

Contents

Preface	vii
BEAUDOIN, A. B. & HEAD, M. J. Drawing a line in the sand: identifying and characterizing boundaries in the geological record	1
MACLEOD, N. Identifying Phanerozoic extinction controls: statistical considerations and preliminary results	11
DORAN, N. A., ARNOLD, A. J., PARKER, W. C. & HUFFER, F. W. Deviation from Red Queen behaviour at stratigraphic boundaries: evidence for directional recovery	35
ZHANG, S. & BARNES, C. R. Late Cambrian and Early Ordovician conodont communities from platform and slope facies, western Newfoundland: a statistical approach	47
ZHANG, S. & BARNES, C. R. Conodont bio-events, cladistics and response to glacio-eustasy, Ordovician–Silurian boundary through Llandovery, Anticosti Basin, Québec	73
MEI, S., HENDERSON, C. M. & CAO, C. Conodont sample-population approach to defining the base of the Changhsingian Stage, Lopingian Series, Upper Permian	105
MCLEAN, D., OWENS, B. & BODMAN, D. Palynostratigraphy of the Upper Carboniferous Langsettian–Duckmantian Stage boundary in Britain	123
NIKITENKO, B. L. & MICKEY, M. B. Foraminifera and ostracodes across the Pliensbachian–Toarcian boundary in the Arctic Realm (stratigraphy, palaeobiogeography and biofacies)	137
HUNT, C. O. Palynostratigraphy of the classic Portland and Purbeck sequences of Dorset, southern England, and the correlation of Jurassic–Cretaceous boundary beds in the Tethyan and Boreal realms	175
HART, M. B. The mid-Cenomanian non-sequence: a micropalaeontological detective story	187
SIKORA, P. J., HOWE, R. W., GALE, A. S. & STEIN, J. A. Chronostratigraphy of proposed Turonian–Coniacian (Upper Cretaceous) stage boundary stratotypes: Salzgitter-Salder, Germany, and Wagon Mound, New Mexico, USA	207

ERNÁNDEZ-MARRÓN, M. T., LÓPEZ-MARTÍNEZ, N., FONOLLÁ-OCETE, J. F. & VALLE-HERNÁNDEZ, M. F. The palynological record across the Cretaceous–Tertiary boundary in differing palaeogeographical settings from the southern Pyrenees, Spain	243
GEDL, P. Dinoflagellate cyst record of the deep-sea Cretaceous–Tertiary boundary at Uzgruň, Carpathian Mountains, Czech Republic	257
VAN EETVELDE, Y. & DUPUIS, C. Upper Palaeocene and Lower Eocene interval in the Dieppe–Hampshire Basin: biostratigraphic analysis based on pyritized diatoms	275
ĚLEWA, A. M. T. & MORSI, A.-M. M. Palaeobiotope analysis and palaeoenvironmental reconstruction of the Palaeocene–Early Eocene ostracodes from east-central Sinai, Egypt	293
GEDL, P. Dinoflagellate cyst record of the Eocene–Oligocene boundary succession in flysch deposits at Leluchów, Carpathian Mountains, Poland	309
GUERSTEIN, G. R., GULER, M. V. & CASADÍO, S. Palynostratigraphy and palaeoenvironments across the Oligocene–Miocene boundary within the Centinela Formation, southwestern Argentina	325
Index	345

Caption for cover

This is one of the most spectacular and well-known views in the Canadian Rockies: Cirrus Mountain and the Weeping Wall seen from the Big Bend viewpoint in northern Banff National Park, Alberta.

Several important boundaries, both geological and ecological, are evident in this image. The distinct break in slope across the centre, edged by trees, marks the boundary between the Upper Devonian and Lower Mississippian. The steep lower slopes of Cirrus Mountain are formed in grey limestone of the Upper Devonian Palliser Formation. These cliffs are known as the Weeping Wall, so called for the number of waterfalls that cascade down the face. The more gently sloping mid-slopes of Cirrus Mountain are formed by shales of the Banff Formation. The upper slopes are formed from the more resistant dark grey cliff-forming rocks of the Rundle Group. Cirrus Mountain rises to 3215 masl, giving almost 1600 m of relief in this view. To the left of the main peak, in the notch, lies the Mount Coleman normal fault, with the lower peak at the far left capped by rocks of the Palliser Formation. This three-part geological sequence (Palliser–Banff–Rundle) occurs widely in the Front Ranges and in places, as here, the Main Ranges of the Canadian Rockies.

The treeline, an important modern ecological boundary, is also well marked along the slopes of Cirrus Mountain. In this area, the upper subalpine forest is dominated by Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) with some Rocky Mountain Sub-alpine Fir (*Abies bifolia*). Whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) is often a component of the treeline zone. In this view southward, down the North Saskatchewan River valley, the valley floor lies at about 1600 masl. The Icefields Parkway (Hwy 93), a major tourist route, parallels the river.

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