

Conchophilia:
Shells, Art, and Curiosity
in Early Modern Europe

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With contributions by
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Part II



MICRO-
WORLDS
OF
THOUGHT



FIG. 34. Master of the Holy Figures. *Triptych of St. Christopher, St. Jerome, and St. Anthony*, c. 1510-20. Oil on panel, 57.5 × 93.4 cm. Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp [MMB .0024].



Marisa Anne Bass

Chapter 3 *Shell Life, or the Unstill Life of Shells*

Shells begin as movable dwellings for the mollusks who create them, but where a shell ends up is far from predetermined. They may go on to have many lives once their makers have left them behind. Whether subsumed into the geological landscape, reoccupied by a hermit crab, or repurposed by humankind, shells are more than exoskeletal remains of life past; they are persistently animable things. To admire a shell's variegated surface, to feel its sculptural form in one's hand, or to hear the echo of the sea in the architecture of its inner chamber, is to engage with a curious object that is also an uncanny subject. This chapter explores how early modern artists employed the pictorial realm to think through shells and their resonant histories, and it seeks to understand the encounters with shells that these pictures stage. I take as my starting point a simple premise: the life of a shell in a painting is never a *still* life.

An anonymous Netherlandish triptych from the first quarter of the sixteenth century offers a first case in point (fig. 34).¹ Dominating the triptych's central panel is the giant St. Christopher, who has just traversed a river with the infant Christ upon his shoulders. He is about to learn that his passenger is the true ruler of the world, one more powerful than either the king or the devil by whom he was previously employed. His spiritual conversion is imminent.

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FIG. 35. Detail of fig. 34.

Yet the shoreline before him teems with menaces, and his next step may prove a perilous one (fig. 35). On that strip of sand, a turtle and a lobster face off amidst scattered coral, stones, and little bivalves, while a still more unsettling congregation occupies the embankments to either side: a lurching bird-like monster, a surprisingly well-endowed beaver, and two sizable trumpet shells—one downturned and the other positioned to reveal the shadowy depths of its interior.²

This collection of creaturely specimens elides nature and fantasy in a manner that recalls the works of Hieronymus Bosch, a Renaissance artist who knew well how to transform a thing observed from life into an invention of an otherworldly kind.³ Enthralled by his ingenuity, Bosch's Netherlandish followers did their best to keep up. In *Alart du Hameel's* Boschian engraving from the end of the fifteenth century, a panoply of somersaulting demons, drunken dwarves, and warring mermen embody the battles that Christopher must wage—and the dangers that he must overcome—on the arduous path to faith (fig. 36).⁴ But so too does the lobster snapping at the saint's muscular calf. Depicted larger than life and in such frenetic surrounds, the crustacean resides within the image at once as a familiar and a monstrous thing: a reminder that even the real inhabitants of the watery deep were perturbing enough to rouse the imagination. Within the realm of the anonymous triptych, the two trumpet shells play an equally ambiguous role. The upturned shell in the lower right is eerily echoed by the eggshell depicted in the nearby wing, from which a fleshy monster has just broken free. The shells lie still for now, though perhaps not for long, and their restless stillness is in part what makes them so arresting.

At the same time, the shells stand out among the specimens within the triptych because they are represented with the greatest truth to nature, even more so than the lobster in du



Hameel's engraving. So carefully delineated are their forms that both can be identified as depictions of *Charonia lampas*, a species of large trumpet nonnative to the Low Countries. By representing the same type from two different angles, the artist amplifies the shells' dimensionality and presence, as if inviting us to imagine turning them over in our hands, or lifting one to our lips and letting loose its droning sound. The doubling also signals that the shells, however singular they appear within the space of the picture, exist as multiples in the outside world. Modern archeological excavation of a fifteenth-century site along the coast of Belgium uncovered a cache of shells from this very species, which were most likely imported to the region from the West African coast and via trade with Portugal.⁵ The find attests that well before the seventeenth century, when the Dutch East and West India Companies were navigating the globe, shells were already among the cargo of ships like those present in the painting's background riverscape. The two trumpet shells might thus be taken to embody both the perils and the prospects of seeking distant shores, and to frame Christopher's storied journey of conversion as a simultaneous journey of discovery. Their exoskeletal forms—as ingenious as any monster of human imagining—are curiosities of nature that have been carried across the seas and repossessed within the space of a European painting to become curiosities in yet another sense: objects that provoke in us a desire to understand them.

FIG. 36. Alart du Hameel, *St. Christopher*, c. 1478–1506. Engraving, 19.9 × 33.6 cm. British Museum, London [1910,0409.6].

So what are these shells really doing on the shoreline of this triptych's central panel, within an image meant first and foremost to serve in the contemplation of Christopher and his saintly companions? Too vibrant to be treated as mere specimens, too palpable to be dismissed as mere fantasies, they might seem to embody the paradox associated with the genre of painting called "still life" or "dead nature" (*natura morta*, *nature morte*, etc.), which came to be known as such only in the mid-seventeenth century. What we would now refer to as still life—namely, tableaus of flowers, foodstuffs, and other objects both natural and human-made—are often found within Renaissance paintings like our triptych that were created prior to the genre's full-fledged emergence, most often in the margins of figural compositions such as depictions of saints, portraits, and market scenes.⁶

To take the shells in the triptych as examples of proto-still life is to take seriously the contradictions of the genre's name. Seventeenth-century writers like the art theorist Joachim von Sandrart employed "still life" not only in reference to the representation of subjects both living and dead but also as a way to describe how artists *still* the life of those subjects with the pictorial realm.⁷ In other words, the term "still life" refers less to the subjects themselves than to what their representation achieves: the demonstration of painting's ability to hold nature in an artificial state of suspension by endowing its subjects with a restive vitality at once seductive and strange. If the attention lavished on the two shells at Christopher's feet seems to give them semiautonomous status within the composition, one might argue that they are so placed to make this very point. It is as if they are precociously poised to be picked up and carried off from one pictorial world into another.

That said, the painting's anonymous inventor was surely oblivious to presaging an as-yet-nonexistent genre. Instead, the triptych is among many devotional images produced in the sixteenth-century Netherlands that pushed the boundaries of its *own* genre beyond the iconic, which challenged viewers to think through the ways in which divine, natural, and human histories are all inextricably entangled.⁸ The trumpet shells participate in this call to contemplative action, compelling us to make sense of their simultaneous status as eerie life-forms, exotic specimens, and signifiers of the parallel between the saint's spiritual journey and the viewer's own. They are integral to the design and experience of the triptych as a whole. Rather than treating the two shells as part of a precocious "still life"—rather than naturalizing them within a now-accepted pictorial category—I want to consider instead what happens when we take these uncanny specimens for what they are: unruly examples of "shell life" in the history of early modern painting.

