

CRIBRARULA CRIBRARIA FALLAX: A RECYCLED OLD NAME

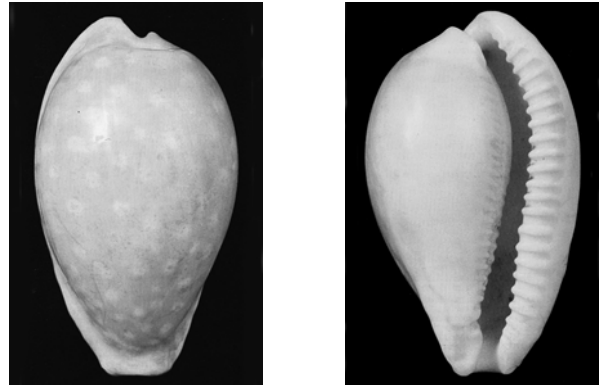
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Abstract: The name *Cribrarula fallax* confused students of cowries for a long time. Its description and pictures of the holotype are cited in this article from works of other authors just to show their origin and the following transformation of its name into the recycled confusing subspecific name *C. cribraria fallax* from West Australia.

Key words: Mollusc, Gastropoda, Cypraeidae, *Cribrarula cribraria fallax*, West Australia, taxonomy, nomenclature.

Cypraea fallax E.A. Smith, 1881 was described based on a single shell from uncertain locality in West Australia-Figs. 1-2. The English part of the description of *C. fallax* reads:

“This shell closely resembles the common *C. cribraria*; but I venture to describe it as a new species for the following reasons. It is larger than any specimen of that species which has come under my observation, and of pear-like shape (in which respect it resembles *C. miliaris* or *C. cumingii*), it has more than the average number (about nineteen) of teeth on the labrum, and the white spots are smaller and not so clearly defined as in *C. cribraria*. The fawn-colour is paler than in most specimens of the latter (perhaps the result of bleaching), and on the right side towards the labrum it is somewhat deeper in tone. This darker tint (possibly an individual peculiarity) commences where the white margination ceases, and extends upwards between the white spots in the form of irregular streaks, and thus does not ter-



1-2. The holotype of *C. fallax* 36mm; after Raybaudi (1986)

minate in a defined line. An almost invariable character of *C. cribraria* is the circularity and clear definition of the white spots, which, too, are very frequently margined with a dark ring. Many specimens (I believe, even the majority) of that species in addition exhibit a few minute brown dots just above or on the white lateral ridge. On the contrary, in *C. fallax* the white spots appear to blend into the fawn colour, and no indication of minute dotting is traceable. The locality (West Australia) may also be slight evidence in favour of its specific distinctness; for as far as I can ascertain, *C. cribraria* is not known from that region.”[after Raybaudi, (1986)].

Melvill (1888) wrote about this shell “*C. fallax* (E.A. Smith) is perhaps only a fine large, more pyriform variety of *cribraria*, with smaller white spots and paler dorsal surface.”

Similar large shells of *Cribrarula cribraria* (Linnaeus, 1758) with unusually small lacunae and the yellowish dorsum (a rare color form) were later sporadically found in the waters bordering West Australia.

A work Schilder & Schilder (1938)—the Prodrôme—should be perhaps considered the beginning of the modern classification of Cypraeidae. Much positive is written about this informative, important work although one nuance in the Schilders’ approach to naming cowry taxa is poorly known—their practice of recycling old names. This practice may be confusing because only a name is used in a new application and the type material of an old taxon is not relevant; examples are given in Heiman (2008a, 2008b). *Cypraea fallax* E.A. Smith, 1881 is one of such recycled names.

In the Prodrôme the name *fallax* is recycled to designate a group of *Cribrarula* populations of West Australia (a subspecies); it is named *Cribrarula cribraria fallax* (E.A. Smith, 1881) and its shell characteristics are given and shortly discussed. Many students of cowries did not pay attention on the Schilders explanations in the Prodrôme regarding recycling old names and attempted in vain to connect between E.A. Smith’s description, the holotype of *fallax*, and the conchological material of the genus *Cribrarula* from West Australia. The name *Cribrarula cribraria fallax* (E.A. Smith, 1881) was for a long time interpreted literally (as *C. fallax*) with confusing results.

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Literature

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Shells of several taxa of the genus *Cribrarula*



1-4. An unusual shell of *C. cumingii* (16 mm, Marquez's Is.) with a confused dorsal pattern, (obtained as *C. astaryi*). Author's collection



5-6. *C. taitae*. Pictured as *C. astaryi* in Burgess (1985)

7-8. *C. fallax*; the holotype, after Raybaudi (1986b)



9-10. *C. cribraria* f.exmouthensis, after Raybaudi (1987)

11. *C. haddnighiae*, Albany. After Raybaudi, 1986b.



12. *C. fallax*, from Denmark -Albany, West Australia. After Raybaudi, 1986b.