

THE MIDDLE JURASSIC SILICEOUS SEDIMENTARY COVER AT THE TOP OF THE VOURINOS OPHIOLITE (GREECE)

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ABSTRACT

The age of the Vourinos ophiolitic massif, pertaining to the Jurassic Tethys Ocean, is not yet exactly known. Four sections in the cherts at the top of the basalts yielded well preserved radiolarian assemblages according to which the age of the end of the "ophiolitic activity" (= the end of ocean spreading) was immediately before or within the latest Bajocian interval. A radiometric (Ar/Ar) age of the metamorphic sole at the base of the ophiolite gave 171 ± 4 Ma (late Bajocian), this is, an age slightly older than that of the cherts: this can mean that the metamorphic soles pertain to an intraoceanic hot thrust, doubling the oceanic crust/lithosphere.

INTRODUCTION AND GEOLOGICAL SETTING

In this study, we describe some radiolarian assemblages that have been extracted from the cherts of the sedimentary cover of the Vourinos ophiolite.

The Vourinos Massif is one of the better known ophiolites of the Mediterranean area. Till the end of the sixties it was considered an autochthonous magmatic body, emplaced, as an enormous lava flow (Brunn, 1956) or "as a crystal mush or a deforming solid mass rather than as a magma" (Moores, 1969), on the continental crust. Its allochthonous position on the metamorphic Pelagonian Zone, now almost unanimously accepted, was firstly put forward by Bortolotti et al. (1969), Zimmerman (1969), Dercourt (1970). Its origin as a portion of an ocean floor was proposed by Dercourt (1970), Zimmerman (1972), Bernoulli and Laubscher, (1972), etc.

If its original position was to the west or to the east, or if it belongs to a "Pindos Ocean" or to the "Vardar Ocean" are till now matter of debate. These problems are beyond the scope of this article. In any case, we incline to a provenance from the Vardar Ocean, situated to the east (see Bernoulli and Laubscher, 1972), which, according our paleogeographic and geodynamic reconstructions, was the only ocean in the Hellenic area (Bortolotti et al. 2003, with bibl.).

The Vourinos Massif consists of a tectonically disrupted but complete ophiolite sequence, which is interpreted as the product of a supra-subduction zone (Beccaluva et al., 1984). It consists of two main bodies (Western and Eastern Vourinos) and three minor satellite bodies (Krapa Hills, Zyghosti Creek and Mikrokaastro). The main outcrops expose a serpentinite carapace, which coats the main mass of harzburgites (with minor lherzolites), dunites and gabbros *lato sensu* (Moores, 1969; Jackson et al., 1975; Beccaluva et al., 1984). The satellite bodies are made of harzburgites, often serpentinitised, cumulates (present only in the Krapa Hills), an extrusive sequence of IAT type (Beccaluva et al., 1984) which includes pillow basalts, basalts andesites, minor dacites and, at the top, scattered thin levels of cherts and cherty limestones. Basalts and cherts are uncomfortably

covered by Lower or Upper Cretaceous limestones.

In spite of the very profound knowledge of the ophiolitic body, no data were available so far on the age of this ophiolite; only a sample from the amphibolite sole gave a radiometric age (Ar/Ar) of 171 ± 4 Ma (Spray et al., 1984), which, according to the Pálfi et al. (2000) time scale corresponds to the ?late Bajocian. The Jurassic age of the ophiolite was established only on calpionellids "of Tithonian (?) or Neocomian (?) age" in "brecciated limestones" covering the cherts at Langadhakia (Moores, 1969) and on the Latest Jurassic - Early Cretaceous age of the transgressive limestones on top of the massif (Brunn, 1956; Pichon and Lys, 1976).

The radiolarian assemblages here described provide more exact datings for the Vourinos ophiolite.

BIOSTRATIGRAPHY AND SECTION DESCRIPTION

The radiolarian assemblages described, come from four sections of cherts (Fig. 1 and 2), cropping out at the top of the basalts in the satellite bodies of Krapa Hills (Section A), Mikrokaastro (Section B) and Zyghosti Creek (Sections C and D).

Fourteen samples have been collected for radiolarian analyses. The radiolarians have been extracted from the cherts with hydrofluoric acid at different concentrations, utilising the method proposed by Dumitrica (1970), Pessagno and Newport (1972), Baumgartner et al. (1981) and De Wever (1982).