By thinking with the concept of "shell life," my aim in this chapter is not to resolve the complexities of the individual works that I discuss below but instead to draw out some of the potential associations that shells inspire within and across them. Although several of the works in question have been designated shell still-life paintings in past scholarship, attempts to interpret them within that genre do not address the peculiarities of shells in the realm of

two-dimensional representation as objects that resist binary categories—above all, as things neither wholly still nor altogether alive. Regardless of whether they are lingering on the sidelines or appear at the center of a composition, shells demand to be understood as more than another example of a still-life subject. From the shoreline of one picture to another, from motion to stillness and back again, shell life is by nature unconfined.

SHELL LIFE WITHIN STILL LIFE

Every shell implies movement, even when at rest. A vacated shell of a gastropod or bivalve was once a thing put in motion by the creature who lived within it, rode the waves, burrowed into sediment, or scoured the ocean floor. At the same time, a shell's very contours mark out the stages of its growth and the annals of its making.⁹ Still-life painting, in the constant dialectic that it poses between stillness and enlivenment, might be said to meet its match whenever a shell enters its domain. In one sense, a shell represented on a table appears wholly divorced from its natural environment, the context of its original function, or the history of its creation. Yet painters of still life were far from oblivious to shells as subjects with multiple lives.

Over the course of the seventeenth century, as still life became a productive arena of specialization, several early modern artists made their names as painters of flowers or sumptuous banquets. Within both of these subgenres, shells often make appearances. In banquet scenes, shells turn up in the form of elaborate drinking vessels such as nautilus cups, their natural forms made lustrous and ornate by means of human artifice (see fig. 1).¹⁰ In flower still-life paintings, shells are often found scattered in the foreground, competing with the blooms arranged beside them in the diversity of their colors and allure of their forms (see fig. 13, fig. 79). Like their costly floral counterparts, exotic shells became increasingly valued commodities and collectibles during this period. The impulse to represent them undoubtedly stemmed from their desirability as rare and intimate possessions, as well as from the growing fervor for their study among naturalists and nature-loving amateurs.¹¹ At the same time, market forces and natural-historical inquiry alone cannot account for what shells actually do within these paintings, let alone for how they differ—both as curiosities and as collectibles—from the other objects depicted around them.

An ingenious painting by the Flemish artist Clara Peeters, signed and dated 1612, already suggests that the early innovators of the still-life genre were awake to the unique potential of shells as subjects (fig. 37).¹² Peeters presents us with a medley of surfaces and shapes: an earthenware vase holding a delicate bouquet, two glistening gilt goblets, stacks of coin, a linked chain, a shallow porcelain bowl with an almost opalescent sheen, and a cluster of four shells.¹³ Displayed so as to reveal their apertures, these small univalves together rival the craftsmanship and variety of all the other objects in the composition. They are matte and shiny, colored and textured, rounded and filigreed—masterful demonstrations of nature's handiwork.



By aligning the gastropods with the coins on the foreground ledge, Peeters signals that these nature-made things are equal in value to human-made currency. Both might be picked up, passed between hands, and circulated beyond the space of the painting. More provocatively still, Peeters positions the shells along a vertical axis with the convexities of the rightmost goblet, in which we see her likeness reflected many times over. The discovery of Peeters's self-portraits heightens our awareness of the tension between what is outside and what is inside the picture, an awareness that extends to the specimens below; in counterpart to the bulbous forms on the goblet, the shells have all been arranged with their concavities facing toward us. It is as if Peeters were asking: Is there anything more difficult to paint than a shell? As she too faces toward us, holding her palette and brush, the singularity of the shells reflects her own singular abilities as an artist.¹⁴

Peeter's near contemporary Balthasar van der Ast was among the first still-life painters in the Netherlands to devote special attention to shells, and his compositions reveal an awareness of their peculiar vitality. A still life now in the Rijksmuseum, painted around 1620, might be taken as an exercise in exploring the distinction between the representation of shells and that of other natural subjects within a single compositional frame (fig. 38).¹⁵ Van der Ast's painting abounds in suspense and suspended life. The fruit in the foreground left is yet green, a sign of how recently it was plucked from the tree. The flowers arranged in the porcelain vase remain in full bloom, even despite the spiders that have spun their webs beneath the dark purple fritillaries on the right side of the bouquet. Yet the longer one looks, the more peril one sees: insects everywhere hang, perch, and lurk in wait to devour the bounty on display.¹⁶ Only the three shells on the edge of the table share with the Wan-li vase and plate an immunity to the inevitable fate of the nearby tulips, carnations, and fruits. Like the porcelain itself, they are delicate and intricate yet durable creations, which will remain after the insects have moved on and the surrounding specimens have perished or faded. But still and inanimate they are not. The rustle of the tablecloth beneath the turban shell (*Turbo chrysostomus*) in the foreground directs our eye to the creature emerging from its interior: a hermit crab clawing its way into the world of the living and out of the depths of the picture. Van der Ast shows us, quite literally, that there is something creepy about shells within the not-so-still domain of *natura morta*. The crab emerges from the shell—from the dead space of its interior—to actively disrupt the stilled world that surrounds it.

The shell life within van der Ast's composition refutes any notion that still-life painting is reducible to a moralizing reflection on the vanity of earthly things, even if moral lessons were sometimes attached to the covetous desire for costly flowers and shells in the emblematic literature of the artist's Dutch contemporaries (see fig. 2).¹⁷ The shells in the painting embody resurgence rather than evanescence, and they speak to the playful tactics of the artist himself. Technical examination has even revealed that van der Ast did not plan the turban shell in advance but instead added it after the tablecloth had already been painted.¹⁸

FIG. 37. Clara Peeters. *Still Life with Flowers, Goblets, and Shells*, 1612. Oil on panel, 73 × 62 cm. Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe [2222].





FIG. 38. Balthasar van der Ast, *Still Life with Fruit and Flowers*, 1620-21. Oil on panel, 39.2 × 69.8 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam [SK-A-2152].

