



## A new species of *Bostrichobranthus* (Ascidiacea, Molgulidae) from the eastern tropical Atlantic

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### Abstract

During the ancient oceanographic expedition of the « Talisman » in 1883, several specimens of a new ascidian species of an uncommon genus of Molgulidae were dredged on a sedimentary bottom off Mauritania. This material was stored in the collections of the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle where it was overlooked until recently. The good condition of some of them reveals original characters of the musculature and gonads compared to those of the three other species known in the genus *Bostrichobranthus*.

**Key words:** Ascidian, Molgulidae, new species, eastern Atlantic, *Bostrichobranthus*

### Introduction

A series of dredgings were made during the year 1883 by the French ship “Talisman” and only one of them collected ascidians, of a single species, which were preserved and housed in the MNHN collections and later forgotten. The nine specimens recently examined, several centimetres in length, are very soft and shapeless, and belong to the Molgulidae genus *Bostrichobranthus*, characterized by its unusual branchial structure. There are only a few other species of this uncommon genus, all collected on sedimentary bottoms, in wide separated geographical regions: north American Atlantic coast, Brazil, and south of Kerguelen. The new species *B. crosnieri* has an original musculature design and a peculiar genital apparatus.

### Description

#### *Bostrichobranthus crosnieri* n.sp.

**Material examined.** Mauritania, west of cape Barbas, 21°47'N – 17°27'W, 3/VII/1883, 9 specimens. (The depth is doubtful as in many cases for the stations of the “Talisman” cruise, the internal labels: 240m differ from the board list: 140m). Syntypes: MNHN S3 BOS 6.

The species is dedicated to Alain Crosnier who has carried out and initiated so many works in marine invertebrate diversity.

**Description.** All specimens are of about the same size 4 to 5cm in length, colorless in formalin, particularly soft and consequently shapeless, embedded in a gelatinous thin tunic. They are not incrustated with sand but some particles adhere to the sticky tunic and fill the digestive tract. Amphipods inhabit some specimens. The body is easily seen through the transparent tunic.

The siphons are in apical position, widely open (Fig. 1A,B). The oral one is directed towards the ventral