The radiolarian zonation based on Unitary Association Zones (UAZ.) proposed by Baumgartner et al. (1995) is adopted herein. The complete faunal assemblages from the examined samples are reported in Fig. 3, the ranges in Fig. 4, and the most important taxa are shown in Plates 1 and 2.

Section A - Krapa Hills

In the Krapa Hills area, near Langadhakia, (NE of Grevena, behind the Aliakmon River) on the eastern side of the road, pillow basalts that lie at the top of the intrusives, are

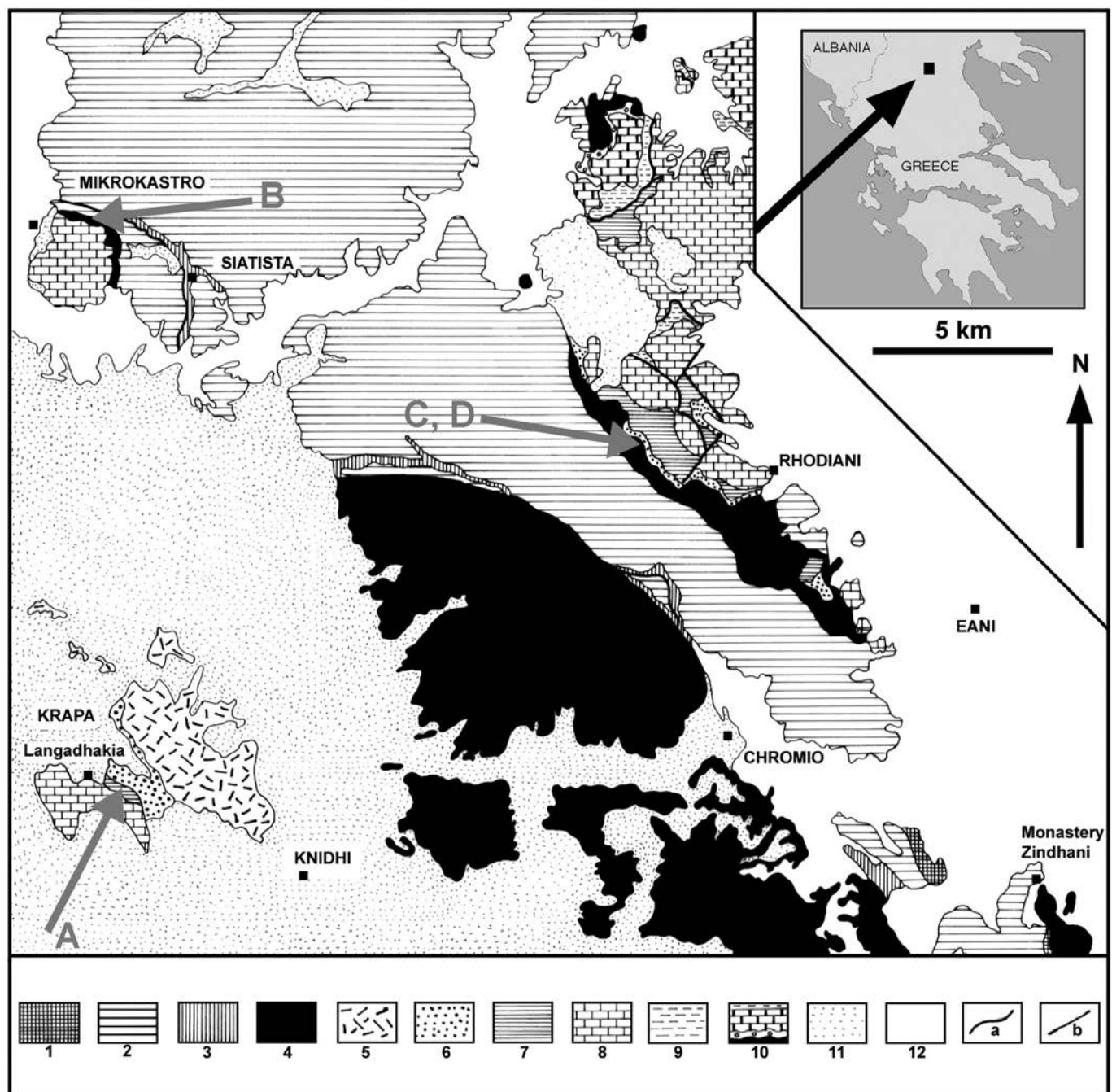


Fig. 1 - Geological map of Vourinos area (Moore's 1969; Mavrides et al. 1982; 1991) modified.