FIG. 39. Pieter van de Venne, *Still Life with Shells and Insects*, 1656. Oil on panel, 26 × 20.6 cm. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, General Membership Fund [39.671].

It is a crucial late addition, one that punctuates the temporal push-and-pull of the entire composition. Van der Ast's repeated return to this motif in later paintings suggests that he was fond of its effect.¹⁹ The turban shell, together with the adjacent magnificent cone (*Conus magnificus*) and episcopal miter (*Mitra mitra*), are all exotic shells from the Indo-Pacific region that complement the other nearby specimens in their shapes, colors, and surfaces. Van der Ast nonetheless goes beyond the presentation of shells as beautiful or valuable things to insist that their forms are inseparable from their function as vessels of creaturely life.

Van der Ast hailed from a family dynasty of still-life painters based in Middelburg, the main port city of the Dutch province of Zeeland, which had close ties to the sea as well as a vibrant community of artists, scholars, and naturalists. Alongside Middelburg's thriving garden culture, which has often been linked to the rise of flower still-life painting in the region, emerged a local circle of enthusiasts for the study and collecting of shells.²⁰ Among them was Philibert van Borssele, whose verses titled *The Beach* (first published in 1611) treat his subjects not only as works of divine artifice but also as strange and lively things. Toward the beginning of his poem, van Borssele urges the painter to rise to the challenge of the diverse colors observable in nature, calling for admiration of the hues found in flowers like the lily, hyacinth, and violet. "But ultimately," he concludes, "all these must concede to the beauty of shells, to which I have never seen a tulip that can compare."²¹ Van Borssele writes that in studying shells, "one sees wild watery pools come to life, here in ebb, there in flow," and describes the sun, moon, stars, and sea as the "master painters" (*meester-schilders*) of their artfully turned forms.²² He exhorts his readers to recognize their peculiar properties of reflection, luminescence, and geometry. Shells for van Borssele are not only visible manifestations of Mother Nature's skillful crafting; they are also creations that embody the elemental movements and transformations that are ever ongoing in the natural world.

A curious little picture by Pieter van de Venne, a Middelburg artist of the next generation, stages the especial liveliness of shells even more directly than the paintings of Balthasar van der Ast (fig. 39).²³ Signed and dated to 1656, van de Venne's composition presents eight subjects arranged in artificial symmetry on a plush burgundy surface. The contrast between the dusky background and the luminous conchs in the foreground dramatizes the properties that van Borssele praised in his poem. Not only do the shells seem to glow in the dark; van de Venne's loose brushstrokes and use of flickering highlights give the impression that the two flesh-colored conchs are stirring restlessly in place. At the same time, the contrast of light and dark almost obscures the black murex shell (*Murex radix*) that lurks between the two conchs, and which is positioned like a nighttime predator waiting to pounce. While the monstrous murex seems to menace us, the insect perching on the conch to the right, and the moth entering from the upper left, pose no danger to the life of the shells upon which they descend. The painting originally had a pendant, on a panel of near equal size, depicting a pile of cut blooms drooping from lack of water and threatened by a parallel butterfly flying down





from the upper corner.²⁴ The juxtaposition would have affirmed that no flower can compare to the eerie luster of shells, which surge with inner life even within the shadows of painting's stilled realm.²⁵

CADAVERS AND CAVITIES

Depictions of shell life within any genre of picture—still life or otherwise—are never only surface deep. Pliny the Elder, the great natural historian of antiquity, set the precedent when he mused that shells display to full effect “nature’s love of play,” and reveled in cataloguing their “many differences of color and shape.”²⁶ Whether flat, long, circular, humped, smooth, or grooved, shells presented Pliny with resemblances to other things, particularly to body parts and objects of human craftsmanship. He describes one shell adorned “with flowing locks or curls,” another that recalls “the teeth of a comb,” still others “corrugated like tiles or reticulated into lattice-work” or “curved so as to make a trumpet.”²⁷ It was surely no coincidence that the Netherlandish miniaturist Joris Hoefnagel, when commissioned to illuminate a stunning calligraphic manuscript for his patron Emperor Rudolf II in the 1590s, also recognized in shells an opportunity both for formal play and for appreciation of nature’s limitless powers of invention.²⁸ Alongside a circle of minute script at the bottom of one folio, Hoefnagel painted a striated mollusk poised impossibly on its tip like a spinning top, as if inviting us to think into the shell’s geometry and to recognize divine nature as the model for the artifices of the human hand (fig. 40).²⁹

Thinking into shells like mollusks, the interiors of which we cannot see, is a mode of inquiry that early modern artists like Hoefnagel often encouraged through compositional means. A shell within the realm of representation may register first as appealing surface and form, and, to those in the know, as a specimen with a particular geographical origin and set of distinctive traits. But as the twentieth-century French philosopher Gaston Bachelard wrote in his own ruminations on shells and the poetics of their inner spaces, if we really want to understand inhabitable things, we “must not be subject to the charms of external beauty.”³⁰ However much we admire a shell’s surface, so Bachelard suggests, we should appreciate in equal measure the mysteries of its depth.

A painting from 1611 by the Dutch artist Joachim Wtewael reverberates Bachelard’s words (fig. 41).³¹ An unusual rendition of its subject to say the least, Wtewael’s *Perseus and Andromeda* takes a popular myth and renders it strange. There is something absurd in the depiction of the hero Perseus about to slay the creature to whom Andromeda was a promised meal. It seems impossible that the stout Pegasus could fly on such pathetic wings, and the technicolor dragon shooting spouts of water from its nostrils hardly seems a formidable enemy. The pathos of the narrative is expressed instead through the tension and torque of Andromeda’s body and the insistent gesticulations of her hands, but even here, Wtewael resists a straightforward approach to history painting. This Andromeda might just as readily

FIG. 40. Georg Bocskay and Joris Hoefnagel, *Mira calligraphiae monumenta* (fol. 118r), 1561–62 and 1591–96. Tempera colors, watercolors, gold and silver, and ink on vellum, 16.6 × 12.4 cm. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles [Ms. 20].



be taken for Aphrodite, that goddess born from the sea who is the very figuration of desire.³² The positioning of Andromeda's left foot on an impressive *Strombus gigas*, a conch that hailed from Caribbean shores—and a prized collector's item in Wtewael's contemporary milieu—further suggests a connection to the amorous deity.³³ Its glistening pink interior, turned in our direction, exposes the erotic allure of the female body in a state of subjection. Both she and the shell seem to be precious objects for the taking.

