

On the identity of *Graphicomassa albina* (Kiener, 1841) (Gastropoda: Columbelloidea)

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Columbellidae,
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ABSTRACT

Investigation of the types of *Columbella albina* Kiener, 1841 indicate that this species is a junior synonym of *Graphicomassa ligula* (Duclos, 1840), leaving the species typically identified as *Graphicomassa albina* (Kiener, 1841) without a name. The species is quite variable and has inspired a number of synonyms over the years; the oldest of these, *Colombella adioestina* Duclos, 1840, now becomes the basis for the valid name for this species. In this paper, *Graphicomassa ligula* and *G. adioestina* n. comb. are both discussed comparatively.

RÉSUMÉ

De l'identité de Graphicomassa albina (Kiener, 1841) (Gastropoda: Columbelloidea).

L'examen du matériel type de *Columbella albina* Kiener, 1841, indique que cette espèce nominale est un synonyme de *Graphicomassa ligula* (Duclos, 1840), ce qui soulève la question du nom sous lequel doit être désignée l'espèce appelée jusqu'ici *Graphicomassa albina* (Kiener, 1841). Celle-ci est très variable, ce qui a causé l'établissement de nombreux synonymes; le plus ancien, *Colombella adioestina* Duclos, 1840, devient maintenant le nom valide de ce taxon. Les deux espèces indo-pacifiques *Graphicomassa ligula* et *G. adioestina* n. comb. sont discutées et comparées.

MOTS CLÉS
Columbellidae,
Graphicomassa,
Indo-Pacifique,
synonymes nouveaux,
combinaisons nouvelles.

INTRODUCTION

Louis Charles Kiener (1841, date confirmed by Faber 2011) coined the name *Columbella albina* for some elongate, narrow, mostly white columbellids in the collections of the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris (MNHN). The species is commonly reported from the Indo-Pacific shallow marine columbellid fauna, and is currently classified (deMaintenon 2008, WoRMS 2015) as *Graphicomassa albina* (Kiener, 1841). Recent study of the types in the MNHN however, indicate that what is usually identified as *Graphicomassa albina* is not the same species as the type material, which are white-shelled individuals of *Graphicomassa ligula* (Duclos, 1840). Thus another name is needed for the species typically identified as *Graphicomassa albina*.

The genus *Graphicomassa* was proposed by Iredale (1929) for the species *Colombella ligula* Duclos, 1840, and, he suggested, “other species in the Queensland list”, without explicitly identifying any. The genus is currently considered (WoRMS editorial board 2015) to comprise three Indo-Pacific species: the type species *G. ligula* (Duclos, 1840), *G. albina* (Kiener, 1841), and *G. margarita* (Reeve, 1859). All three are similar conchologically in being tall spired, almost oliviform, thick-shelled and porcelainous, with a very weak columellar groove and columellar denticles, and all three are polymorphic with respect to shell color and pattern.

The two species currently known as *G. ligula* and *G. albina* are very similar; *G. ligula* is generally larger at maturity, and extremely variable in color and pattern. The seven syntypes of *G. ligula* in the MNHN are 15.75 to 18.55 mm in length and vary in color and pattern (Fig. 1A-F). Shells of the species typically identified as *G. albina* are usually 10 to 15 mm long, white or mostly white with some pattern, with shoulder nodules on the dorsum of the last whorl and spire nodules in adults, typically with a black anterior tip to the shell, and sometimes purple staining around the aperture edge. However, *G. albina* (Kiener) is based on two rather damaged syntypes, 14.85 and 16.3 mm long, white with three bands of brown marks, no dorsal shoulder nodules, and no black anterior tip (Fig. 1G, H). Both were damaged during growth as well and have slightly atypical growth after the damaged portion. One of the two (Fig. 1G) is a good match for Kiener's fig. 4 and his description (with the exception of a large hole in the shell), having three bands of chestnut spots, of which the anteriormost one is wider. The other has a relatively smaller body whorl and the spiral banding is less well developed, but can be seen on the penultimate whorl. The characteristics of these indicate that they are white specimens of *G. ligula* rather than what is usually identified as *G. albina*. That being the case, Kiener's *Columbella albina* n. syn must be considered a junior synonym of *Colombella ligula* Duclos, 1840.