1- Pelagonian basement with gneiss and schists; 2- Triassic-Jurassic Pelagonian marbles; 3- Jurassic "sub-ophiolite" mélangé rich in schists and amphibolite soles; 4- More or less serpentinised harzburgites including dunites rich in chromite and pyroxenite bodies; 5- Ultramafic (dunite, wherlite, pyroxenite, troctolite, gabbro) and mafic (pyroxenite, gabbro) cumulates; 6- Dolerite sheeted dyke complex with pillow lavas intruded by boninitic dykes and overlain by radiolarian red chert sequence; 7- Upper Jurassic limestones; 8- Cretaceous limestones; 9- Upper Maastrichtian flysch; 10- Post-flysch tectonic unit including serpentinites, ophiolitic conglomerates, Upper Cretaceous rudist limestones and flysch; 11- Upper Aquitanian-Burdigalian (Miocene) molassic sediments; 12- Plio-Quaternary deposits; a- thrust; b- normal fault.

A- Krapa section; B- Mikrokastro Section; C, D- Zyghosti sections.

overlain by about 3 m of red radiolarian cherts grading upwards to Tithonian thin-bedded cherty limestones which yielded not determinable ammonites and belemnites. Further up, the succession continues with redeposited Jurassic limestones and is unconformably covered by Upper Cretaceous limestones (Fig. 2A).

In this section four samples were collected:

- GR 19 (uncertain stratigraphic position) yielded a well preserved radiolarian assemblage. The coexistence of *Mirifusus fragilis praeguadalupensis* Baumgartner and Bartolini

with *Guexella nudata* (Kocher), *Mirifusus guadalupensis* Pessagno, *Protunuma* (?) *ochiensis* Matsuoka, *Protunuma quadriperforatus* O'Dogherty and Gorican, *Ristola altissima major* Baumgartner and De Wever and *Stylocapsa* (?) *hemicostata* Matsuoka indicates a latest Bajocian-early Bathonian age (UAZ. 5). The presence of *Hexasaturnalis nakasekoi* Dumitrica and Dumitrica-Jud could indicate a more restricted time interval: early Bathonian age.

- GR 20 (about 1.30 m above the basalts). Age not determinable due to the poorly preserved fauna.

