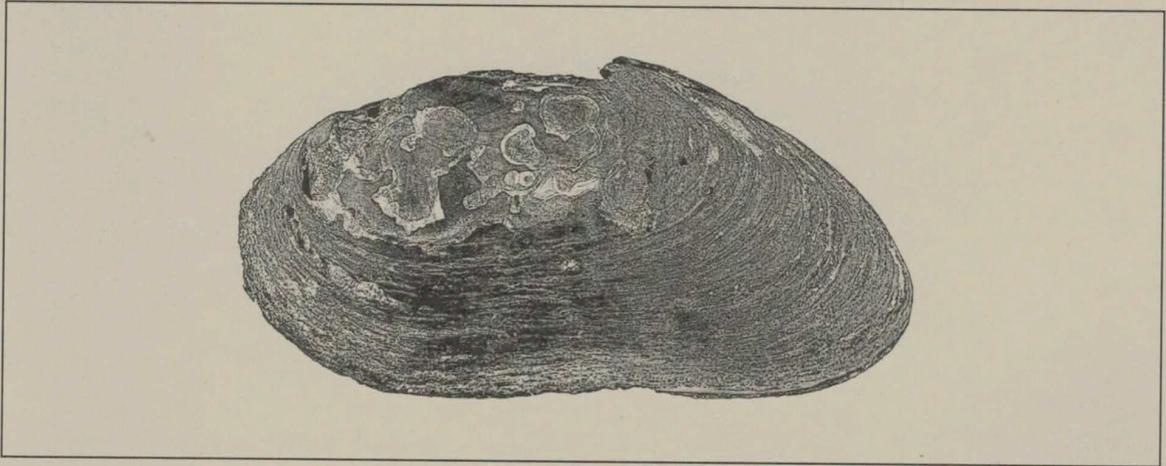


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A new species of *Ficus* (Gastropoda: Ficidae).

By FELIX LORENZ, Buseck-Beuern

Abstract: *Ficus dandrimonti* n. sp. from Cargados Carajos, N. Mauritius differs from *Ficus ficus* LINNAEUS, 1758, by a more coarse, cancellate sculpture and much paler overall color.

Keywords: New species, *Ficus dandrimonti*, Mauritius.

Zusammenfassung: *Ficus dandrimonti* n. sp. von Cargados Carajos, N. Mauritius, unterscheidet sich von *Ficus ficus* LINNAEUS, 1758, durch eine gröbere, gegitterte Skulptur und eine viel blässere Färbung.

Introduction: Recent explorations to study the molluscan diversity of Mauritius and its offshore atolls in the Southwest Indian Ocean has led to the discovery of several new species. These include *Rolaniconus lecourtorum* LORENZ, 2012 (Conidae) and *Morum (Oniscida) lorenzi* MONSECOUR, 2012 (Harpidae) as remarkable examples, as well as several new species of the families Turbinidae, Cypraeidae, Fascioliariidae, Muricidae, Conidae and Tridacnidae that are yet to be named. In the following, a new species of Ficidae is described.

Ficus dandrimonti n. sp.

Holotype: 35,4 mm x 18,7 mm. Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, France MNHN25145

Paratype 1: 40,2 mm x 24,6 mm. FELIX LORENZ, Buseck, Germany

Paratype 2: 37,6 mm x 22,8 mm. MICHAEL A. MONT, Owings Mills, Maryland, USA

Paratype 3: 47,6 mm x 25,7 mm. PETE STIMPSON, Loudon, Tennessee, USA

Paratype 4: 33,7 mm x 19,5 mm. FELIX LORENZ, Buseck, Germany

Paratype 5: 42,3 mm x 26,2 mm. Haus der Natur - Cismar, Germany

Paratype 6: 42,4 mm x 24,9 mm. SENCKENBERG Naturkundemuseum, Frankfurt, Germany

Plus 23 additional paratypes, which will be distributed among institutions and malacologists.

