



Biodiversity loss by the study of aberrant microfossils and their relative livings.

Amalia Spina, Roberto Rettori, Simonetta Cirilli, Nicola Mitillo, Andrea Sorci

Highlights:

- Increase of teratological terrestrial and marine organic-walled microfossils associated with mass extinction events.
- Interaction with other research lines: biodiversity loss across the Earth history.
- Other: methods for the thermal maturity of organic matter.

- Increase of teratological terrestrial and marine organic-walled microfossils associated with mass extinction events.

Ambito/i del PTSR interessato/i

Ambito di ricerca nuovo: 1

TITOLO: Earth System and Global Changes

In particolare per le seguenti tematiche

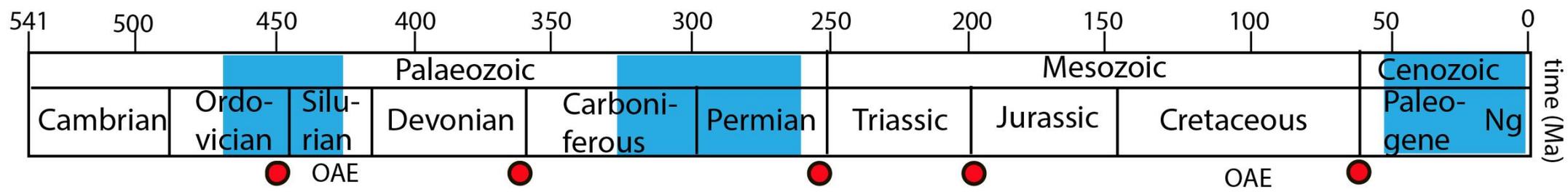
- le cause e conseguenze delle variazioni climatiche nella storia del pianeta Terra e le maggiori estinzioni di massa;
- le relazioni tra i cambiamenti globali e lo sviluppo sostenibile;

Ambito di ricerca già attivato: 10

TITOLO: Geocronologia relativa e assoluta

In particolare per le seguenti tematiche

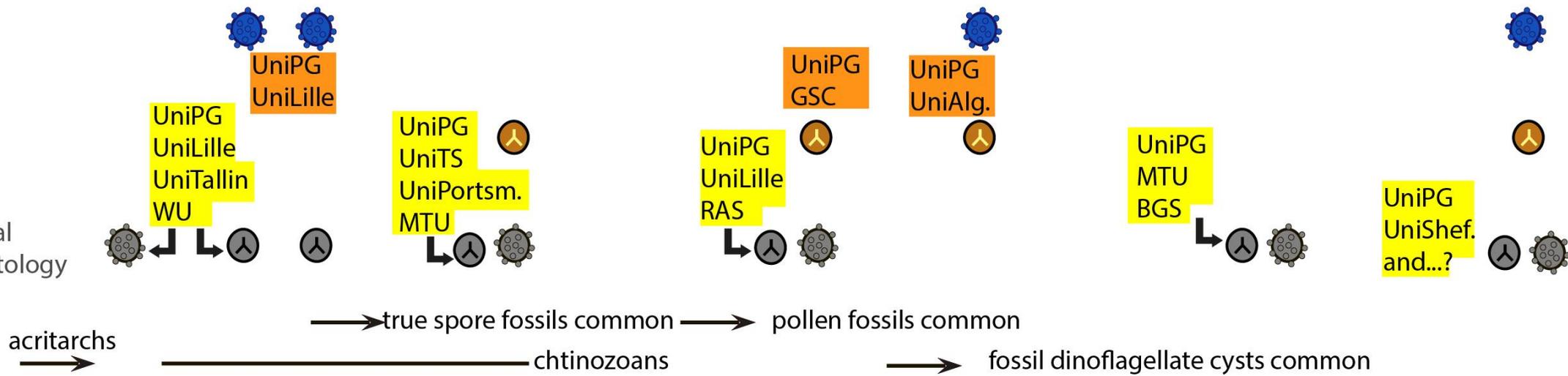
- studi di paleontologia sistematica.
- studi sull'evoluzione nel tempo degli esseri viventi attraverso indagini paleontologiche



Marine teratology

Terrestrial teratology

Discovery potential for additional teratology

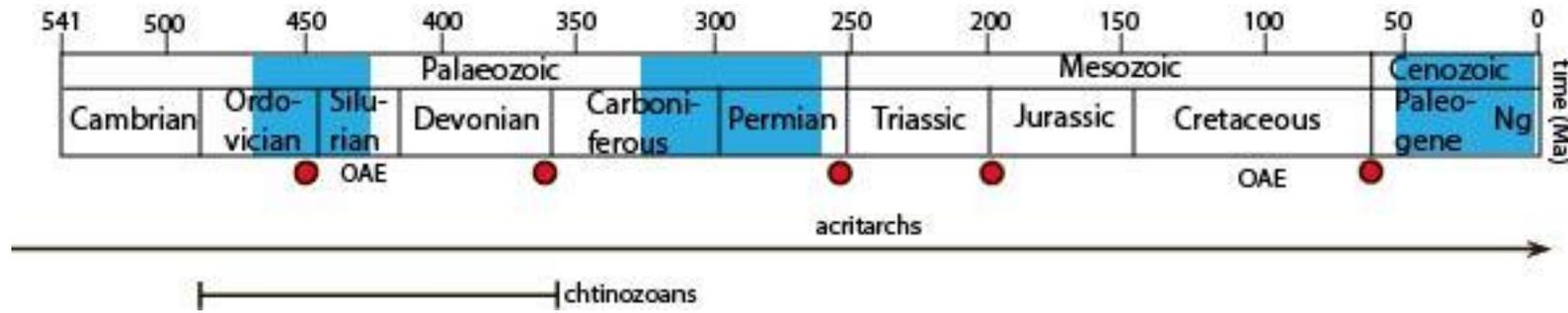


Big 5	Phanerozoic Ice ages	terrestrial teratological palynomorphs (pollen/spores)
OAEs: Oceanic Anoxic Events (biogeochemical events)		marine teratological palynomorphs (acritarchs/chitinozoans/dinocysts)
currently unreported and/or to be studied teratological palynomorphs		

Aberration in organic microfossils as a proxy for understanding the extinction events through time

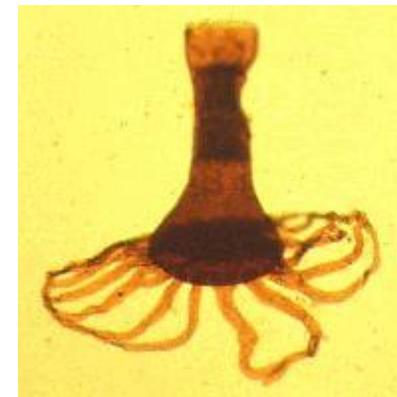
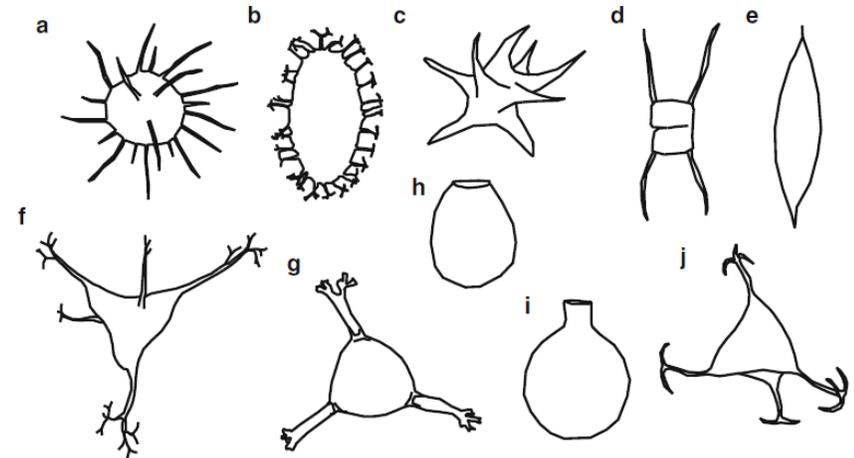
Objectives:

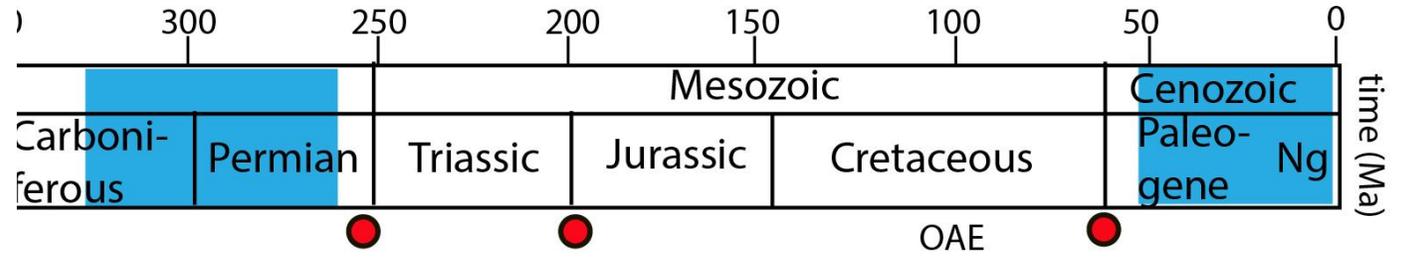
- To confirm the emerging temporal pattern of teratologies as harbingers of mass extinctions, across terrestrial and marine realms, across biological groups & kingdoms, and across geological time. **Are palynomorphs the proverbial ‘canaries in the coal mine’, i.e. the first victims that announce catastrophic extinctions?**
- To compare existing hypotheses for malformation for individual events and search for common denominators.
- To test and ground-truth our emerging hypotheses for the causes of malformations using experiments and modern analogue settings.
- To explore if causes for malformation actually scale up to the proximate mechanisms for mass extinctions.



Nomenclature:

- Acritarchs: utilitarian category to classify all organic-walled microfossils of unknown biological affinity (Evitt, 1963). This definition clearly excludes a biological interpretation: the organisms that produced the acritarchs could be of diverse origins, marine and non-marine, planktonic and non-planktonic (Servais et al., 1997; Spina and Vecoli, 2009).
- Chitinozoans: extinct group of organic-walled microfossils of uncertain affinity. Knowledge about their biology and ecology is limited and has been gathered indirectly from associated fauna and facies. They are interpreted to be pelagic and marine. They have been assigned to various groups, from protozoans to dinoflagellates and fungi or eggs of soft-bodied metazoans that had a planktic mode of life (Paris and Verniers, 2005).





HFSP Research Grants

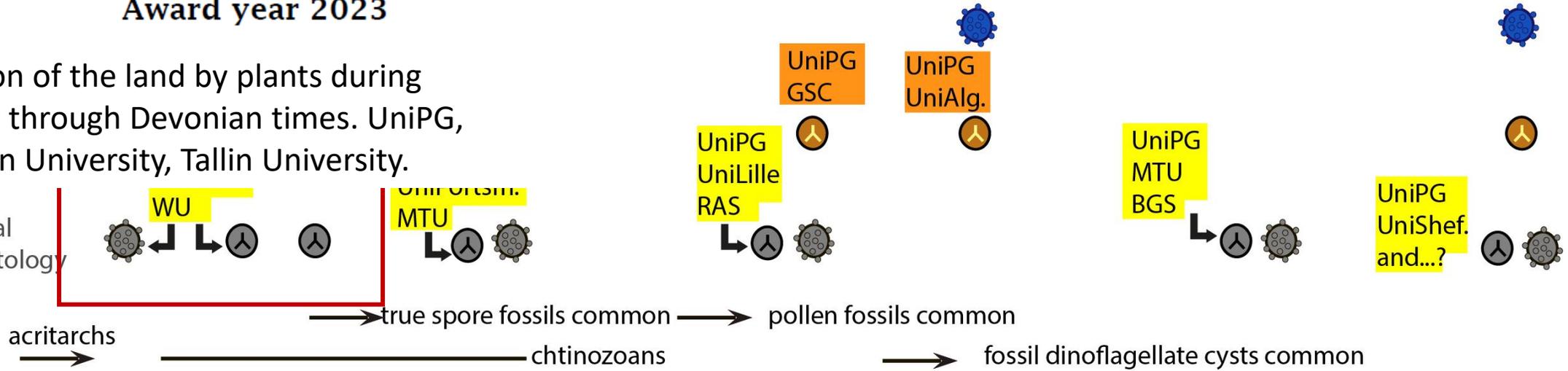
Award year 2023

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The invasion of the land by plants during Cambrian? through Devonian times. UniPG, Washington University, Tallin University.

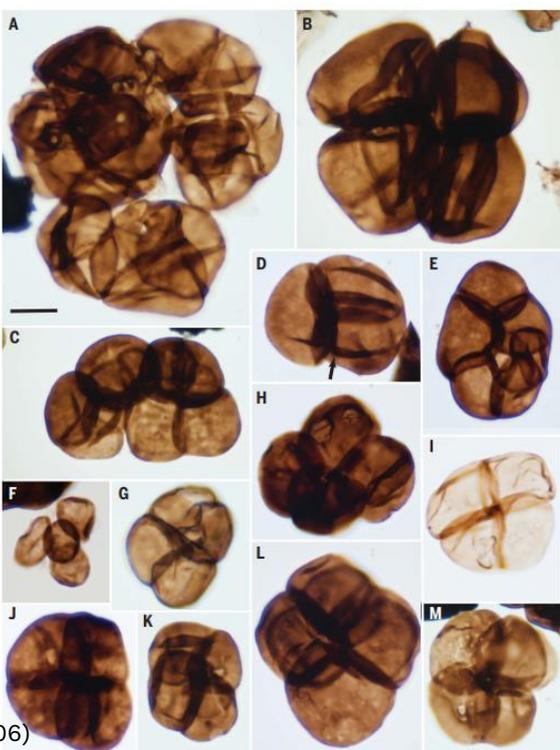
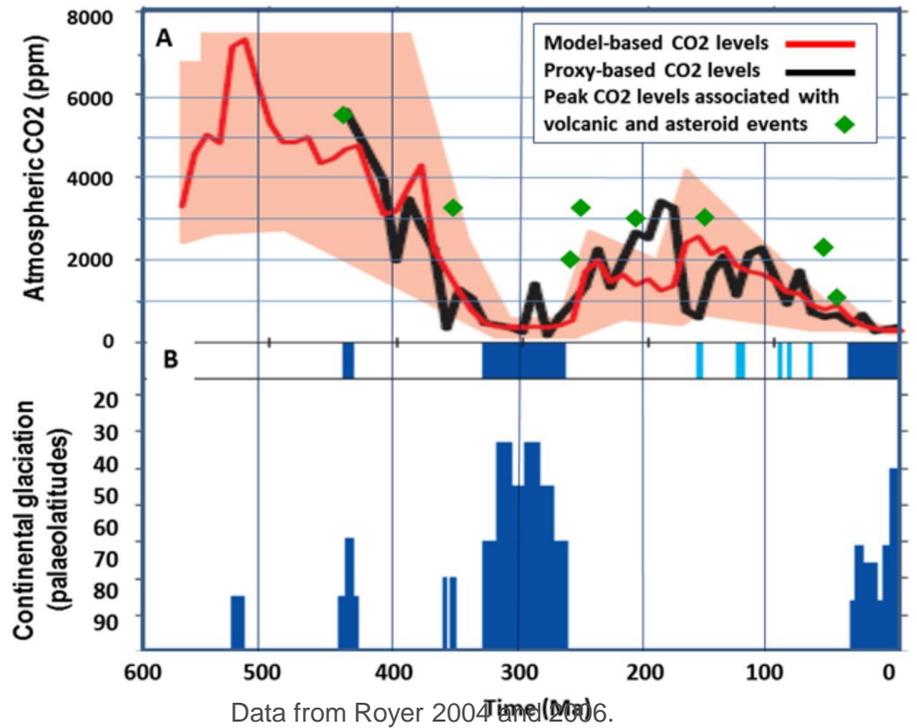
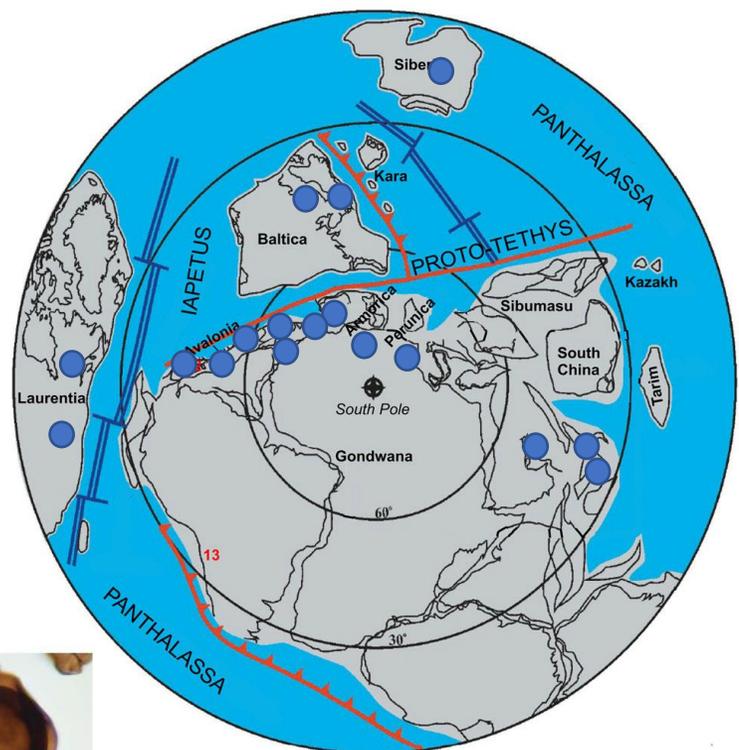
Discovery potential for additional teratology



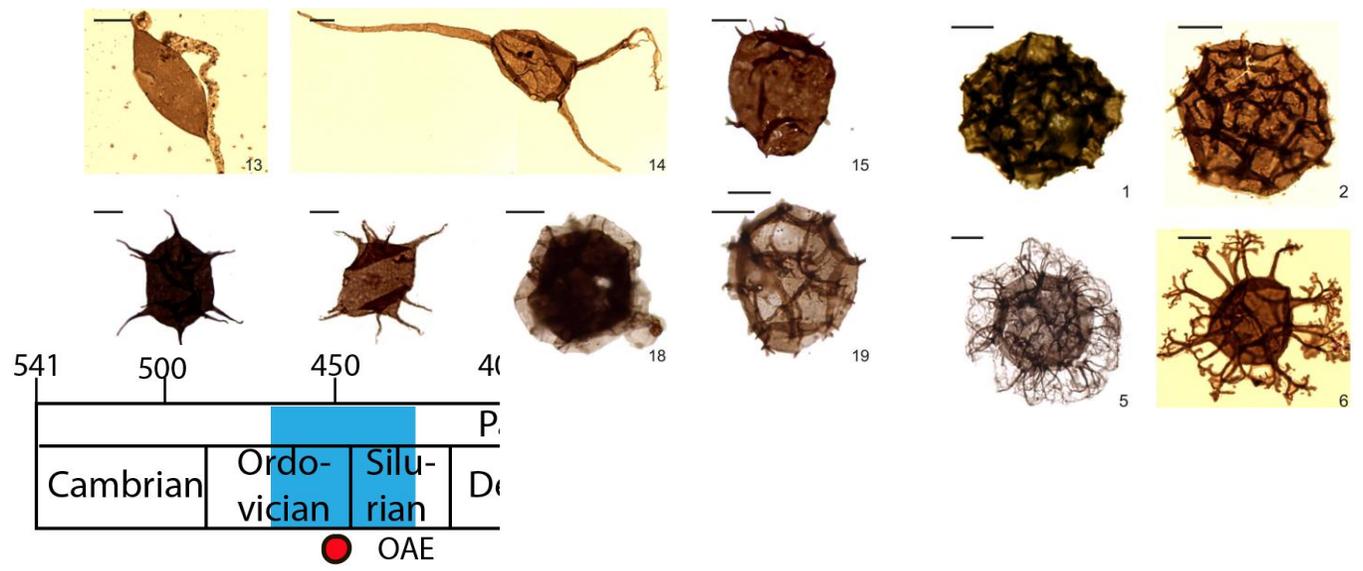
Big 5	Phanerozoic Ice ages	terrestrial teratological palynomorphs (pollen/spores)
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currently unreported and/or to be studied teratological palynomorphs		

HFSP Research Grants
 Award year 2023

The invasion of the land by plants during Cambrian? through Devonian times. UniPG, Washington University, Tallin University.



