



A *Leporocypraea mappa*

***Leporocypraea mappa* with an encapsulated
barnacle on the exterior and blister pearl
formation in the interior**

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The Map cowry *Leporocypraea mappa* (Linnaeus, 1758) is a well known species from the Indo-Pacific. Only a few records are known from the Red Sea and seem to be confined to its southern part: the Dahlak Archipelago (Schilder, 1967).

In the National Mollusc Collection of the Tel Aviv University (TAU) there is a single shell from the Dahlak Islands. It is most probably one of the specimens recorded by Schilder (1967). This cowry is characterised by bright orange teeth and belongs therefore to *Leporocypraea mappa alga* (Perry, 1811).

This specimen has a length of 67.7 mm and is rather particular in two aspects. On its dorsum it carries a barnacle which managed to grow to a size of 6.3 mm diameter, before it was covered completely with a glossy layer by the cowry. Usually cowries manage to keep their shells free of any epibionts due to the fact that they cover the shells with their mantle flaps. However, occasionally barnacles manage to settle on the smooth dorsum of a cowry.

In its interior the beginning of two cases of pearl formation are visible. The largest one was triggered by an accumulation of sand grains between the mantle and the inner wall of the shell, the second seems to contain as its nucleus a foraminifera.

Reference

Schilder, F.A., 1967. *Mauritia mappa* in the Red Sea. *Hawaiian Shell News* (N.S.) 88: 5.



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