Description: The shell is rather small for the genus, and is quite solid, with a pear-shaped body, a slightly projecting spire, and a rather short, evenly tapered anterior canal. The protoconch is smooth, consisting of only one whorl, and measuring 1,6 mm in diameter. The entire shell has strong transverse ribs, usually with just a single weaker intermitted riblet. The transversely oriented ribs are crossed by longitudinal ones of variable, but comparable thickness. This gives the shell a rough and regular, cancellate sculpture. On the anterior half of the shell, the transverse ribs are stronger and more distinct than mid-dorsally.

The ground color is plain white. There are two broad, interrupted pinkish zones, one on the mid-portion of the shell, and the other towards the anterior canal. The ribs are white and may show distant, pale brown dots. Many specimens are plain white with no discernible color pattern.

The living animal is transparent white, with numerous irregular opalescent white spots on the proboscis, the mantle, and the foot. The mantle shows numerous discrete black spots in addition to the white spots. The crawling surface of the foot is saturated red with white dashes.

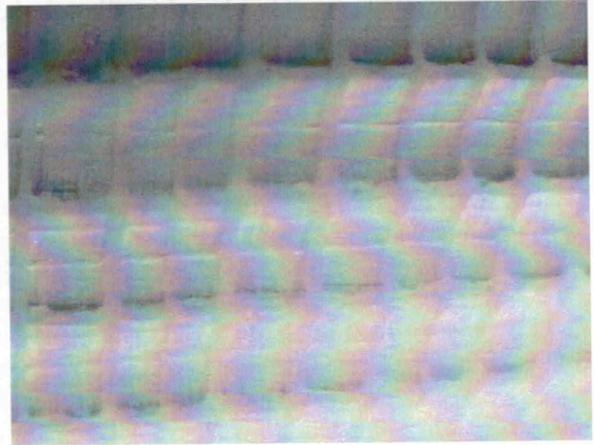


Fig. 1:
Close-up of the dorsal sculpture of
Ficus dandrimonti n. sp.

Explanations of Plate 4:

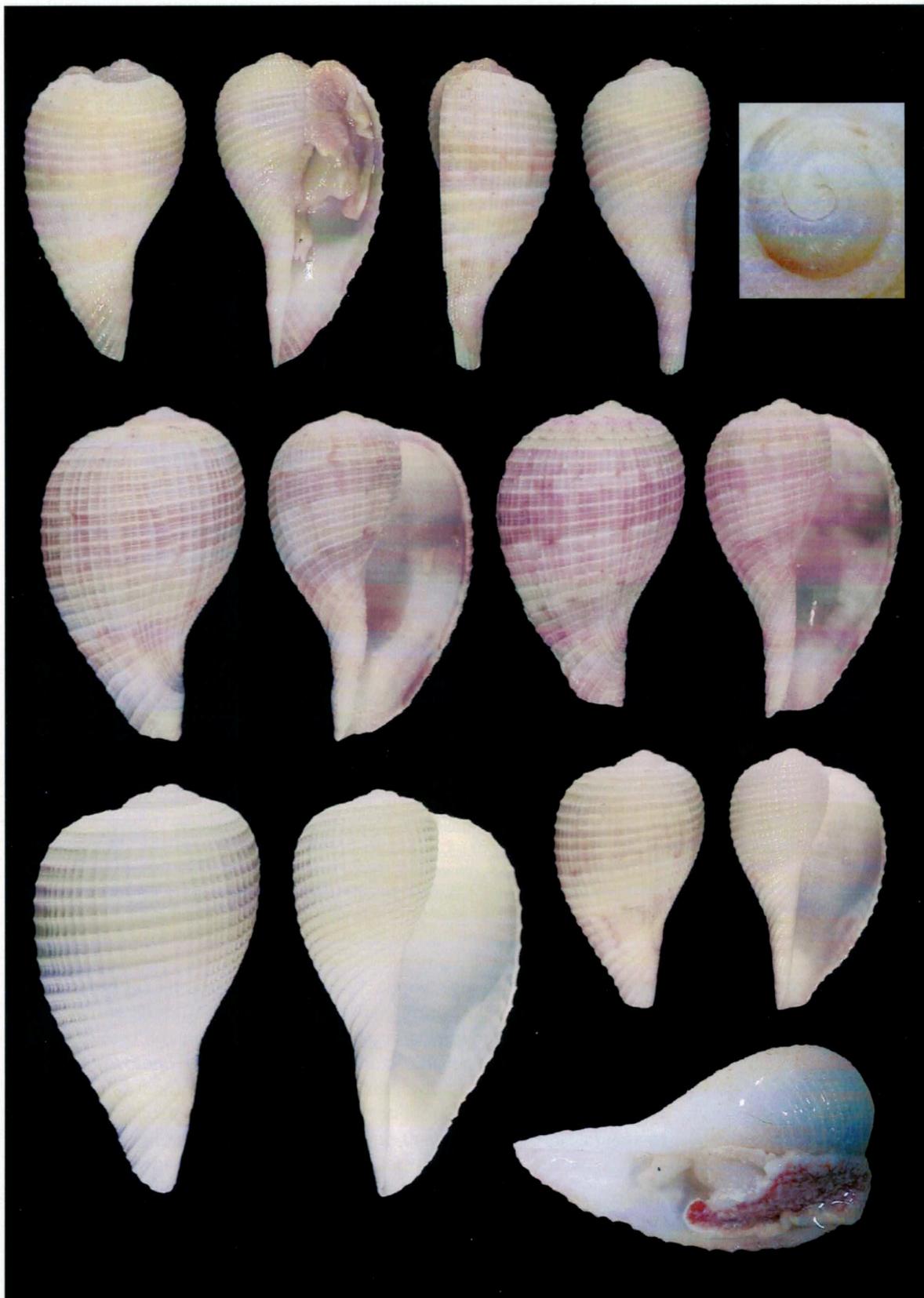
Ficus dandrimonti n. sp.

