A NEW ECHINOID FROM THE LOWER CRETACEOUS (ALBIAN) OF KENT

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ABSTRACT. Holaster cantianus sp. nov. is a large holasterid of Lower Cretaceous (Lower Albian) age and is found in the Lower Greensand (Folkestone Beds) of the Folkestone neighbourhood of Kent. It is designated type species of a new subgenus, Labrotaxis, to which it is also referred. The Upper Albian-Cenomanian Holaster latissimus J. L. R. Agassiz. The diagnostic feature of Labrotaxis is the primitive condition of the meridosternous plastron.

The common occurrence of a large echinoid belonging either to Holaster or to Cardiaster in the Folkestone Beds (Lower Albian) of the Folkestone neighbourhood of Kent has long been known (Price 1874; Topley 1875; Casey 1949), but owing to the imperfect state of preservation of the specimens no attempt at specific determination or description has been hitherto made. The following account is based on material accumulated by the author over a period of many years and now incorporated in the collections of the Geological Survey Museum, London. The paper is published by permission of the Director of the Geological Survey Museum.

Order HOLASTEROIDA Wyatt Durham and Melville 1957
Family HOLASTERIDAE Pictet 1857
Genus HOLASTER J. L. R. Agassiz 1883
Subgenus LABROTAXIS nov.

Type species. Holaster (Labrotaxis) cantianus sp. nov.

Diagnosis. Holaster with well-developed frontal sulcus bounded by carinae. Plastron of primitive meridosternous type, the labrum spanning the oral margin of sternal 2' to make contact with sternal 2.

Remarks. Among the Spatangoida and the Holasteroida the structure of the plastron has high taxonomic value. In the former order it is of amphidisternous type, characterized by the labrum being joined at its posterior end to two large, equally developed sternal plates (2', 2'). The Holasteroida include those forms in which the plastron is meridosternous, with the labrum abutting against a single sternal plate (2'). Lambert (1893) showed that in Holaster intermedius (Münster), of very early Cretaceous (Neocomian)...

EXPLANATION OF PLATE 44

Figs. 1–4. Holaster (Labrotaxis) cantianus sp. nov., Lower Greensand (Folkestone Beds), Folkestone, Kent. Author’s collection, now in the Geological Survey Museum, London. 1. Adoral surface, the sutures inked-in, Zm 32, reduced ×0.8. 2. Port of adoral surface showing pores and ornament. The apical system lies on the right-hand border of the photograph; the frontal sulcus runs obliquely upwards. G.S.M. 97304, enlarged ×5. 3. Two of a group of three specimens (the third is on the other side), the larger being the holotype. G.S.M. 74118–19, natural size. 4. Smaller specimen illustrated in fig. 3 enlarged ×2.

age, the meridosternous type of plastron is already typically developed, the labrum being well separated from the second sternal plate (2). His illustrations of the plastron of *H. nodulosus* (Goldfuss), the type species of *Holaster*, from the base of the Upper Cretaceous, show this second sternal plate even farther removed from the labrum, its position behind sternal plate 2 foreshadowing the single row of plastronal plates peculiar to the subgenus *Sternoholaster*. On the other hand, the plastron of *Labrotaxis* (Pl. 44, fig. 1; text-fig. 1d), having the labrum just touching sternal plate 2, represents a more primitive stage in the evolution of the meridosternous condition than is seen in *H. intermedius*. In all other features, especially the intercalary type of apical system, *Labrotaxis* conforms to the Holasteridae. It lacks the ambital fasciole of *Cardiaster* and the sharp frontal carinae and unequal pores of *Pseudoholaster*. An Upper Albian-Cenomanian form, *H. latissimus* J. L. R. Agassiz, is also referable to *Labrotaxis* and the scope of the subgenus may be expected to widen with increasing knowledge of the plastronal structure of other members of the genus.

*Holaster (Labrotaxis) cantianus* sp. nov.

Plate 44, figs. 1-4; text-fig. 1

*Holaster* sp., Price 1874, p. 140.


*Cardiaster* ? sp., ibid., p. 413.

Holaster, large undescribed species, Casey 1949, p. 225.


**Description.** Test large (up to 70 mm. long), fairly thin, of heart-shaped outline, widest at the anterior three-fifths of the length and contracting posteriorly, the length slightly exceeding the width. Adapical surface elevated, the highest point of the test placed well forward, at the apical system or just in front of it. From the anterior border the profile makes a sweeping curve to the summit and thence declines in a gentle curve to the posterior border, which is truncated either vertically or obliquely downwards and inwards. A cross-section of the test through the summit is subtrigonal in outline, with the sides and base nearly flat, but rounded at the ambitus and the apex. Posterior to the summit the sides of the test are gently vaulted, the line of their convergence being marked by a faint carina extending from the centre of the disk to the posterior extremity. Anterior border indented by the frontal sulcus, which is defined by two blunt carinae diverging at an angle of 25° from their point of origin at the apical system. Periproct oval, placed high in the concave posterior face.