Given that, a different name must be found for the species traditionally called *G. albina*, and there are many named species previously considered synonyms that could qualify. Of these, the oldest is *Colombella adiostina* Duclos, 1840. This name actually had priority over *C. albina* n. syn, being older, but the identity of the specimens was uncertain. This

probably occurred in part because Duclos neither described the species nor indicated a locality for it, and because the syntypes of this species have more densely patterned shells than is typical so have essentially gone unrecognized (Fig. 1I, J). They are however well within the scope of variation of this species.

TAXONOMY

Genus *Graphicomassa* Iredale, 1929

TYPE SPECIES. — *Colombella ligula* Duclos, 1840, by original designation.

Graphicomassa ligula (Duclos, 1840) (Figs 1A-H, 2A-C)

Columbella ligula Duclos, 1840: pl. 11, figs 11-16 [as *Colombella ligula*, an incorrect original spelling of *Columbella ligula*]. No description. Syntypes MNHN IM 2000-22709-22712, various localities (see below), examined.

Columbella lactea Duclos, 1840: pl. 1, figs 3-4 [as *Colombella lactea*, an incorrect original spelling of *Columbella lactea*]. No description. Syntype, MNHN IM 2000-6881, locality not specified, examined. N. syn., First Reviser's choice herein.

Columbella albina Kiener, 1841: 32-33, pl. 13 fig. 4. Syntypes, MNHN IM-2000-22742, locality not specified, examined.

Mitra insignis A. Adams, 1853: 132, not figured. Holotype NHMUK 1966465 (juvenile), Rain's Island, photo from K. Monsecour (pers. comm.).

Columbella acicula Reeve, [April] 1858: sp. 46; pl. 10 fig. 46a, b. Syntypes, NHMUK 1982126, “California” (erroneous), examined.

Columbella seychellensis E. A. Smith, 1884: 493, pl. 44 fig. G (K. Monsecour, pers. comm.; type not found).

Columbella ligula var. *carnea* Hervier, 1899: 327, not figured (K. Monsecour, pers. comm.; type not found).

Columbella ligula var. *nivalis* Hervier, 1899: 326-327, not figured (K. Monsecour, pers. comm.; type not found).

Columbella albina – Sowerby 1844 (part): 123, fig. 82 (not fig. 81). — Chenu 1846: pl. 16 figs 19-20.

Columbella (Mitrella) ligula – Kobelt 1892: 78-79, pl. 11 figs 1-5.

Columbella (Mitrella) albina – Kobelt 1892: 80-81, pl. 11 figs 6-7.

Mitrella ligula (Duclos, 1840) – Cernohorsky 1972: 135-136, radula diagram textfigure 10, shell pl. 41 fig. 1, 1a. — Monsecour in Poppe 2008: pl. 329, figs 7-16.

Mitrella (Graphicomassa) ligula (Duclos, 1840) – Wilson 1994: 104, pl. 16 fig. 1a-d. — Okutani 2000: 431, pl. 214 fig. 33.

TYPE MATERIAL. — *Colombella ligula*. Lectotype (herein designated): MNHN IM 2000-22712 (adult, 19.3 mm long, apex missing, Fig. 1A), Philippines. This specimen corresponds to Duclos' pl. 11, fig. 13, and was chosen because the specimen is in better condition than the first specimen Duclos illustrated. Three paralectotypes, MNHN IM 2000-22709 (adults, 15.65-17.2 mm long, apices