From Spina et al. (2021)



Late Ordovician (about 455-445 ma) mass extinction: glacial event

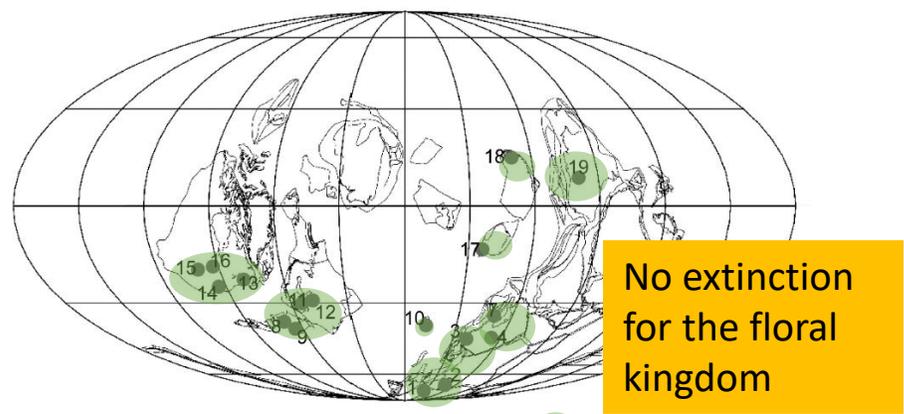


Application guidelines for HFSP Research Grants Award year 2023

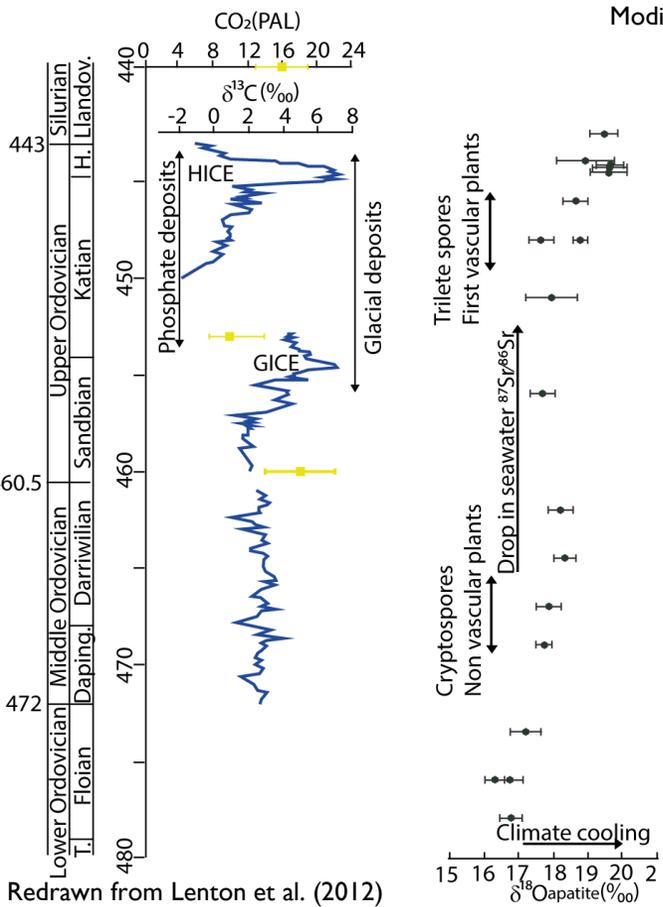
The invasion of the land by plants during Cambrian? through Devonian times. UniPG, Washington University, Tallin University.



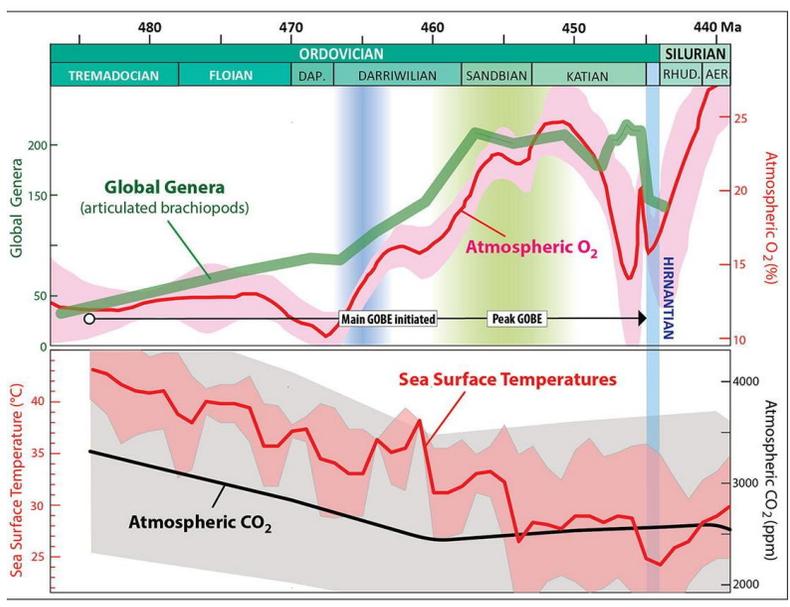
From Achab and Paris (2007); modified by Vecoli et al. (2011)



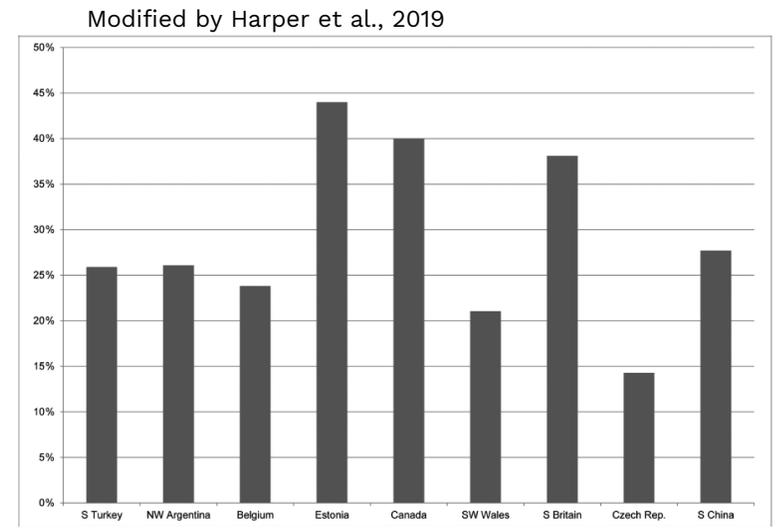
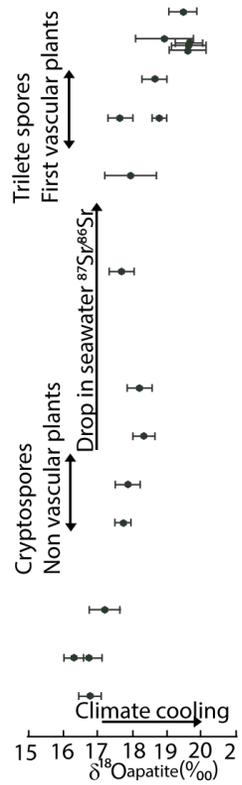
Modified from Spina (2015) Flora



Redrawn from Lenton et al. (2012)

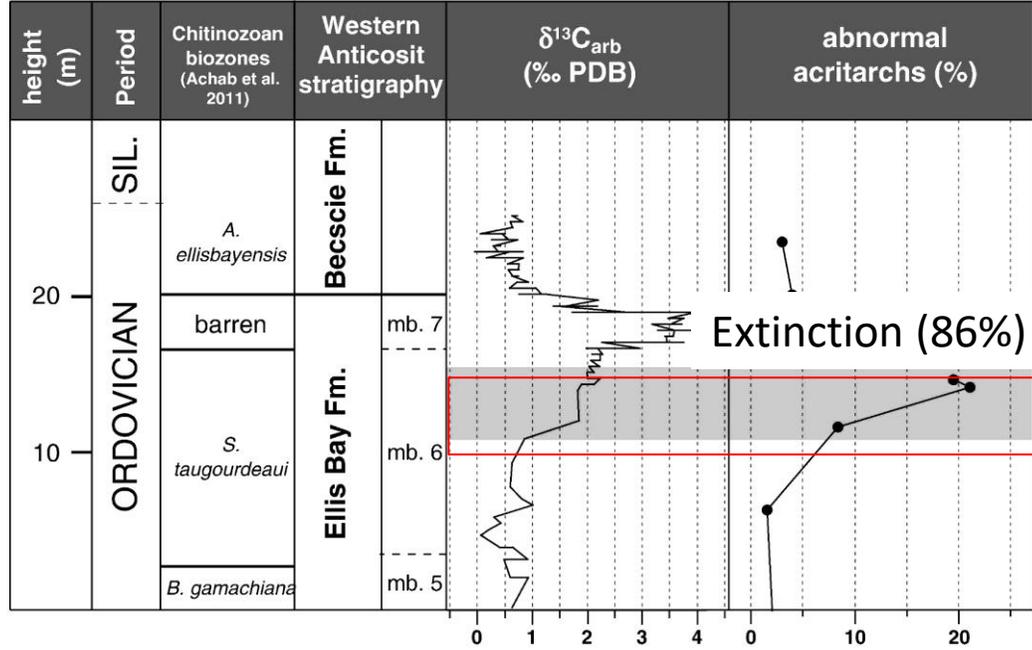
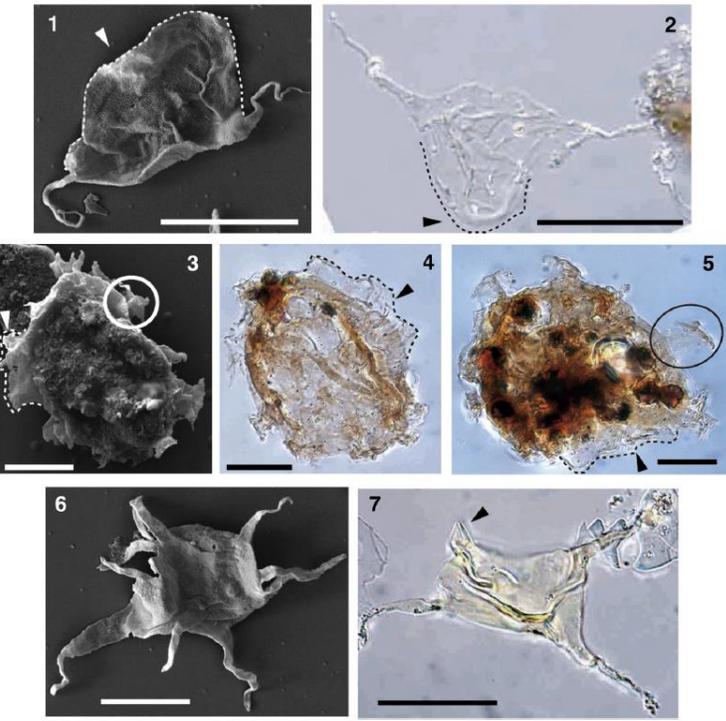
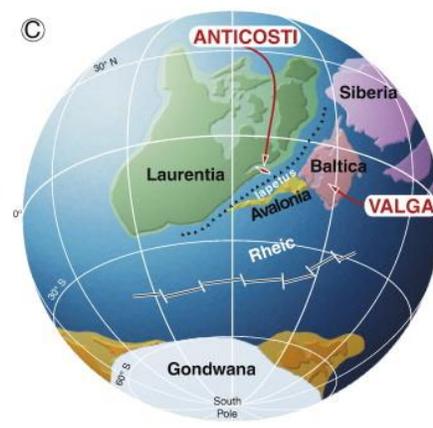
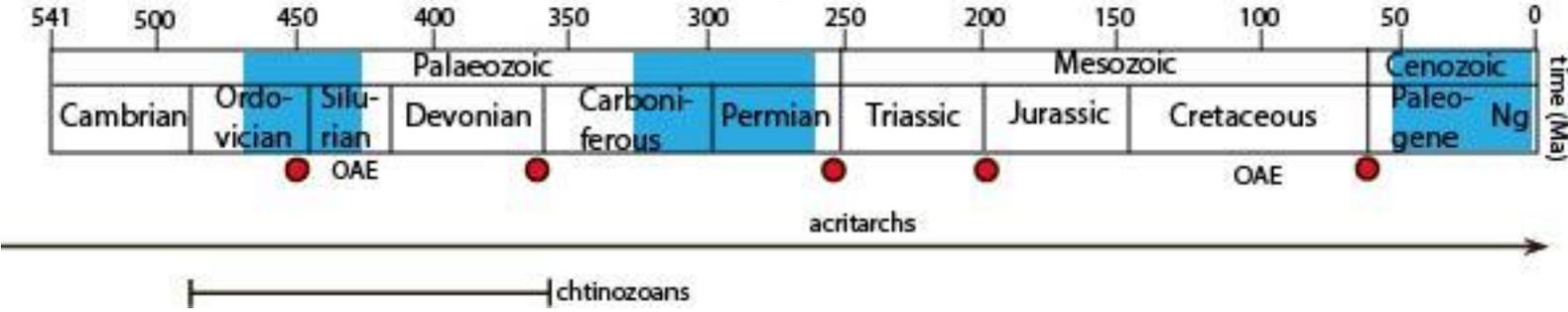


From Cocks and Torsvik (2021)

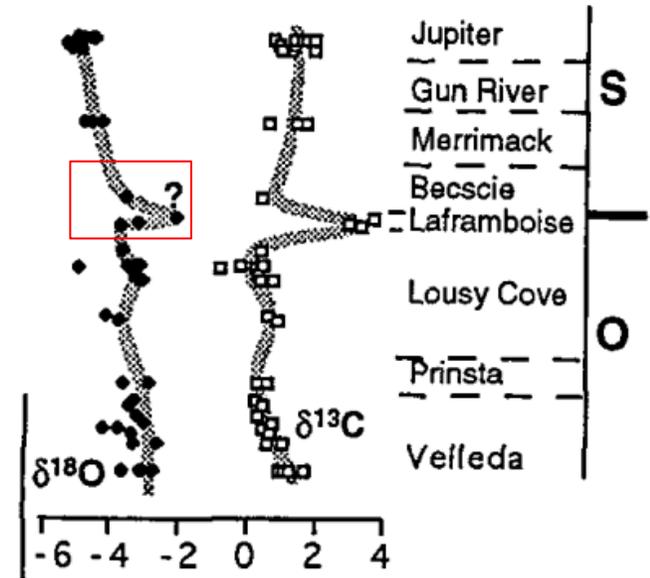


Similarity index among cryptospore assemblages (percentage of shared species on total species; from Spina, 2015)

Late Ordovician teratological events



Anticosti Island Canada



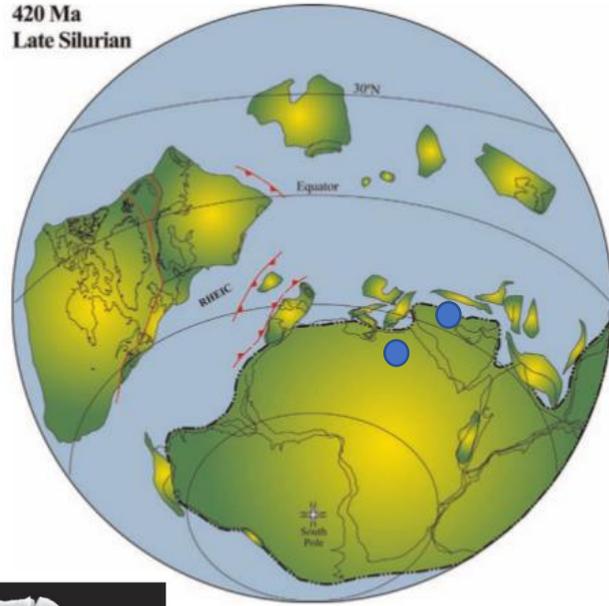
From Delabroye et al. (2011); Vecoli et al. (2011); Spina, 2015)

From Delabroye et al. (2011); Vecoli et al. (2011)

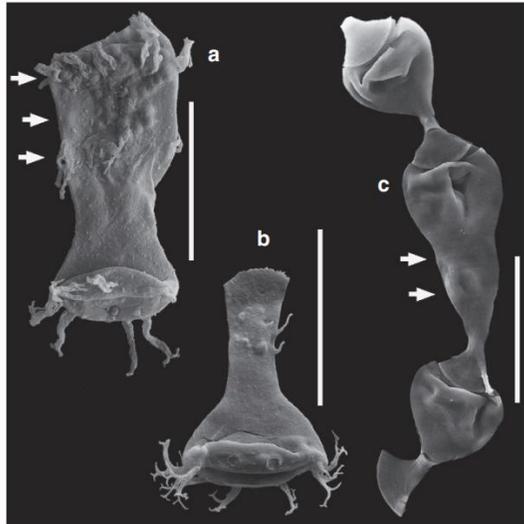
From Brenchley et al. (1994)

Ordovician and Silurian teratological events

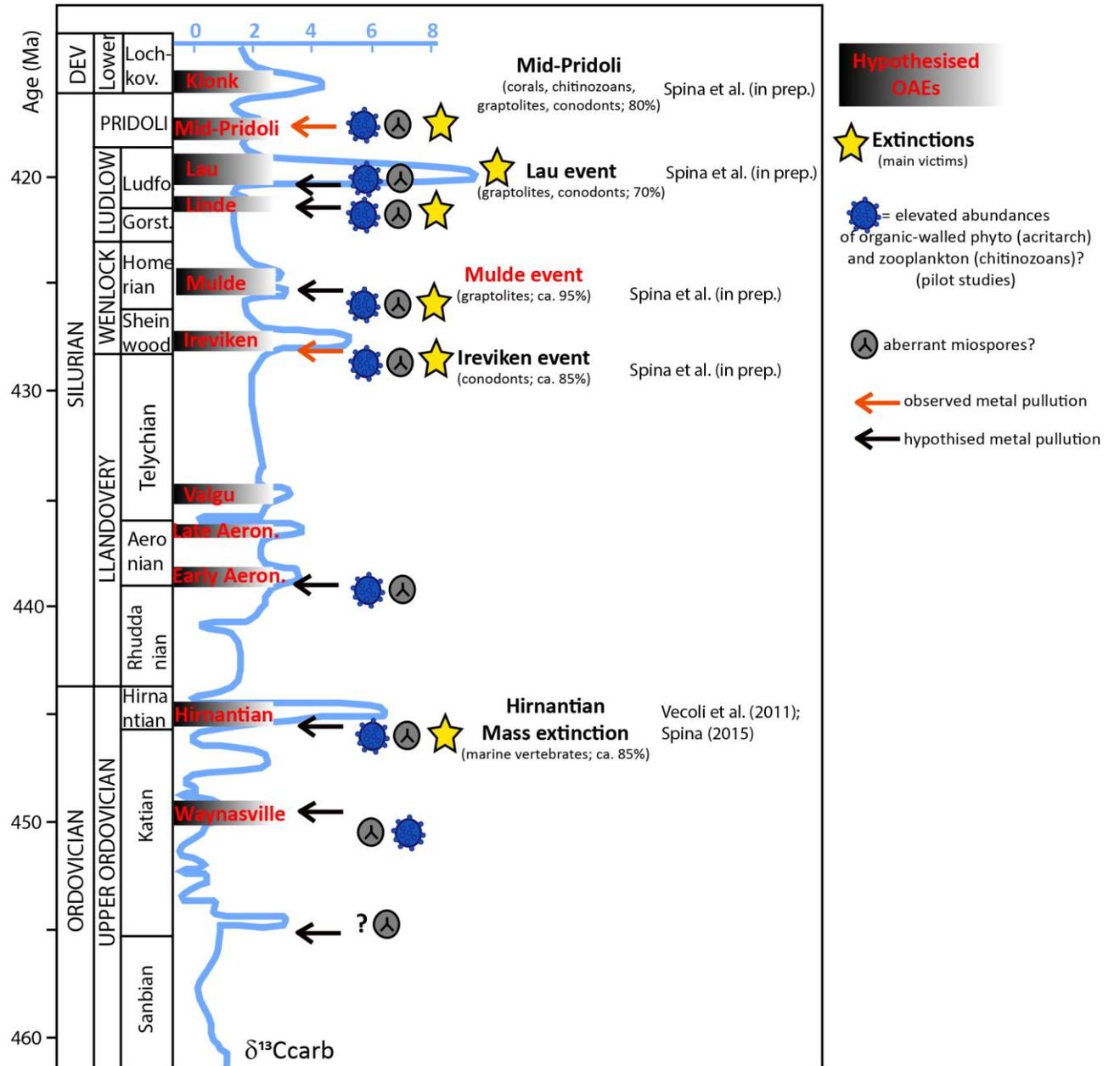
● This research

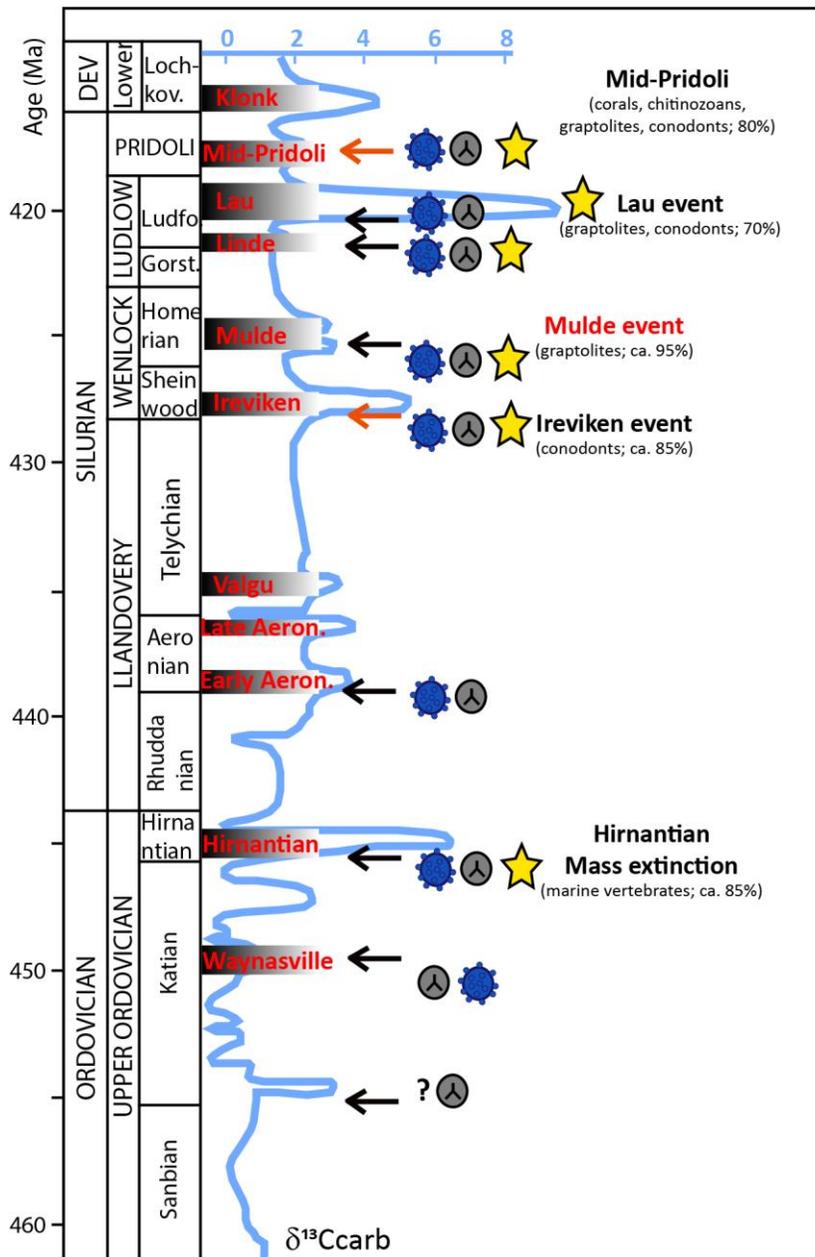


(Palaeogeographic map from Cocks and Torsvik, 2002)



