

***Koneprusia cf. dahmani*** Chatterton et al., 2006 (TH247)

*Koneprusia* → Odontopleurida → Odontopleurina → Odontopleuroidea → Odontopleuridae → Koneprusinae

**Provenance** : Morocco; "Foum Zguid" (more probably NW-slope of Jbel Gara el Zguilma)

**Formation** : Timrhanrhart Fm

**Age** : Lower Devonian, Upper Emsian

**Details** : Complete specimen, apparently prepped by my good friend Haddach (Mohamed El Afou), with whom I undertake visits to Moroccan sites since 2018. Tailored from out of the rock without any breaking of the stone through the exoskeleton (the way trilobites are usually found in the field), this piece is rightfully a pride prepping by Haddach. Considering the slightly off-symmetry way the spines are spread over the dorsal carapace, it must have taken him a lot of patience to bring out every protruding extremity. In fact, he was telling a curious tourist how, when he preps, he's usually only at it for an hour or so, then gets off to do something else altogether, before getting back to the prep at hand. There have been a couple of "accidents" nevertheless. In the photograph below, one may notice that the left genal spine (spine on the left side of the cephalon – see also left in the picture) was broken off and then glued back on (a perfectly acceptable modus operandi of completing an exoskeleton). The same seems, at least to me, also have happened with the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> axial thoracic spine. Otherwise however, the prep is near-perfect! That is...see further...

An additional nice touch, is the free-standing position in which the exoskeleton was prepped from the stone. (This is where "further" comes in) Looking at the anteriorly taken detail photos of the cephalon (the first one with a slightly oblique stance allowing a partial view on the thorax), it seems to me there's been a couple of "hits" : when the prepping pen touches the exoskeleton by mistake, it leaves a tiny white dot...something which the less honest salesmen of Moroccan extraction (not excluding dishonest Europeans, by all means) will cover up by applying a black cover-up paint (therefore, beware of all-too-glossy specimens when you're out to buy trilobites!). Haddach however, being a geologist (with a specialization in paleontology) himself (or so he tells), hates that kind of foolery, and much prefers leaving his mistakes obvious. I have to say however, that his prepping skills have much improved since I first met him...only a year and a half ago!...and this piece is certainly one of his best I saw to date. Providing the preservation was good enough (see further), the (slightly stalked) eyes might've come out a little better...but probably this type of trilobite was a first for Haddach too, as far as prepping goes. And...you know what they say : experience – and excellence – comes with practice...but also with a lot of patience, for sure!!!

Hah...yet another detail I remember from talking to Haddach on the day I bought this little marvel : turns out he at least finished the piece by sandblasting with talc powder. I'm not certain anymore whether he told me he'd done the whole prep that way...which would be weird, considering talc is a very soft material in comparison with the calcareous stone of the matrix in which the fossils are lodged. Ordinarily, one would use a material with a hardness in between that of the exoskeleton – which is a hard calcite – and that of the matrix. Of course, considering he's probably using an old-type of sand blaster (or a disused dentist sandblaster) on 8 atmosphere of pressure, the thing might work anyway. Us Europeans, we're blessed with more modern (and possibly more expensive) tools, which work at such low pressures as a mere 0.2 atm. At that low a pressure, even working with (fine-grained) iron will give excellent results indeed.

A little word about the piece's preservation (something Haddach could not help, nature being as nature does)...the exoskeleton suffered slightly from some kind of oxidation, a small vein of iron leaving that rust-coloured vein in the stone, which also regrettably went through part of the exoskeleton (see the two lateral photographs).

Additional note : I've seen *Koneprusia "dahmani"* with secondary small spines on the spines (mainly on the pygidium, but also on a fair amount of the posterior thoracic segment spines)...and in fact, you'll see 'em too...later on ☺...even coming from the same site. Currently (2023), they're all still put under the same species, but I wouldn't be surprised if some researcher claims a species differentiation in the near future!

**Bought on** : 26-27/11/2016

**Bought at** : Namur Expo

**Event** : Namineral 2016