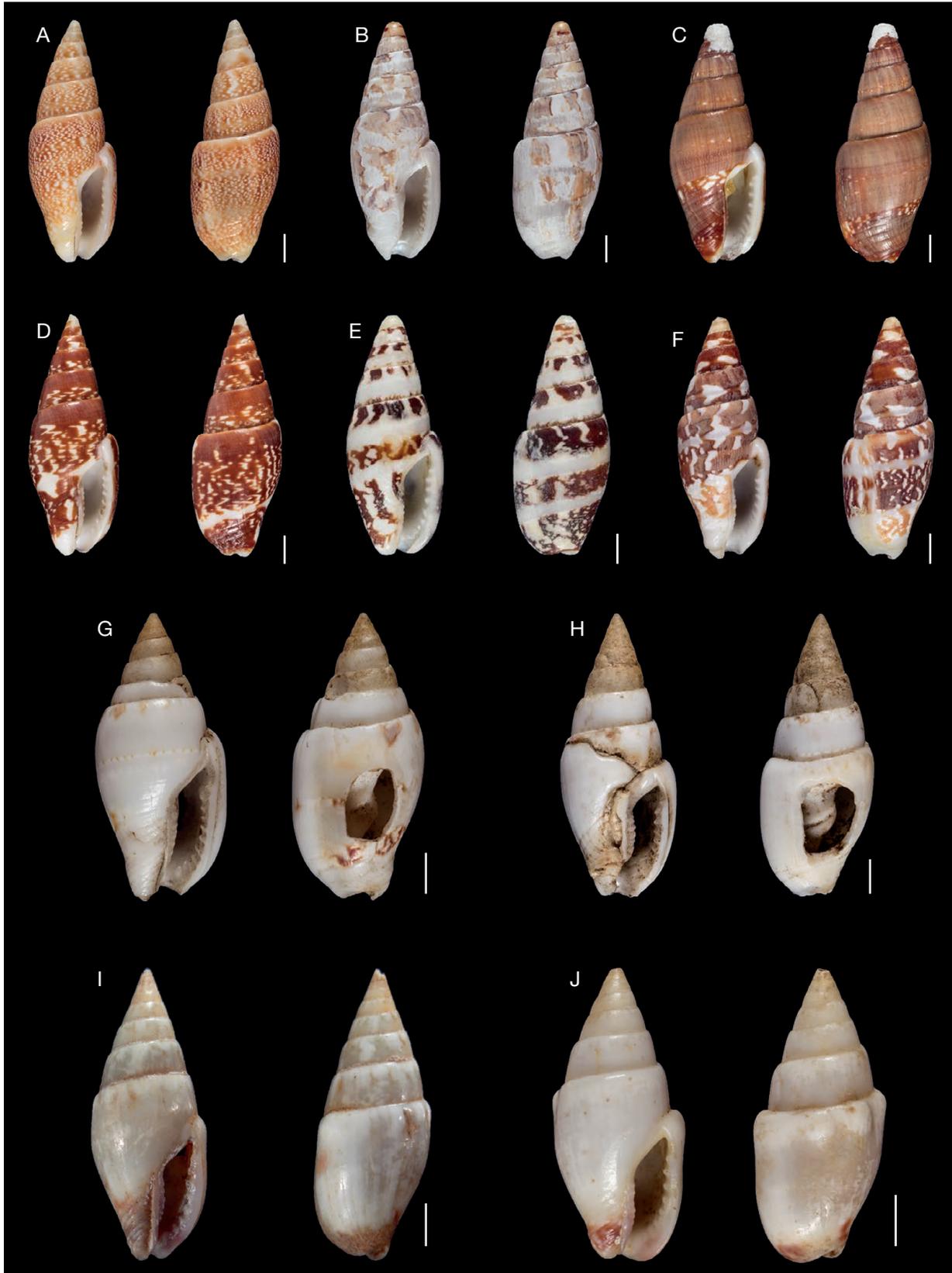


FIG. 1. — *Graphicomassa* Iredale, 1929 lectotypes and paralectotypes: **A-F**, *Columbella ligula* Duclos, 1840: **A-E**, match Duclos' (1840) figures: **A**, Lectotype, MNHN-IM-2000-22712, Philippines, 19.3 mm; **B**, MNHN-IM-2000-22711, Philippines, 18.4 mm; **C**, MNHN-IM-2000-22709, Seychelles, 16.6 mm; **D-E**, MNHN-IM-2000-22710, I. Nevis (err), 17.0 mm, 16 mm respectively; **F**, MNHN-IM-2000-22709, Seychelles, 15.7 mm; **G-H**, *Columbella albina* Kiener, 1841, Locality unknown: **G**, Lectotype, MNHN-IM-2000-22472-1, 14.85 mm; **H**, Paralectotype, MNHN-IM-2000-22472-2, 16.3 mm; **I-J**, *Columbella adlostina* Duclos, 1840. Locality unknown: **I**, Lectotype, MNHN-IM-2000-6332-1, 14.3 mm; **J**, Paralectotype, MNHN-IM-2000-6332-3, 12.05 mm. Photos taken by MNHN. Scale bars: 2 mm.

eroded, Fig. 1C, F), Seychelles; two paralectotypes, [MNHN IM 2000-22710](#) (adults, 16.0-17.0 mm long, apices eroded, Fig. 1D, E), I. Nevis (err.); 1 paralectotype, [MNHN IM 2000-22711](#) (adult, 18.4 mm long, apex missing, Fig. 1B). *Columbella albina*. Lectotype, [MNHN IM 2000-22472](#) (adult, 14.85 mm long, Fig. 1G. This specimen corresponds to Kiener's fig. 4); 1 paralectotype, [MNHN IM 2000-22472-2](#) (adult, 16.1 mm, Fig. 1H).

TYPE LOCALITY. — Because Duclos did not indicate a type locality for *C. ligula*, Drivas & Jay (1990) designated Mauritius. This is inconsistent with the stated localities of the specimens however. Labels with the lectotype designated above specify Philippines, which becomes the type locality.

DIAGNOSIS. — Shell thick, narrowly biconic, porcelainous, usually 15 to 20 mm long in adults, white, with variably colored mottling. The color pattern commonly features spiral bands of a color or colors, with white spots or blotches (Fig. 1A-I and modern specimens from New Guinea in Fig. 2A-C). Color bands may be in the form of, or replaced by, brown or black axial lines or scribbles. The protoconch is narrowly conical, unsculptured, white, with 2.75 whorls. The shell is unsculptured except for funicular grooves. The aperture is narrow, the labial edge thickened and denticulate, with a weak columellar notch and a row of beadlike parietal denticles. The aperture is typically white.