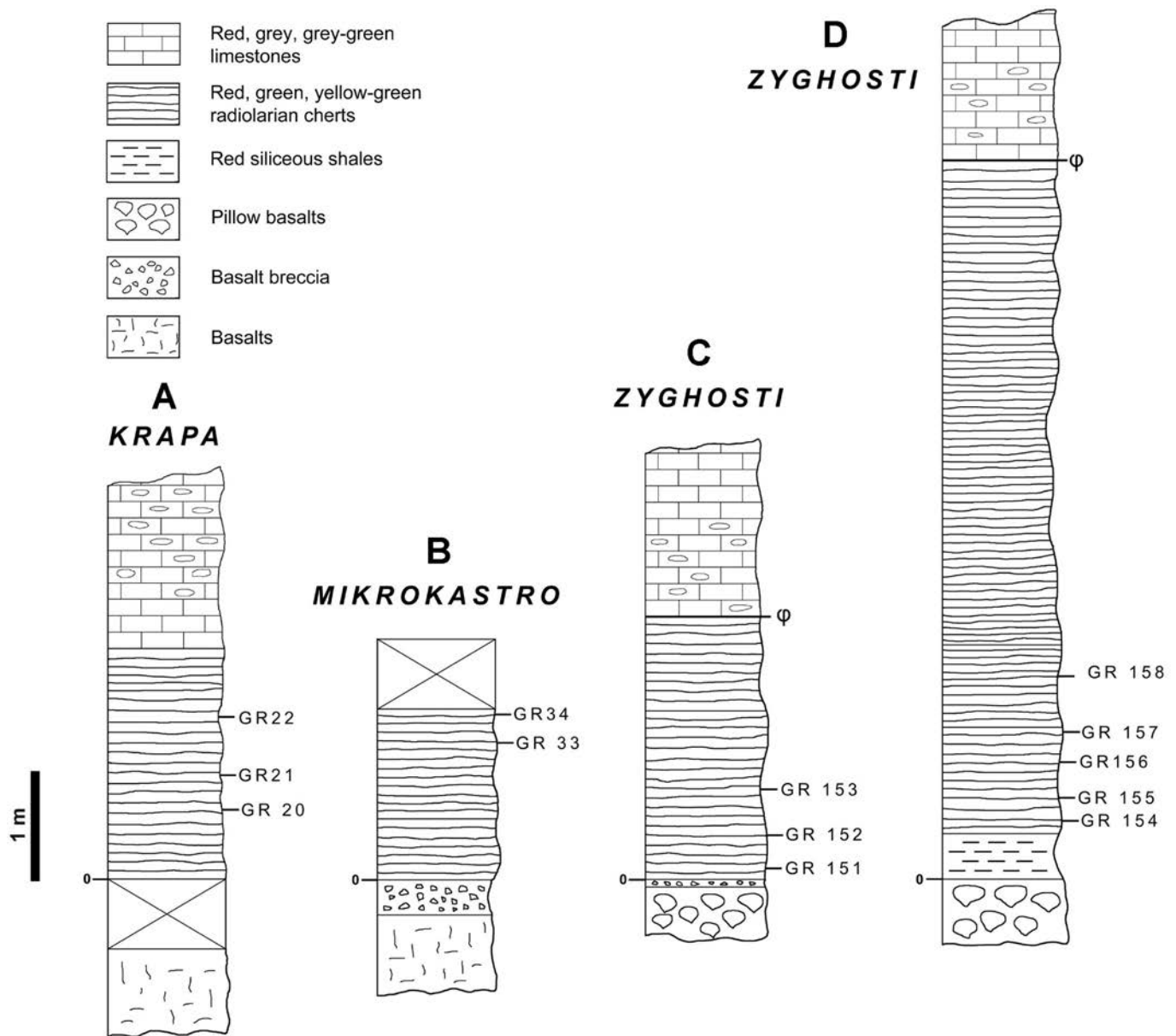


Fig. 2 - Logs of the examined sections.

- GR 21 (about 1.60 m above the basalts). Age not determinable due to the poorly preserved fauna.

- GR 22 (about 2.10 m above the basalts). The presence of *Ristola altissima major* Baumgartner and De Wever indicates a latest Bajocian - early Bathonian to late Bathonian-early Callovian age (UAZ. 5-7).

Section B - Mikrokaastro

In the Siatista area, about two km from Mikrokaastro, on the right of the road towards Siatista, the ophiolite outcrop consists of schistose serpentinites, at the base, and pillow lavas covered by a thin level of red and green radiolarian cherts, at the top. The contact between serpentinites and cherts is covered and probably tectonic. A tectonic contact (fault?) separates also the ophiolitic rocks from a Lower Cretaceous cherty limestone succession (Fig. 2B).

In this section two samples were collected for radiolarian analyses:

- GR 33 (about 1.5 metres above the basalts), yielded a well preserved radiolarian assemblage. The coexistence of

Bernoullius cristatus Baumgartner, *Protunuma quadriperforatus* O'Dogherty and Gorican and *Stichocapsa robusta* Matsuoka with *Unuma latusicostata* (Aita) indicates a latest Bajocian-early Bathonian age (UAZ. 5). The presence of *Hexasaturnalis suboblongus* (Yao) could indicate a more restricted time interval: latest Bajocian age.

- GR 34 (about 1.8 metres above the basalts). The coexistence of *Guexella nudata* (Kocher), *Protunuma quadriperforatus* O'Dogherty and Gorican, *Ristola altissima major* Baumgartner and De Wever and *Stichocapsa robusta* Matsuoka with *Theocapsomma medvednicensis* Gorican indicates a latest Bajocian-early Bathonian age (UAZ. 5).

