

CENOZOIC MURICIDAE OF THE WESTERN ATLANTIC REGION

DERMOMUREX—ADDENDUM

EMILY H. VOKES
TULANE UNIVERSITY

During the summer of 1975 the writer had the occasion to visit St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, where Mr. Gordon Nowell-Usticke makes his home. Examining the collections of this gentleman, it became painfully obvious that certain statements made in a recent publication (Vokes, 1975, p. 138 and 140) regarding the identity of a West Indian species of *Dermomurex* were in error. Therefore, this note is an attempt to correct this erroneous information as quickly as possible.

In 1969 Nowell-Usticke published a small booklet entitled "A supplementary list of new shells of St. Croix." In this paper he described a new species of *Dermomurex*, which he called "*Aspella pauperculum varians*" (1969, p. 15, pl. 3, no. 692). In the revised edition of the same pamphlet (1971, p. 12) he noted that: "The shell I named *Aspella varians* has, I find, a much earlier, overlooked name *Aspella cantrainei* Recluz." The present writer included *varians* in the synonymy of *Dermomurex pauperculus* (C. B. Adams), as "*Triton cantrainei*" is an unquestionable synonym of that species. However, seeing the specimens of "*Aspella varians*" in Nowell-Usticke's collections it was immediately apparent that these are not the same as *D. pauperculus* but are another West Indian species, which the writer had dismissed as being a case of mistaken locality, stating that the species was the same as *Dermomurex indentatus* (Carpenter) from West Mexico (Vokes, 1975, p. 138).

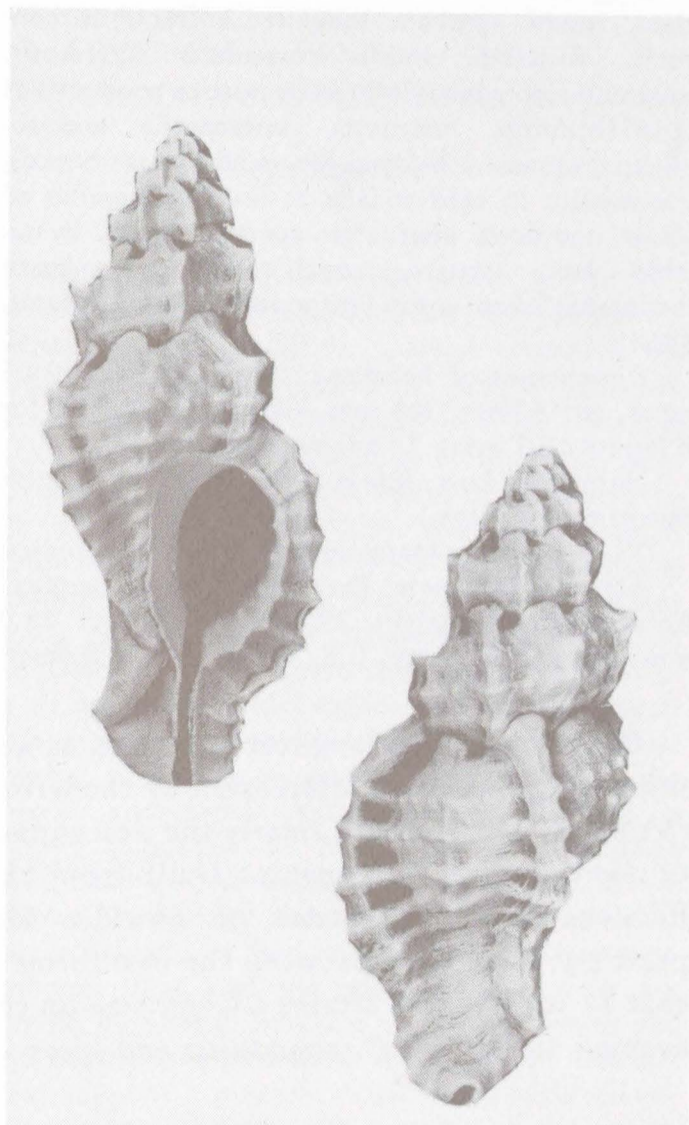
The species under discussion is that named by A. Adams (1864, p. 508) as *Murex alabastrum*, from Martinique. It was later figured by G. B. Sowerby in the *Thesaurus Conchyliorum* (1879, pl. 21, fig. 191) but has never been recognized since. Clench and Pérez Farfante (1945, p. 31) relegated it to synonymy as "a very young shell of *M. brevifrons* with very poorly developed spines." As noted, the present writer placed it in the synonymy of *Dermomurex indentatus* (Carpenter). In

Nowell-Usticke's collections there are several examples of this species and it is obvious that it is not rare in the West Indies, and the original type locality was indeed correct.