Yet the carpet of shells at Andromeda's feet ultimately grounds the atmosphere of the mythological scene in a harsher reality. At the painting's threshold, closest to the level of the viewer, human and molluscan remains seem to be the refuse of the dragon's former conquests. For every shell that echoes the peachy lips of Andromeda's footrest, another lies shrouded in darkness and scattered alongside human bones. The analogy between exoskeleton and corpse is condensed in the juxtaposition of the *Strombus gigas* with the glistening skull beside Andromeda's right ankle, the deep cavities of its nose and eyes parallel to the conch's seductive interior. One may well discern a moral here in the link between death and desire, but the attention that Wtewael lavished on the shells in the foreground is in excess of what is required to convey that message. There seems little doubt that Wtewael studied these specimens from life given the detail and precision of their rendering. It is as if he has taken a conchological collection and released it back into the wild. The shells appear not just dead but far more deadly than the dragon beyond them, and any endeavor to gather them up again would be at the collector's peril.

Just over a decade prior to Wtewael's magnificent painting, Shakespeare put in words an experience similar to the encounter with the artist's necropolis of shells. In the first act of *King Richard III*, Clarence recounts—on the eve of his own murder—a stygian nightmare of shipwreck. Within the dream, Richard's doomed brother envisioned bodies devoured by fishes and condemned to watery graves, their remains taunted beneath the sea by stones and pearls:

Some lay in dead men's skulls, and in the holes
Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept—
As 'twere in scorn of eyes—reflecting gems
That wooed the slimy bottom of the deep
And mocked the dead bones that lay scattered by.³⁴

Richard's lines are evocative not just for their macabre imagery of the underwater realm, which Shakespeare employed in other plays as well, but still more for their almost cinematic quality.³⁵ The first three lines progressively zoom in, from skulls to their cavities to the pearls that have come to occupy their insides, while the last two lines pan out to the murky seabed. A similar movement results from Wtewael's blending of painterly modes. Standing before

FIG. 41. Joachim Wtewael, *Perseus and Andromeda*, 1611. Oil on canvas, 180 × 150 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris [R.F. 1982-51].

FIG. 42. Giovanni Battista Recco, *Still Life with Fish and Oysters*. Oil on canvas, 100 × 126 cm. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm [NM 759].

the painting, we might step back to admire the softness of Andromeda's arching body and the vanishing expanse of the landscape. But the impulse to survey those eerie and pearlescent bodies on the shoreline inevitably draws us closer again. The most uncanny word in Clarence's account of his dream is the verb "crept," which transforms the "reflecting gems" from inert objects into beings that glare back at us.³⁶ The heightened detail that Wtewael employs in his depiction of the shells has the same uncanny effect, endowing those lifeless things with a sense of latent power.³⁷ The shells plunge us into a spiral of reflection on their haunted depths, threatening to pull our attention away from the mythological drama unfolding around them.

A long literary tradition of associating the depths of the sea with the descent into Hades preceded both Wtewael's painting and Shakespeare's lines.³⁸ The Neapolitan poets of the early sixteenth century were already writing of the oceanic realm as a sinister site and stimulus for melancholic imaginings. Bernardino Martirano installed a shell-covered grotto at his villa of Leucopetra south of Naples where he invited fellow poets and scholars to gather in conversation, reflecting on the watery landscape that they so often took as inspiration for their writings.³⁹ Among the most influential verses to emerge from the literary circles of early modern Naples were the *Piscatorial Eclogues* of Jacopo Sannazaro, which were read and imitated across Europe long after his death, not least by the likes of John Milton.⁴⁰ The first of Sannazaro's eclogues, a dialogue between two fishermen named Lycidas and Mycon, is a lament on the loss of their mutual beloved Phyllis. Describing the funerary offerings that they have bestowed upon her tomb, Mycon declares to Phyllis's departed shade, "See, we are bringing you moss from the green-blue sea, we are bringing you purple conchs, and coral for which we scoured throughout the deep and scarcely wrenched from rocks in the abyss."⁴¹ Lycidas, who can no longer bear to walk the busy city streets, wanders the shoreline longing to become one with the sea and its tumultuous waves.⁴²

The offerings of Lycidas and Mycon, and the doleful mood of Sannazaro's poetry, share much with the shadowy still-life paintings of marine subjects that emerged in Naples during the subsequent century. Giovanni Battista Recco's *Still Life with Fish and Oysters*, signed and dated 1653, presents an odorous haul wrenched from the deep, as if a Neapolitan fisherman had just stepped ashore and unloaded his catch before us (fig. 42).⁴³ These shells may be comestibles, but they hardly appeal to the appetite. Occupying the upper corner is a tray of bivalves, garnished with mossy sponges, which echo in their colors and sheen the bodies of dead fishes splayed out beneath and around them. In the foreground, a pair of trumpet shells gleam with ocean spray. Their cavities—juxtaposed like two eyeholes in a skull—are shrouded in the same darkness that imbues the painting as a whole. Only on close inspection does the foremost shell reveal a creature lurking inside it, not unlike the hermit crab in the earlier still life of Balthasar van der Ast. The fishes' vacant eyes, along with the open bivalves that look like a pile of eyes and tongues, cast this emergent creature in a far less playful light. Recco's subjects themselves seem to mourn the loss of their underwater realm.





At the end of the seventeenth century, the virtuosic Dutch artist Adriaen Coorte explored the poetics of the vacant shell on a more intimate scale (fig. 43).⁴⁴ Five specimens appear on the solemn stone plinth that Coorte so often used to stage his pictures, their presence amplified by the darkness that surrounds them. The painting is so small, and so delicate in its execution on paper pasted to panel, that the picture seems as rarified as its subjects. But there is something haunting about the composition that mingles with the pleasure to be taken in admiring the diversity in size, shape, texture, and color of the shells that Coorte selected for display. With the exception of the small black shell (*Euspira nitida*) set apart on the left, the specimens seem to merge together and form the mask of a creature not quite human. As in Recco's painting, here too the paired hollows of the spiny snail shell (*Chicoreus sauli*) and of the magpie shell (*Cittarium pica*) just behind it join together to form the mask's eyeless sockets, while the lip of the latter suggests a drooping ear and the slender auger shell (*Terebra subulata*) in the foreground a contorted nose. Coorte, as did Wtewael before him, denies the collector's inclination to treat each shell as a single precious thing. The composite head without eyes, once observed, cannot be unseen. Yet like a skull at the slimy bottom of the deep, the shells' inner depths are penetrable only through the workings of the imagination. Coorte presents us the most paradoxical kind of picture, one that simultaneously entices and scorns our desire to see within.