REMARKS

This species is incredibly variable in color and pattern, and so has been synonymized by a number of authors. Duclos (1840) did not provide any text with his illustrations of this species and the next; he did however recognize the variability of this species, in that he illustrated five different patterns (Fig. 1A-E show corresponding types). Sowerby (1844) and Reeve (1858) reported on specimens from Cuming's collection, from Ticao, Philippines. Some of the MNHN syntypes list this as a potential locality. Hervier (1899) speculated that *Columbella lutea* Quoy & Gaimard, 1833 from Tonga-Tabou may be a senior synonym, but the identity of this species remains unknown pending location of the types.

Columbella lactea, also of Duclos (1840), is most likely *G. ligula* and appears before it in the publication, though there is some uncertainty about its identity because the single type specimen appears to be an albino, and though mature is rather small (12.8 mm long). It is considered (WoRMS 2015) a synonym of *G. ligula*, though I have found no published basis for this. Its identity has been confounded by many authors (e.g., Sowerby 1844; Martens 1880; Tryon 1883) with that of *Buccinum lacteum* Kiener (1834), which is similar, based on the figures. I have not located the type material for this latter species, though it is currently considered a columbellid (WoRMS 2015), so its identity remains uncertain to me. Kiener (1841) includes *Columbella lactea* Duclos 1840 (pl. 15; fig. 4), which he evidently considers different than his *Buccinum lacteum*. Reeve (1858, pl. 21, species 120) then included *Columbella lactea* Kiener, which appears to be a totally different species. Finally, Drivas & Jay (1990, 1997) consider *C. lactea* likely to be an albinistic *Mitrella moleculina* (Duclos, 1840), which is a mystery because *M. moleculina* is much smaller and very different in shape.

