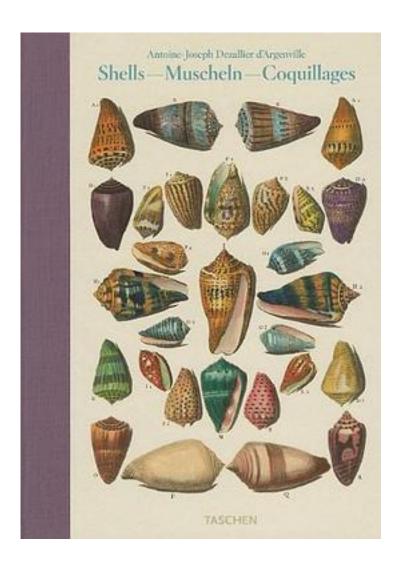
Dezallier D'Argenville



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This title includes masterpieces from the sea. Antoine Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville

(1680-1765) was so bewitched by seashells that he authored one of the world's most spectacular books dedicated to seashells. His "La Conchyliologie ou Histoire Naturelle" des Coquilles de Mer, d'Eau Douce, Terrestres et Fossiles", published at Paris in 1780, was a summa of contemporary knowledge in the complementary fields of mineralogy and conchology, and was so popular as to turn the study of natural history into a fad in Paris. A botanist and art lover, Dezallier drafted life-size drawings of the seashells, hand-coloring them in rococo style and even using a mirror to illustrate them to best effect. This luxurious edition, complete with a magnificent engraved frontispiece based on a drawing by the King of France's principla painter, Francois Boucher (1703-1770), was financed by numerous savants and amateurs. Boucher owned an eclectic collection of art, porcelain, mineral specimens, seashells, coelenterates, and a hodgepodge of curiously shaped and colored objects. Séashells were always considered 'natural works of art', i.e. specimens of nature's power to craft plastic works from raw materials on par with those created by man, and were thus admired as the tangible image of the wonder and perfection of Creation. Taschen's complete reprint of these 80 splendid hand-colored copper engraved plates, distinguished by their vivid colors and vast selection of rare, beautiful species, is taken from one of the finest original copies. The copy belongs to Claire Cernoia, president of Vasari Rare Books & Prints, vasaribooks.com.

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