Nigrapercula mutabilis (Canu & Bassler, 1929). Tilbrook, 2006, p.186, pl.50D-F.

Nigrapercula mutabilis (Canu & Bassler, 1929)
new combination Plate 50D-F

Galeopsis mutabilis Canu & Bassler, 1929: 273, pl. 28, figs 4-6.

Gigantopora mutabilis: Harmer, 1957: 883, pl. 60, fig. 8.

Pachycleithonia mutabilis: Hayward & Cook, 1983: 53, fig. 14B; Cook, 1985: 151; Hayward, 1988:296; Ristedt & Hillmer, 1985: 137, pl. 3, fig. 2; Scholz, 1991: 293, pl. 14, figs 1, 3.

Material examined

SBMNH 365569-572, **506-87**; NHM 1931.12.30.88, "Albatross" Station 5142, off Jolo, Jolo Island, Philippines, 38 m; NHM 1882.10.18.46, Providence Reef, Mascarenes, 44 m.

Description

Colony encrusting, unilaminar. Autozooids large (0.80–0.90 x 0.55–0.65 mm), flask-shaped, distinct, separated by shallow grooves, lateral walls conspicuous. Frontal shield granular, evenly perforated by numerous large pores, delimited from peristome, few areolae, one either side of peristome, others at proximal or lateral "corners" of frontal shield. Peristome imperforate, granular, thin, erect or suberect, tubular, secondary opening circular, large proximal spiramen, extending into long, thin tubular structure, near junction with frontal shield. Primary orifice suborbicular, wider than long (ca 0.22 x 0.21 mm), widest distally across deeply rounded anter, separated from narrow, shallowly concave poster by two small, tooth-like projections (condyles?). Ovicell low on distal wall, near junction with peristome into which it opens, hyperstomial, globular, smoothly calcified, evenly perforated with large, ostensibly round, pores of varying sizes, larger fenestrae on either side, not closed by maternal operculum. Ancestrula identical to autozooids only smaller. Single row of multiporous septula along base of vertical walls.

Remarks

Nigrapercula mutabilis is characterised by its large size, its evenly perforated frontal shield, tall, thin peristome, with tubular spiramen, and smooth, perforated ovicells. Canu & Bassler (1929) described the operculum as black. The very dark dried organic matter remaining inside the zooids of the material examined gives the colony a grey appearance when seen through the frontal shield perforations. The primary orifice described and illustrated in by Canu & Bassler (1929: pl. 28, fig. 6) agrees well with those observed in the material described here.

Nigrapercula africana is distinguishable from ***N. mutabilis*** in having an ovicell closed by the maternal operculum, the oral peristome is shorter and may be produced with bifid or trifid lateral extensions and often lacks a tubular spiramen. Also, the primary orifice in ***N. africana*** is almost oval, longer than wide, with large condyles, that of ***N. mutabilis*** is almost oval, wadier than long with small spick-like condyles.

Distribution

Originally described from the Philippines, ***Nigrapercula mutabilis*** has been recorded subsequently from South Africa, the Indian Ocean and Malaysia. This species has also been noted from Bass Strait, southern Australia. However, the zooidal and colonial morphology of this material differs slightly, and consistently enough, to exclude this record until further investigation. ***N. mutabilis*** is common on the branches of coralline algae of Rarotonga, Cook Islands (Tilbrook, unpub. data). Three separate small, yet fertile, colonies of this species were found from Linggatu Cove, Mbanika Island, Russell Islands.

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