



In Memoriam

Dec 24, 2010

Some days are more special than other days. Last wednesday was such a day: I woke up at 6 a.m. in the futuristic Crown Plaza hotel of Changi Airport in Singapore, on my way back from Bali to Cebu. After the always exhausting flight over the open ocean between Malaysia and the Philippines, I took a brief swim in the pool and prepared for the Christmas party of Conchology that very same day. We rented a nice beach in one of the hotels on Mactan and the ladies of our company were more wild than usual. It was a full moon that night and while the events were going on I thought by myself it was not a day as others.

Little I knew that in far away France, my friend Manou passed away and the news came yesterday rather as a shock. It is with emotion that I here give a brief overview of the life of Emmanuel Guillot de Suduiraut and his importance in the conchological world.

Emmanuel Guillot de Suduiraut (1938 - 2010)



"Manou" as he liked to be called, was born in Monségur, in the Gironde, France, in a noble family with close ties to the early French monarchy. His ancestors produced the famous Suduiraut wines, generally known as the second best Sauterne wine, of which Manou was happy to offer a prestigious bottle on several great occasions. Manou was proud on his ancestry and definitely inherited many of their qualities- and defects - as I should say. This is reflected in the names of shells he created, such as *Vexillum sauternesense*, after the Sauterne wines, and *Vexillum lavoisieri*, named after the French nobleman Antoine-Laurent de Lavoisier, father of modern chemistry, who lost his head in the French revolution.

Manou got a first career in southern France as a wine-dealer, following the family tradition. During his service in the army he was stationed in the French Congo and this triggered a love for voyages. He liked to tell that when he arrived in "the Congo", he was so amazed with the banana tree, so that he bought a complete fruit. When walking through a village with the fruit on his shoulder, the women started laughing, as he bought bananas for the porks, instead as bananas to eat. After the army, his independent profession allowed him to travel several months a year, and Manou relentlessly, driven by his curiosity, went to many countries. His adventurous and brave mind moved him through areas few westerners could see at that time, such as Afghanistan and Yemen. When approaching his forties, he went to the Philippines, Palawan, and he fell completely in love with the place. The blue and turquoise waters with white beaches, palm trees and beautiful people were in strong contrast with the winters in Europe where life in the early seventies started to become more and more severe.

With a logic and perseverance, typical for him, Manou sold everything: house, car etc.. and changed life: he rented a small island in Palawan and constructed a "beach resort". He bought a banka and started living the life on a remote small Island in the even more remote Palawan. Every afternoon he snorkeled for hours, discovering the amazing marine life. It is at that time he met Evelyne and her then very young daughter "Jacky". He later married Evelyne and took great care of Jacky for the rest of his life. It is also during these early years that he traveled the Philippines south to the now impossible Sulu Sea islands such as Jolo, which he loved. He is one of the only westerners who dived personally the *Cymbiola palawanica* and many of the fantastic orange *Conus bandanus vidua MOZOII*.



Left Jacky, right Evelyne, on a visit to the Eiffel Tower

Life on a small island in the tropics is pretty hard, but Manou enjoyed it, until his resources did not allow him to stay there any longer. So, when things went bankrupt, he took his banka. He often told the hardships of crossing the Sulu Sea with his banka in stormy weather with only Evelyne and the small Jacky on board. Anybody who knows the dangerous Philippine waters will appreciate the guts of such an exploit. The family finally arrived in Cebu - with 100 pesos (about 5 \$ at that time) in the pocket. Manou never knew he got a much bigger treasure in his head: he developed in Palawan a deep love for marine life and a passion for seashells. We are at that time in the early eighties and in Cebu, he met with Nora, from Portugal. He decided to become the exclusive supplier of Philippine shells for Nora and studied shells day and night.

The fine French education that Manou got helped him a lot and he applied quality norms in the shells he handled with an expert eye. Few will ever be able to rival with him on this level. Manou was ruthless with shells that did not match his taste for perfection and beauty, either it was a Triphorid or a *Conus*. After his years with "Nora", he supplied "Poppe". It was with delight we opened treasure box after treasure box of the Manou-shells: they are now

dispersed in many collections all over the world and many of them are in the Poppe-collection in the KBIN, Brussels. But as soon as his means allowed it, Manou went beyond the classic "buy and sell" mode and started exploring the waters of Balicasag Island with great enthusiasm. And this is undoubtedly his major contribution to conchology. Balicasag became what it is today thanks to Emmanuel Guillot de Suduiraut.

Manou installed a small house on Balicasag and even got a "pigeonnier" there, as he liked to eat pigeons from time to time: a reminiscence of the time he hunted "palombes" as a young man in the Gironde. Every morning at 6 a.m., when the fishermen finished lifting the tangle nets, Manou will make his choice in the catches with an expert eye. Each shell he acquired has been recorded and the records fill several books. Manou spend for many years three days a week on Balicasag Island. It is difficult to explain how hard such a task is: the weekly travel from Mactan to Balicasag takes almost one day: one hour to the harbor of Cebu, two to four hours on the sea, back one hour by tricycle all over Panglao and finally half an hour in a very small banka in the big waves from Panglao to Balicasag Island.



The beach on Balicasag Island, where Manou spend several years of his life.

Manou got the very healthy mentality that money is a "means", so he invested much of his revenue in the tangle netting which is a rather expensive enterprise. But his daily efforts brought to light much of the treasures who were the delight of that period which I should call the "diamond time" of shell collecting: the early eighties until the late economical crisis hit the world in 2008. He was the first one to put nets as deep as 360 m, bringing up treasures such as the wonderful red *Peretrochus vicdani* from the Balicasag-Pamilacan area.

