

*THORNELYA FUSCINA* SP. NOV.

(Fig. 17E,F)

*Material*

Holotype: NHM 1998.8.4.183, Port Vila Harbour, Efate, Vanuatu.

Paratype: NHM 1998.8.4.265, Poanangisu, Efate, Vanuatu.

Other material: NHM 1903.1.29.34 (as *Thornelya* sp.), Falefuti, Funafuti, Tuvalu, 146 m; NHM 1936.12.30.91 (as *Thornelya ceylonica*), Sri Lanka, Thornely Coll.; NHM 1969.1.4.5 (as *Thornelya ceylonica*), New Guinea, Siboga Stn 131, 32 m.

*Description*

Colony encrusting, unilaminar. Autozooids rectangular to irregularly polygonal, slightly convex, separated by distinct grooves. Primary orifice elongate-oval, slightly thickened around smooth edges; anter occupies 90% of orifice, flaring laterally at junction with poster, proximal border shallowly concave; condyles large, rounded-triangular; 3–4 oral spines present in younger autozooids, disappearing in later ontogeny. Frontal shield evenly perforated by round pores, immersed in thickened frontal calcification giving an almost tuberculate appearance. Adventitious avicularia small, lateral-oral, single or paired; small cystid very close to oral rim, the rostrum acute to frontal plane, directed mid-distally towards orifice; mandible acutely triangular. In some autozooids a third avicularium may be present on the proximal edge of the distal autozooid, identical to the lateral-oral avicularia, rostrum perpendicular to frontal plane, directed towards orifice of preceding autozooid. Ovicells globular, slightly wider than long, evenly perforated as in the autozooids, recumbent on, or slightly immersed in, the frontal shield of the distal zooid; closed by maternal operculum.

*Measurements*

Holotype, means and standard deviations, mm ( $n=30$ ).

Autozooid length  $0.56 \pm 0.07$ ; width  $0.46 \pm 0.07$ .

Orifice length  $0.15 \pm 0.00$ ; width  $0.13 \pm 0.00$ .

*Etymology*

From *fuscina*, L.—three-pronged fork, alluding to the three perioral avicularia seen in some autozooids.

*Remarks*

*Thornelya fuscina* is characterized by its orifice shape, narrower than in other species of *Thornelya*, and also by the three perioral avicularia, fewer than in most other *Thornelya* species.

Some of the material attributed by Harmer (1957) to *Thornelya ceylonica* belongs to *T. fuscina* (e.g. NHM 1936.12.30.91). The primary orifice in *T. ceylonica* is far wider, and the poster much shallower, than in *T. fuscina* and the orifice is surrounded by many avicularia. *Thornelya ceylonica* also has 6–8 oral spines, compared to three or four in *T. fuscina*.

While Harmer's specimens from Sri Lanka and New Guinea clearly belong to *T. fuscina*, the specimen from Tuvalu (NHM 1903.1.29.34) differs subtly in that one of the pair of lateral-oral avicularia is longer than the other, less acute to the frontal plane, and distally directed. The oral spines also appear to remain evident longer.

*Distribution*

Only two colonies of *Thornelya fuscina* were found in Vanuatu, encrusting coral debris at Poanangisu and Port Vila Harbour, Efate. *Thornelya fuscina* occurs from Sri Lanka in the west to Tuvalu in the east, and undoubtedly occurs elsewhere within the Southwest Pacific.