Adoral surface more or less flattened, depressed around the peristome, which is very eccentric anteriorly, transversely oval and without a labral process. Plastron tumid, increasing in elevation posteriorly, with about seven ill-defined nodules connected into a zigzag. Nodules also on either side of the periproct and at the base of the posterior face and a line of them, albeit faint, is traceable on each of the frontal carinae.

Ambulacrals areas fairly wide, the paired ambulacra subpentaloid. Near the apex the ambulacral plates are raised a little at the median vertical sutures, giving a sunken appearance to the poriferous avenues on that part of the test. The pairs of poriferous avenues have a simple adoral divergence, and the pores are uniserial, subequally, and feebly conjugate. Pore-pairs in ambulacra I, II, IV, and V close to the adradial suture.
TEXT-FIG. 1. *Holaster (Labiatozaxis) contius* sp. nov. *a, b, c*, diagrammatic representation of specimen viewed from top, side, and posterior end; based on G.S.M. 74118–21. *d*, under surface showing plating of the pustule, with the labrum (1) spanning the oral margin of sternal plate 2 and touching sternal plate 2; G.S.M. Zm 32. *e*, apical system; G.S.M. 97304. *a–d* approximately natural size, *×4.*
near the apex, remote at the ambitus, the pores slit-like and nearly horizontal, becoming rapidly smaller, closer, and circumflex towards the ambitus. Poriferous avenues in ambulacra II and IV unequal, the anterior series having smaller and more approximated pores. Poriferous avenues of ambulacrum III lodged in the sides of the sulcus and adjacent to the adradial suture, the pores minute and oblique.

Apical system elongate, composed of angular plates flush with the surrounding corona. Oculars II and IV meet in the mid-line and separate the anterior from the posterior genitals. Oculars II and IV and genitals 1 and 4 each support a tubercle. Madreporite covers all of genital 2.

Interambulacral areas built up of long curved plates, averaging eleven plates to a column from apex to ambitus. Plastron composed of a series of alternating cuneiform plates surmounted by an asymmetric, subtrigonal labrum, conforming to the characters of the subgenus.

All plates finely granulate, those of the upper surface studded irregularly with very small tubercules which become larger and more thickly clustered towards the anterior carinæ and around the apical system, and larger still along the sides of the sulcus. A line of milliaries, sometimes irregular or failing at the ambitus, runs vertically up the sulcus, parallel and close to each of the inner lines of pores in ambulacrum III. Most of the lower surface is covered with primary tubercules. On the plastron the tubercules are crowded and are graduated in size, the smallest at the centre of the plastron, the largest at the margins. Periplastronal areas devoid of tubercules. The tubercules have crenulated bosses, perforated summits, and wide scrobicular circles limited by the granules.

Remarks. This echinoid is ubiquitous in the Folkestone Beds of the Folkestone district, ranging from the jacobii Subzone of the nodosocostatum Zone to the mammillatum Zone. The holotype is one of three specimens found in association in the regularis Subzone, on which horizon the species reaches its maximum. Specimens used in this account are listed below under the registration numbers of the Geological Survey Museum:

97304 mammillatum Zone (top stone band), Copt Point, Folkestone, Kent.
74118–20; 74121 tardefalcata Zone (regularis Subzone, 15–25 ft. below 97304), East Cliff, Folkestone.
Zm 32, 35 tardefalcata Zone (regularis Subzone, bottom stone band), as before.
97305 tardefalcata Zone (regularis Subzone), Mill Point, Folkestone.
97306 tardefalcata Zone (trivialis Subzone), Sandling Junction sandpit, Hythe, Kent.
Zm. 522, 653 nodosocostatum Zone (jacobii Subzone, Red Bed), as before.

Holaster (Labrastis) latissimus Agassiz is a more orbicular species with rather more pronounced anterior carinae; the profile lacks the posterior descent of H. (L.) cantianus, tuberculation is not so strong on the apex, and the ambulacral plates are more numerous, the poriferous avenues generally narrower. Unlike the Cenomanian form figured by d’Orbigny (1853, pl. 387–8), the English Upper Albian specimens of this species are less elevated than H. cantianus (cf. Wright 1878, pl. 67, fig. 2b). Holaster amplus d’Orbigny, described from the Albian of Grandpré (Ardennes), France, and united with H. latissimus by Desor (1858, p. 337), is an orbicular, depressed form with long, sloping posterior end. The earlier Lower Greensand forms, H. benstedi Forbes (Lower Aptian) and H. wrighti Lambert (Upper Aptian), like the foreign Aptian H. cordatus Dubois and H. prestensis Desor, are much smaller and more rotund.
REFERENCES


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