

VENUS DIONE.



CHARACTER GENERICUS.

Animal Tethys.

Testa bivalvis æquivalvis, altero latere complanato et velut duplicato.

Cardo dentibus tribus: omnibus approximatis; lateralibus apice divergentibus.

CHARACTER SPECIFICUS, &c.

VENUS SUBCORDATA, latere complanato ferie duplici spinarum curvarum ciliato.

PECTUNCULUS RUBER, fasciis acutis et ex altera parte muricatis exasperatus.

List. Conch. t. 307. p. 140.

CONCHA BRASILIANA CUSPIDATA.

Bonanni Mus. Kirch. Cl. 2.
n. 121. p. 448.

CONCHA VENERIS ARMATA.

Jacobæus in Mus. Reg. Dan.

PECTUNCULUS VENEREUS.

Pet. gazoph. t. 31. fig. 9.

CONCHA ECHINATA.

Valent. Mus. Museor. t. 35. n. 19.

CONCHA VENERIS occidentalis cum spinis.

D'Argenville. t. 21. f. 1.

Concham raram et elegantem ostendit tabula, qua nihil injuriarum passa vix pretiosiore[m] continet hodiernorum

diernorum museorum scrinia. At difficillimum est specimina nancisci integra et illæsa, ea præcipue quæ ad plenam magnitudinem pervenerint.

Venerem Dionem, quam generant maria Americana, primus descripsit et depinxit Bonannus? Color illi generalis est levissime incarnatus, seu fere albidus; valvula utraque zonis plurimis levatis et concentricis extrinsecus notata. Pars posterior seu complanata in variis speciminibus plus minus est purpurea, et spinarum curvarum utrinque serie laterali ciliata; unde fit, ut si e transverso testam intuearis, non longe oculo absimilis videatur, vel etiam ori ringenti quadrupedis. Cum species numerosissimas contineat genus, multisque egregium sit decus, nomen ideo ei datum est quod puchritudinem denotet.

Venerem seu Dionem e mari anadyomenen toties celebrarunt poetæ, ut supervacaneum forsan habeatur de re notissima quicquam dicere. Bellum tamen Aufonii epigramma liceat citare.

“ Emerfam pelagi nuper genialibus undis
Cyprin Apellei cerne laboris opus.
Ut complexa manu madidos salis æquore crines
Humidulis spumas stringit utraque comis
Jam tibi nos Cypri, Juno inquit et innuba Pallas
Cedimus, et formæ præmia deferimus.”

At vel Aufonio felicius cecinit celeberrimus Darwin, in eximio poemate cui titulus HORTUS BOTANICUS, cujus versus in linguam Latinam eleganter adeo transtulit eruditus quidam amicus, ut si quod
ille

ille scripsit in scriniis ineditum fervem, persuasissimum habeam me a publica delectatione detracturum.

Addidi et egomet arcttorem, humiliorem, et quasi centonicam imitationem.

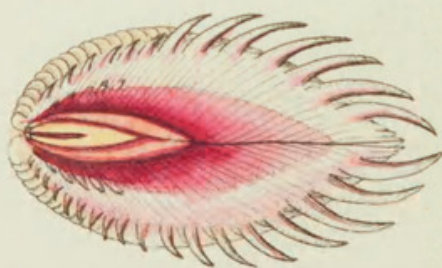
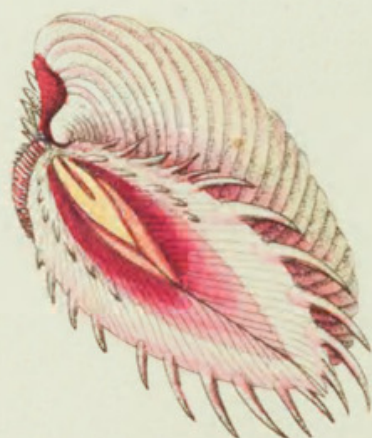
“ Sic primum vitreum fugiens Erycina profundum,
Nereidumque domos, patrio jam debita cælo,
Surgit ad æthereum solem pulcherrima rerum,
Cæruleis emerfa vadis : rutilante sedentem
Hanc concha manibus tollunt submisisse iphiantes
Semiviri, visusque avidos pascuntur amore.
At leve subridens falsam dea crine soluto
Humorem, liquidas et gemmas exprimit ; illæ
Defiliunt niveis sinuoso tramite mammis
Protinus, et placide lambunt juvenilia membra.
Præsentis valet interea vis vivida formæ.
Sternitur attonitum pacatis fluctibus æquor
Immensum, vix jamque tremit, metuitque moveri.
Mollius aspirant zephyri, simul æthera stillant
Ambrosiam, et toto nova regnat in orbe voluptas.”

IMITATIO CENTONICA.