Graphicomassa adiostina (Duclos, 1840) n. comb. (Figs 1I-J; 2D-F)

Columbella adiostina Duclos, 1840: pl. 11, figs 9-10 [as *Colombella adiostina*, an incorrect original spelling of *Columbella adiostina*]. No description. Syntypes [MNHN IM-2000-6332](#), locality not specified, examined.

Columbella egeria Chenu, 1846: pl. 4 figs 19-20 [as *Colombella egeria*, an incorrect original spelling of *Columbella egeria*]. Syntypes, [MNHN IM-2000-6916](#), locality not specified, examined.

Columbella annulata Reeve, 1858: sp. 101, pl. 19, fig. 101 (K. Monsecour, pers. comm.; type not found).

Pyrene eustomus Jousseau, 1876: pl. 5 figs. 3-4. Syntypes, [MNHN IM-2000-6912](#), locality not specified, examined.

Columbella terpsichore var. *dreyfusi* Kobelt, 1897: 61-62, fig. 7 (K. Monsecour, pers. comm.; type not seen).

Columbella albina var. *albaria* Hervier, 1899: 321, not figured (K. Monsecour, pers. comm.; type not found).

Columbella albina var. *carneola* Hervier, 1899: 323-324, not figured (K. Monsecour, pers. comm.; type not found).

Columbella albina var. *nubila* Hervier, 1899: 322, not figured. Three syntypes, ZMA 2.99.012 (K. Monsecour, pers. comm.; types not seen.)

Columbella albina var. *polychroa* Hervier, 1899: 322, not figured (K. Monsecour, pers. comm.; type not found).

Columbella albina var. *straminea* Hervier, 1899: 324, not figured (per Monsecour, pers. comm.; type not found).

Columbella albina var. *zonifera* Hervier, 1899: 323, not figured (K. Monsecour, pers. comm.; type not found).

Columbella albina var. *agonatodes* Hervier, 1899: 324, not figured (K. Monsecour, pers. comm.; type not found).

Columbella somnium Pilsbry, 1904: 15, pl. 3, figs 28, 29 (two syntypes, ANSP 86129, Yakujima, Osumi, Japan; photo per ANSP).

Columbella albina – Sowerby 1844 (part): 123, fig. 81 (not fig. 82). — Chenu 1846 (part): pl. 54, figs 19-20.

Mitrella albina – Cernohorsky 1972: 136, radula diagram text-figure 11, shell pl. 41 fig. 2, 2a. — Monsecour *in* Poppe (2008): pl. 328, figs 6-11.

Mitrella (Mitrella) albina – Wilson 1994: 104, pl. 16 fig. 5a, b.

Mitrella (Graphicomassa) albina – Okutani 2000: 431, pl. 214 fig. 34.

TYPE MATERIAL. — Lectotype, here designated, [MNHN IM 2000-6332](#) (Fig. 1I), and four paralectotypes from the same lot [MNHN IM-2000-32245](#) (one juvenile, three adults (one illustrated, Fig. 1J), 10.75-14.3 mm long, apices eroded). No type locality given. The only specimens I have seen similar to the types of *C. adiostina* are from Papua New Guinea (e.g., Fig. 2E), so this is herein designated as the type locality.

DIAGNOSIS. — Shell thick, biconic, porcelainous, usually 10 to 15 mm long in adults though they are smaller in some locations (e.g., those shown by Poppe (2008) from the Philippines), white with variably colored mottling or blotches usually including black or dark markings on the anterior tip; frequently mostly white. A typical modern specimen is shown in Fig. 2D, and color variants are shown in Fig. 2E-F. The protoconch is narrowly conical, unsculptured, white,

