Caleschara minuta (Maplestone, 1909). Tilbrook, 2006, p.72, pl.11E.

Caleschara minuta (Maplestone, 1909)
Plate 11E

Steganoporella minuta Maplestone, 1909: 412, Fig.26, Fig. 3.
Caleschara minuta: Cook & Bock, 2001: 536, figs 15,16 (cum syn.).
Caleschara levinseni Harmer, 1926: 221, Fig. 14, Fig. 1.
Floridinella arculifera Canu & Bassler, 1927a: 7, Fig. 2, Fig. 1.
Caleschara laxa Canu & Bassler, 1929: 136, Fig. 114, figs 5,6.

Material examined

SBMNH 365121-122, **411-84**; SBMNH 365123-124, **409-84**; SBMNH 365125-127, **407-84**; NHM 1928.3.6.41, "Siboga" Station 144, Djilolo, S. of Halmahera, Sulawesi; NHM 1928.3.6.40, "Siboga" Station 133, Lirung, Talaut Island, S. of Mindanoa, 0-36 m; NHM 1931.12.30.45,46, "Albatross" Station 5217, Anima Sola Island, off Burias, Philippines, 192 m; NHM 1882.10.18.125-138, Darros Island, Amirante Islands, 40 m, "Alert" (two slides); NHM 1886.10.22.21, Seychelles (two slides); 1928.9.13.5, Okinose, off Tokyo, Japan, 73 m, Owston Coll.; NHM 1996.10.2.1, "Discovery" Station 929, 34°22'S, 172°49.8'E, 55-58 m.

Description

Colony encrusting, unilaminar. Autozooids rounded, irregularly polygonal, distinct, separated by shallow grooves, arranged quincuncially (ca 0.65 x 0.55 mm). Frontal membrane translucent light brown when dried, bordered by thin, rounded mural rim. Gymnocyst negligible; cryptocyst extensive, finely granular, flat. A pronounced cryptocystal median process ("polypidian lamella" auctt.) produced slightly convex frontally, very narrow free end distally, lateral edges with small, sharp spinous processes; lateral cryptocyst also with spinous processes and a pair of protuberances into opesia, distal to end of median process, level with proximal edge of operculum. Operculum darker than frontal membrane with dark marginal sclerite. Opesia trifoliate, orbicular distally with two proximal diverticula along sides of median process, unequal in size and length. Ovicell endozooecial, derived from distal autozooid; brooding autozooids with dimorphic opercula, distal edge slightly raised, surrounded by gymnocystal calcification. Ancestrula is a smaller but otherwise indistinguishable version of normal autozooids.

Remarks

Caleschara minuta is characterised by its extensive cryptocyst, its median cryptocystal process and its dimorphic brooding zooids.

Caleschara minuta has recently been redescribed by Cook & Bock (2001) in their review of the genus. They examined a number of Type specimens of related species and were able to include a number of them, e.g. *Caleschara levinseni* Harmer, 1926, *Floridinella arculifera* Canu & Bassler, 1927a and *Caleschara laxa* Canu & Bassler, 1929, as junior synonyms of Maplestone's species.

In their description of *Caleschara minuta* Cook & Bock (2001) note the presence of "tubercles ... on the proximal rim in some specimens". This is true in some specimens but not others, and not evident in their illustrations of this species. The "Discovery" material and that from Japan and the Seychelles, has large, obvious proximal gymnocystal papillae. These are not seen at all in material from the Amirante Islands, Philippines (as *C. laxa*) and the Solomon Islands, though smaller versions of this may be seen in the specimen from Djilolo (NHM 1928.3.6.41). An increased robustness of the median process and its lateral fimbriations is associated with the presence of these papillae.

Caleschara minuta differs from *C. denticulata* (MacGillivray, 1869) in the absence of a join between the median process and the lateral cryptocyst. *Caleschara junctifera* Canu & Bassler, 1929 is an erect species in which the ovicell complex is unknown, however superficially it appears more akin to species of the genus *Biflustra* than to the genus *Caleschara sensu stricto*.

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