Sic alto enata oceano, si credere fas sit,
Alma Venus quondam pelagi gratissima nymphis,
Muscosos inter scopulos cautesque profundas
Lusit amabiliter ; vitreisque sedilibus hærens
Dulcia subridens immiscuit oscula verbis,
Et finxit vultum, et meruit formosa videri :
Jam teneros experta jocos, nec egena leporum.
At mox tota merum sal, plena et fulgida forma,
Tritonum manibus folio subvecta virenti
Sedibus ex imis, pacato in marmore ponti
Institit, attonitas despectans desuper undas :
Qualis ubi e cælo radiis argenteus almis

Lucifer

Lucifer assurgit, ridentemque undique terram
Vivificat, pictos revocans ad gaudia campos.
Ut roseis cæpit digitis ficcare capillos,
Per caput errantes guttæ et per eburnea colla
Suave micant; dein terga petunt, humerosque latosque
Pectoraque, et falsis stellantes roribus artus.
Continuo natura Deam mirata salutat,
Et manifesta Venus cælo terrisque renidet.



VENUS DIONE,
OR THE
OCCIDENTAL VENUS-SHELL.



GENERIC CHARACTER.

Animal resembling a Tethys.

Shell bivalve; Valves similar, flattened on one side and furnished with a duplicature.

Hinge consisting of three teeth, approximated, the outer ones diverging.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER, &c.

SUBCORDATED VENUS, with a double row of incurvated spines on the flat side.

THE OCCIDENTAL VENUS-SHELL.

CONQUE DE VENUS occidentale.

Encyclop. Recueil de planches. tom. 6.
t. 73. fig. 6.

CONQUE DE VENUS à pointes.

Fav. D'Herbigny Dict. vol. 1. p. 262.

THE VENUS SHELL OR CONCHA VENERIS.

Hill's Hist. of Animals. p. 158.

The rare and curious shell represented on the present plate is numbered amongst the most valuable articles

articles of the conchyliological cabinet, and is indeed considered, when in its complete and unblemished state, as one of the cimelia of modern museums. It is, however, not often that specimens can be obtained which have not suffered some accidental injuries, especially those which have attained their full size. The Venus Dione is a native of the American seas, and was first described and figured by Bonanni? Its general colour is a very pale or whitish pink; each valve is marked externally by a great number of sharpened concentric zones or prominent ribs: the hinder or flattened part is of a purple tinge, more or less deep in different individuals, and is ciliated on each side with a row of curved spines, so as to give the shell, when viewed in a transverse direction, an appearance not ill resembling that of an eye, or even of the ringent mouth of a quadruped.

As the genus to which it belongs is extremely extensive, and contains several species of uncommon beauty, it has therefore received a name appropriated to the elegance of its form.

The birth of the younger Dione or Venus from the sea has so often been commemorated by the poets of antiquity, that it would be superfluous to relate what must be universally known. It may be sufficient therefore to quote on this subject the elegant epigram of Ausonius on the celebrated picture of Venus anadyomene by the hand of Apelles.

“ Emerfam pelagi nuper genialibus undis
Cyprin, Apellei cerne laboris opus.

Ut

Ut complexa manu madidos salis æquore crines
Humidulis spumas stringit utraque comis
Jam tibi nos Cypri, Juno inquit et innuba Pallas
Cedimus, et formæ præmia deferimus."

Form'd in bold fancy by Apelles' hand,
See Venus on her native ocean stand.
As from the wave in full-blown charms she springs,
And from her hair the dropping moisture wrings,
Juno and Pallas view her with amaze :
In silence on the lovely tablet gaze :
No more at beauty's envied prize repine,
But to the pictur'd fair the willing palm resign.

A still more beautiful description has, however,
been given by Dr. Darwin in his celebrated poem
THE BOTANIC GARDEN.

" So young Dione, nurs'd beneath the waves,
And rock'd by Nereids in their coral caves,
Charm'd the blue sisterhood with playful wiles,
Lisp'd her sweet tones, and tried her tender smiles.
Then on her beryl throne by Tritons borne,
Bright rose the Goddess like the star of morn ;
When with soft fires the milky dawn he leads,
And wakes to life and love the laughing meads ;
With rosy fingers, as uncurl'd they hung
Round her fair brow, her golden locks she wrung ;
O'er the smooth surges on silver sandals stood,
And look'd enchantment on the dazzled flood.
The bright drops, rolling from her lifted arms,
In slow meanders wander o'er her charms,
Seek round her snowy neck their lucid track,
Pearl her white shoulders, gem her ivory back,
Round her fine waist and swelling bosom swim,
And star with glitt'ring brine each crystal limb.
Th' immortal form enamour'd Nature hail'd,
And Beauty blaz'd to heaven and earth unveil'd."

Of

Of this the reader will find in the corresponding Latin part a free translation by the hand of a learned friend, so highly elegant that I cannot resist the pleasure of presenting it to the public.

I have also myself added, in the manner of a cento, a more close imitation of Dr. Darwin's lines.



Shaw, George. 1793. "Venus Dione or the Occidental Venus-Shell, Venus dione [Pl. 163]." *The Naturalist's Miscellany* 5(LIII), <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.310742>.

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