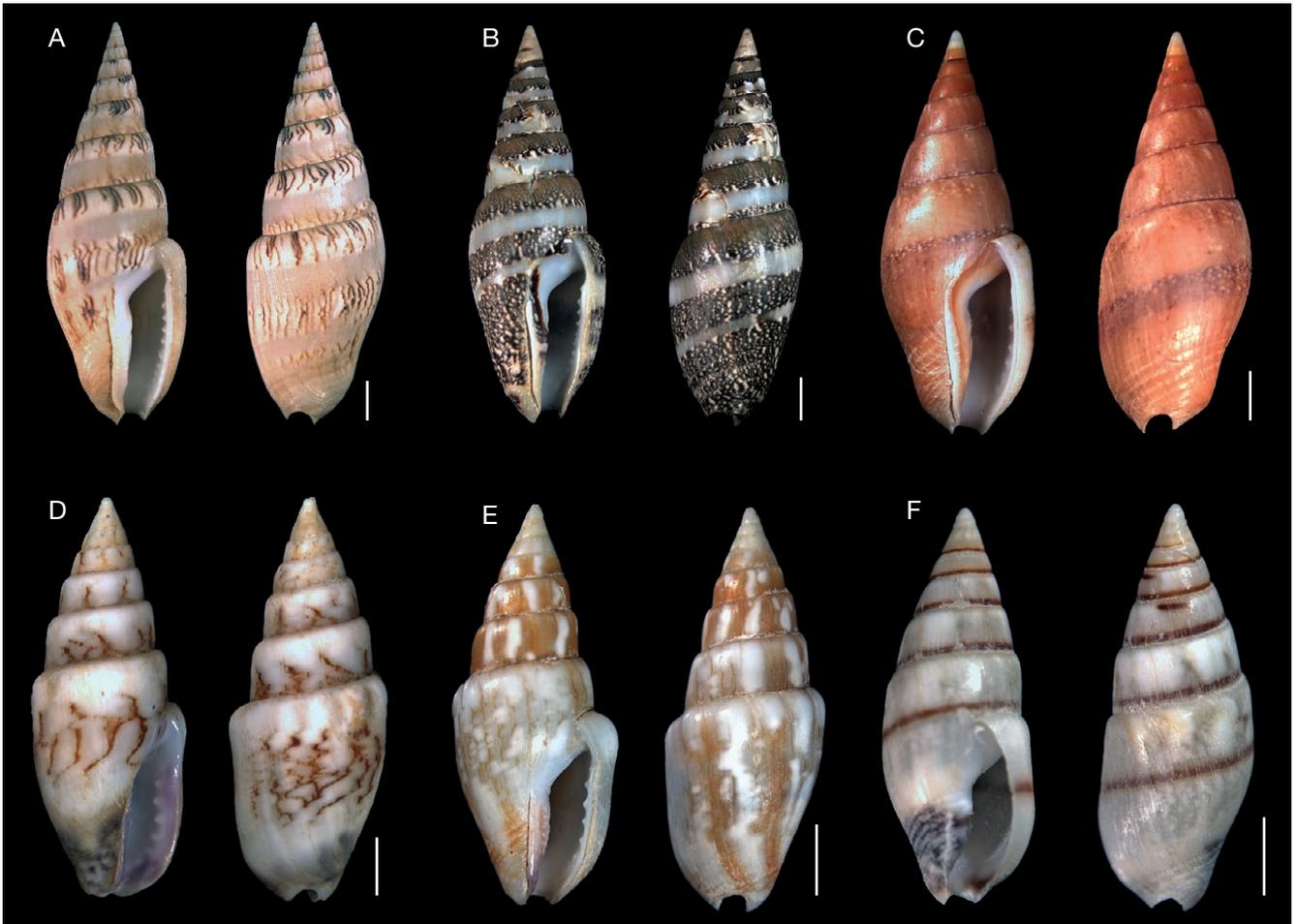


FIG. 2. — *Graphicomassa* Iredale, 1929 fresh material, **A-C**, *Graphicomassa ligula* (Duclos, 1840): **A**, MNHN-IM-2013-12215, Siar Isl., Papua New Guinea, 21.9 mm; **B**, MNHN-IM-2013-12707, Alexishafen, Papua New Guinea, 20.5 mm; **C**, MNHN-IM-2013-14020, Tadwai Isl., Papua New Guinea, 16.6 mm; **D-F**, *Graphicomassa adiostina* (Duclos, 1840) n. comb.: **D**, MNHN-IM-2013-52501, Ponta Torres, Mozambique, 14.95 mm; **E**, MNHN-IM-2013-3993, Tadwai Isl., Papua New Guinea, 11.75 mm; **F**, juvenile, MNHN-IM-2013-303, Kranket Isl., Papua New Guinea, 10.5 mm. Photos taken by M. deMaintenon. Scale bars: 2 mm.

with 3.25 to 3.5 whorls. The shoulder is nodulose just below the suture on the body whorl and just above the suture on the early spire whorls, otherwise the only sculpture is shallow funicular grooves. The aperture is narrow, the labial edge thickened and denticulate, with a weak columellar notch and a row of beadlike parietal denticles. Many specimens have a purple stain around the anterior portion of the aperture on one or both sides.

REMARKS

This species can be difficult to differentiate from its congeners, *G. ligula* and *G. margarita*. *Graphicomassa ligula* is larger, usually 15–20 mm long when mature. Although it is quite variable in color and pattern, it always lacks the shoulder and spire nodules, dark anterior tip, and purple aperture stain. *G. margarita* in contrast is smaller, 6–10 mm long when mature, stockier, and occasionally has nodules on the shoulder and spire whorls, though it also lacks the dark anterior tip and purple aperture stain. In most locations the latter species has a more stereotypic color pattern, though it also can vary.

Previous monographers had various concepts of this species. It should be noted that Kiener (1841) also described an unnamed variety of *C. albina* (his fig. 4a) with a dark band at