FIG. 43. Adriaen Coorte, *Shells on a Stone Plinth*, 1698. Oil on paper, pasted to panel, 29 × 22.5 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam [SK-C-1761].

ARTIFACTS OF DEEP TIME

Every evacuated shell is in some sense a fragment of a former life, an architectural remnant that has outlived its architect. This understanding of shells refracts onto the ways that they were treated within early modern collections. Once stored within boxes and drawers, shells must await reactivation by human hands. Part of the pleasure that a collector might derive from taking a shell out of its drawer is the sense of revival that comes with allowing its surface to catch the light, caressing its form, and placing it in conversation with other specimens. Grand edifices on miniature scale, shells offer an invitation to dwell upon natural histories that run parallel to our own.

The collecting and appreciation of shells in the seventeenth century coincided with the antiquarian interest in other precious small-scale objects such as Renaissance medals, ancient coins, gems, and cameos. The English naturalist Robert Hooke turned this affinity into a metaphor when he described a cache of fossilized shells uncovered during an excavation in central London as “the medals, urnes, or monuments of nature,” proclaiming their antiquity far greater than any monuments of human making.⁴⁵ Comparing Hendrik Goltzius's portrait of the shell collector Jan Govertsz van der Aar from 1603 with a contemporary etched portrait of the Antwerp antiquarian and shell collector Abraham Gorlaeus shows that shells and coins alike were studied in the same way: through touch and sustained

FIG. 44. Jacques de Gheyn II,
Portrait of Abraham
Gorlaeus at Age 52, 1601.
Engraving, 16.8 × 10.9 cm.
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
[RP-P-OB-9952].



contemplation (see fig. 12; fig. 44).⁴⁶ As van der Aar fondles his prized natural artifacts acquired from distant shores, Gorlaeus points to the venerable artifacts from ancient Greece and Rome that he collected on his travels—objects that he professed a perpetual desire “to examine closely and to feel by hand.”⁴⁷ Cabinets like the one behind Gorlaeus were used in the seventeenth century to house both shells and small antiquities, each drawer opening to reveal a different material history.

This antiquarian bent underlies the representations of shell life by the painter Jacques Linard, who was active in seventeenth-century Paris, and whose position as an official artist of the royal court afforded him access to the elite collections of the period.⁴⁸ Shell collecting was ascendant in this milieu at the time, not least through the endeavors of Gaston of Orléans, the eldest brother of King Louis XIII. Gaston amassed an enormous collection of *naturalia* that included over one thousand shells; many were inventoried upon his death in boxes custom-designed to house them.⁴⁹ He also assembled a vast cabinet of human-made curiosities—particularly antique coins, medals, and engraved gems—that was no less comprehensive in scope.⁵⁰ Gaston’s tandem interest in natural history and numismatics had its roots even earlier in sixteenth-century France, from the antiquities collection of King François I to the writings of the naturalist, antiquarian, and adventurer Pierre Belon, who published one of the first illustrated treatises devoted to marine life.⁵¹ Belon’s close



FIG. 45. Bernard Palissy (attributed to), *Oval Basin with Life Casts of Reptiles and Sea Creatures*, c. 1550. Lead-glazed earthenware, 47.9 × 36.8 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles [88.DE.63].

contemporary and fellow polymath Bernard Palissy produced ceramic plates and vessels adorned with casts of reptiles, fishes, crustaceans, plants, and shells that seem to creep uncannily across their surfaces; he also expounded upon the singular artifice of shells and other natural specimens in his writings (fig. 45).⁵² On the subject of molluscan architecture, Palissy is unequivocal. “Do you think,” he writes, “that the little concavities and ribs of these shells were made only for ornament and beauty? No, not at all. These are designed to advantage, to augment the strength of these fortresses, as do flying buttresses positioned against a wall as reinforcement.”⁵³ In describing the architecture of shells, Palissy makes analogy to nothing less than the great Gothic cathedrals of his native land and, in so doing, celebrates the union of form and function in their design.

The natural fortresses that Palissy describes are fully on view in Linard’s most popular composition, one that was frequently copied, and which exemplifies his witty approach to animating the shell as both collector’s object and historical subject (fig. 46).⁵⁴ At center is a simple wooden box that appears as a motif in many of Linard’s pictures, its facture evident from the visible nail and seams where the strips of wood have joined together. Linard seems to mock the box’s function as container by piling shells and a gleaming branch of coral atop its lid, as well as positioning in the foreground numerous specimens far too large to fit within it. On the one hand, the angle of the table pushes the shells forward in space, as if they are defensive structures barring our access to the picture itself. On the other hand, the manner in which the shells are spaced out in neat rows implies the recent presence of a collector who

1640

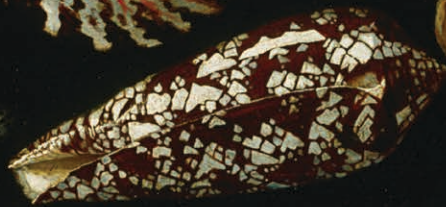
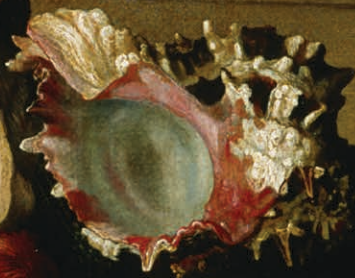




FIG. 46. Jacques Linard.
*Still Life with Shells and
Coral*, 1640. Oil on canvas,
53.5 × 62.2 cm. Musée
des Beaux-Arts, Montreal
[1999.149].

has taken them out one by one and placed them down upon the table. Against the wall in the background left, a spider conch (*Lambis chiragra chiragra*) hangs from a blue thread attached to a nail just below where Linard inscribed the picture's date. We sense not only the invisible hand of the collector at work but also the hand of the artist who contrived this display. The spider conch embodies the tension of the entire painting, which oscillates between presenting the shells as beautiful objects and enlivening them as lively subjects. Despite being tethered in place—despite the fact that we know the shell no longer has a mollusk within it—the conch still looks as though it might at any moment break free and creep down the wall.