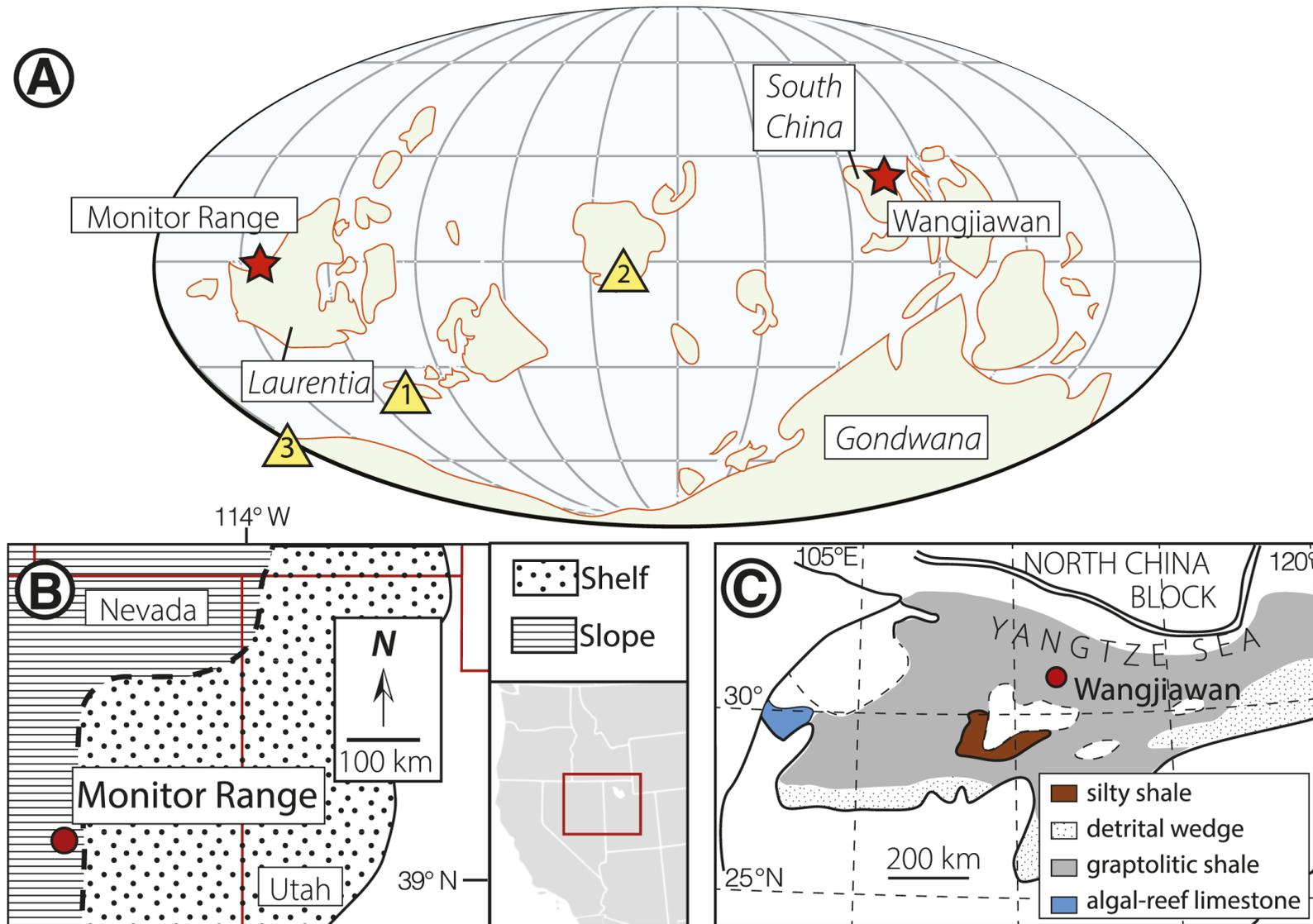
(Vandenbroucke et al., 2015)



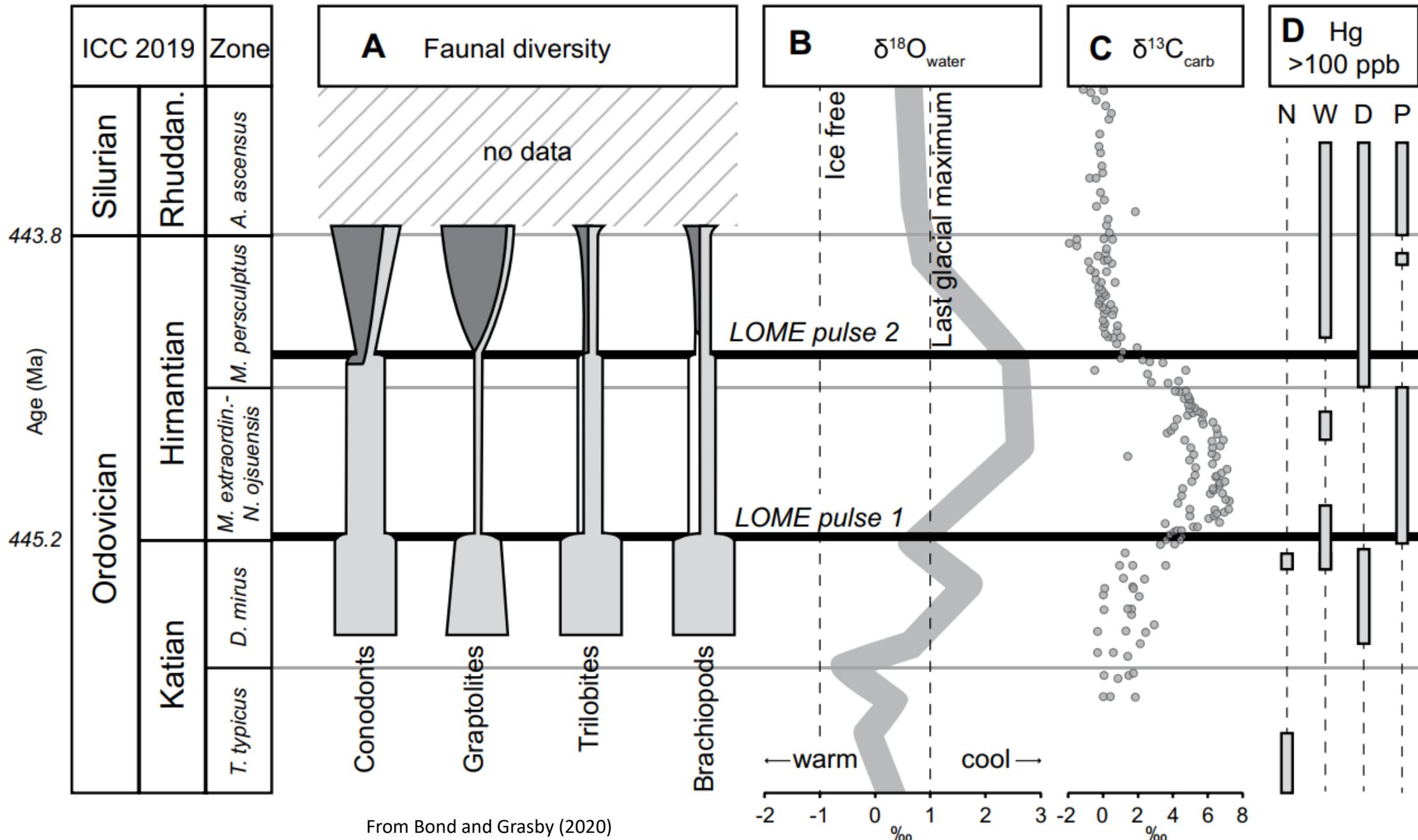


Possible causes for the Ordovician and Silurian teratological events:

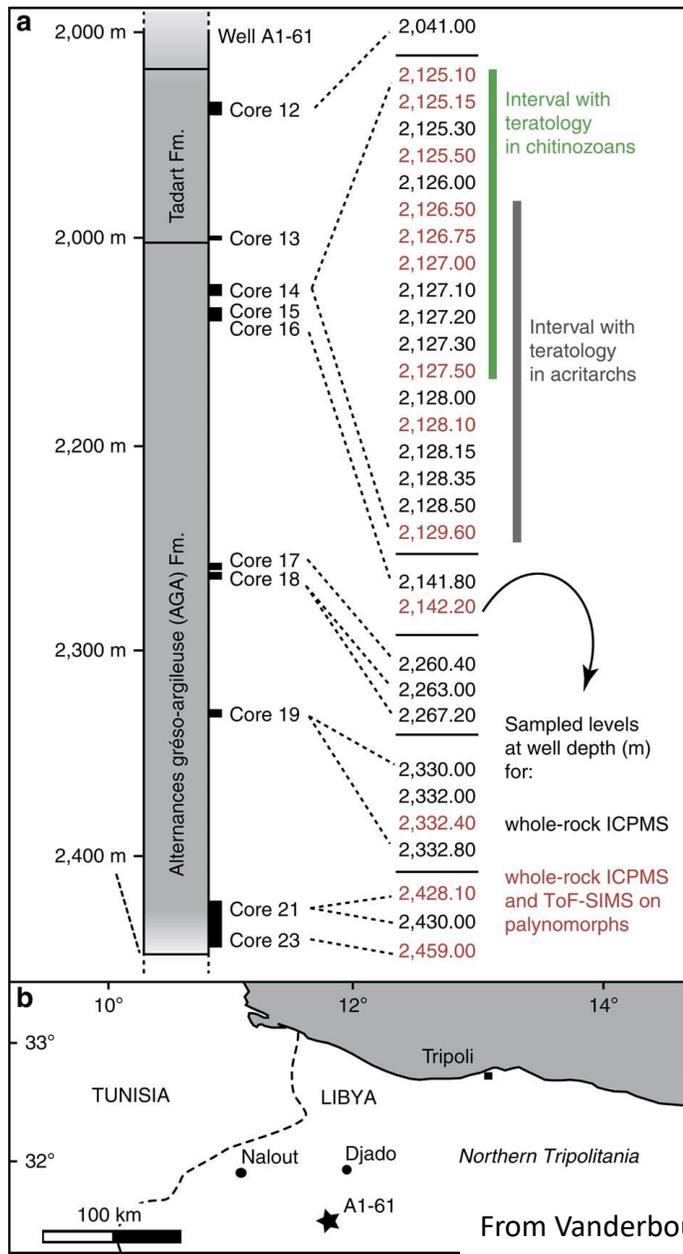
- Volcanism
- Upwelling of anoxic/dysoxic waters
- Heavy metal pollution



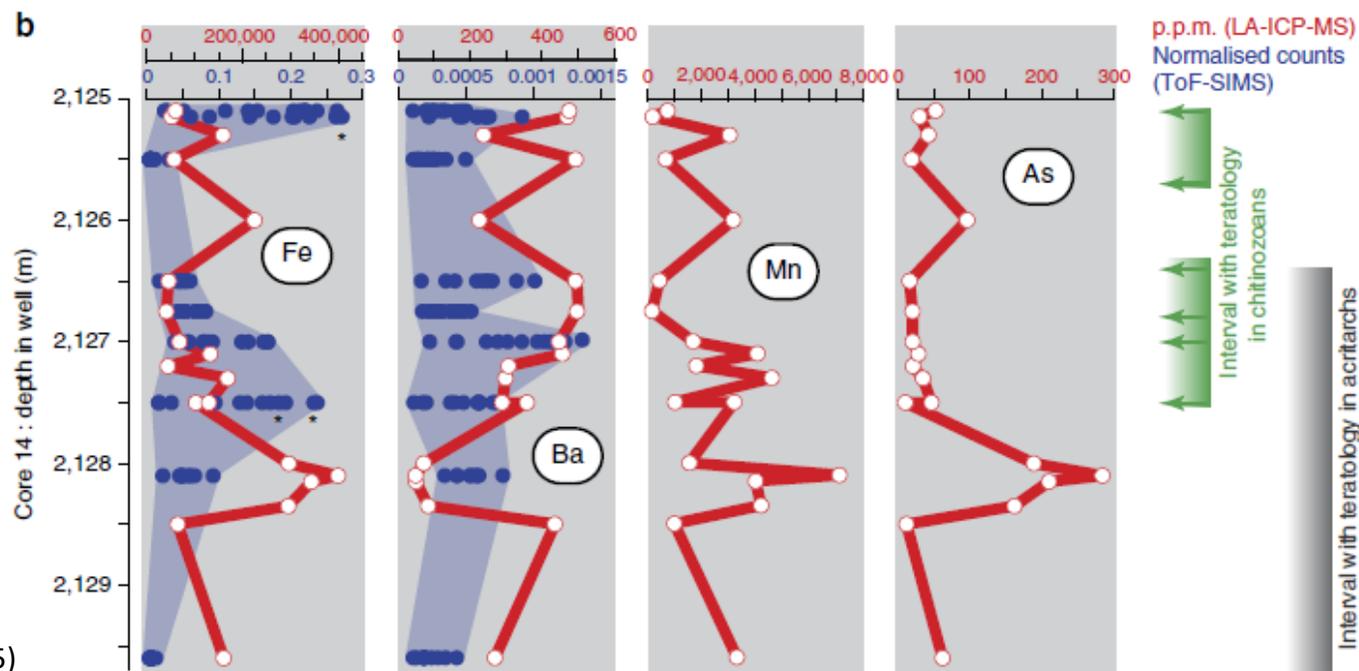
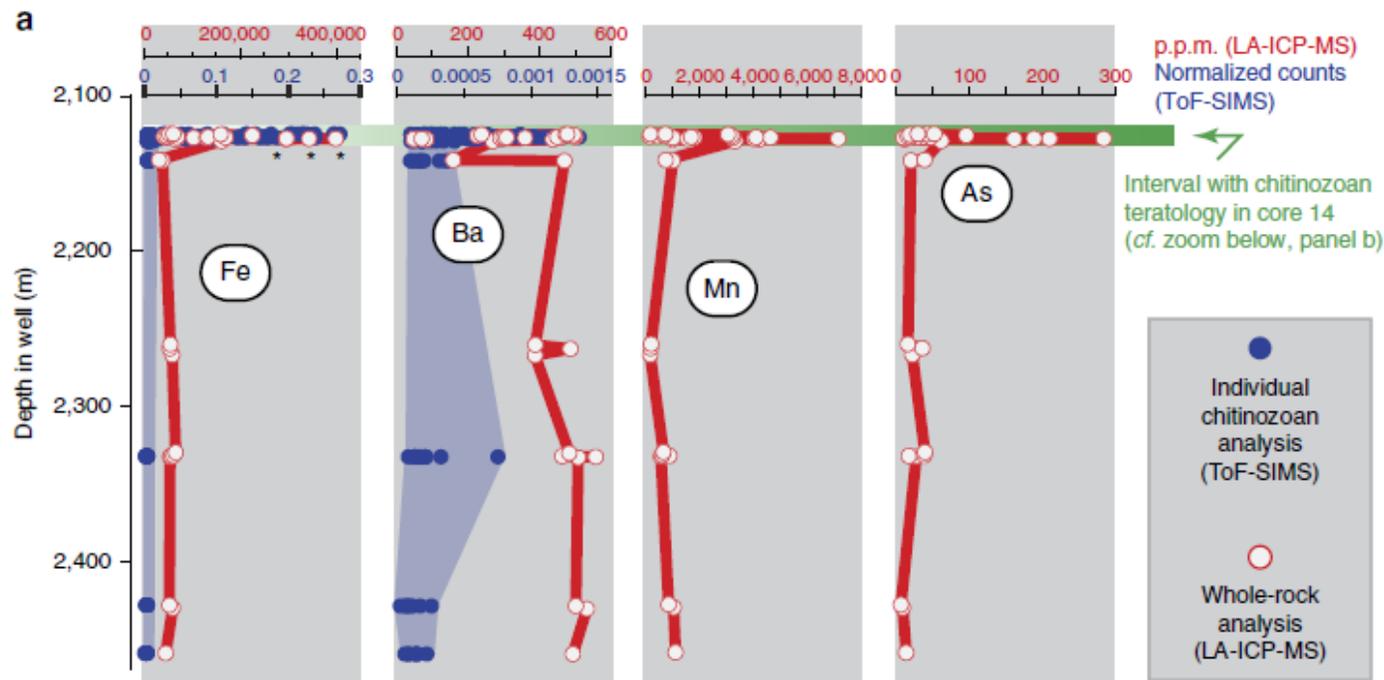
Late Ordovician paleogeography and study locations. A: Paleogeographic reconstruction at 446 Ma, modified from Kilian et al. (2016). Stars mark locations of stratigraphic sections at the Monitor Range (western Laurentia; Nevada, USA) and Wangjiawan (south China). Triangles mark the locations of Late Ordovician mafic provinces: 1—Cape St. Mary's sills, Newfoundland; 2—Suordakh, Siberia; 3—Sierra del Tigre, Argentina. B: Location map for the Monitor Range (after Jones et al., 2016). C: Location map for Wangjiawan (after Gorjan et al., 2012).

