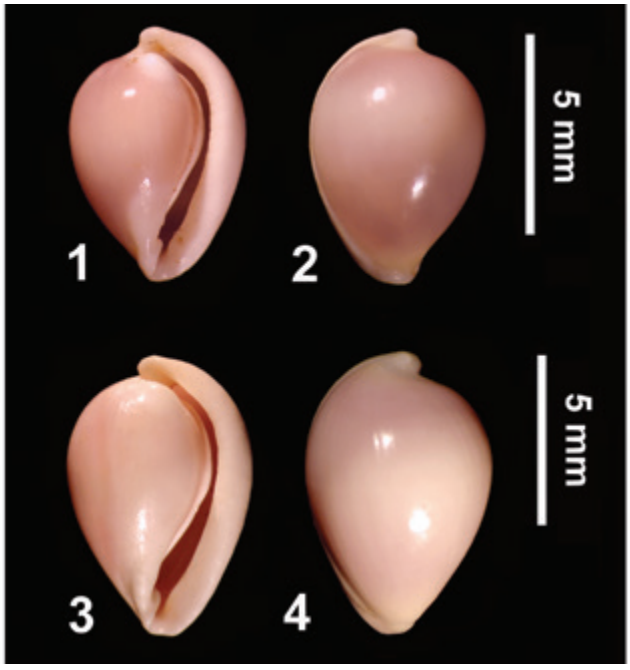
REPORT OF *GLOBOVULA TRIPOLIA* CATE, 1973 FROM WEST AFRICA: A GOOD SPECIES OR A SYNONYM OF *GLOBOVULA CAVANAGHI* (IREDALE, 1931)? (GASTROPODA, CAENOGASTROPODA, OVULIDAE)

The Ovulidae are a family of cypraeoidean caenogastropods associates with Anthozoan Cnidarians[1], given that most of the ovulid morphological features are related to their association with cnidarians. Six species (one Pediculariinae and five Ovulinae) are recognised with certainty as living in the Mediterranean sea. Two additional species are based on specimens of doubtful origin: *Prionovolva castanea* Cate, 1978 and *Globovula tripolia* Cate, 1973. The latter species was originally described on a single specimen, supposedly collected in the Gulf of Oran (north-west Algeria)[2] and was therefore included in the Mediterranean malacofauna[3]. Oliverio & Villa[4] reported two additional "Mediterranean" specimens (in the private collections of Mr Calò, Milan, Italy, and Mr Amati, Rome, Italy), but critically discussed the reliability of the collecting localities of these two shells and highlighted their similarity ("nearly identical") to the Australian *Globovula cavanaghi* (Iredale, 1931). Intriguingly, this species is restricted to the Australian coasts and there is no fossil record of members of this genus in Europe. Based on these considerations, Oliverio & Villa[4] suggested to reconsider the reliability of the type locality of *G. tripolia* too. We report herein a fourth record of a shell attributable to *G. tripolia*, with one specimen lacking soft parts (Fig. 1-2), dredged at a depth of 20-30 m offshore Dakar, Senegal (Atlantic Ocean). Also this shell strongly resembles the australian *G. cavanaghi* (Fig. 3-4), so we agree with Oliverio & Villa[4] that there are no diagnostic shell characters to separate these two species. It is worth mentioning that the similarity albeit "*only vaguely*" between the two taxa was indeed pointed out by Cate himself (1973, p. 22). Whether we are facing two sibling species or a single one (*G. cavanaghi*) with a very broad geographical distribution, due to its larval planktotrophic development[1], is still an open question. Anatomical and molecular studies could be very useful to solve this aspect. At the moment we conservatively kept the two species separate. With this record, the geographical distribution of the genus *Globovula* (whatever the species involved, *G. tripolia* or *G. cavanaghi*) is extended to the Atlantic Ocean, at the same time the Mediterranean records become more plausible.



Figs 1-2 *Globovula tripolia* Cate, 1973. 9.3 X 6.5 mm. Off Dakar, Senegal, 20-30 m depth. Collection F. Swinnen (Lommel, Belgium). **Figs 3-4** *Globovula cavanaghi* (Iredale, 1931). 12.5 X 8.3 mm; Port Hedland, western Australia, 5 m depth, dredged on coral. Collection Smriglio-Mariottini (Rome, Italy).

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[1]LILTVED WR 2000 *Cowries and their relatives of Southern Africa* 224 pp.
[2]CATE CN 1973 *The Veliger* (Supplement) **15**:1-116.
[3]SABELLI B, GIANNUZZI-SAVELLI R & BEDULLI D 1992 *Catalogo annotato dei Molluschi marini del Mediterraneo* 150 pp.
[4]OLIVERIO M & VILLA R 1995 *Argonauta* (Suppl.) **2**: 468/01-05.

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