Shortly before I moved to the Philippines, Manou started selling shells directly online and he discovered the life of a shell dealer. He was delighted with the discoveries and when he could make a nice transaction, but he was furious with the classic hassles such an activity brings along.

He stopped his Balicasag enterprise about four years ago and Conchology, Inc. took over his last fisherman. At the end of his activities Manou got more than 5 km of tangle nets in the area ! This is down to a few hundred meters today, and without Manou as the daily influx of cash, Balicasag has become almost a desert for shells and the local population oriented theirselves to the hundreds of tourists visiting the Island daily.

During all these years Manou collected avidly the Mitridae and Costellariidae and he contributed considerably to the popularisation of these families. He maintained a broad network of good relations with many experts which he generously supplied with study material. Whenever he noticed a shell that could be new to science and which appealed to his notions of aesthetics, he tried to find an expert. Many shells have been named after Manou: at first sight I notice the following (this list is possibly not complete):





Rare, exclusive and beautiful : *Calliostoma suduirauti*.

- *Falsilatirus suduirauti* Bozzetti, 1995
- *Trivellona suduirauti* (Lorenz, 1996)
- *Calliostoma suduirauti* Bozzetti, 1996
- *Clavus suduirauti* Bozzetti, 1997
- *Lyria suduirauti* (Bozzetti, 1997)
- *Colubraria suduirauti* Parth, 1999
- *Nipponaphera suduirauti* (Verhecken, 1999)
- *Calliostoma emmanueli* Vilvens, 2000
- *Fusolatirus suduirauti* (Fraussen, 2003)
- *Coralliophila suduirauti* Smriglio & Mariottini, 2003
- *Chattina suduirauti* (Lamprell, 2003)
- *Conus suduirauti* Raybaudi Massilia, 2004
- *Clathroterebra suduirauti* (Terry & Conde, 2004)
- *Chilodonta suduirauti* Poppe, Tagaro & Dekker, 2006
- *Acrosterigma suduirauti* Vidal & ter Poorten, 2007
- *Mitrella suduirauti* K. & D. Monsecour, 2009
- *Vexillum vicmanoui* H. Turner & M. P. Marrow, 2001
 - Has been named after Victor Pagobo (Nickname "Vic" and Emmanuel, Nickname "Manou")
- *Calliostoma jackylenae* Bozzetti, 1997
 - Has been named after his daughter Jackelyn.

Manou also described lots of species, often in collaboration with other Mitrid or Costellarid-lovers. A short search shows us immediately the following species (this list is possibly not complete):

- *Vexillum sauternesense* Suduiraut, 1997
- *Vexillum alvinobalani* Suduiraut, 1999
- *Mitra poppei* Suduiraut, 2000
- *Scabricola condei* Suduiraut, 2001
- *Scabricola lavoisieri* Suduiraut, 2002
- *Domiporta dianneae* Salisbury & Suduiraut, 2003
- *Mitra heinickei* Salisbury & Suduiraut, 2003
- *Mitra schepmani* Salisbury & Suduiraut, 2003
- *Neocancilla splendidula* (Salisbury & Suduiraut, 2003)
- *Neocancilla rikae* Suduiraut, 2004
- *Vexillum monalizae* Poppe, Suduiraut & Tagaro, 2006
- *Vexillum balicasagensis* Salisbury & Suduiraut, 2006

- *Vexillum darwini* Salisbury & Suduiraut, 2006
- *Vexillum dautzenbergi* Poppe, Suduiraut & Tagaro, 2006
- *Vexillum gouldi* Salisbury & Suduiraut, 2006
- *Vexillum luigiraybaudii* Poppe, Suduiraut & Tagaro, 2006
- *Vexillum monsecourorum* Poppe, Suduiraut & Tagaro, 2006
- *Vexillum thorssoni* Poppe, Suduiraut & Tagaro, 2006
- *Visaya rosenbergi* Poppe, Suduiraut & Tagaro, 2006
- *Vexillum epigonus* Salisbury & Suduiraut, 2006
- *Vexillum jackylenae* Salisbury & Suduiraut, 2006
- *Vexillum evelynae* Suduiraut, 2007
- *Vexillum poppei* Suduiraut, 2007
- *Vexillum tanguyae* Suduiraut & Boutet, 2007
- *Vexillum hoarai* Suduiraut, 2007



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The magnificent *Acrosterigma suduirauti*

Often he is mentioned in literature as "de Suduiraut", but Manou explicitly asked us to be cited as "Suduiraut".

I have known Manou only for a little more than the two last decades of his life, but it must be said he was a "character". We have spend much time together on shell shows throughout Europe, in my house in Brussels where he stayed during his yearly visit before going Saint Jean de Luz in southern France. Also much time on Balicasag Island and even more in his place in Mactan, Punta Engano, where he lived in "native style". Manou was passionate about everything and it is with admiration that I saw him discussing philosophical matters with my friends until 5 a.m. in the morning in the realm of cigarette smoke and delicious wines. He read a lot: In Balicasag Island he always took some books and he studied mainly authors on natural history - Darwin was one of his gods - but he was also a lover of many other philosophical writers: his interests were wide and diverse. "*Vexillum darwini*" is a result of these activities. A major quality of Manou was his ability to forget very fast the fights he got with even his best friends. He was not at all what we call "rancunier", a quality not well understood by Asian people which occasionally gave him a hard time. Despite that, Manou will help many around him and even while his means were never that exhaustive, he always had a budget ready for the poorest, among which he lived, for when they got into trouble.

With Manou, a chapter in the conchological world is gone. Just in the short time we shared together, I got enough material to write a book on him. He was indeed one of the true "Adventurers" as we seldom meet, and his passing away leaves a big empty in the hearts of the ones who knew him and loved him.

Sincerely Yours,

Guido T. Poppe