1st row: holotype, with detail of protoconch

2nd row: left: paratype 1, right: paratype 2

3rd row: left: paratype 3, right: paratype 4

bottom right: holotype with animal, shortly after removal from fish gut.



LORENZ, F.: A new species of *Ficus* (Gastropoda: Ficidae).

Habitat and distribution: *Ficus dandrimonti* n. sp. is endemic to Cargados Carajos in the north of Mauritius. The holotype was recovered from the stomach of an indeterminate fish caught at approximately 10 meters by local fishermen in the close vicinity of South Island. The animal was still alive when the fish was landed and cleaned. The stomach contents of fish caught in the same place consisted of fragments of the bivalve *Fragum hemicardium* LINNAEUS, 1758, indicating a sandy, moderately shallow-water habitat. Occasional fresh dead shells and numerous fragments of *Ficus dandrimonti* n. sp. are washed ashore throughout the atoll, especially on beaches facing sandy areas of the lagoon. The species has not been found on the Mauritian mainland or elsewhere.

Etymology: Named in honour of THIERRY DANDRIMONT of Paris, France, a passionate photographer of living gastropods and an expert in the molluscan fauna of Mauritius.

Discussion: The geographically isolated *Ficus dandrimonti* n. sp. somewhat resembles the highly variable *Ficus ficus* LINNAEUS, 1758, which is widespread throughout the Indo-Pacific. The new species differs by its smaller size and much coarser, cancellate sculpture (Fig. 1). In *Ficus ficus*, the transverse ribbing is usually dominant, whereas, in *Ficus dandrimonti* n. sp. this is less obvious. Only *Ficus eospila* (PÉRON & LESUEUR, 1807) from Australia has a similar sculpture, but that species differs by its remarkable spotted color pattern. The most obvious difference from all species in the genus is the pale pink to white color of *Ficus dandrimonti* n. sp., which lacks darker elements such as conspicuous blotches or the brown ground color of its relatives. VERHAEGE & POPPE (2000) assumed that *Ficus ficus* constitutes a complex of species, which became obvious to me on comparing series of shells from various localities. However, no population of *Ficus ficus* studied contained shells matching the new species in color and sculpture.

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