Linard's selection of shells is itself remarkable in scope, representing a diversity of geographical origins that may well have been intentional, and which is evident in the front row alone. The vibrant spiny oyster (*Spondylus princeps*) in the lower left corner hails from the west coast of South America. The striped king helmet (*Cassis tuberosa*) in the opposite corner is found in the eastern Atlantic, while the lettered cone (*Conus litteratus*) and princely cone (*Conus aulicus*) between them are among the venomous snails of the Indo-Pacific. Spanning from east to west, the shells chart a history of travel and conquest, indexing the expansion of global trade across the seventeenth century. In this respect, the painting's composition encourages the recognition of each shell as an individual entity within a larger oceanic kingdom, appealing to the imagined collector who aspires to achieve a comprehensive assemblage of specimens from every corner of the known world.

At the same time, Linard asks the knowing viewer to reflect on the represented shells in both space and time, to think beyond longitude and latitude to the question of longevity. Hovering in the background is an ancient funerary altar with a libation vessel depicted in relief on its receding side and a prominent crack that marks its age. The altar is surmounted by a marbled turban shell (*Turbo marmoratus*) with its shadowed mouth opened toward us; one can almost hear the sounds of ancient rites resonating from within its inner chamber. By placing the shell atop this stone structure, Linard may have been appealing to the antiquarian knowledge of his courtly patrons. Shells in Greek antiquity were often presented as votive offerings to the goddess Aphrodite-Arsinoe—protectress of seafarers—a practice documented not least through a famous epigram by the Greek author Callimachus.⁵⁵ The nautilus shell in the poem addresses the reader in the first person, reminiscing about its former life when it rode the open seas with wind in its sails. Now that it has been transformed into a “plaything” (*παίγνιον*) of the gods, the nautilus declares itself lifeless (*ἄπνοος*)—literally “without breath” or “without wind”—even as its capacity to speak belies that very claim.⁵⁶ The tension between the shell's liveliness and lifelessness is central to the playfulness of the poem as a whole.

Much like the nautilus in Callimachus's epigram, the shells in Linard's painting are effectively lifeless, yet the artist's emphasis on their electric hues, vibrating patterns, and curious structures brings them to life for the delectation of our senses and the stimulation of our minds. As we study the tableau before us, Linard asks us to remember that these wondrous

and exotic possessions from faraway places are also the structural remains of an underwater world. Like the buttresses of a Gothic cathedral, the shells uphold the history of their creators. They are survivors of the vagaries of time. While an empty shell might readily be understood to evoke the transience of earthly things, Linard makes the case for the opposite view. The collector, like the antiquarian with his ancient coins and gems, could take up the study of shells as a way of animating the past in the present. Linard's painting is not a mere surrogate collection. It is also an image about the need to keep the strangeness of shells alive, to recover their origins, and to look beyond their beauty to the architecture of their endurance. Shells, so the artist shows us, are monuments of nature indeed.

WHAT A SHELL KNOWS

In a 1937 essay, the French poet Paul Valéry reflected on what humankind can and cannot perceive about a shell's origins and making. Rather than coming to a definitive conclusion, the essay suggests that such reflections are always open-ended. The shell, writes Valéry, "has served me, suggesting by turns what I am, what I know, and what I do not know."⁵⁷ To recognize the perpetual mobility of shell life across place, time, and pictorial genre is to heed Valéry's words. In their manifold artifice and complex histories, shells are too restless to be held in place by symbolic meanings or fixed interpretations. They are, in art as in nature, the ultimate curiosities.

An anonymous painting from the mid-seventeenth century affirms the point and offers a fitting place to conclude (fig. 47).⁵⁸ This large canvas charts the movement of shells from the sites of their creation in the background to the spaces of their possession in the foreground, a movement punctuated by the lone nautilus shell at foreground center that has already been altered by human intervention. The signature helmet sculpted into its face, and pointing directly toward us, associates the nautilus with the work of the Bellekin family, master shell carvers active in the later seventeenth-century Netherlands (fig. 48). At the same time, the inclusion of the parrot and a cluster of dead exotic birds recalls the advice of the Dutch art theorist Karel van Mander, who proclaimed that "the speaking parrot, birds, and shells offer examples of how to unite colors with one another," and exhorted the young artist to acknowledge Nature herself as the mother of painting.⁵⁹ In this light, the carved nautilus—dwarfed by the enormous conchs and glistening turban shells, overwhelmed by the colors and forms scattered around it—seems little more than a trifle. What the painter can depict, what the sculptor can carve, or what the architect can build is always lesser than nature. Still life, in the end, proves a profoundly inadequate category for describing the inherent unstillness that defines the representation of any shell within a picture. In a century of expanding trade, travel, and knowledge, this anonymous artist saw what Valéry would see centuries later: a reminder that however much we might strive to think into shells, there are limits to how deep we can get.





FIG. 47. Anonymous (Flemish?), *Scene of Shells and Birds*, c. 1640-50. Oil on canvas, 88.5 × 156 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Gemäldegalerie [9675].

FIG. 48. Jan Bellekin, *Carved Nautilus (The Sloane Nautilus)*, late seventeenth century. Natural History Museum, London.

38. *Ibid.*, 13.
39. Grasskamp, *Objects in Frames*.
40. Manning Stevens, "New World Contacts."
41. Scot, *The discoverie of witchcraft*, 8.
42. See, for example, Albrecht Dürer, *Witch Riding Backwards on a Goat*, engraving, 1501–2. Hans Baldung (called Hans Baldung Grien), *The Witches*, chiaroscuro woodcut in two blocks, printed in gray and black, 1510.
43. For a representation of an octopus-like creature in a nautilus shell, see Aldrovandi, *De reliquis animalibus*, 260; for the image of a large foreign sea snail opposite depictions of local specimens, see Aldrovandi, *De reliquis animalibus*, 390f. The motif is copied in later treatises such as Buonanni, *Ricreatione dell' occhio*, fig. 32.
44. Albertinus, *Der Welt Tummel- und Schaw-Platz*, cited from Grasskamp, "Spirals and Shells," 152ff.
45. Grasskamp, *Objects in Frames*, 121–23.
46. Mason, *Deconstructing America*, 173.
47. Scholars hold different opinions on the letters' authorship, the authenticity of their contents, and other aspects of their interpretation. See, for example, Roukema, "The Mythical 'First Voyage.'"
48. Daly and Rengel, *Greek and Roman Mythology*, 59.
49. For period references to poetic associations between female skin and white ivory, see Vickers, "Diana Described," 266; Yandell, "Iconography and Iconoclasm," 549. The German poet Christian Hoffmann von Hoffmannswaldau's "Description of Immaculate Beauty" (*Beschreibung vollkommener Schönheit*) published in 1670 employs the metaphor of alabaster to refer to the skin of a dangerously seductive woman.
50. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 13.791–804.
51. Grasskamp, "Spirals and Shells," 151.
52. Pedersen, *Mermaids*, 27.
53. Edward Weston, "Diary Entry, July 7, 1927," in Weston, *The Daybooks of Edward Weston*, 2:32.
54. For a historical overview on sexual aspects of the symbolism of shells, see Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, 125–50.
55. Burke, "Nakedness and Other Peoples."

