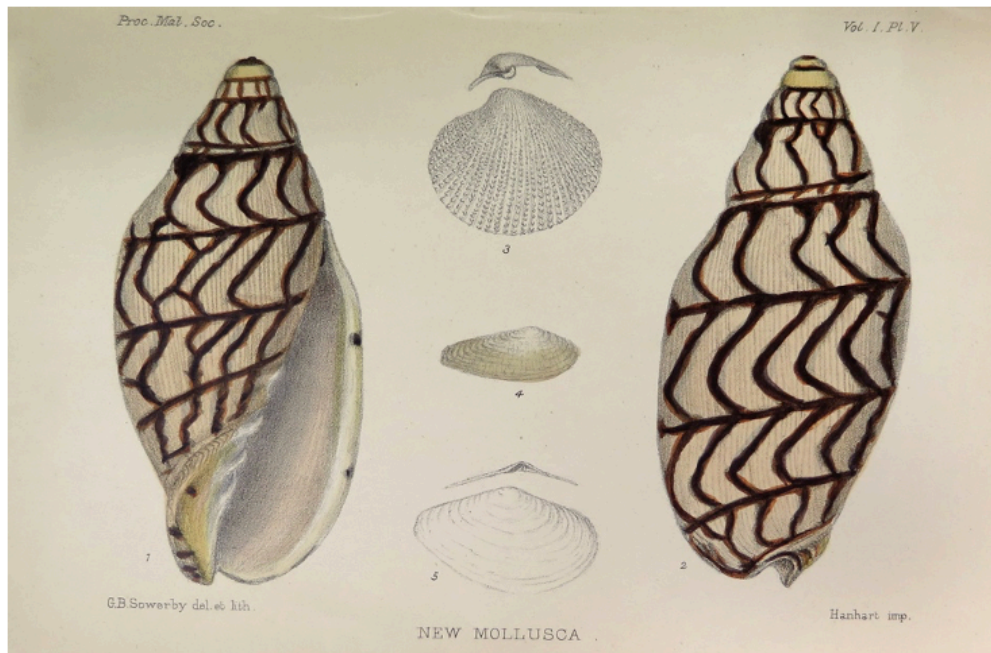
One year later, Angas, most likely a little frustrated by the poor quality squeezed image of the original description, published dorsal and ventral views of that holotype in color in the Proceedings of the Malacological Society of 1880. He there writes: "Mr. Brazier, of Sydney, has already bestowed on this beautiful shell the name of its discoverer, Mr. W.T. Bednall; and I have much pleasure in retaining that name, and figuring it in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London."

I here reproduce this first hand colored image of the *Voluta bednalli*, from the article of Mr. G.F. Angas on new marine mollusks in the Proceedings mentioned above. It is visible it concerns a young shell, with the lip not fully mature.



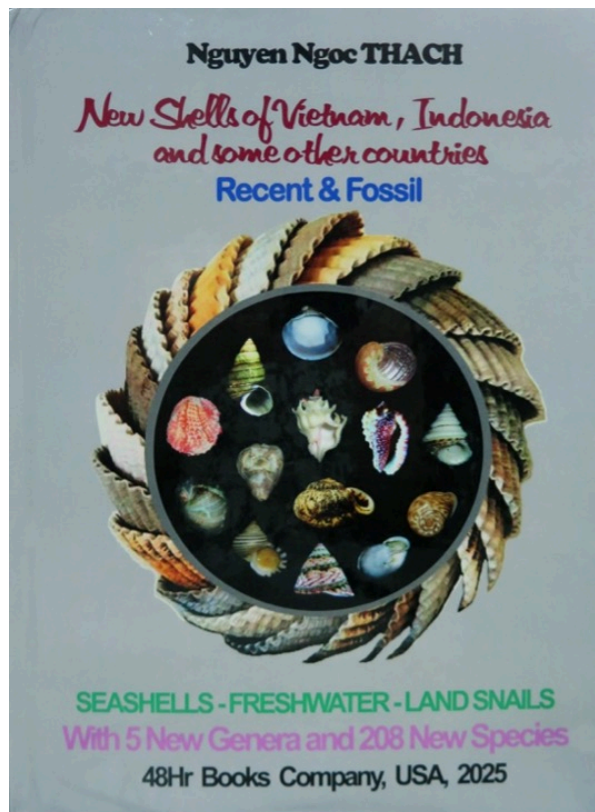
The holotype of V. bednalli - the first color drawing.

A few years later, G.B. Sowerby F.L.S. got a splendid specimen, fully adult, and realizing that, decided in January 1894 to publish a magnificent color drawing in the Proceedings of the Malacological Society. I here show the entire page, with the two views of *Volutoconus bednalli*, splendidly executed. For the pleasure of your eyes. Definitely based on a great specimen. I did not photoshop the colors on the plate, here shown.



It is well known I'm a volute lover, I even once wrote a book on that family that needs updating at present. Possibly, T. Cossignani in Italy still has copies left for the ones who don't have that book in their library. I do not maintain an extensive Volute collection any longer, but in all place(s) where I live(d) you will notice here and there some *bednalli* dwelling around... the color pattern of this species is definitely one of the best designs seen in Gastropods.

