



Dasya patentissima (Ceramiales, Dasyaceae), a new species from the Cabrera Archipelago (Balearic Islands, eastern Spain)

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Abstract

Morphological studies on the genus *Dasya* (Ceramiales, Rhodophyta) in the western Mediterranean revealed the existence of a collection from the Balearic Islands (eastern Spain) that differed considerably from the known species in the genus. Evidence is provided to regard it as a new species, which here is named *Dasya patentissima*. Affinities and divergences to other Mediterranean species, namely, *D. ocellata* and *D. hutchinsiae*, are discussed and illustrated.

Key words: Ceramiales, Dasyaceae, Morphology, Rhodophyta, Taxonomy, Western Mediterranean

Introduction

The genus *Dasya* C. Agardh (1824: 211) includes red algae with a hairy and delicate appearance and rigid to flaccid texture. According to Pena-Martín *et al.* (2014, and references therein), the thalli are variable in size, up to 30 cm high, and deep red or brownish to purplish-red, with a sympodial branching, polysiphonous, with 4–5 periaxial cells, and more or less strongly corticated. The tetrasporangia are borne in modified axes (stichidia), whorled (4–7 per segment), and the gametophytes are dioecious. The spermatangia, when present, are whorled in monosiphonous axes. Procarps are produced in segments of the sympodial axes. The cystocarps are ostiolate, usually strongly beaked. The genus currently includes over 81 species distributed in sub-polar, temperate and tropical seas (*cfr.* Guiry & Guiry 2014), and the revision of Pena-Martín *et al.* (2011a) evidenced the existence of eight species of *Dasya* growing in the west Mediterranean basin (from northwestern Italy and Algeria to the Iberian Peninsula): *D. baillouviana* (S.G. Gmelin 1768: 165) Montagne (1841: 165) (≡ *Fucus baillouviana* S.G. Gmelin), *D. corymbifera* J. Agardh (1841: 31), *D. hutchinsiae* Harvey (1833: 335–336), *D. ocellata* Harvey (1833: 335) (≡ *Ceramium ocellatum* Gratel.), *D. rigidula* (Kützing 1843: 415) Ardisson (1878: 140), *D. rigescens* Zanardini (1865: 388), *D. sessilis* Yamada (1928: 524–526), and *D. patentissima* sp. nov. (here described). Only six of them occur in the Balearic Islands (Pena-Martín, 2011): *D. baillouviana*, *D. hutchinsiae*, *D. ocellata*, *D. patentissima*, *D. rigidula* and *D. rigescens*. Together with *Heterosiphonia* Montagne (1842: 4), it is one of the most widespread genera of the Dasyaceae. However, the taxonomy of *Dasya* is very difficult, and its diversity is still far from being satisfactorily understood. Anatomical and morphological interspecific differences are scarce, and several species show high intraspecific variability (*cfr.* Pena-Martín *et al.* 2011a).

In the course of taxonomic studies on the Iberian taxa of *Dasya*, several specimens were collected in June 2005 in the Archipelago of Cabrera (Balearic Islands, E of Spain), on sheltered rocks, namely, in the northern part of Punta d'Ensiola (Cabrera Gran Island). Most of these specimens belonged to *D. hutchinsiae* and *D. ocellata*. However, a small peculiar plant was found among specimens of the two other species, which showed well developed stichidia and cystocarps. After detailed studies, assignment was not possible to any of the described species of *Dasya*. Therefore, evidence is here presented to describe it as a new species.

filaments, the smaller stichidia ($125\text{--}325 \times 45\text{--}90 \mu\text{m}$), the contiguous (not separated) cover cells, and the smaller pericaps ($350\text{--}500 \times 320\text{--}450 \mu\text{m}$) (Table 1). From *D. hutchinsiae*, it is recognisable by the presence of adventitious branches, the complete cortication of thalli, the periaxial cells indistinguishable at the base, the narrower ($15\text{--}25 \mu\text{m}$) fifth apical cell of ramuli, the apical position of cystocarps, and the carpospores elongated in outline (Table 1).

Although the type specimen of *Dasya patentissima* might be regarded as an atypical individual of *D. ocellata* or *D. hutchinsiae*, the fact that it is reproductive, all the morphological characters are constant through the thallus, and no aberrant specimens of both above cited species are known, allows us to rule out this possibility. Furthermore, the eventual inclusion of this specimen within the variation range of any of those two species would create a great distortion of the current taxonomic circumscription of both taxa (Pena-Martin 2011). All those reasons justify in our opinion the description of a new species.

Nonetheless, new collections of *D. patentissima* are necessary to undertake genetic analyses that will help to establish its taxonomic position and phylogenetic relationships. Two collecting attempts during the last years to find new localities of *D. patentissima* were unsuccessful to date. In the meantime, and due to the small amount of available original material, no DNA extraction was made to preserve the holotype.

So far, the available molecular papers that include *Dasya* species are focused on phylogenetic relationships within Florideophyceae, Ceramiales or some families close to Dasyaceae (cfr. Saunders & Bailey 1997; Jong *et al.* 1998; Choi *et al.* 2002, 2008; Kapraun & Dunwoody 2002), the sequences of *Dasya* they refer being only partial. Recently, Yamagishi *et al.* (2014) have reported a phylogenetic study on *Dasya* species from Japan, based mostly on the same data taken from GeneBank. Therefore, to date no comprehensive molecular studies are found allowing a proper discussion on phylogenetic relationships within the genus *Dasya*. Nonetheless, a preliminary phylogeny inferred from *rbcL* sequences (cpDNA) and morphological data including the west Mediterranean taxa of *Dasya* is underway.

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