CHAPTER 3.
SHELL LIFE, OR
THE UNSTILL LIFE OF SHELLS

In writing this chapter, I am grateful for assistance, advice, comments, and inspiration from Jim Clifton, Ned Cooke, Milette Gaifman, Denise Gill, Rafeeq Hasan, Pamela Lee, Rhodri Lewis, Renata Nagy, Verity Platt, and Carolyn Yerkes. I also thank my fellow authors, and especially Hanneke Grootenboer. All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own.

1. See Mund et al., *The Mayer van den Bergh Museum*, 378–401.
2. For further representations of the saint tormented by sea monsters and marine creatures, dating back to as early as the thirteenth century, see Benker, *Christophorus*, 106–9. See also Stahl, *Die Legende*, passim.
3. The first to associate this triptych with Bosch's legacy was Unverfehrt, *Hieronymus Bosch*, 192, 266, no. 63. On Bosch's inventive strategies in the use of nature study, see also Koerner, "Impossible Objects."
4. Bass and Wyckoff, *Beyond Bosch*, 96–101, no. 5, and Pokorny, "Alart du Hameel," 269.
5. Pieters et al., "Een 15de-eeuwse sector," 227, 229, fig. 17. An exotic trumpet shell also appears in another closely contemporary Netherlandish painting, Jan Gossart's so-called *Neptune and Amphitrite* of 1516 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. 648), where it is worn by the sea god as a precarious codpiece. Although identified in recent literature as a *Charonia tritonis* (Ainsworth, *Jan Gossart's Renaissance*, 220), this shell is more likely a *Charonia lampas* given its stocky and knobbed form.
6. See most recently Ekserdjian, *Still Life*, and also Kemperdick and Sander, "The Still Life."
7. Take Sandrart's reference to the still-life painter Cornelis de Heem, whom he describes as a specialist in representing "all sorts of still-standing natural things" (*allerley stillstehende Natürlichkeiten*). See Von Sandrart, *Teutsche Academie*, CCXVIII. See further Hochstrasser, "Stil-staende dingen," 108–9; Fehrenbach, "Cut Flowers," 584–85; Chong, "Contained under the Name"; and Woodall, "Laying the Table," esp. 983–84.
8. Ribouillault, "Seeing Christ, Reading Nature," esp. 534–40, for an example of how shells signify within another innovative devotional painting of the period: Jan Swart van Groningen's *Christ in a Landscape* (c. 1530–40) in the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (inv. no. 1996.15).
9. For an excellent account of shell formation, see Vermeij, *A Natural History*.
10. On shell vessels, see further chapter 2 of this book.
11. See Goldgar, *Tulipmania*, esp. 62–130; Leonhard, "Shell Collecting"; Bass, "Florilegium"; and the introduction to this book.
12. Vergara, *The Art of Clara Peeters*, 106–9, no. 11, with prior literature.
13. Identified (from left to right) as a *Hexaplex rosarium*, *Harpa harpa*, *Harpa doris*, and *Cittarium pica*. See *ibid.*, 108.
14. See Brusati, "Stilled Lives," esp. 172–74. For compelling discussion of still-life painting as a site of "ungendered imaginary" for early modern women artists, see also Garrard, "The Not-So-Still Lives," esp. 73.
15. Ayooghi, Böhmer, and Trümper, *Die Stilleben*, 117–19, no. 8.
16. On the destructive role of insects in early modern still life, see further Berger, *Caterpillars*, passim.
17. Pace Segal, "Shell Still Lives," 88, and passim. See further the introduction to this book.
18. See discussion of the painting's technical examination in Wallert, *Still Lifes*, 52–55, no. 4, esp. 53–54, fig. 1.
19. See the examples illustrated in Ayooghi, Böhmer, and Trümper, *Die Stilleben*, 132–36, nos. 13–14, 143–45, no. 17, and 164–65, no. 24.
20. Zuidervaart, "'Scientia' in Middelburg," esp. 57–59.
21. Van Borsselen, *Strande*, A5r: "Maer moeten al te gaer der Schelpen schoonheydt wijcken, / Geen Tulipa sagh mo'yt hier by te vergelijken." For further discussion of this passage, see also Prosperetti, "'Conchas legere,'" 401–2; Goldgar, *Tulipmania*, 81–82; and Dance, *A History of Shell Collecting*, 11.
22. Van Borsselen, *Strande*, A5r: "op dese sietmen leven / De woeste water-plas, hier d'ebbe, daer den vloed / D'wijn Son, Maen, Sterr' end Zee de Schelpen groeyen doet."
23. Keyes et al., *Masters of Dutch Painting*, 238–39, no. 99, with additional literature.
24. *Ibid.*, 239, fig. 2, and n5. The current location of this pendant is unknown.
25. It is interesting to note that shells were associated with resuscitation and vitality in other cultures as well—in particular, among the indigenous inhabitants of North America. See

