

A Taxonomic Iconography of Living Cardiidae.

By Jan Johan ter Poorten. Published by Conchbooks, Harxheim, Germany

The completion of this book project has taken about two decades. During this long time the author visited several museums, browsed through as many private collections as he could find and exchanged and bought specimens from collectors and dealers all over the world. He searched for all first hand and bibliographic information relevant to the matter, studied and compared the shells. The result of all the passion that Jan Johan ter Poorten invested in this work is a massive and wonderfully illustrated DIN-A4 sized book of 600 pages. As a shell collector with a liking for Cardiidae shells I can only define this book as “complete”, at least for the moment. It starts with explanations how to use the book and how the chapters are built. Furthermore, information is given about the fossil history, the anatomy, biology and ecology of the family. The family Cardiidae is divided into 10 subfamilies and 53 genera, all well described, and the last phylogenetic tree is reported according to recent molecular genetic analysis. As a consequence the *Tridacna* are included as a subfamily. The 297 species chapters are very informative, include distribution maps (created with good and reliable data that were often obtained in museums) and contain all kind of information concerning the addressed species (name, type locality, type repository, distribution, description, synonymie, ecology etc.). 238 excellent plates often illustrate several specimens of the same species and are really helpful in understanding the diagnosis within certain “species groups” where the morphological differences are not always easy to detect. However, on the basis of my own expertise I still recognize some need for further discussion. There are several surprises within the text like some hybrids of *Vasticardium* making the research on this difficult genus even more challenging. Moreover, a larger diversity of species than ever before in older monographs concerning Cardiidae is presented. As a lover and user of books I may say that I appreciate the solid cardboard cover and the paper used for printing because it does not retain the fingerprints that you may leave when scrolling. The price of the book (Euro 150) is a bit high but reflects the quality of the paper and printing as well as all the hard work invested in its preparation, layout and printing by the author and the editor. In conclusion, I highly recommend this work as it will definitely enrich the knowledge of all people who are interested in bivalves.