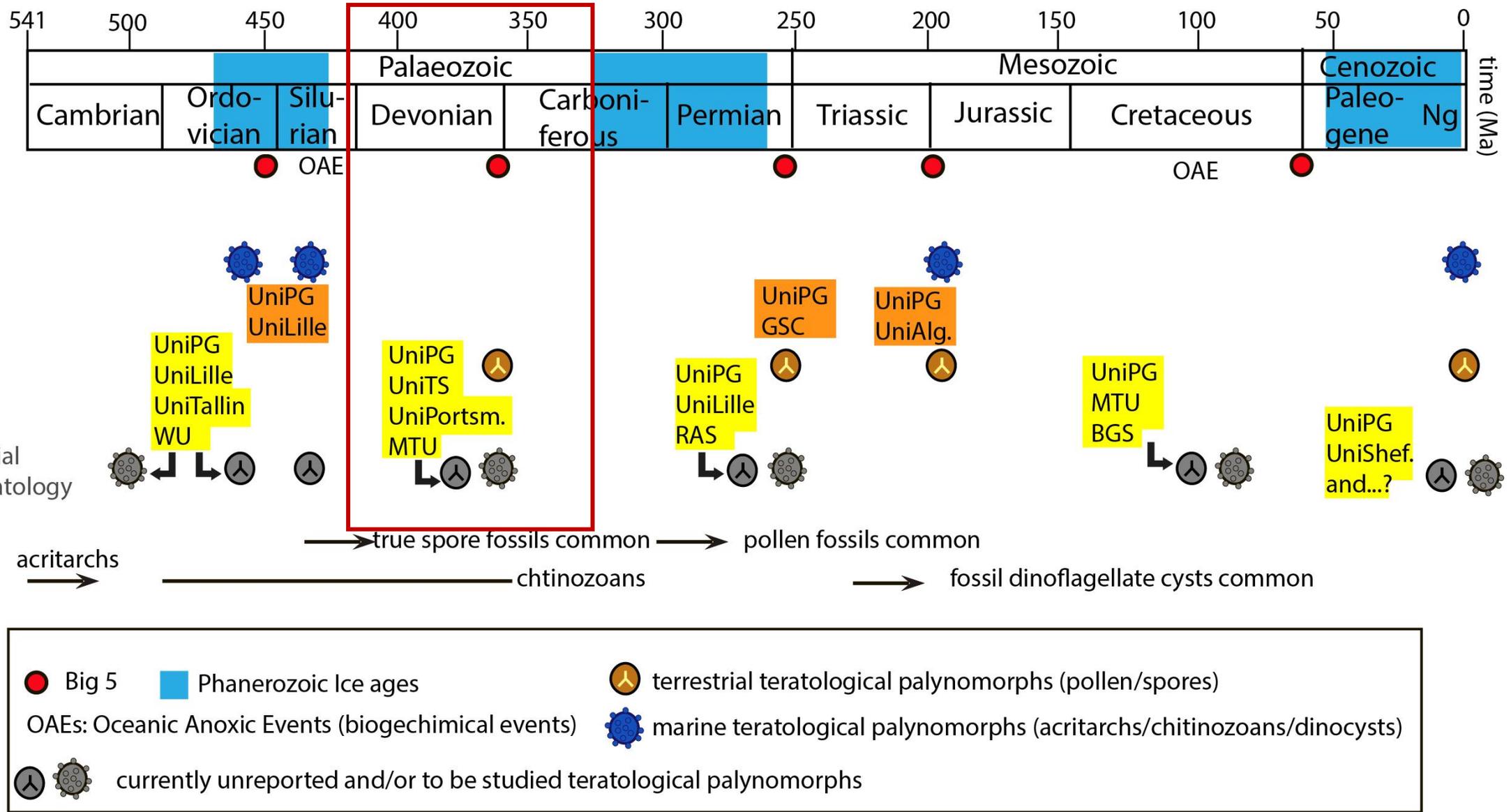


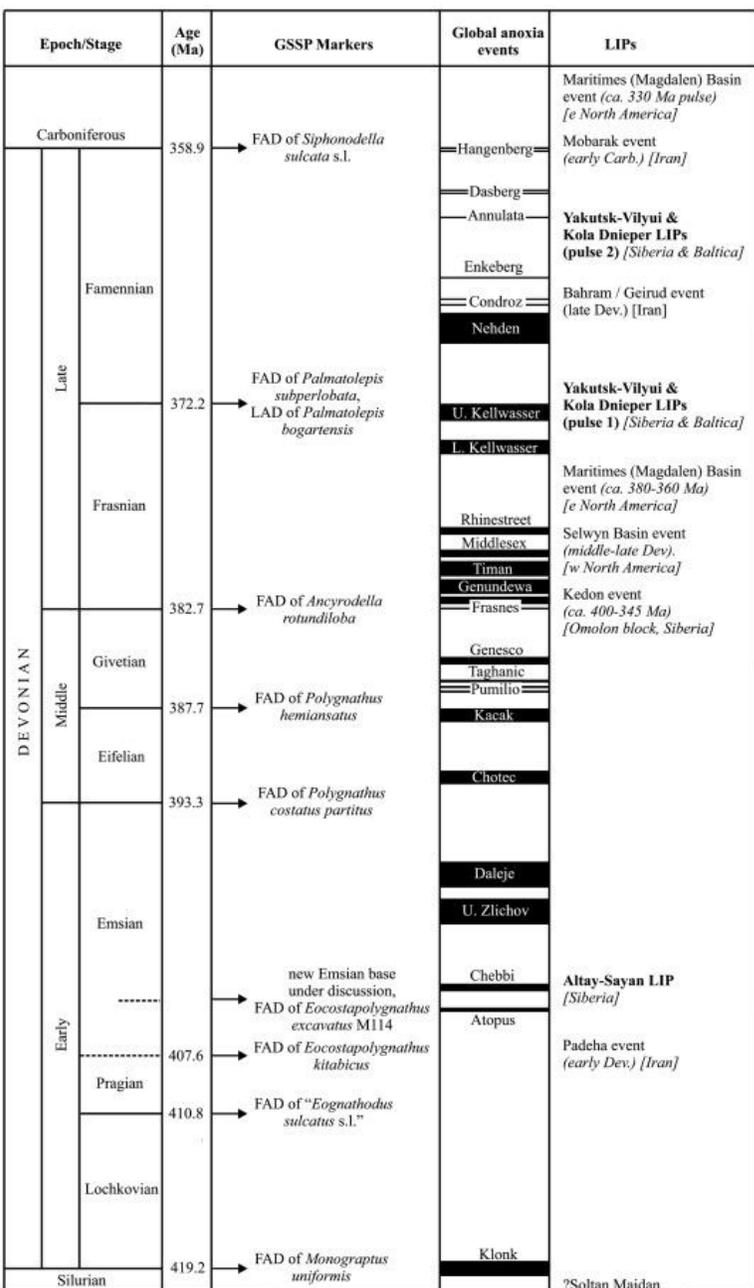
Silurian OAEs



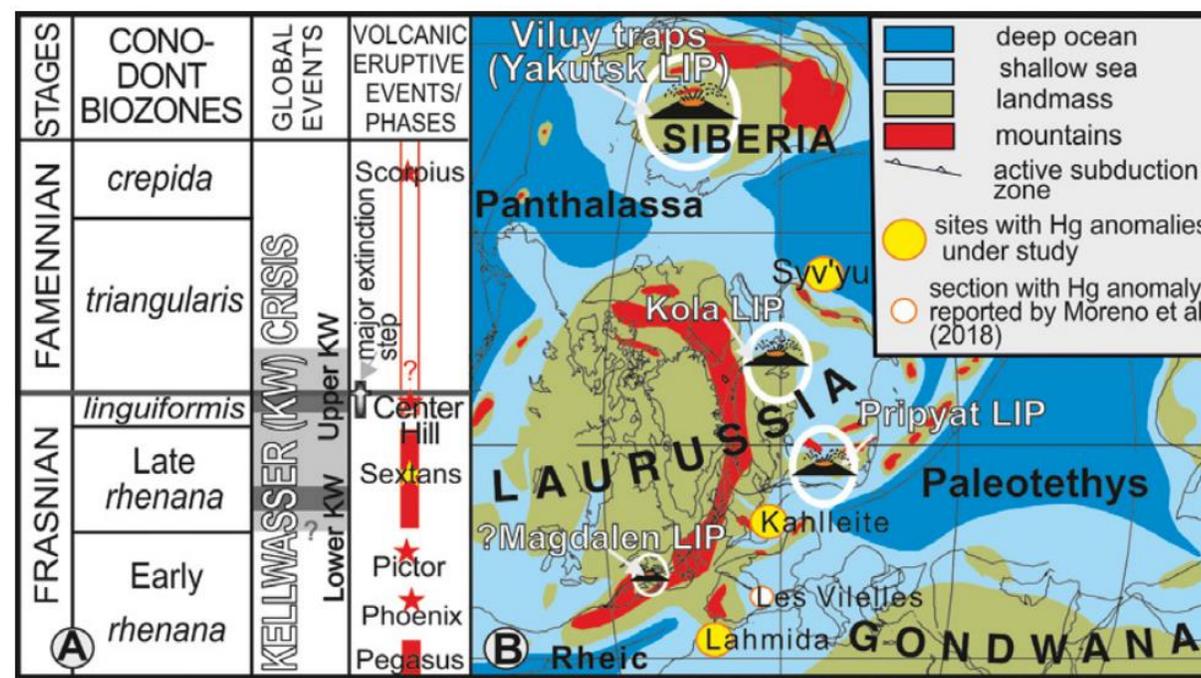
From Vanderboucke et al. 2015)



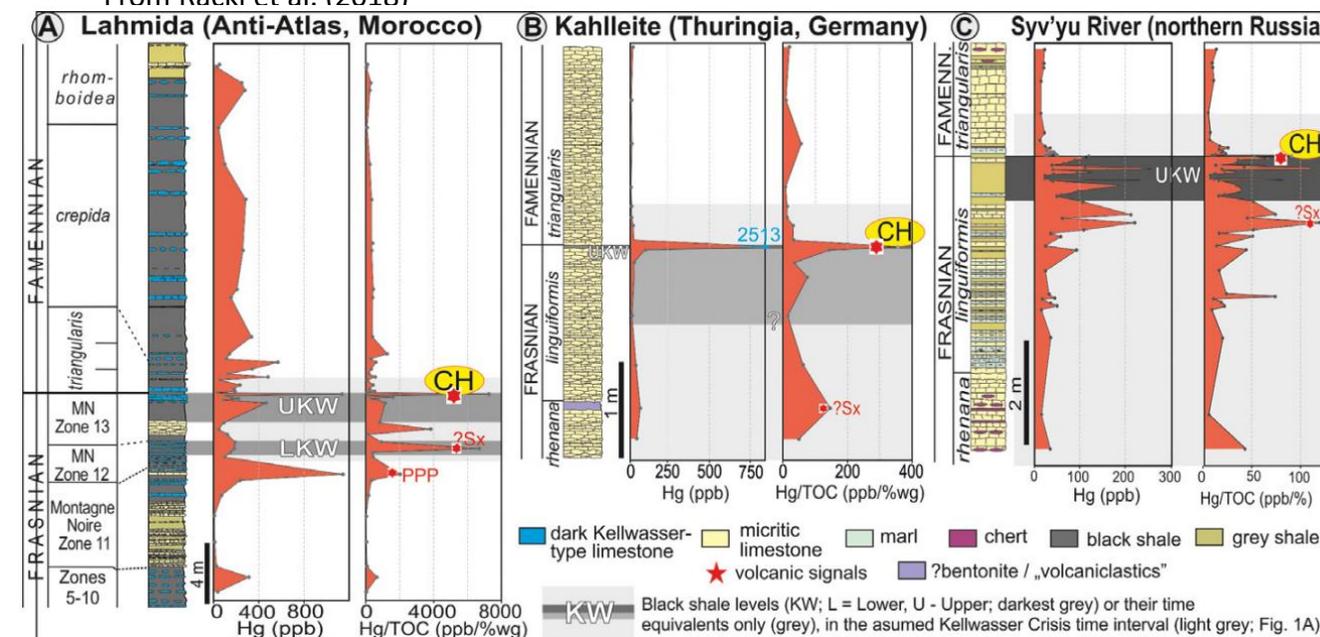




From Bond and Grasby (2020)

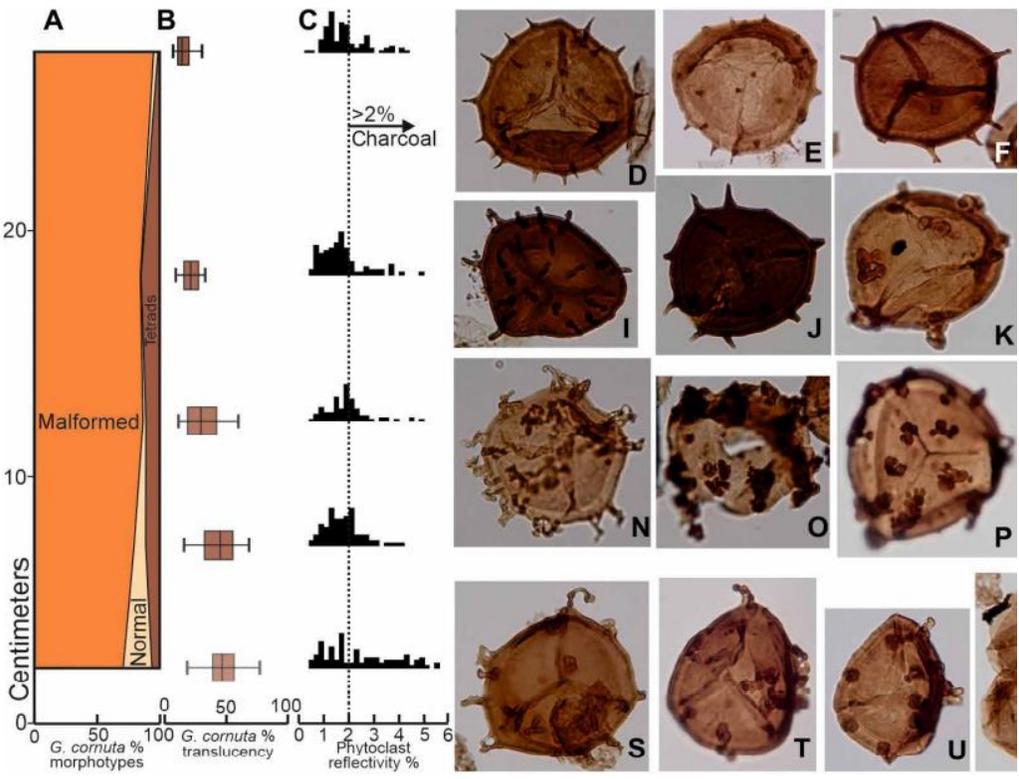
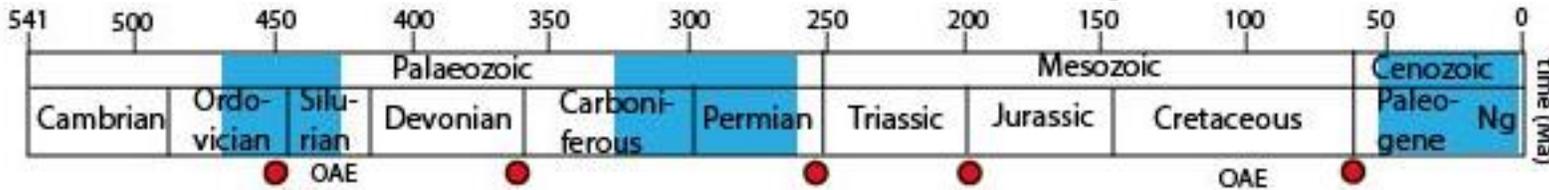


From Racki et al. (2018)

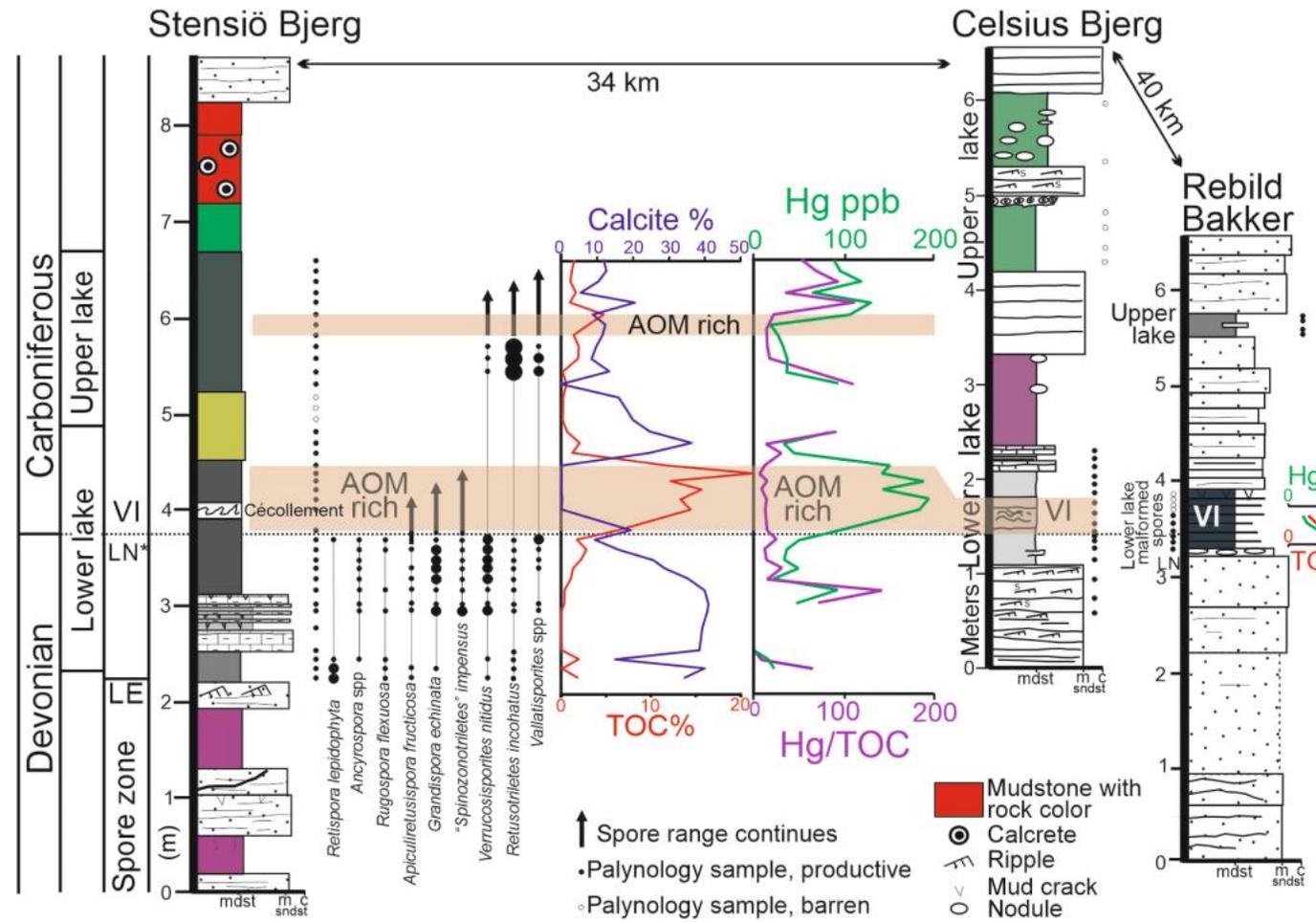


Legend for stratigraphic columns:
 ■ dark Kellwasser-type limestone ■ micritic limestone ■ marl ■ chert ■ black shale ■ grey shale
 ★ volcanic signals ■ ?bentonite / „volcaniclastics”
 ■ KW Black shale levels (KW; L = Lower, U = Upper; darkest grey) or their time equivalents only (grey), in the assumed Kellwasser Crisis time interval (light grey; Fig. 1A)

Devonian-Carboniferous and teratological events



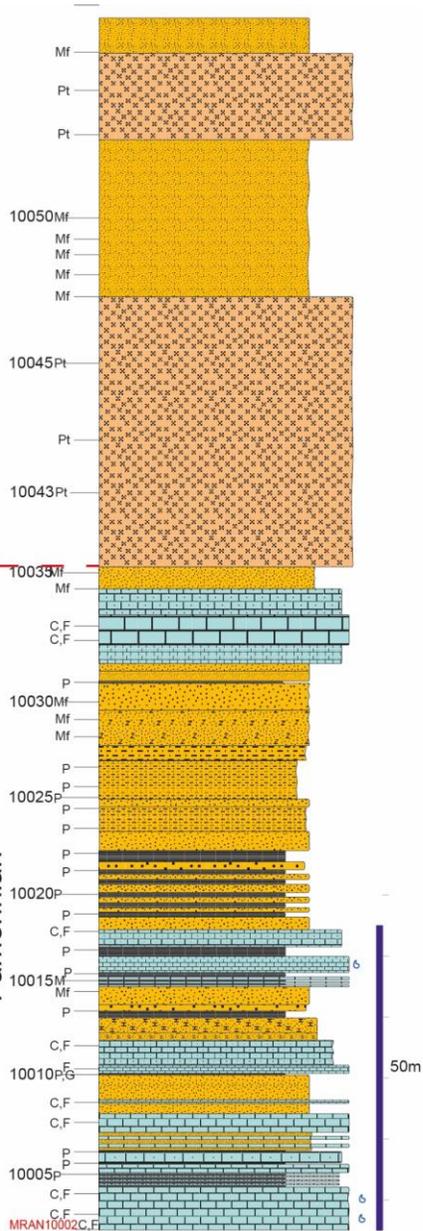
From Marshall et al. (2020)



Volcanic levels

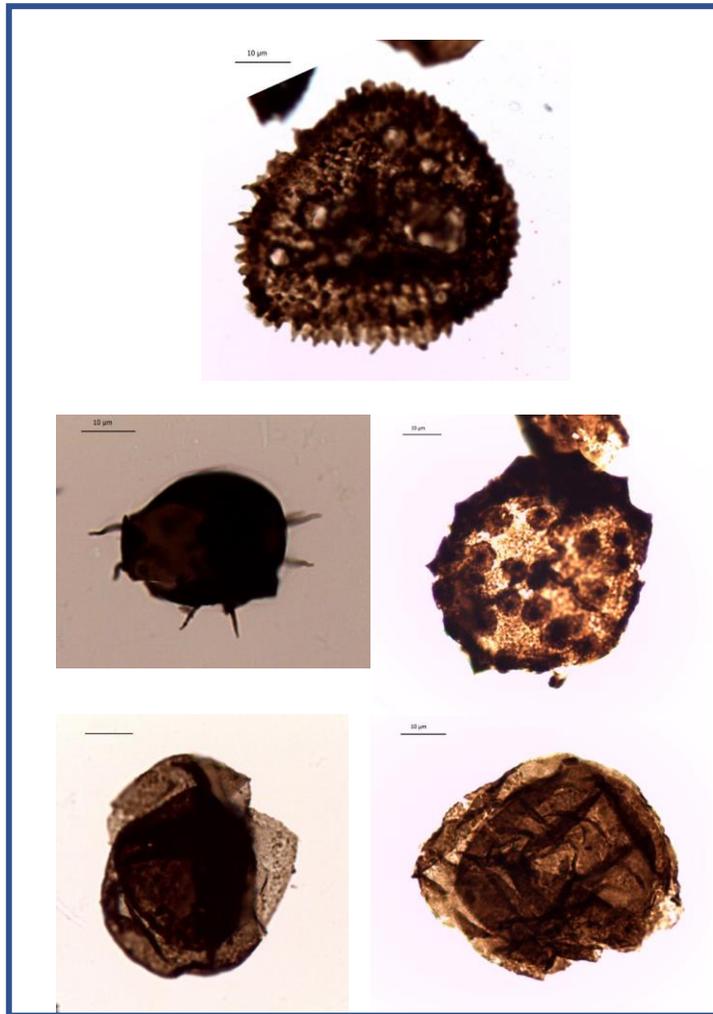
Shishtu Formation

Devonian
Late
Famennian



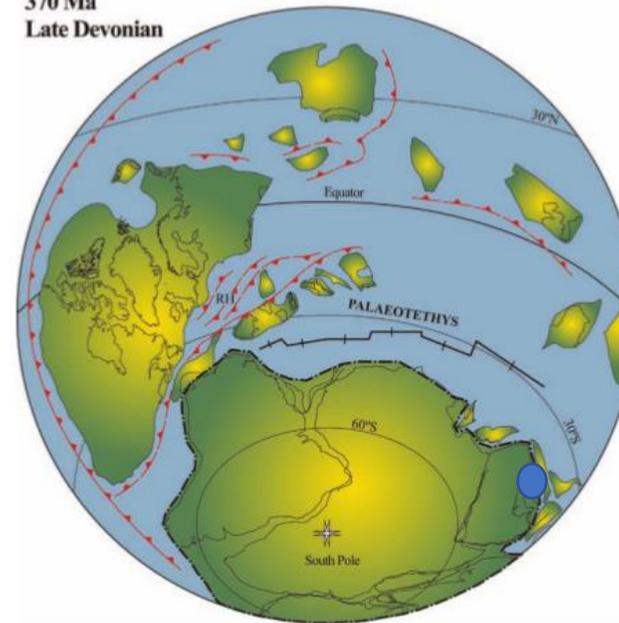
LE Spore Zone

Spores with abnormal morphologies



Research in progress

370 Ma
Late Devonian

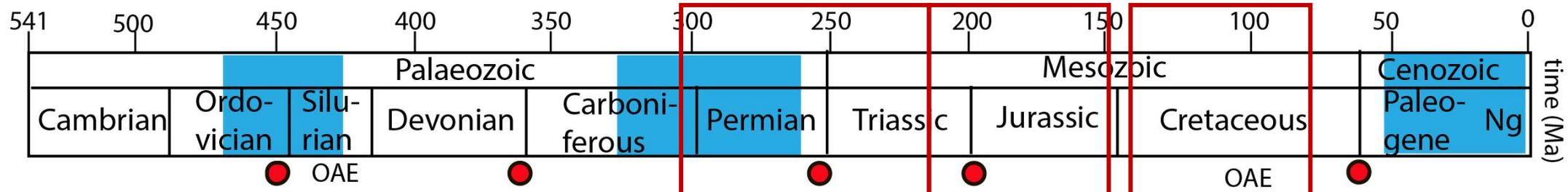





Service Contract

Subject
Paleontology and Biozonation of Paleozoic
Sediments of Central Iran and Zagros
Basins