- Hamell, "Trading in Metaphors," esp. 6, with thanks to Ruth Phillips for this reference.
26. Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* 9.52: "concharum genera, in quibus magna ludentis naturae varietas: tot colorum differentiae, tot figurae." Translation adapted from Pliny, *Natural History*, 231–33.
 27. *Ibid.*, 9.52: "iam distinctione virgulata, crinita, crispa, canaliculata, pectinatim divisa, imbricatim undata, cancellatim reticulata, in obliquum, in rectum expansa, densata, porrecta, sinuata; brevi nodo ligatis, toto latere conexas, ad plausum apertis, ad bucinam recurvis."
 28. See Hendrix and Vignau-Wilberg, *Mira Calligraphiae Monumenta*, passim, and Vignau-Wilberg, *Joris and Jacob Hoefnagel*, 82–91, no. A4.
 29. J. Paul Getty Museum, MS 20 (86.MV.527), fol. 118r. For further discussion of Hoefnagel's understanding of nature, see Bass, *Insect Artifice*.
 30. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 126.
 31. See Clifton et al., *Pleasure and Piety*, 140–42, no. 30, with prior literature.
 32. As compellingly observed in Woodall, "Wtewael's *Perseus and Andromeda*," esp. 41–44.
 33. For identification of the other shells in the painting, see Le Chanu, *Joachim Wtewael*, 30–31.
 34. Shakespeare, *Richard III*, 1.2.474–82.
 35. See, for example, Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1.2.560–67.
 36. On Shakespeare's larger interest in visual effects and deceptions of the eye, see Elan, *Shakespeare's Pictures*, esp. 260–64. On the playwright's use of shell imagery, see also Kelley, "Shells."
 37. I borrow the phrase "uncanny effect" from Freud, *The Uncanny*, esp. 150.
 38. See Brooks, "Richard III."
 39. Martirano describes the grotto in his own verses as "fatta è sol di cocchiglie / di color bianco, nero, giallo e misco." His friend and fellow poet Luigi Tansillo also described the grotto in verses dedicated to the delights of Leucopetra. See Martirano, *Il pianto*, 76; Tansillo, *Leggola*, 257 ("Stanza a Bernardino Martirano"); and also Milburn, *Luigi Tansillo*, 55–57. For further discussion of shell grottoes, see chapter 5 of this volume.
 40. See Smith, "The Genre and Critical Reception." See also Brown, "Underworld Sailors," passim, and Piepho, "Phineas Fletcher."
 41. Sannazaro, *Eclogae*, I: 38–41: "En tibi caerulei muscum aequoris, en tibi conchas / purpureas, nec non toto quaesita profundo, / et vix ex imis evulsa corallia saxis / adferimus." Text and translation from Sannazaro, *Latin Poetry*, 104–6.
 42. Sannazaro, *Eclogae*, I: 72–75: "Nunc iuvat immensi fines lustrare profundi, / perque procellosas errare licentius undas / Tritonum immistum turbis, scopulosaque cete / inter et informes horrenti corpore phocas." Sannazaro, *Latin Poetry*, 108.
 43. Eliasson et al., *Italian Paintings*, 187–88, no. 71.
 44. For a particularly penetrating discussion of this painting, see Grootenboer, "Sublime Still Life," esp. 20, including illustrations of Coorte's other paintings of shells. See also Buvelot, *The Still Lives*, 48–54.
 45. Hooke, *Lectures and Discourses*, 335. See also Rossi, *The Dark Abyss of Time*, 15–16. For a parallel connection between antiquarianism and the investigation of fossilized shells in seventeenth-century Italy, see Findlen, "Agostino Scilla," esp. 131–32.
 46. See esp. Langereis, "De verzameling," and also chapter 1 of this book.
 47. Gorlaeus, *Dactyliotheica*, unpaginated front matter (from Gorlaeus's dedicatory letter to the Leiden doctor and botanist Aelius Everhardus Vorstius): "Non facile dixerim quam inter reliqua mihi fuerit volupe uberrimam illam rerum antiquarum apud te conflugem summo cum animi mei stupore intueri, singulaque minutim perlustrare, ac digitis contrectare."
 48. On Linard and his career, see esp. Szanto, "Pour Jacques Linard." See also Nusbaumer, *Jacques Linard*, 13–16; Coatalem et al., *La nature morte*, 240–58; Salvi, *D'après nature*, 21–27; and Rosenberg, "Jacques Linard."
 49. Schnapper, *Le géant*, esp. 189–90.
 50. See Wellington, *Antiquarianism*, esp. 80–81; Kenny, *The Uses of Curiosity*, esp. 224–25; and on the relation between the collecting of shells and antiquities in eighteenth-century France, see also Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities*, 121–38.
 51. Belon, *L'histoire naturelle*.
 52. For an overview of Palissy's work and practice, see Amico, *Bernard Palissy*, and Shell, "Casting Life." See also Newman, *Promethean Ambitions*, 153, 156–57, for Palissy's particular interest in shells and the origins of fossils.
 53. Palissy, *Recepte veritable*, 213: "Penses-tu que ces petites concavitez et nervures, qui sont desdites coquilles, soyent faites seulement par ornement, et beauté? Non, non: il y a quelque chose d'avantage: cela augmente en telle sorte la force de ladite forteresse, comme feroient certains arbotans appuyez contre une muraille, pour la consolider."
 54. Nusbaumer, *Jacques Linard*, 76, no. 23.
 55. Callimachus, *Epigrams* 6. See also Prescott, "Callimachus' Epigram," and Gutzwiller, "The Nautilus."
 56. I am especially grateful to Verity Platt for her assistance with this translation.
 57. Translation from Valéry, *Man and the Sea Shell*, 134. Originally published as Valéry, *L'homme et la coquille*.
 58. Nitze-Ertz, Kleinmann, and Brakensiek, *Das flämische Stilleben*, 106–9, no. 32, with prior literature.
 59. Van Mander, *Den grondt*, 1:248–49, fols. 45v–46r (2.11.8): "Exempel de bespraecte Papegaeyen, / Voghels, schelpen, en meer dinghen gheschapen, / Hoe alle verren malcander verknappen, / Dus Natuere, die ons alles maeckt vroeder, / is van het schilderen voester en moeder."

CHAPTER 4.

THINKING WITH SHELLS IN PETRONELLA OORTMAN'S DOLLHOUSE

1. The argument that dollhouses are female cabinets of curiosity is made by, among others, Pijzel-Dommisse, *Het Hollandse pronkpoppenhuis*, 13–18; and Broomhall and Spinks, "Imagining Domesticity."
2. Stewart, *On Longing*, 55.
3. Valéry, "Man and the Sea Shell," 117.
4. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, esp. chapters 5, 7, and 9.
5. Pijzel-Dommisse, *Het Hollandse pronkpoppenhuis*, esp. 247–347; Broomhall and Spinks, "Imagining Domesticity"; van Eeghen, "Het poppenhuis van Petronella Oortman," 113–17.
6. Few documents that give insight into the self-images of early modern Dutchwomen are extant. Broomhall and Spinks, "Imagining Domesticity," 122, suggest expanding Rudolf Dekker's