DERMOMUREX (DERMOMUREX) ALABASTRUM (A. Adams) Text figure 1

Murex alabastrum A. ADAMS, 1864, Zool. Soc. London, Proc. for 1863, p. 508.

Murex adamsii KOBELT, 1877, Jahr. Deutsch. Malac. Gesell., v. 4, p. 154 (unnecessary new name for *M. alabastrum* Adams, non *M. alabaster* Reeve).



Text figure 1. *Dermomurex* (*Dermomurex*) *alabastrum* (A. Adams). (X 2). Height 29.0 mm, diameter 13.0 mm; St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. From the collection of G. W. Nowell-Usticke.

- Murex alabastrum* Adams. G. B. SOWERBY JR., 1879, Thesaurus Conchyliorum, v. 4, *Murex*, p. 20, pl. 21, fig. 191.
- Murex adamsi* Kobelt. TRYON, 1880, Man. Conch., v. 2, p. 86, pl. 40, fig. 514 (from Thes. Conch., fig. 191).
- Murex alabastrum* Adams. CLENCH and PÉREZ FARFANTE, 1945, Johnsonia, v. 1, no. 17, p. 31 (in synonymy of *M. brevifrons* Lamarck).
- Aspella pauperculum varians* NOWELL-USTICKE, 1969, A supplementary list of new shells of St. Croix, p. 15, pl. 3, fig. 692.
- Aspella varians* Nowell-Usticke. NOWELL-USTICKE, 1971, A supplementary listing of new shells (revised edition), p. 12, pl. 6 (no number). (In synonymy with *Aspella cantrainei* Recluz).
- [*Dermomurex*] *alabastrum* (Adams). E. H. VOKES, 1971, Bulls. Amer. Paleontology, v. 61, no. 268, p. 14.
- Dermomurex alabastrum* (Adams). E. H. VOKES, 1975, Tulane Stud. Geol. Paleont., v. 11, no. 3, p. 138.

Diagnosis: "M. testa ovato-fusiforimi, alba; spira elata, quam apertura longiore; anfractibus convexis, varicibus validis rotundatis squamosis, squamulis incrassatis imbricatis postice productis et spiniformibus instructis, interspatiis nodosoplicatis, squama lobiformi erecta ad suturas ornatis, transversim in toto striatis et lirulis transversis ad plicas nodulosus instructis: apertura parva, ovata; labio lavi, arcuato, canali mediocri angusto recurvato; labro extus late varicoso." (A. Adams, 1864).

Dimensions of holotype: "long. 14 lines [29.5 mm], lat. 3 lines [6.3 mm—obviously an error for 6 lines = 12.7 mm]." (Adams, 1864).

Holotype: Lost, *fide* K. Thomas, *in litt.*, British Museum (Nat. Hist.).

Type locality: Martinique, French West Indies.

Figured specimen: Paratype "*Aspella varians*" Nowell-Usticke; height 29.0 mm, diameter 13.0 mm; locality St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, Recent.

Discussion: This long-lost species is, as was noted in the previous discussion by the writer (Vokes, 1975, p. 138), clearly the descendant of *Dermomurex engonatus* (Dall) from the Pliocene and Pleistocene of Florida. The principal difference between the two forms is that *D. alabastrum* attains a larger size on the average than does *D. engonatus* and loses its

intermediate varices at an earlier stage. This is somewhat variable and it is probable that the two forms are, in fact, conspecific. In view of the long acceptance of the name *D. engonatus* for the common Florida fossil it seems better to keep both names, but with the realization that the two may well represent the same biologic species, or local variants at best.

Another specimen was provided through the kindness of Mr. J. Gibson-Smith, of Caracas, Venezuela, who noted that it came from a lot of ten specimens from a coralline dredged spoilbank at Borburata, near Puerto Cabello, Edo. Carabobo, Venezuela. Obviously this species is widespread throughout the Caribbean and why it is not represented in collections cannot be answered.

The writer is most grateful to Mr. Nowell-Usticke for the loan of the figured specimen, as well as for the opportunity to examine his collections. She also thanks Mr. Gibson-Smith for the additional range data.

LITERATURE CITED

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