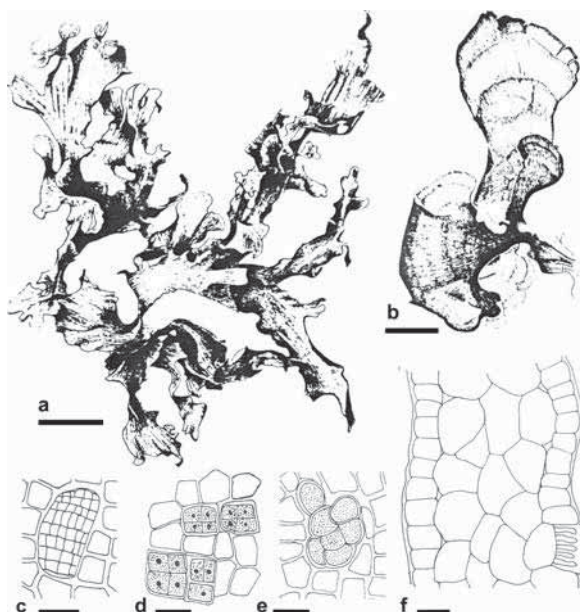


## *Spatoglossum variable* Figari & De Notaris

### Misidentification

*Spatoglossum asperum*  
J. Agardh ?

a. Habit. b. Upper portion.  
c. Surface view of young  
hair tuft. d-e. Surface views  
of sporangia. f. Transverse  
section with young hair tuft.  
Bars: a = 2 cm; b = 3 mm;  
c-f = 60 µm.



Drawings a, b: Natour et al., 1979 (Red Sea), with the permission from E. Schweizerbart  
Science Publishers; c-f: Aleem, 1950 (Mediterranean, Egypt).

### Short description

Medium (> 20 cm high), fan-shaped, irregularly branched, up to 6 layers of cells; growing margin

flat; calcification absent; in transverse section of old portions of plants cells irregular and not arranged in rows; hair tufts scattered, arising from a pit within the thallus; tetrasporangia transformed from cortical cells and remaining sunk in the cortex.

### Distinguishing characteristics

The growing margin flat, the calcification absent, the hair tufts and the tetrasporangia sunk in the cortex are distinctive; confusion possible with other fan-shaped Dictyotales occurring in the Mediterranean:

- *Padina* spp.: growing margin inrolled; hairs in concentric lines; outer calcification;
- *Styopodium schimperi* (Kützing) Verlaque & Boudouresque: hairs in concentric lines; cells sub-rectangular and arranged in regular rows in transverse section; tetrasporangia external to the blade, with 1-2 stalk cells.

## Biology / Ecology / Habitat

Aleem's record is only based on specimens cast ashore in October 1944.

## Distribution

**Worldwide:** Red Sea, described from Suez, Egypt, Aqaba, Jordan (Figari and De Notaris, 1853); Indian Ocean, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen; Pacific, Philippines. **Mediterranean:** only recorded in 1944 from Egypt (Sinai) (Aleem, 1950, as *Spathoglossum variabile*). The exotic Dictyotale *Spatoglossum asperum* J. Agardh, regularly cited in Israel since 1973 (Lundberg, 1980, 1989; Lundberg and Golani, 1995), is a misidentification of either *S. variabile* or *Stypopodium schimperi* (Kützing) Verlaque & Boudouresque.

## Mode of introduction

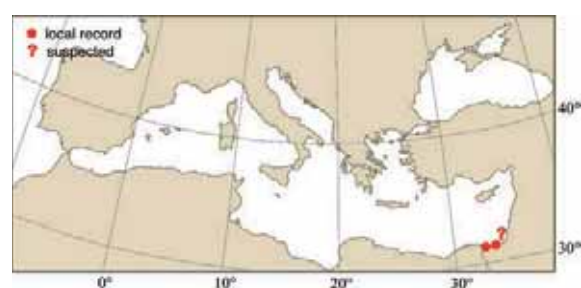
Via the Suez Canal.

## Establishment

Uncertain, only known from the original record.

## Importance to humans

None.



1st Mediterranean record  
Sinai, Egypt, 1950 [1944].

## Key references

- Aleem A.A., 1950. Some new records of marine algae from the Mediterranean Sea. *Meddelanden Från Göteborgs Botaniska Trädgård*, 18: 275-288.
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- Lundberg B., 1980. Selectivity of food algae by the herbivorous fish *Siganus rivulatus* in the marine vegetation at Mikhmoret (the Mediterranean coast of Israel). PhD. Thesis, Hebrew University, 176 p.
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