PI: Roberto Rettori (UniPG)



Marine teratology

Terrestrial teratology

Discovery potential for additional teratology

acritarchs →

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ICDP Proposal Cover Sheet

Above For Official Use Only

Proposal Type: Drilling Workshop Preliminary IODP Relation*

Status: Revised New

Project Title: The Deep Dust Drilling Project: Earth-System Responses to the Penultimate Icehouse Collapse and Greenhouse Intensification

Acronym: DeepDust **Drill Spot(s):** Oklahoma (US); France

Principal Investigators: G.S. Lynn Soreghan (US) Sylvie Bourquin (FR)

Co-Investigators: Georg Feulner (DE) Natsuko Hamamura (JP)

Co-Investigators: Laurent Beccaletto (FR) Heather Bedle (US)

Co-Investigators: Kathy Benison (US) Nicholas Heavens (US)

Co-Investigators: Linda Hinnov (US) Yuki Morono (JP)

Co-Investigators: Andrea Moscardello (CH) Marc Poujol (FR)

Co-Investigators: Amalia Spina (IT) Christian Zeeden (DE)

Keywords: paleoclimate; microbial biosphere, equatorial Pangaea, (5 or less)

Geological Period: Permian

UniPG
UniLille

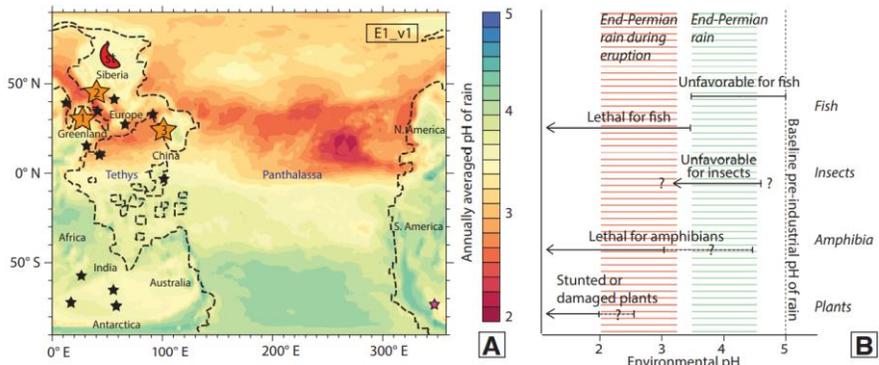
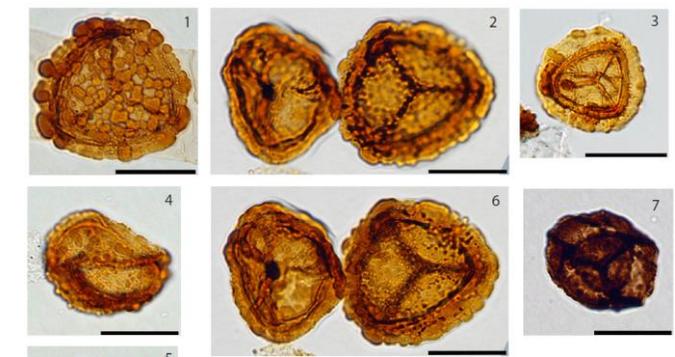
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and...?

jellate cysts common

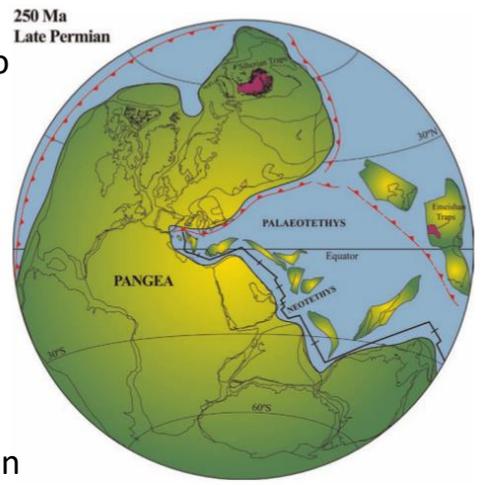
- Big 5
- Phanerozoic Ice ages
- marine teratological palynomorphs (acritarchs/chitinozoans/dinocysts)
- ⤴ terrestrial teratological palynomorphs (pollen/spores)
- ⤴ ⤴ currently unreported and/or to be studied teratological palynomorphs

Late Permian and teratological events-UV-B driven teratology during the crisis: FTIR spectroscopy and ultrastructure analysis, and other

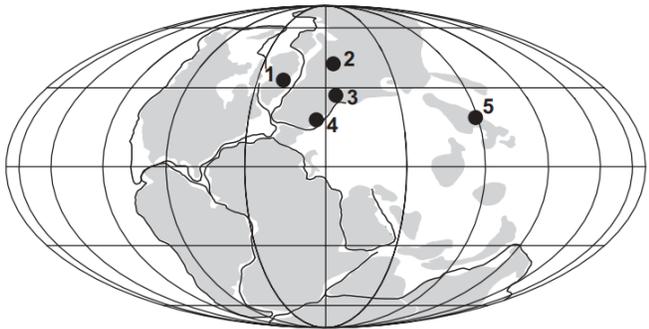


- a 100–200 kyr main eruptive phase had the potential to produce high latitude stratospheric O₃ depletion due to largereleases of HCl - organohalogen release from heating of organic-rich rocks was insufficient to extensively damage the ozone layer. However, including the possibility that dispersed organic matter provided a precursor for organohalogen synthesis results in massive CH₃Cl production that could lead to substantial O₃ depletion when released over 100 kyr.

From Beerling et al. (2007)



From Cocks and Torsvik (2002)



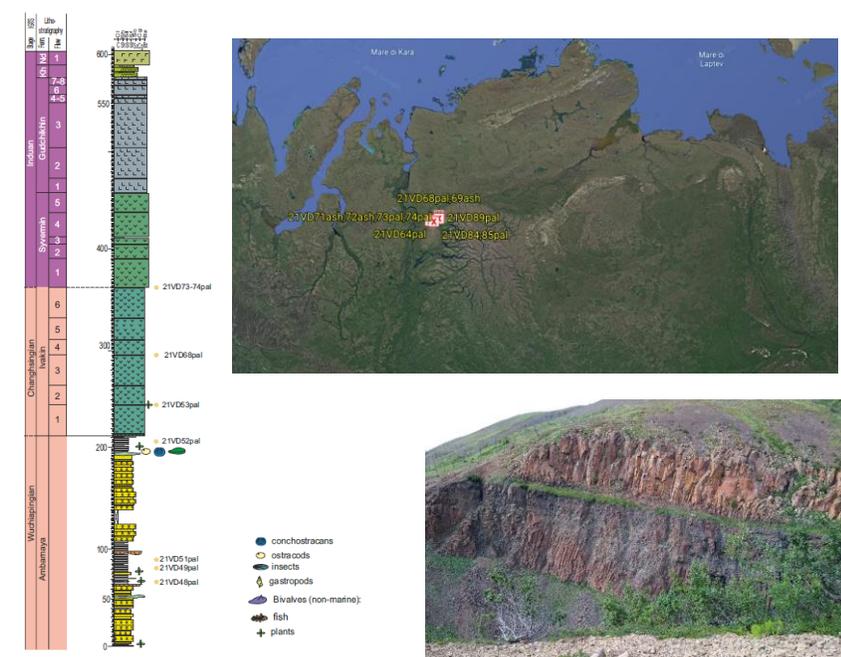
From Spina et al. (2015)

Palynology of the Permian and Triassic of the Tesero and Bulla sections (Western Dolomites, Italy) and consideration about the enigmatic species *Reduviasporonites chalastus*

Amalia Spina^{a,*}, Simonetta Cirilli^a, John Utting^b, Jan Jansonius¹

Research paper
 First record of Permo-Triassic palynomorphs of the N'Condédzi sub-basin, Moatize-Minjova Coal Basin, Karoo Supergroup, Mozambique
 Francesca Galasso^{a,b,1}, Zélia Pereira^{c,*}, Paulo Fernandes^b, Amalia Spina^a, João Marques^d

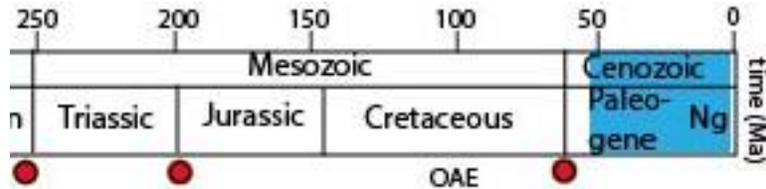
Present research



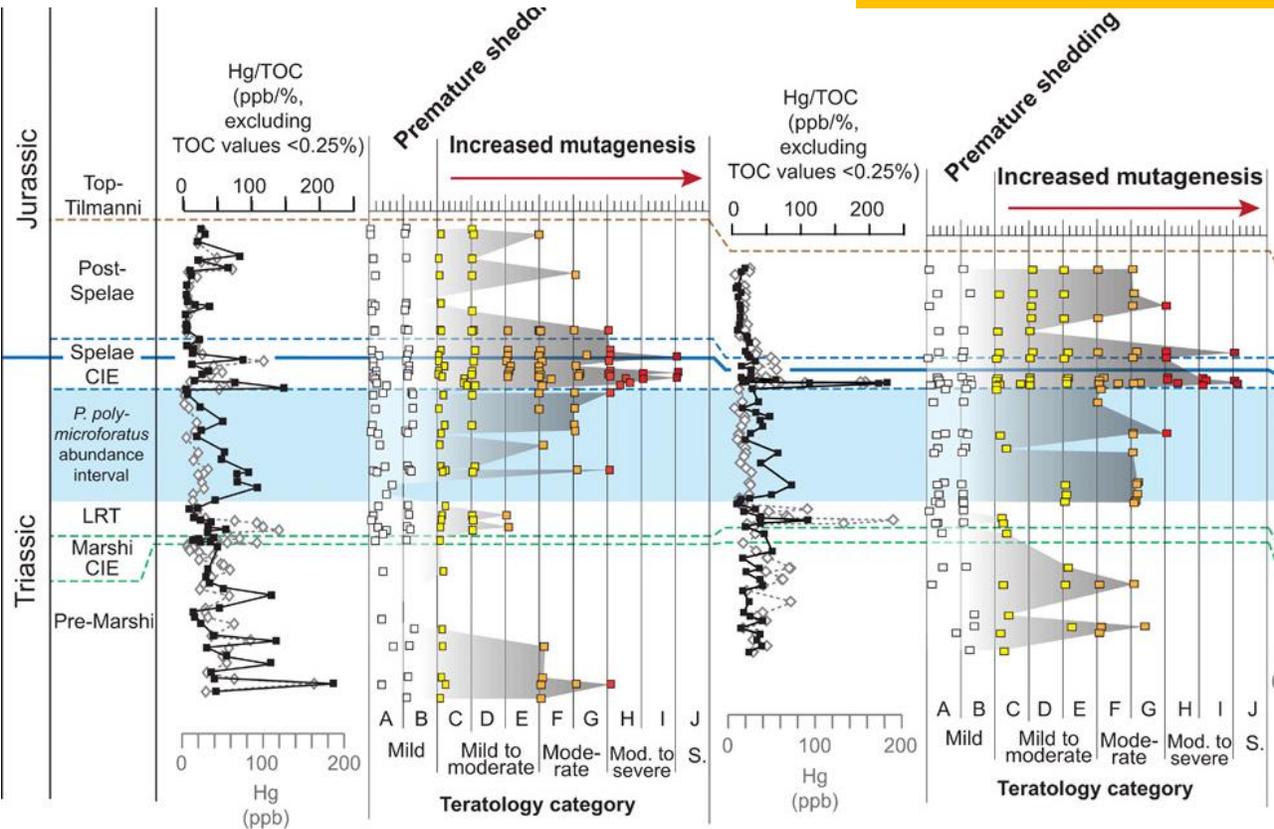
From Spina et al. (in prep.)



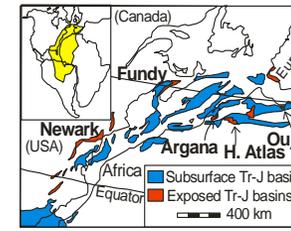
Volcanic mercury and mutagenesis in land plants during the end-Triassic mass extinction



2019- 2021:
 Progetto PRIN-2017:
 Biotic Resilience to
 Global Change.
 PI: Simonetta Cirilli



Lindström et al. (2019)



Newark
 (ENA)

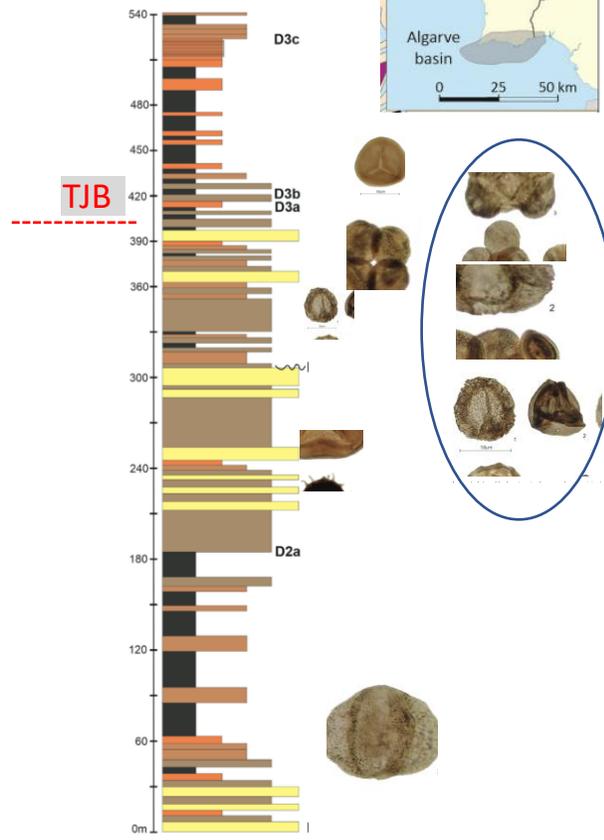
Fluvial
 lacustrine dep.
 setting



Cirilli et al. (in prep)

Research papers
 New data on the palynology of the Triassic–Jurassic boundary of the Silves Group, Lusitanian Basin, Portugal
 Margarida Vilas-Boas^a, Zélia Pereira^{b*}, Simonetta Cirilli^c, Luís Vitor Duarte^d, Paulo Fernandes^a

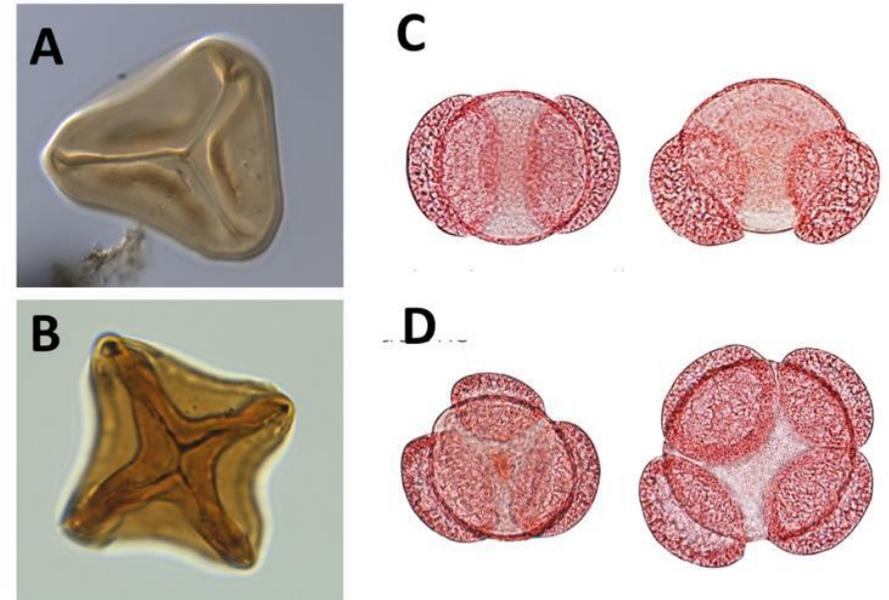
Silves Group,
 Lusitanian
 Basin, Portugal



Villa Boas et al., 2021

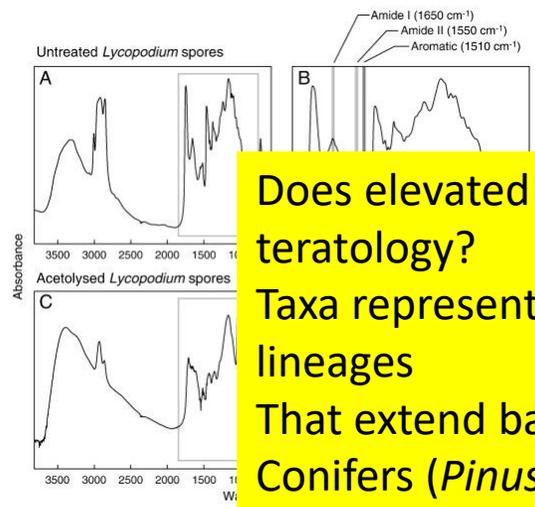
Proximal research: Chemical analyses of teratological organic-walled microfossil

- their formation and their geochemistry may be used as markers and as a series of independent proxies for monitoring the paleo-environmental conditions during the biological crises;
- Fully characterization of the chemistry of teratological and non-teratological individuals using non-destructive (FTIR and Raman) techniques.
- LA-ICPMS: trace-element geochemistry on shared specimens using Laser Ablation Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry: different degrees of metal toxicity (Hg, Ni, Cd, Pb)
- FTIR and Raman: Samples will be imaged for infrared and Raman spectroscopy analysis to determine/test for changes in UV-B flux through time and relationships between teratologies and UV-B.
- Laser scanning Confocal microscopy and Optical confocal microscopy: ultrastructure analysis

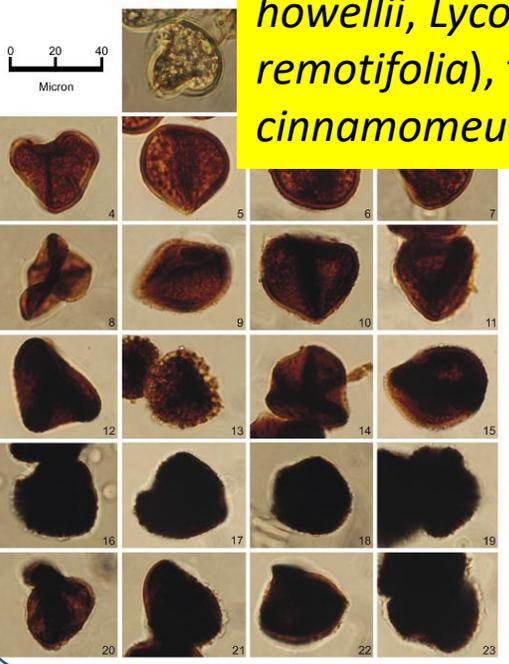
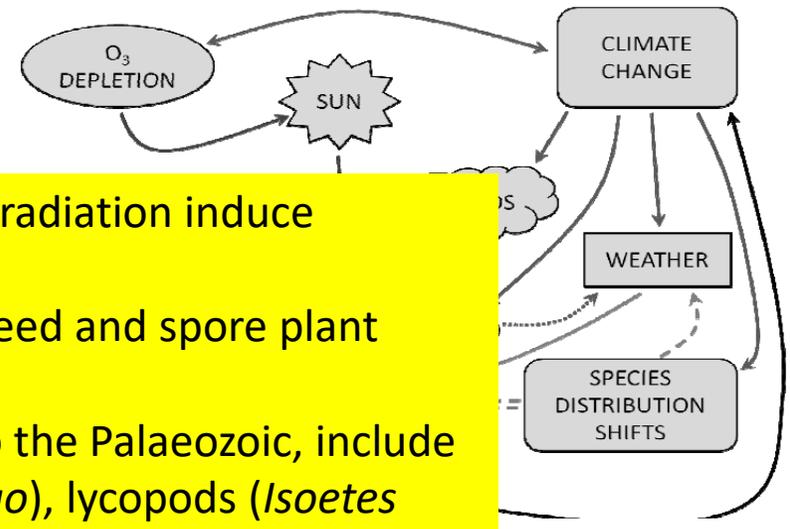


How did the ozone layer depletion contribute to the mass extinction events?