A NEW INTERESTING BOOK BY OUR FRIEND THACH FROM VIETNAM



From the end of last year, this volume, densely stocked with photos and text. Overwhelming is the word. In this book once more a multitude of hitherto unseen shells from Vietnam, and lots and lots of text, which I did not have the time to go through...

Almost a decade ago, I could spend almost a month in Vietnam with the late Gabriella Raybaudi and Franco Caci. Philippe and his family joined, then me and Sheila, we were a big group but we rented a car and got fantastic experiences.

One of these great experiences was almost a week in the region of Hoa Binh. This is in the north of Vietnam, a non-touristic area few outsiders have been. South of the city the Russians have made a huge water dam on the "River Da", and that created a gigantic dozens of kilometers long lake with multiple arms: a fantastic water-world with hundreds of kilometers of coasts.

There were only a few small hotels at the time of our visit, about a dozen years ago, and few restaurants. So, we could rent spaces in an empty garden for children... or something similar: situated in a park full of exotic animals in cages and even a crocodile in a small pond.

It was a challenge to find proper food as restaurants in the way we know them in the west were only a few in the entire region.

Visiting markets, I noticed that more than a dozen local species of UNIONIDAE are eaten in the area around Hoa Binh. Every day several thousands are sold to the locals. We bought quite some samples but visibly not enough and now our friend Thach described this fantastic species in honor of Sheila and myself and named it, as a première:



Lanceolaria tagaropoppeorum N. Thach, 2025
Hao Binh region, northern Vietnam.

I advise the new Thach book to all shell lovers, and especially to the ones interested in Vietnamese shells and/or southeast Asian marine species. But also land and freshwaters are in there, as usual...

REGULAR AUCTIONS

For newcomers: Regular auctions usually offer 100 different shells, chosen because there is only one available or for interesting features in the particular shells. These are in general weekly auctions and they last usually 3 or 4 days. In these auctions all shells start at 1 euro.

PRESTIGE AUCTIONS

For newcomers: Prestige auctions usually offer 21 exceptional shells/lots and all start at different prices for the bidding. Each shell is extensively documented by your author and Sheila. They last usually 3 or 4 days.

AUCTION RESULTS OF THE LAST PRESTIGE AUCTION

***Lyria anna* (R.P. Lesson, 1835)**



Is an extremely rare Volute of which few are turning around in the collector's market, occasionally. Most material has been collected decades ago already, and the species is endemic to remote St. Brandon Island. We could only handle 2 fresh dead specimens in the last 23 years. It's for most of us a now or never shell, but despite that, the price for this quite good dead specimen was low. It went for a stunning 905 euro only, and in this very case, I mean "only". And this despite the fact that most likely many amongst the older collectors will not get a second chance.

So, we congratulate the lucky winner. The shell went after 14 bids, to a private American collector.

***Trona stercoraria* (C. Linnaeus, 1758)**



A beautifully overglazed *stercoraria*. This quite exceptional curiosity for advanced cowry collectors is rare in this collection. And collectors were very well aware of that as the shell ended at a perfect 476 euro, after 14 bids. This shell went to a German collector.

***Pecten maximus f. maculata* E.A.A. Locard, 1888**



The *Pecten maximus* is experimenting with variations in color in the Bay of St. Brieux, in the north of Brittany, France. Occasionally fantastic specimens turn up in a great variety of colors and designs in the colors. Shape of the shells is not very

variable. This shell developed two dark flecks, resembling two doves for some, for me it looks like two tails of whales. But whatever they are: it's beautiful and unique. We in conchology all agree it's a great shell and the public apparently agrees as this shell went through 7 bids and ended in the hands of a Spanish collector for a well-deserved 270 euro.

THE NEXT PRESTIGE AUCTION WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY 27 FEBRUARY

The southern half of Madagascar has been destroyed by a cyclone called GEZANI on February 17 this year. That cyclone left 63 people dead and 804 people injured. 15 are missing and 16 000 have been displaced. The material damage is staggering.

Our suppliers, several of these located in Tamatave, asked for possible help. You can see the devastation in Tamatave here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYr1NtymqIE>

We proposed them to keep an auction with mainly Madagascar material and half of the total money collected from this auction will be send to them to help recover a little faster.

Therefore, the present upcoming auction has 19 of the 21 prestigious lots coming from Madagascar. We hope that the good destination of the monetary side of this auction will motivate all of you to be generous...



THE BANNER OF THE MADAGASCAR AUCTION IN THE MAKE
All shells are from Madagascar, except the *rutila* which is from the Solomons.

This is almost the end of February. We hope the start of the year was good for all of you and wish you great new acquisitions for your collections and much bidding pleasure in our coming auctions.

Sincerely yours,

Guido T. Poppe
For Conchology, Inc.

You can contact us: **philippe@conchology.be**
guido@conchology.be
sheila@conchology.be

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