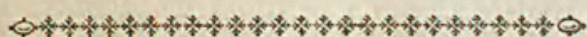


ARGONAUTA ARGO.



CHARACTER GENERICUS.

Animal Sepia.

Testa univalvis, spiralis, involuta, membranacea, unilocularis.

Lin. Syst. Nat. p. 1161.

CHARACTER SPECIFICUS, &c.

ARGONAUTA carina utrinque subdentata.

Gmel. Syst. Nat. p. 3367.

NAUTILUS fulcatus.

Klein. ostr. t. 1. f. 3.

NAUTILUS tenuis.

Rumpf. mus. t. 18. f. 1. 4. A. B.

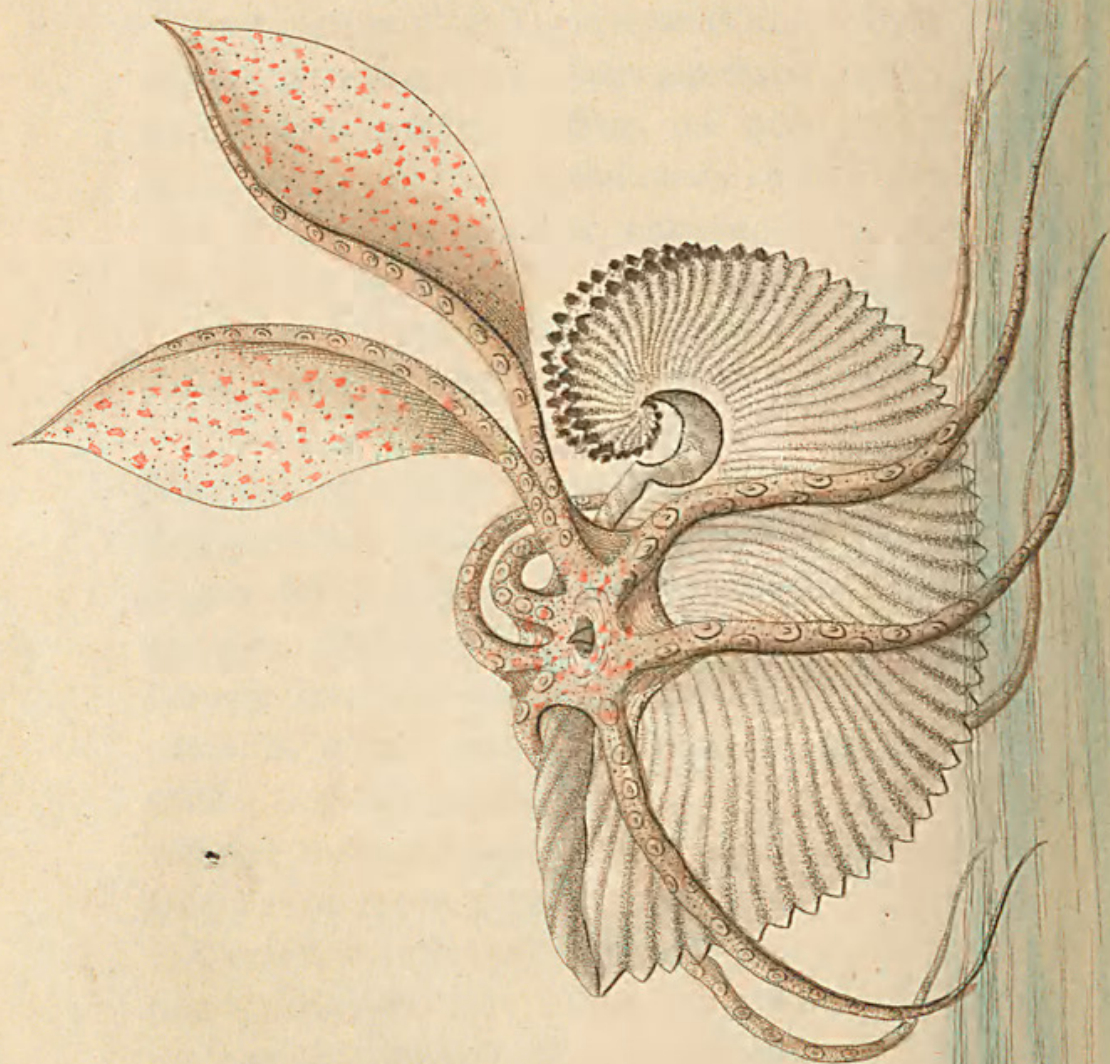
Utcunque inter animalia ejusdem familiæ eadem fere sit formæ partiumque similitudo, pauca tamen proferri possunt exempla, in quibus a norma sua insigniter aberrare solet natura; præcipue vero in classe testacea. Testarum enim univalvium (ut dicuntur) incolæ, generi Limacis simillimi sunt; bivalvium contra generibus Tethyos et Ascidia. Formæ hujus anomalæ nullum notabilius argumentum possit feligi quam in genere Argonautæ; vel Nautili qui papyraceus dicitur: ab omnibus enim aliis ejusdem divisionis adeo discrepat animal

animal hanc testam inhabitans, ut illius verum esse et genuinum incolam non mirum sit si ægre credatur. Linnæus igitur de hac re scribit, “ Domunculam alienam, quemadmodum Cancer Diogenes seu Bernhardus, intraſſe Sepiam, cum non connexa ſit teſtæ, ſibi adeo alienæ, qui non crederet, niſi tot teſtes nobis obſtringerent, qui propriis oculis viderunt Argonautam velificantem?”