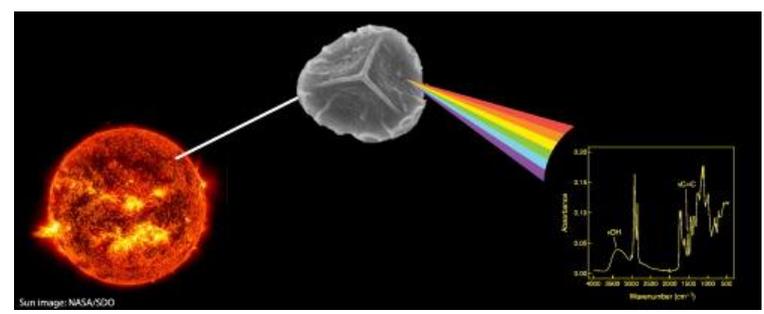
Infrared spectroscopy



Does elevated UVB radiation induce teratology?
 Taxa representing seed and spore plant lineages
 That extend back to the Palaeozoic, include
 Conifers (*Pinus mugo*), lycopods (*Isoetes howellii*, *Lycopodium clavatum*, *Selaginella remotifolia*), ferns (*Osmundrastrum cinnamomeum*, *Anemia tomentosa*)



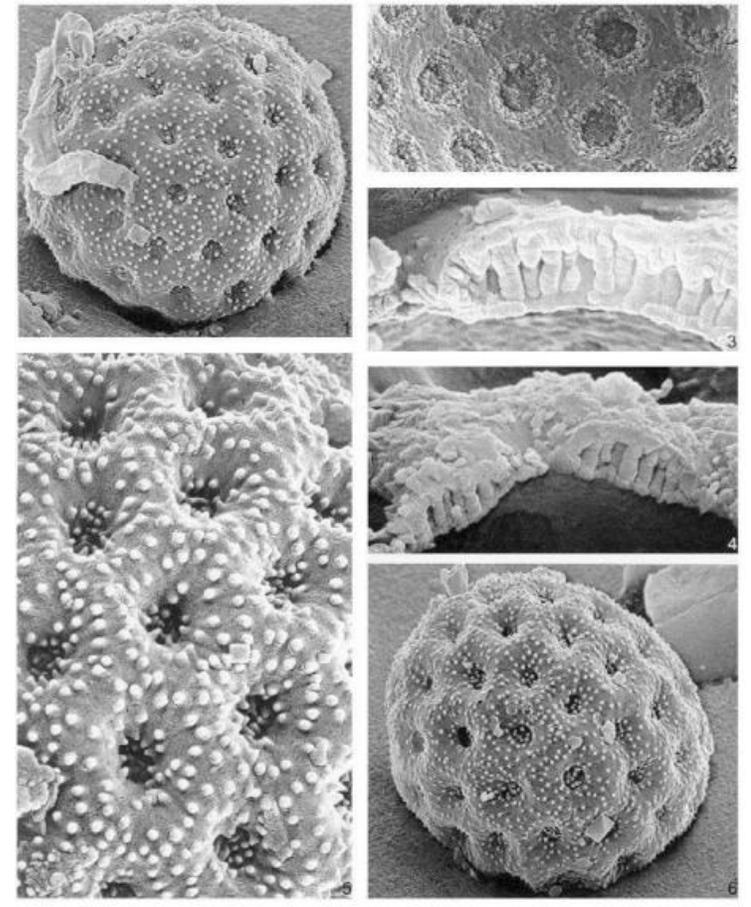
Shedding light on sporopollenin chemistry, with reference to UV reconstructions
 Phillip E. Jardine ^{a,*}, Feargus A.J. Abernethy ^b, Barry H. Lomax ^c, William D. Gosling ^{a,d}, Wesley T. Fraser ^{a,e}



Morphological ultrastructure analyses

Fl. Medit. 24: 247-272
 doi: 10.7320/FIMedit24.247
 Version of Record published online on 30 December 2014

P. Angelini, E. Bricchi, D. Gigante, S. Poponessi, A. Spina & R. Venanzoni
Pollen morphology of some species of *Amaranthaceae* s. lat. common in Italy



Highlights:

- Increase of teratological terrestrial and marine organic-walled microfossils associated with mass extinction events.
- Interaction with other research lines: biodiversity loss across the Earth history.
- Other: methods for the thermal maturity of organic matter.

Ambito di ricerca già attivato: 12

TITOLO: ***Geoinformatica***

- georeferenziazione di mappe paleogeografiche in ambiente GIS e compilazione del database GIS correlato di dati paleontologici;

Palynological database: Palaeozoic biodiversity curve of miospores

Localities plotted

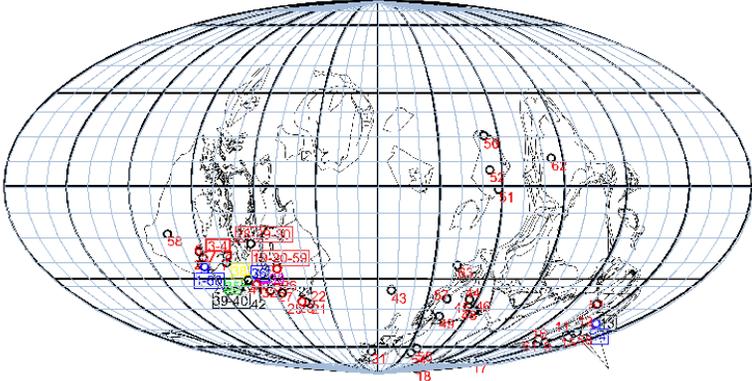
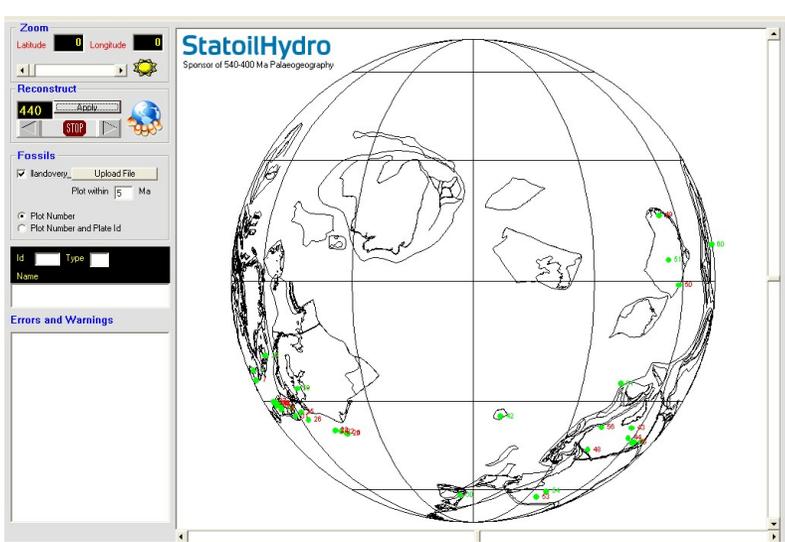
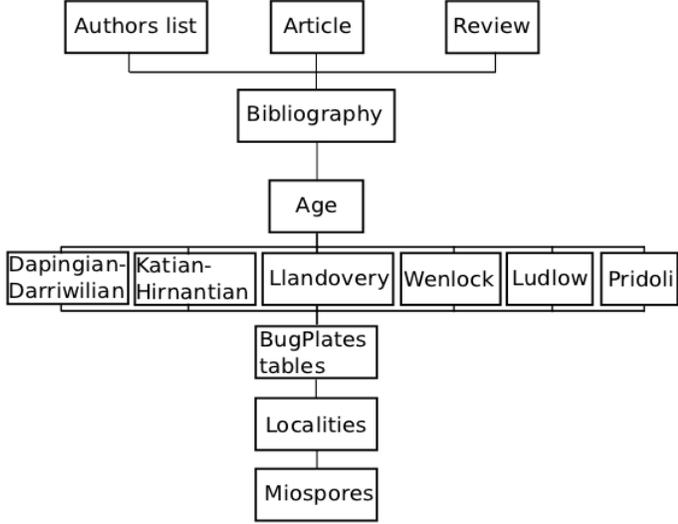


PostgreSQL Database: bibliography

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Organization



Highlights:

- Increase of teratological terrestrial and marine organic-walled microfossils associated with mass extinction events.
- Interaction with other research lines: biodiversity loss across the Earth history.
- **Other: methods for the thermal maturity of organic matter.**

Palynomorph Darkness Index

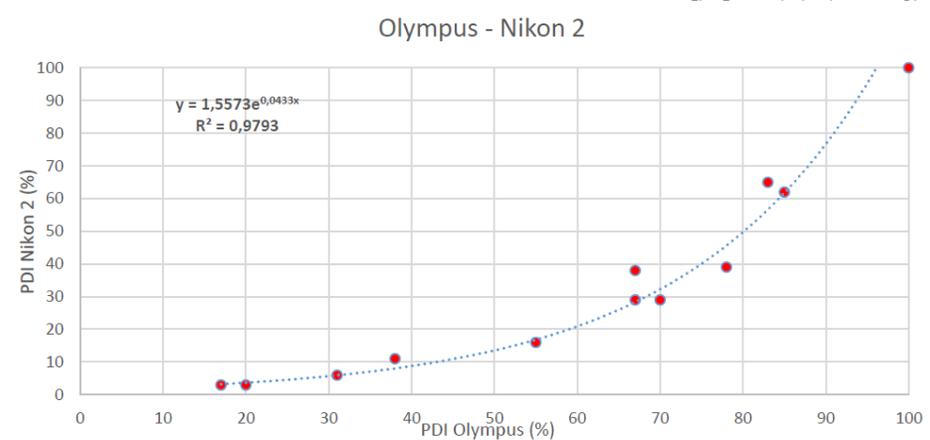
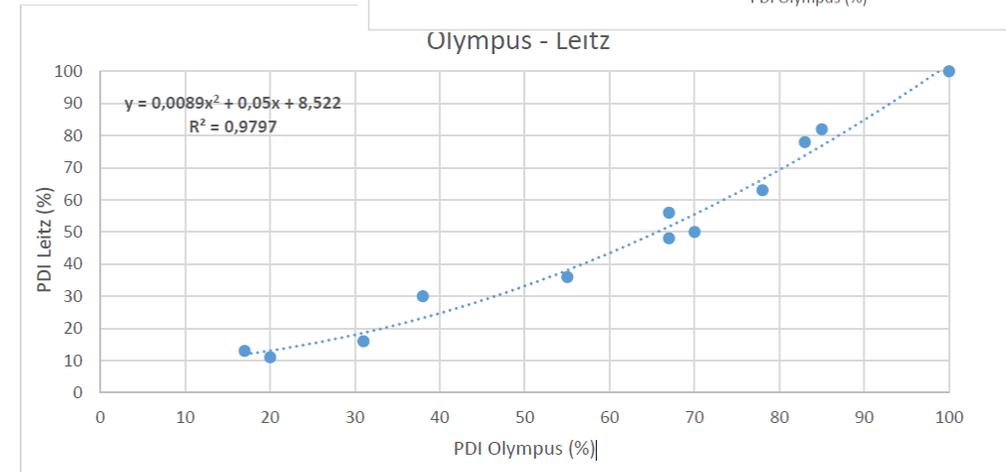
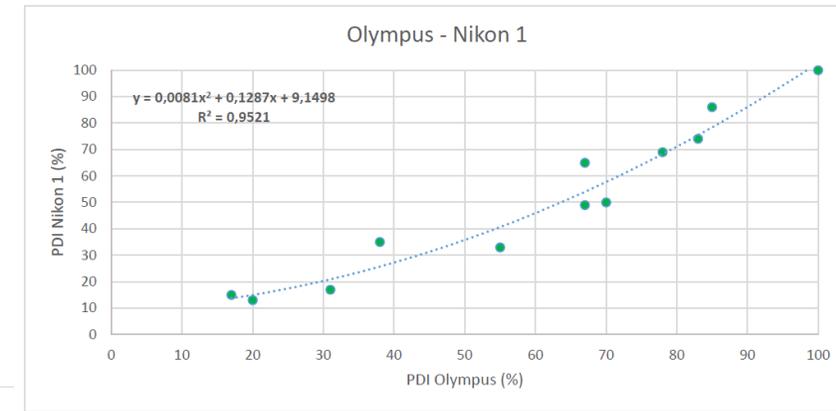
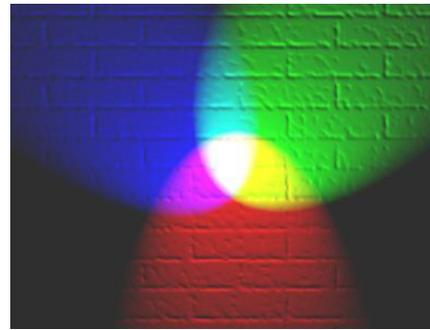
The computation of PDI is based on the following steps:

- Selection of palynomorph taxa to investigate
- White background balance
- White background and palynomorph RGB measurements
- Ya computation

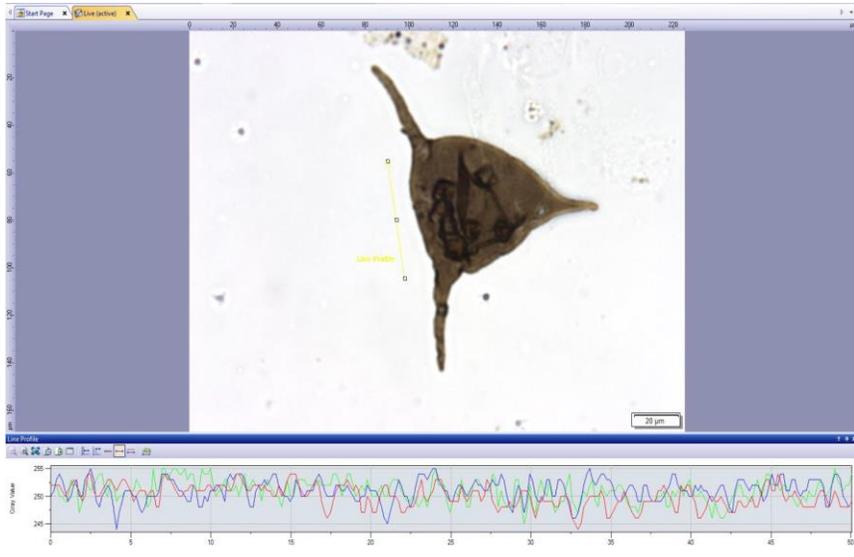
$$Y_a = (0.299R * 255/R_b) + (0.587G * 255/G_b) + (0.114B * 255/B_b)$$

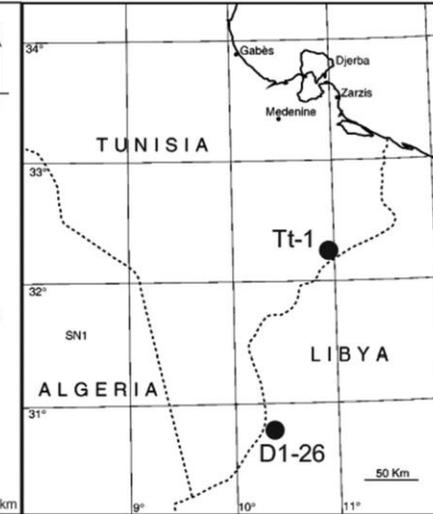
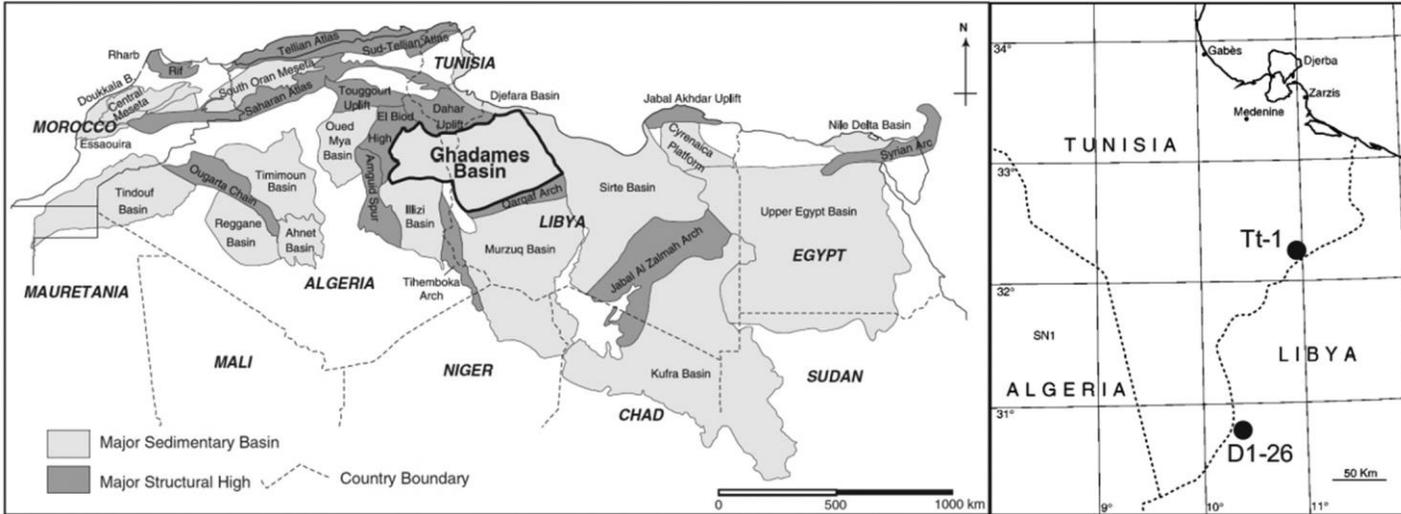
- PDI computation:

$$PDI (\%) = 100 - (100Y_a/255)$$

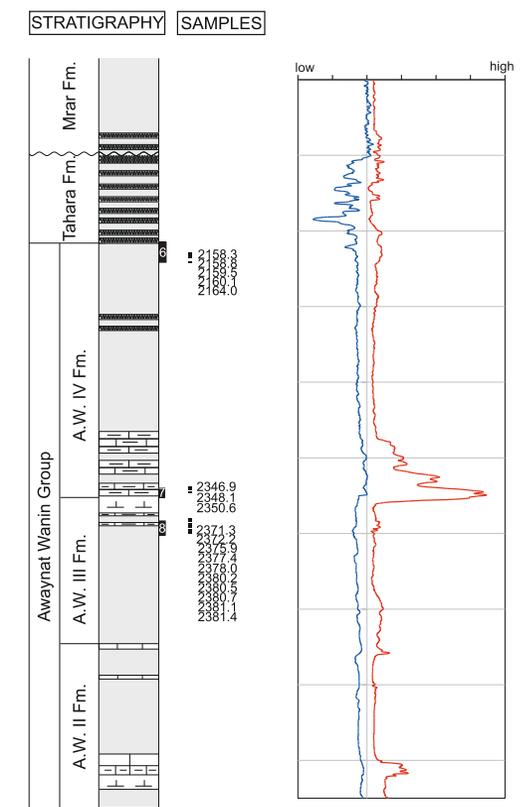


2018-2021: Progetto: The Palynomorph Darkness Index and the evolution of the macromolecular structure of sporopollenin during the thermal degradation: correlation and calibration with classical thermal maturity index. Finanziato da UniPG- Ricerca di Base.

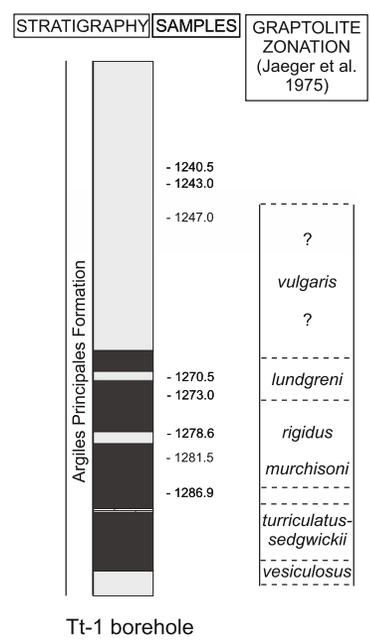




Spina, A., Vecoli, M., Riboulleau, A., Clayton, G., Cirilli, S., Di Michele, A., Marcogiuseppe, A., Rettori, R., Sassi, P., Servais, T., Riquier, L. (2018). International Journal of Coal Geology, 188, 64-78.