the shoulder similar to the juvenile specimen in Fig. 2F, but there was no name or specimen associated. G. B. Sowerby I (1844), in his *Monograph of the Genus Columbella*, had a mixture of species as *C. albina*. In his description he notes that the shell is “sometimes slightly tuberculose behind”, and he figures two shells, neither of which is particularly similar to Kiener’s figures. Both are from the Cuming Collection, collected in the Philippines. Shells that may correspond to these are in the general collection at NHMUK. The shell in fig. 81 (G. B. Sowerby I 1844), with the black tip, is *G. adiostina* n. comb., while the shell in fig. 82 (G. B. Sowerby I 1844) without a black tip is *G. ligula*. In Chenu (1846) figured shells similar to both variations of Kiener’s, though the one resembling Kiener’s unnamed variety has a black anterior tip and appears consistent with *C. adiostina*. Reeve (1858) apparently selected a different shell from the Cuming collection to represent *C. albina* than did Sowerby, and the illustration suggests this is a *G. ligula* very similar to Kiener’s type specimens and description. Tryon (1883) copied two of Kiener’s figures and added one more that’s rather nondescript; he also notes that plications are sometimes present on the dorsum, but otherwise

describes a large (18 mm) white shell with various colored markings. Kobelt (1892) apparently was confused by at least Tryon's version of *C. albina*, as he recognized it as a white *C. ligula*, so he contented himself with reproducing Kiener's fig. 4 (not including the unnamed variant). Hervier (1899) notes that New Caledonia didn't appear to have Kiener's typical variant of *C. albina*, but does have several new varieties, all of which but one (var. *agonatodes* Hervier) have the dorsal nodules on the body whorl, making those color variants and so likely synonyms of *G. adiostina* n. comb. Given these were not illustrated, their types have mostly not been identified. Hervier describes *C. adiostina* as a separate but very similar species, distinguished to a large degree by color and pattern. Modern authors (e.g., Cernohorsky 1972; Drivas & Jay 1990) tended to separate *C. ligula* from *C. albina* by some combination of smaller size, presence of shoulder nodules and a dark base in the latter, thus completing the "conceptual creep" that perhaps originated with Sowerby (1844).

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