Extra teſtam viſus Argonautæ habitator ſepiæ ſpeciem, ſepiam præcipue octopodiam admodum refert: nec ſane ab ea forma generali differt, niſi quod ad extremitates brachiorum duorum membranas ovatas habeat, quas cum ſuper mare pacatum navigat, erigit, reliquis ſex brachiis remigans. Fieri non potuit ut miranda res hominum oculos effugeret: ideoque a variis auctoribus deſcriptam legimus; nullis elegantius quam Plinio.

“ Inter præcipua autem miracula eſt, qui vocatur Nautilus, ab aliis Pompilos. Supinus in ſumma æquorum pervenit, ita ſe paulatim ſubrigens, ut emiſſa omni per fiſtulam aqua, velut exoneratus ſentina, facile naviget. Poſtea prima duo brachia retorquens, membranam inter illa miræ tenuitatis extendit; qua velificante in aura, cæteris ſubremigans brachiis, media cauda, ut gubernaculo, ſe regit. Ita vadit alto, Liburnicarum ludens imagine, et ſi quid pavoris interveniat, hauſta ſe mergens aqua.”

Cavendum eſt hanc teſtam, quæ verus eſt Argonauta, cum Nautilo communiter dicto, ſeu Nautilo *concamerato* confundamus, qui generis eſt omnino diſtincti. Creſcit Argonauta Argo ab una uncia ad ſex vel etiam octo. Mare Mediterraneum nec non Indicum incolit.



THE
ARGONAUT,
OR
PAPER NAUTILUS.



GENERIC CHARACTER.

Animal extremely resembling a Sepia.
Shell univalve, spiral, extremely thin.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER, &c.

ARGONAUT with whitish furrowed shell, with
the keel dentated on each side.

THE PAPER NAUTILUS.

NAUTILLE PAPIRACÉ.

Argenv. t. 5.

Notwithstanding the general similarity of structure which prevails amongst animals of the same tribe, there are yet some remarkable deviations from it. This is nowhere more conspicuous than in the testaceous tribe, in which the inhabitants of most of the Univalves bear a strong affinity to the genus *Limax*, or Slug, while those of almost all the Bivalves are distinguished by a striking similarity to the genera of *Tethys* and *Ascidia*. Amongst the instances of deviation from the general plan may
be

be adduced the very remarkable and curious genus Argonauta or Paper-Nautilus, which is inhabited by an animal of an appearance so widely removed from those of most of the Univalves, as almost to make doubtful the reality of its being the genuine and proper inhabitant of the shell in which it resides. Linnæus accordingly has well observed, that unless the evidence of so many eye-witnesses had enforced belief, it might have been reasonably imagined that an animal so unlike the rest of the tribe, was only a usurper of the shell; in the same manner as the Cancer Diogenes and a few others, which take possession of such vacant shells as happen to suit their convenience. The inhabitant of the Argonauta, if seen detached from its shell, might pass for a real Sepia, and bears so great a resemblance to the Sepia octopodia or eight-armed Cuttle-fish, that the principal difference consists in its being furnished at the extremities of two of its arms with a pair of membranes of an oval form, which, during its occasional navigations on the surface of a calm sea, it raises upright and expands to the gale; while by the assistance of the six remaining arms it rows itself along. It seems impossible that so curious a spectacle could have escaped the particular observation of mankind. Accordingly we find it described by various authors: by none however more elegantly than by Pliny, whose short and beautiful description, has generally been quoted by modern writers.

“ But amongst the principal miracles of nature is the animal called Nautilus or Pompilos. It ascends to the surface of the sea in a supine posture, and gradually raising itself up, forces out by means of its tube all the
water

water from the shell, in order that it may swim the more readily; then throwing back the two foremost arms, it displays between them a membrane of wonderful tenacity, which acts as a sail, while with the remaining arms it rows itself along; the tail in the middle acting as a helm to direct its course; and thus pursues its voyage like a little ship; and if alarmed by any appearance of danger, takes in the water and descends."

We must be careful not to confound this shell, which is the real and proper Nautilus, with the chambered or pearly Nautilus, which belongs to a very distinct genus. The Argonauta Argo is found of various sizes, from one to six or eight inches in length, or even larger. It is a native both of the Mediterranean and Indian seas.



Shaw, George. 1792. "The Argonaut or Paper Nautilus, Argonauta argo [Pl. 101]." *The Naturalist's Miscellany* 3(XXXIII), <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.304521>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/279090>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.304521>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/304521>

Holding Institution

Museums Victoria

Sponsored by

Atlas of Living Australia

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.