D1-26 borehole

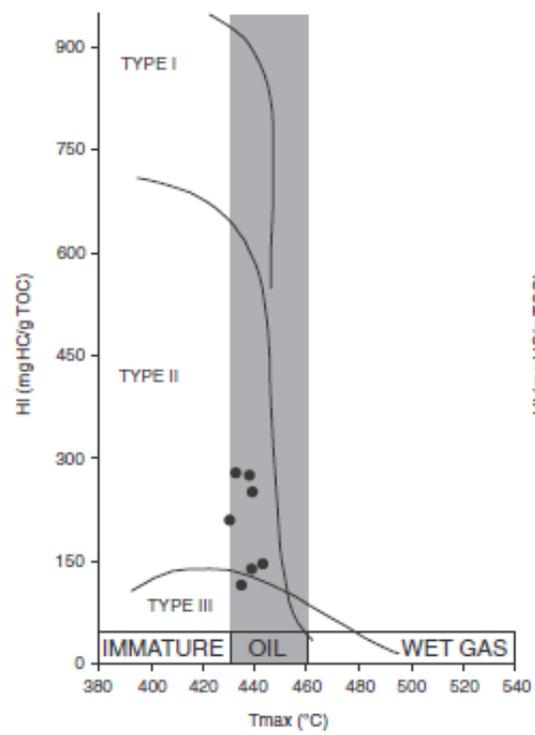


Tt-1 borehole

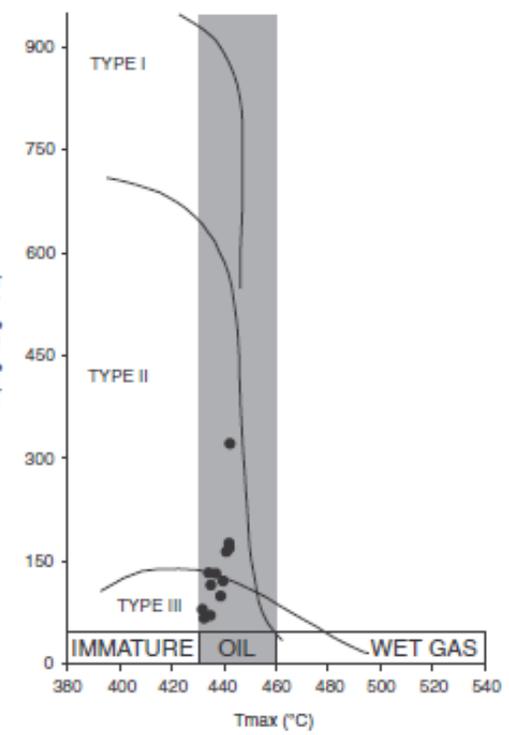
- Sandstone - silty sandstone
- Shale - silty shale
- Shale
- Sonic curve
- Resistivity curve
- Marl
- Marly limestone
- Limestone

GRAPTOLITE ZONATION (Jaeger et al. 1975)

- 1240.5
- 1243.0
- 1247.0
- 1270.5
- 1273.0
- 1278.6
- 1281.5
- 1286.9
- ?
- vulgaris*
- ?
- lundgreni*
- rigidus*
- murchisoni*
- turriculatus-sedgwickii*
- vesiculosus*



A Tt-1 borehole



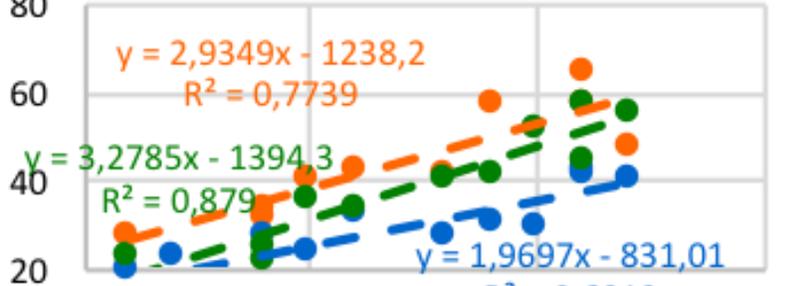
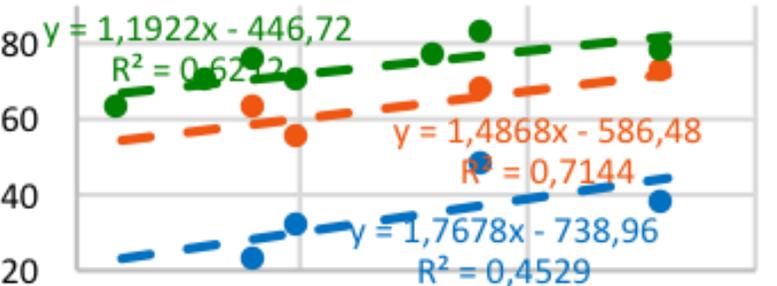
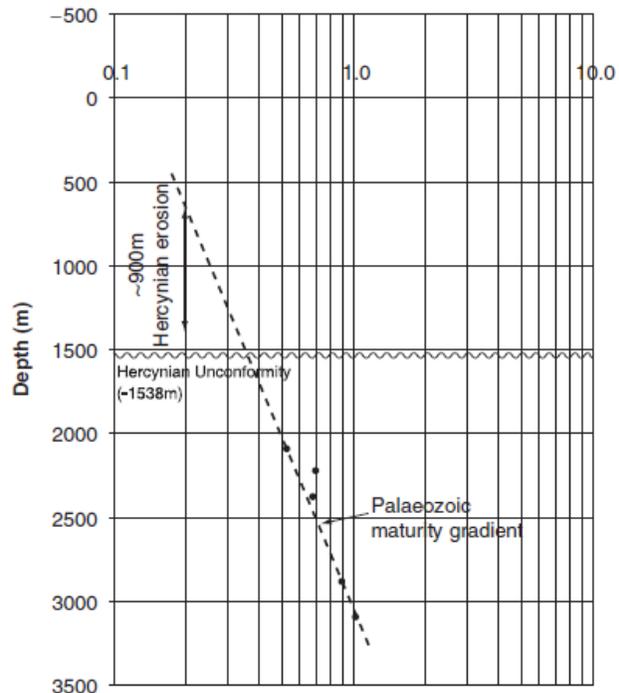
B D1-26 borehole

PDI vs. T_{max}

PDI vs. T_{max}

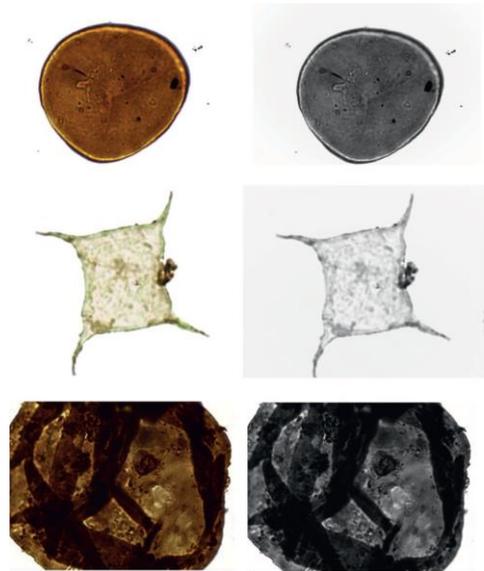
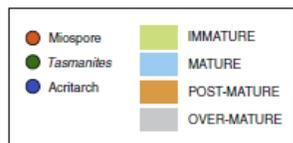
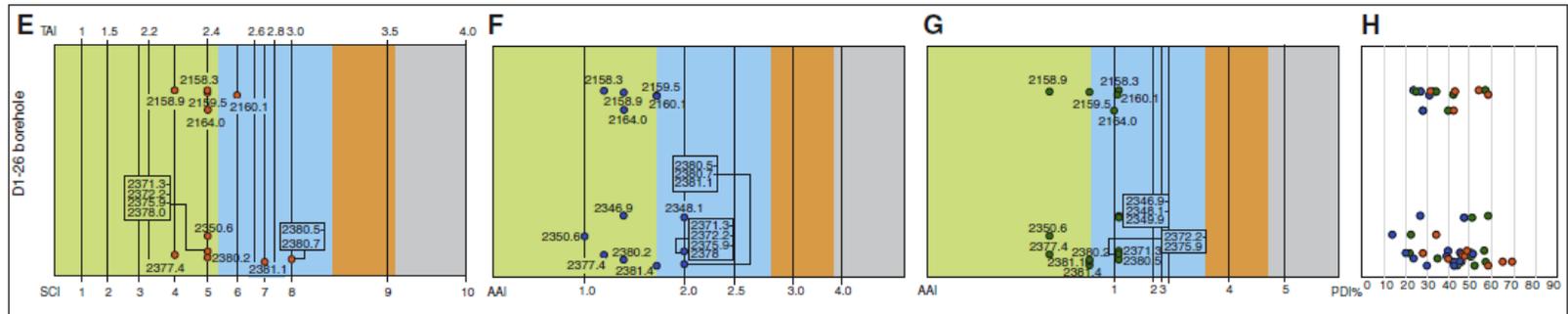
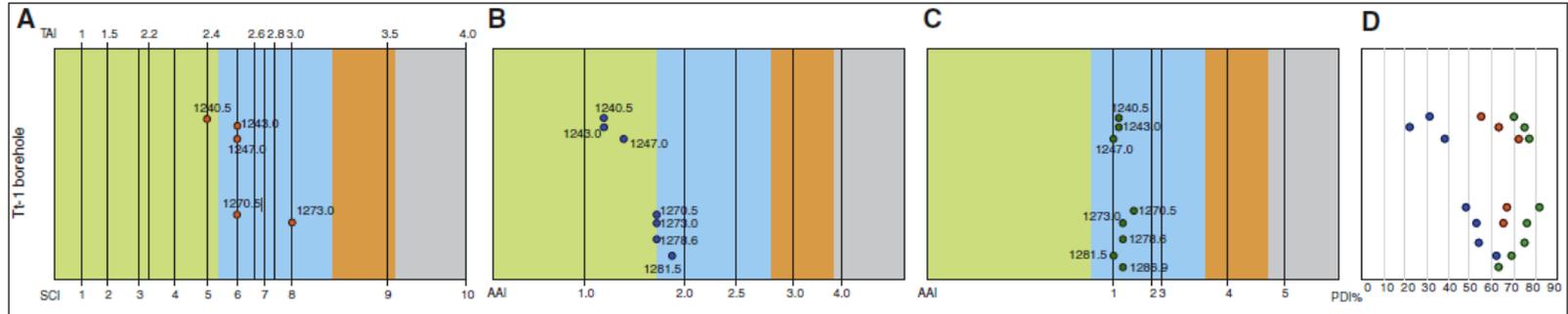
(c)

D1-26
Ro (%)



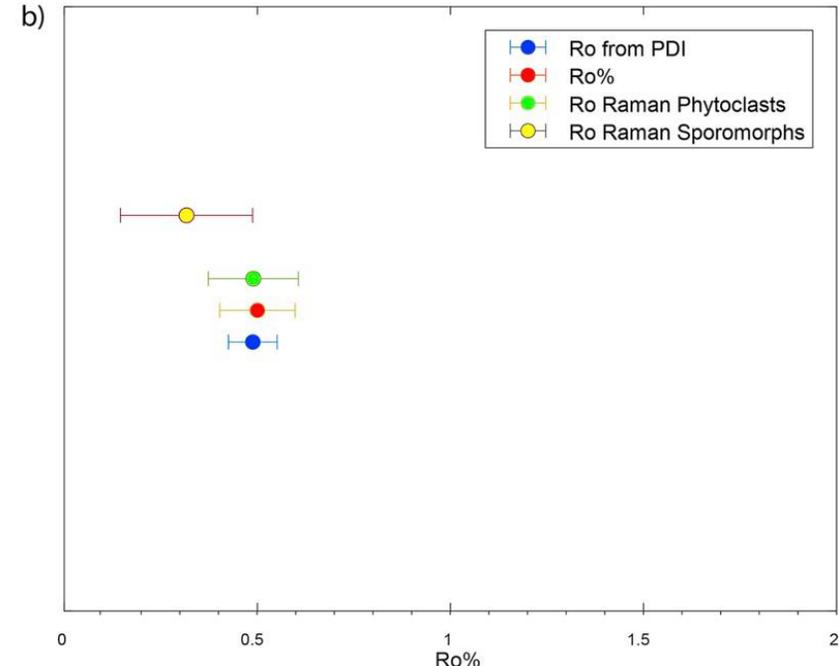
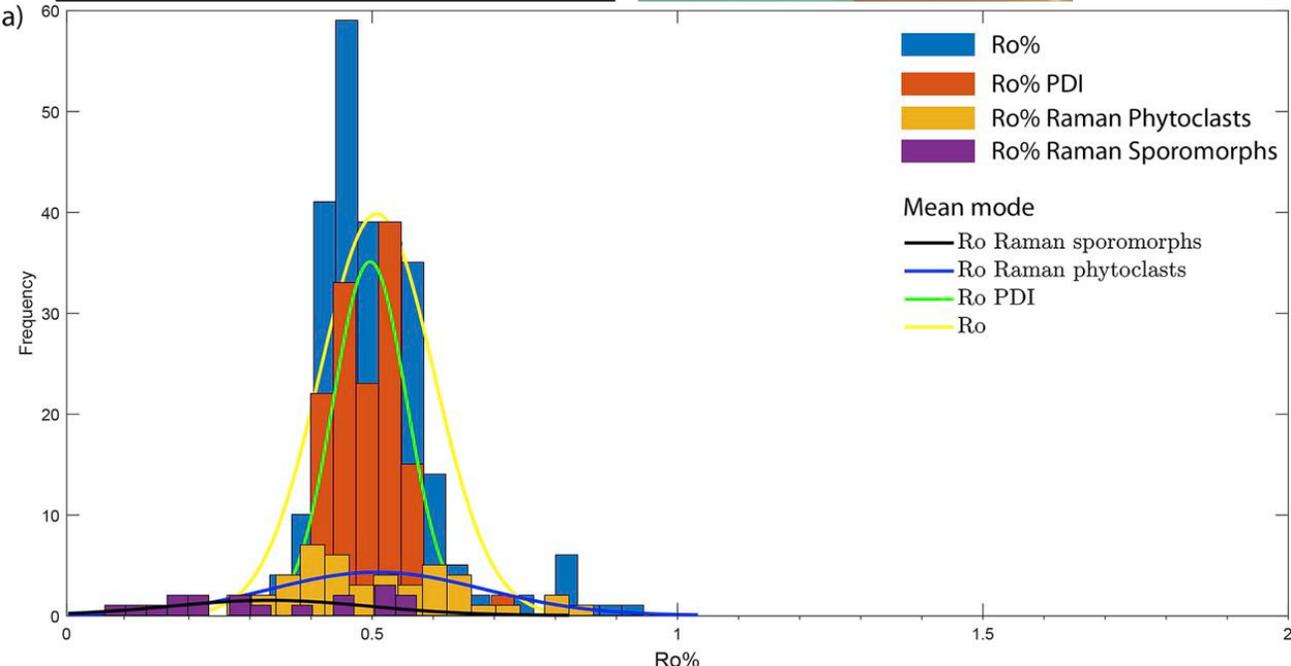
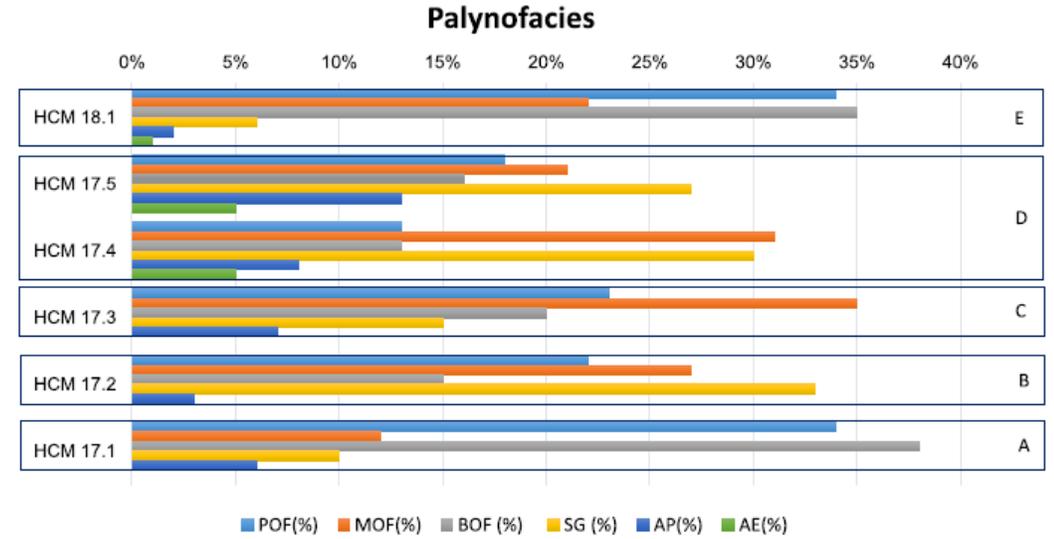
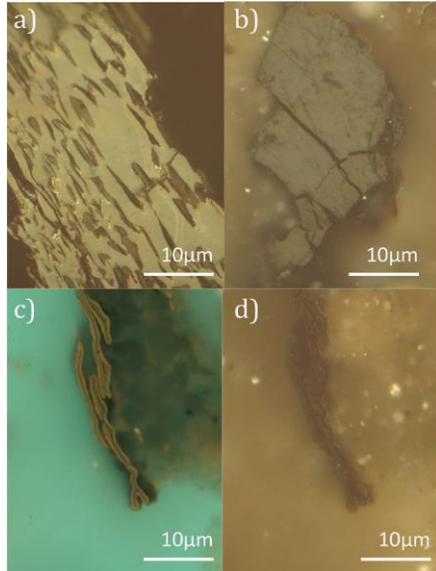
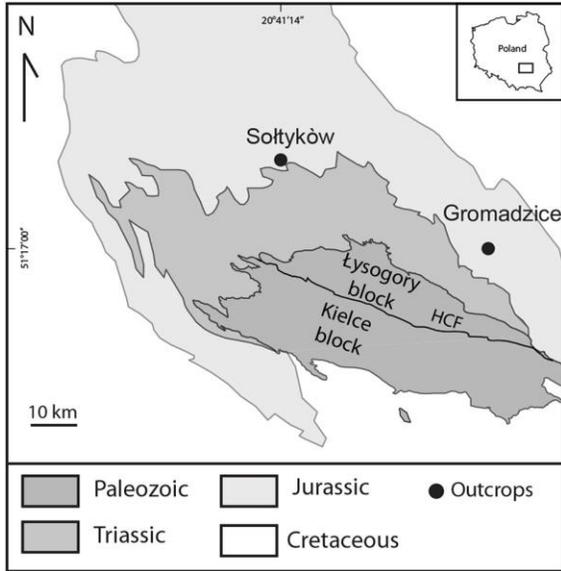
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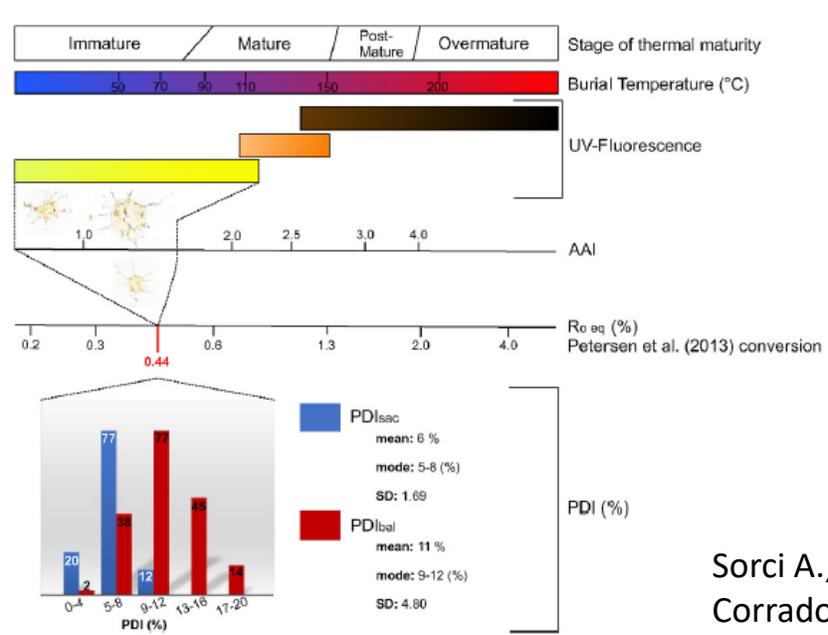
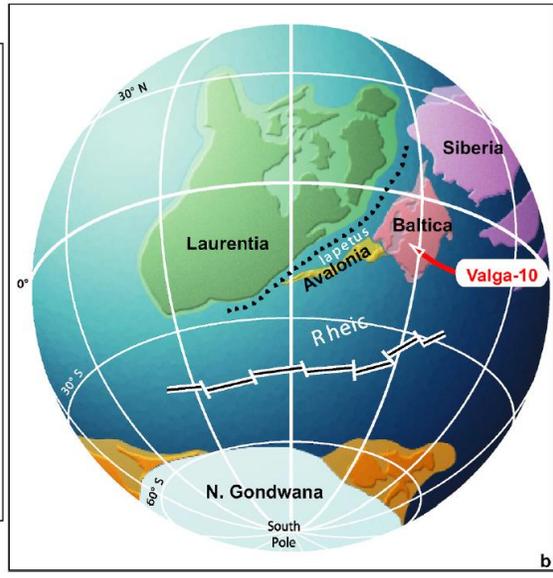
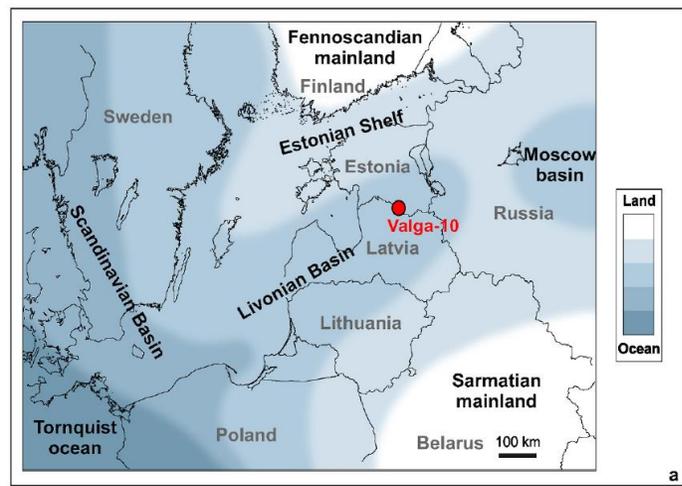
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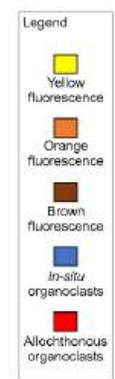
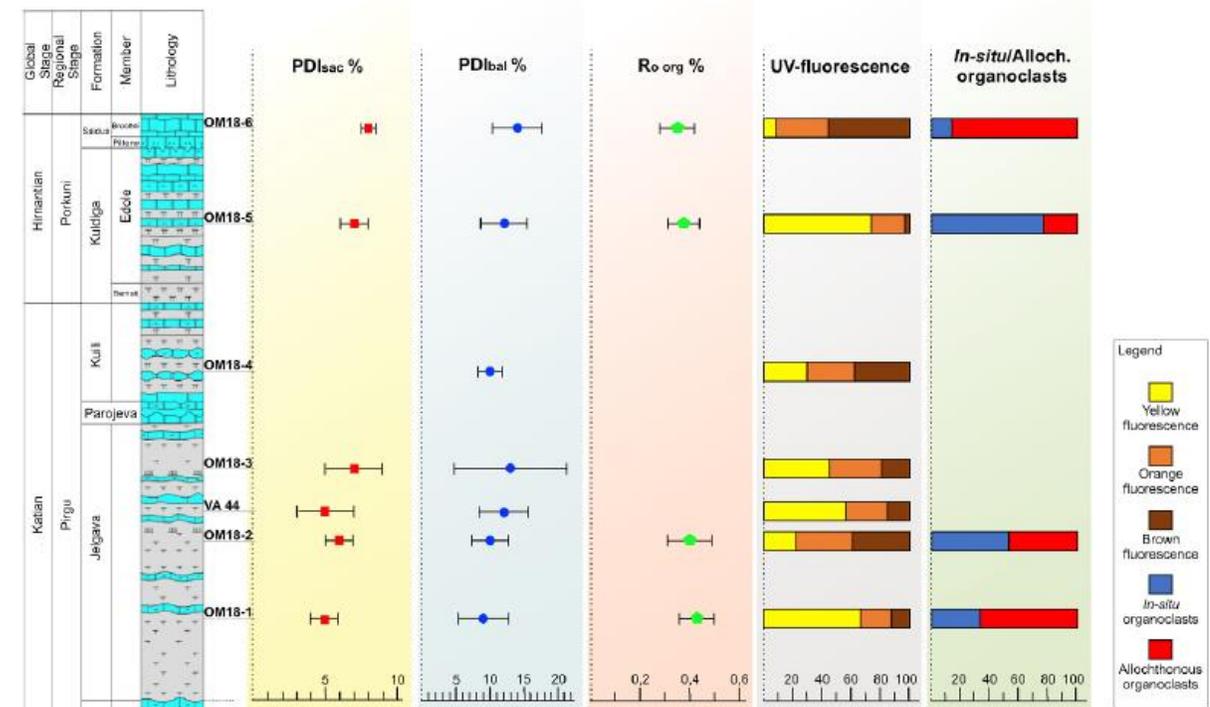
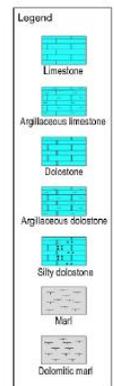
Schito, A., Corrado, S., Trolese, M., Aldega, L., Caricchi, C., Cirilli, S., Grigo, D., Guedes, A., Romano, C., **Spina, A.**, Valentim B. (2017). *Marine and Petroleum Geology*, 80, 112-132.

