
**Etymology:** From gigas (= giant, Gr.).

**Description:** The asteroliths have a broad central area and long arms and consist of 6 segments.

The distal surface of the central area is almost flat and without a central knob; in some specimens very shallow depressions can be observed. The depressions extend up to the very centre. No ridges are present on the distal faces of the arms.

Pl. 36, figs 4-10

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The arms show a tiny V-shaped notch at their tips which produces two very short and pointed limbs. No calcareous filling is present between these limbs. A very large third limb is present perpendicular to the proximal surface of the arms. In side view these third limbs are often as large as the free length of the arms. In some specimens the trifurcations are present on only some of the arms.

In proximal view a small stellate central knob can be seen on the central area with its points orientated towards the arms. The points of the proximal knob merge into the ridges which are present on the central area and along the median axes of the arms.

**Differential diagnosis:** *E. giganteus* is readily distinguished from *E. calcaris* by the large size of its central area, the thicker arms and the larger perpendicular third limbs of the trifurcations. *E. kugleri* has a similarly large central area but the arms are shorter and thinner and the third branches that appear occasionally at the tips of its arms are smaller and oblique.

*E. surculus* exhibits pronounced features on the distal surface of its central area and ridges on the same surface of its arms. Moreover, the third branch of the trifurcations of *E. surculus* is smaller and extends obliquely relative to the arms and not perpendicular to the arms as in *E. giganteus*.

**Holotype:** Pl. 36, figs. 5-6, sample: 231-110, coordinates: 100.0/6.6.

**Isotypes:** Pl. 36, figs. 4, 7, sample: 231-117; Pl. 36, figs. 8-10, sample: 231-113.

**Type level:** *M. convallis* Subzone.

**Type locality:** D.S.D.P. Site 231, Indian Ocean.

**Occurrence:** This species has been observed from the *E. hamatus* Subzone to the *E. pentaradiatus* Subzone.