



A new genus of Lanceoporidae (Bryozoa, Cheilostomata)

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Abstract

A new genus of cheilostomate bryozoan, *Stephanotheca* n. gen., is introduced for several species previously placed in the genus *Schizomavella*. This new genus differs from *Schizomavella* mainly in its ovicell closure, with a dimorphic orifice closed by the zooidal operculum. Nine species are placed in the genus *Stephanotheca* n. gen. *Stephanotheca barrosoi* n. sp., type species of the genus, was previously reported as *Schizomavella ambita*. *Stephanotheca ambita* is redescribed from the original Australian material, while *Stephanotheca watersi* n. sp., previously reported as *Schizomavella ambita* and *Schizomavella rudis*, is described from material collected in the western Mediterranean. *Stephanotheca victoriensis* n. sp. is described for other Australian specimens. The rest of the species are closely similar, so they are grouped in the *Stephanotheca ochracea* species group. *Stephanotheca ochracea*, redescribed from its holotype, is the only Atlantic species of the genus. A lectotype and paralectotypes are chosen for *Stephanotheca monoecensis*. *Stephanotheca triangulata* n. sp. and *Stephanotheca perforata* n. sp. were previously reported as *S. ochracea*. Finally, *Stephanotheca arrogata* is redescribed from the original material. The structure of the ovicell of *Stephanotheca*, its opening, with a dimorphic orifice closed by the zooidal operculum, and the presence of zooids with extremely enlarged orifices suggest that this genus belongs to the family Lanceoporidae, which must be transferred from the Schizoporelloidea to the Smittinoidea owing to its smittinoid ovicell.

Key words: Mediterranean, NE Atlantic, Australia, new species, ovicell closure, Schizoporelloidea, Smittinoidea, Bitecporidae, *Schizomavella*, *Calyptotheca*

Introduction

The genus *Schizomavella* Canu & Bassler, 1917 is currently one of the largest among cheilostome bryozoans as regards the number of species and their biogeographic distribution (see Bock & Hayward 2012a). *Lepralia auriculata* Hassall, 1842 was selected as type species and it was noted that the zooidal operculum closes the ovicell. However, Hayward & Thorpe (1995), in their redescription of the British species of *Schizomavella*, concluded that the original diagnosis of the genus was wrong, as the type and all other European species show ovicells that are not closed by the operculum. In spite of this contradiction, Hayward & Thorpe (1995) considered the genus to be valid and reasonably well-founded.

Nevertheless, other authors (e.g. Barroso 1935; Gautier 1962; Zabala 1986; Zabala & Maluquer 1988; López de la Cuadra 1991) had by this time reported that, in some Mediterranean species considered to belong to *Schizomavella*, the ovicell is indeed closed by the operculum and some other recent authors (in litt.) also have doubts about the ovicell closure in this genus. Therefore, it seems that in general most authors paid little attention to the ovicell closure and its importance for the classification of the different species of the genus *Schizomavella*.

In a previous paper (Reverter Gil & Fernández Pulpeiro 1995), we established the existence of a group of species within the genus *Schizomavella*, named ‘Group 2’, that would comprise *Schizomavella ochracea* (Hincks, 1862), *Schizomavella monoecensis* (Calvet, 1927) and *Schizomavella rudis* (Manzoni, 1869). This group was defined by exhibiting a central, round, porous area in the ovicell skeleton and by a wide and slightly defined sinus in the zooidal orifice.