

Morphology and ecological setting of the basal echinoid genus *Rhenechinus* from the early Devonian of Spain and Germany

Andrew B. Smith, Mike Reich, and Samuel Zamora

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Based on new material from Germany and Spain, the echinoid “*Lepidocentrus*” ibericus from the Early Devonian (Emsian) of northern Spain is shown to be congeneric with *Rhenechinus* from the Hunsrück Slate of south–western Germany. New information on the lantern, pedicellariae and internal structure of the theca is provided, and confirms this genus as a member of the Echinocystitidae–Proterocidaridae clade and the most primitive of all Devonian echinoids. The two environmental settings in which *Rhenechinus* is found are very different: the Spanish specimens come from a relatively shallow–water bryozoan meadow setting while the German specimens are preserved in a deep–water setting. We deduce that the rare echinoid specimens from the Hunsrück Slate are all allochthonous, whereas the Spanish material is preserved in situ.

Key words: Echinodermata, Echinoidea, morphology, phylogeny, Devonian, Spain, Germany.

Andrew Smith [a.smith@nhm.ac.uk] and Samuel Zamora [samuel@unizar.es],
Department of Palaeontology, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London
SW7 5BD, UK; Mike Reich [mreich@gwdg.de], Geowissenschaftliches Zentrum der Universität
Göttingen, Museum, Sammlungen & Geopark, Goldschmidtstr. 1-5, D–37077 Göttingen, Germany.

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