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Confirmation of the poriferan status of favositid tabulates

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Reported are findings of calcitic pseudomorphs of monaxonic sclerites (heloclones and ophirhabds) occuring as highly ordered vertical tracts and subhorizontal strands in the midwall of dalcareous skeletal tubes of a common Silurian favositid species, *Favosites hisingeri*, from Gotland. The discovery ends conclusively the current controversy about the nature of favositids and related tabulomorphs in favour of the neglected early suggestion of Kirkpatrick (19 1 1) that these fossils can be basal calcareous secretions of siliceous sponges similar to those in living *Merlia normani*. The type of sclerites found in *F. hisingeri* and other favositids indicate that favositids are closely related to fossil and extant sponges classified within the order Lithistida (class Demospongia) as the so-called sublithistids.

Key words: favositids, tabulomorphs, sclerites, affinity, sponges, Silurian.

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