Schito, A., **Spina, A.**, Corrado, S., Cirilli, S., Romano, C. (2019). *Marine and Petroleum Geology* 104, 331-345.





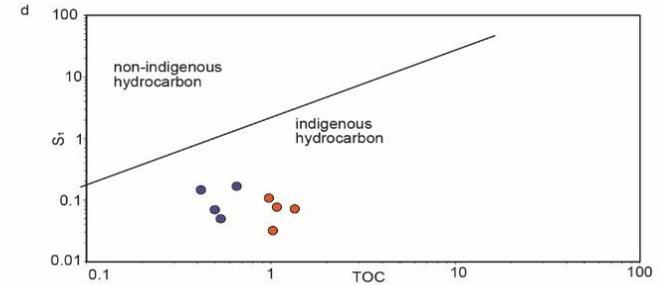
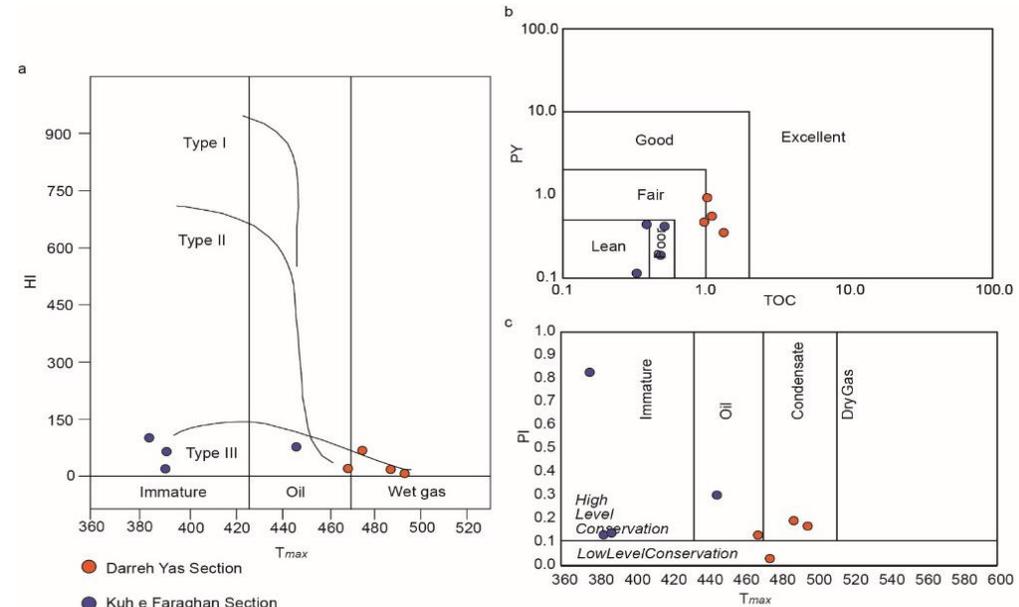
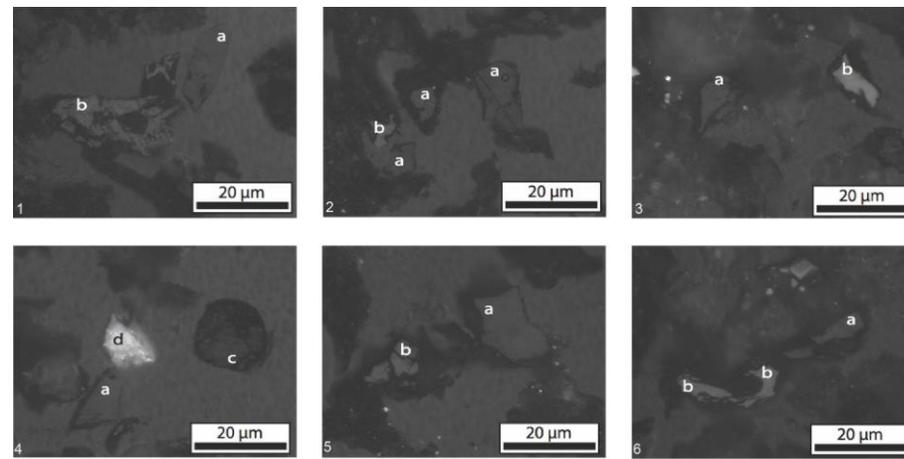
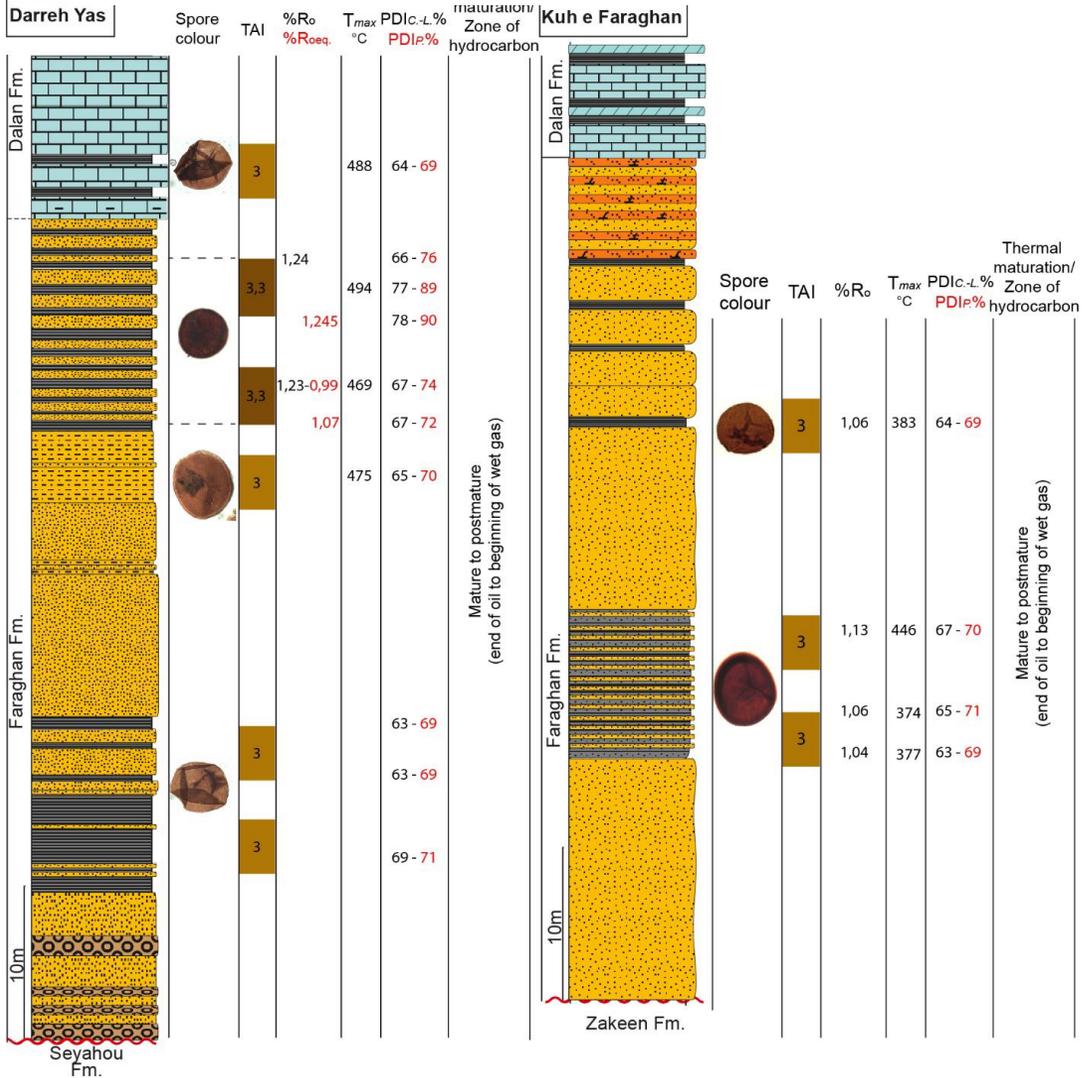
System	Stage	Regional Stage	Formation	Member	Lithology	Chitinozoan zone (1)	Conodont zone (2)	Acritarch zone (3)	Sample
Upper Ordovician	Hirnantian	Porkuni	Salidua	Broodni Piltso	[Lithology patterns]	C. scabra	N. girvanensis	AS 4	OM18-6 (312.20 m)
			Kuldiga	Elole				AS 3	OM18-5 (320.00 m)
		Kullī	Bernati	S. latga				AS 2	OM18-4 (328.90 m)
			Parojeva	[Lithology patterns]				C. rugata	OM18-3 (335.50 m)
									VA 44 (338.80 m)
	Katian	Pirgu	Jelgava	[Lithology patterns]	OM18-2 (340.60 m)				
					OM18-1 (345.60 m)				
		Jonstorp	[Lithology patterns]	[Lithology patterns]	AS 1	OM18-1 (345.60 m)			



Sorci A., Cirilli S., Clayton G., Corrado S., Hints O., Goodhue R., Schito A., **Spina A.** (2020) - Marine and Petroleum Geology, 120.

Assessing Thermal Maturity through a Multi-Proxy Approach: A Case Study from the Permian Faraghan Formation (Zagros Basin, Southwest Iran)

Amalia Spina ^{1,*}, Simonetta Cirilli ¹, Andrea Sorci ¹, Andrea Schito ², Geoff Clayton ³, Sveva Corrado ⁴, Paulo Fernandes ⁵, Francesca Galasso ⁶, Giovanni Montesi ¹, Zelia Pereira ⁷, Mehrab Rashidi ⁸ and Roberto Rettori ¹



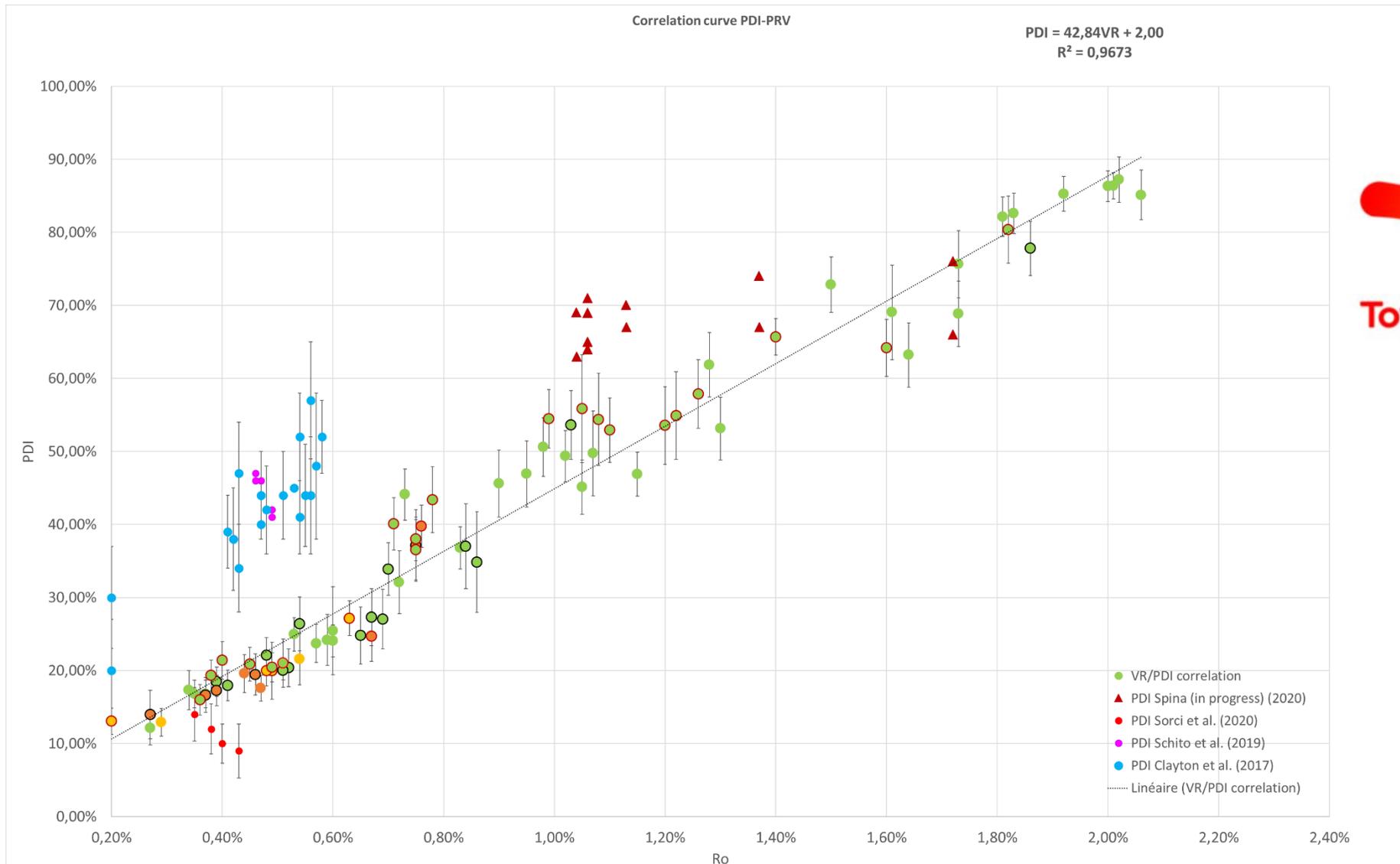


Figure 24: PDI/VR correlation final curve with bibliography data.

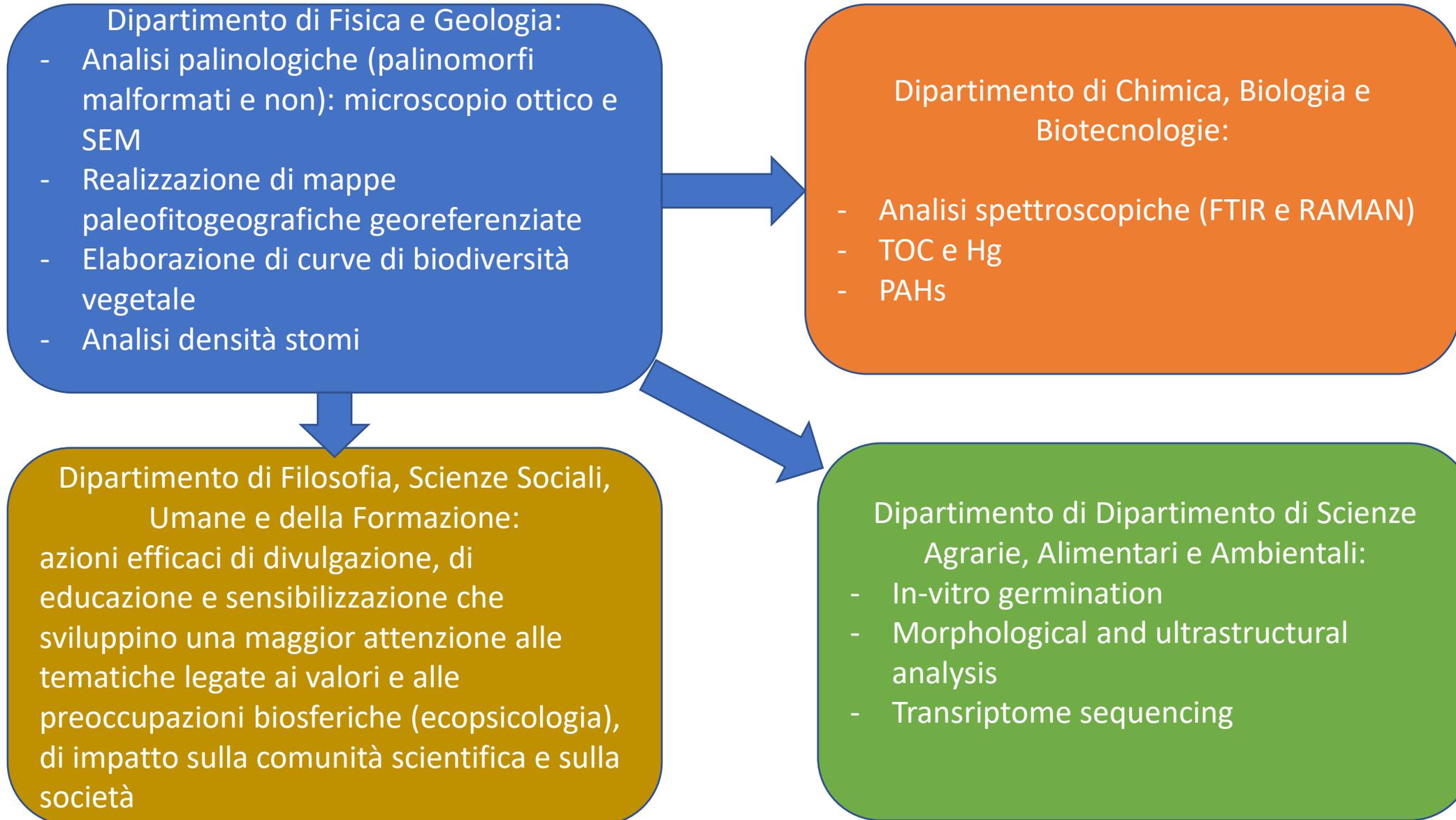


Attraverso questo progetto:

- Tre contratti professionalizzanti postlauream della durata di un anno negli ultimi tre anni
- Uno stage di sei mesi Per tesi di laurea



Progetto inter e transdisciplinare @ UniPG





Roberto Rettori



Simonetta Cirilli



Andrea Sorci



Nicola Mitillo

Grazie per l'attenzione