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A DESCRIPTIVE REVIEW OF *GRACILARIA* FROM GHANA, WEST AFRICA

Hikoei Ohmi

While I was studying Gracilariaceous plants from Japan and its adjacent waters, I had an opportunity to examine a number of herbarium specimens of *Gracilaria* from Ghana, West Africa, through the kindness of Dr. G.W. Lawson of The University College of Legon, Ghana. The majority of the specimens are labelled by him as *Gracilaria henriquesiana* Hariot, and the rest as *G. ferox* Agardh and *G. verrucosa* (Huds.) Papenfuss. The discovery of peculiarly constructed antheridial conceptacles in the specimens of *G. henriquesiana* was previously reported by myself in a short paper (Ohmi, 1958). Here I wish to give full data of these specimens as well as the descriptions of the species except *G. verrucosa* in the hope that this will be of some use for a taxonomic study of *Gracilaria*.

I am much obliged to Emer. Prof. J. Tokida of Hokkaido University for his kindness in reading the manuscript and also to Dr. G.W. Lawson for the loan of valuable specimens.

Description of the species

*Gracilaria henriquesiana* Hariot

Plate I, A-C; II, Figs. 1-6


Distribution: West Africa.

Frond complanate, flabelliformis, arising in tufts from a common small attachment disc, 3-18 cm long and 0.7-5 mm broad in dried specimens, tapering gradually...
towards the base into an elongated cuneate or linear portion and a short subterete stipe, lobed in repeated dichotomous manner with rounded axil, ending into blunt bifurcate tips; the angle of the furcation is considerably sharp; up to 875μ in thickness when immersed in water; some specimens are furnished with abundant pinnate proliferations along the margins of the upper and middle portions of the frond; subcartilaginous in substance, brownish to purplish red or sometimes olive green in color in dried specimens.

Medulla in the inner structure of frond consists of 3–6 layers of large isodiametric parenchymatous cells, which attain 315μ in diam. and are surrounded by a thin wall, mostly less than 4μ in thickness; infracortical cells are generally one-layered, 30–40μ in diam.; the cortex is built up of 1–2 layers of minute cuboid cells which are 4–6μ in diam. Surface jelly substance is very thin.

Tetrasporangia densely scattered on both surfaces of frond, bordered by unmodified cortical cells; they are spherical or ovoid in shape, 25μ×30μ to 30μ×42μ in dimension as seen in transverse section, cruciately divided.

Cystocarps hemispherical or low dome-like in shape, non-rostrate, up to 1.25 mm in diam., 700μ in height, slightly constricted at the base, with gonimoblast placenta consisting of large vacuolous cells, with nutritive filaments issued from placenta and growing towards the pericarp; the pericarp ca. 210μ thick; carpospores roundish or ovoid in shape, 12–18μ in diam. The surface jelly of the pericarp is ca. 9μ thick.

Antheridal globular conceptacles are densely scattered on both surfaces of frond, surrounded by slightly modified or unmodified cortical cells, immersed under a slightly elevated surface layer of the frond, vaguely discernible from the frond surface as roundish pits, containing 3–6 aggregated small globluar cavities which are 20–45μ in diam. and containing many spermatangia (cf. Ohmi, 1958).

These antheridal conceptacles closely resemble the so-called antheridial caves of *Gracilaria multifurcata* (Bögensen, 1953). However the latter species is different from *G. henriquesiana* not only in the external appearance but also in having more than six globular antheridial cavities aggregated in each “cave”.

The present species is known to be one of the commonest red algae among the intertidal seaweeds of Ghana (Dickinson and Foote, 1951; Lawson, 1954). According to the personal communication from Dr. Lawson, Mrs. Nielson of Ibadan is of the opinion that *G. henriquesiana* is a form of *G. dentata*. But I can say nothing about the relation between these two species as I am not accessible at present to any reliable specimens of the latter.

*Gracilaria verrucosa* (Huds.) Papenfuss


Habitat: According to Lawson the plant commonly grows on rocks partially covered by sand, or on sandy bottoms of tide pools.

Distribution: Cosmopolitan.

**Gracilaria ferox** J. AGARDH

Plate I, D; II, Fig. 7


Distribution: Florida; Bermuda; and the Caribbean Sea.

Frond erect, arising in tufts, 4-6 cm high, subterete or slightly compressed, up to 2 mm in breath, repeatedly bi- or tripartite, branched densely at close intervals in the upper part with a patent round axil, bushy flabellate or corymbose; ultimate branchlets ending mostly in obtuse, or occasionally in considerably acute apices; pinkish or brownish red in color.

The transverse section through the frond shows that the medulla consists of several layers of roundish parenchymatous cells which are 120-160 μ in diam. and surrounded by a wall 6-10 μ thick. Cortex is composed of two layers of small ovoid cells, which are 5-6 μ in diam. Surface jelly substance ca. 3 μ thick.

Four specimens at hand are all sterile, but their structure agrees very well with the description and figure of the present species given by Taylor (1928, p. 154, pl. 33, fig. 2). According to Lawson this plant grows together with *Sargassum* on somewhat exposed rocks fringing the infralittoral zone.

**Summary**

In the present paper are given the data and descriptions of three species of the genus *Gracilaria* on the basis of the herbarium specimens from Ghana borrowed from Dr. G.W. Lawson of The University College of Legon, Ghana.

**Literature cited**


--- (1953). Some marine algae from Mauritius. Additions to the parts previously published. 5, 42-44.


Explanation of Plates
PLATE I

A-C. *Gracilaria henriquesiana* Hariot

A. A tuft of tetrasporic plant from Pram Pram, Ghana, *Lawson* A 973
B. A tetrasporic plant from Pram Pram, Ghana, *Lawson* A 927
C. A tetrasporic plant from Pram Pram, *Lawson* A 16

D. *Gracilaria ferox* J. Agardh

D. Sterile plant from Nachtigal Lighthouse, Ghana, *Lawson* A 808
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PLATE II

Figs. 1–6 *Gracilaria henriquesiana* Hariot

Fig. 1. Transverse section through a branch \( \times 120 \)

Fig. 2. Surface view of a tetrasporic frond \( \times 210 \)

Fig. 3. Transverse section through a tetrasporic frond \( \times 210 \)

Fig. 4. Transverse section through a mature cystocarp \( \times 37 \)

Fig. 5. Surface view of a frond showing two antheridial conceptacles as seen beneath the superficial cells which are not drawn in this figure \( \times 250 \)

Fig. 6. Section through a part of an antheridial frond showing an aggregation of small bodies (four in the figure) in an antheridial conceptacle \( \times 140 \)

Fig. 7. *Gracilaria ferox* J. Agardh

Fig. 7. Transverse section through a branch \( \times 210 \)