Sections C and D - Zyghosti Creek

In the Zyghosti Creek area, about 10 km S-SW of Kozani, some tens of metres of pillow basalts tectonically cover the harzburgite-dunite complex. Scattered thin outcrops of radiolarian cherts are present at the top of the basalts. A thrust surface separates this succession from the Middle and Upper Jurassic carbonate platform deposits that

Sections		KRAPA				MIKRO-KASTRO		ZYGHOSTI A		ZYGHOSTI B	
Taxa	Samples	GR 19	GR 20	GR 21	GR 22	GR 33	GR 34	GR151	GR 153	GR 154	GR 157
<i>Angulobracchia</i> sp.											
<i>Archaeodictyomitra</i> (?) <i>amabilis</i> Aita											
<i>Archaeodictyomitra</i> (?) sp. cf. <i>A. amabilis</i> Aita											
<i>Archaeodictyomitra</i> sp. cf. <i>A. apiarium</i> (Rüst)											
<i>Archaeodictyomitra</i> sp. cf. <i>A. etrusca</i> Chiari, Cortese and Marcucci											
<i>Archaeodictyomitra</i> sp. cf. <i>A. spelae</i> Chiari, Cortese and Marcucci											
<i>Archaeodictyomitra</i> sp.											
<i>Bernoullius cristatus</i> Baumgartner											
<i>Dictyomitrella</i> (?) <i>kamoensis</i> Mizutani and Kido											
<i>Dictyomitrella</i> (?) sp. cf. <i>D. (?) kamoensis</i> Mizutani and Kido											
<i>Emiluvia premyogii</i> Baumgartner											
<i>Emiluvia</i> sp. cf. <i>E. premyogii</i> Baumgartner											
<i>Emiluvia</i> sp.											
<i>Eucyrtidiellum</i> sp. cf. <i>E. unumaense dentatum</i> Baumgartner											
<i>Eucyrtidiellum</i> sp. cf. <i>E. unumaense pustulatum</i> Baumgartner											
<i>Eucyrtidiellum unumaense</i> s.l. (Yao)											
<i>Eucyrtidiellum</i> sp.											
<i>Guexella nudata</i> (Kocher)											
<i>Hexasaturnalis nakasekoi</i> Dumitrica and Dumitrica-Jud											
<i>Hexasaturnalis suboblongus</i> (Yao)											
<i>Homoeoparonaella</i> (?) sp. cf. <i>H. (?) pseudoewingi</i> Baumgartner											
<i>Homoeoparonaella</i> sp.											
<i>Levilleugeo ordinarius</i> Yang & Wang											
<i>Linaresia</i> sp.											
<i>Mirifusus fragilis praeguadalupensis</i> Baumgartner and Bartolini											
<i>Mirifusus guadalupensis</i> Pessagno											
<i>Mirifusus</i> sp. cf. <i>M. fragilis praeguadalupensis</i> Baumgartner and Bartolini											
<i>Napora</i> sp. cf. <i>N. saginata</i> Takemura											
<i>Pantanellium</i> sp.											
<i>Paronaella</i> sp. cf. <i>P. broennimanni</i> Pessagno											
<i>Paronaella bandyi</i> Pessagno											
<i>Podobursa helvetica</i> (Rüst)											
<i>Protunuma</i> (?) <i>ochiensis</i> Matsuoka											
<i>Protunuma quadriperforatus</i> O'Dogherty and Gorican											
<i>Protunuma turbo</i> Matsuoka											
<i>Protunuma</i> sp.											
<i>Protunuma</i> (?) sp.											
<i>Pseudoeucyrtis</i> sp. cf. <i>P. sp. J</i> Baumgartner et al.											
<i>Ristola altissima major</i> Baumgartner and De Wever											
<i>Saitoum levium</i> De Wever											
<i>Saitoum</i> sp. cf. <i>S. pagei</i> Pessagno											
<i>Saitoum</i> sp.											
<i>Sethocapsa funatoensis</i> Aita											
<i>Sethocapsa</i> sp.											
<i>Sethocapsa</i> (?) sp.											
<i>Stichocapsa convexa</i> Yao											
<i>Stichocapsa robusta</i> Matsuoka											
<i>Stichocapsa</i> sp.											
<i>Striatojaponicapsa conexa</i> (Matsuoka)											
<i>Striatojaponicapsa plicarum</i> s.l. (Yao)											
<i>Striatojaponicapsa</i> sp. cf. <i>S. conexa</i> (Matsuoka)											
<i>Striatojaponicapsa</i> sp. cf. <i>S. plicarum</i> ssp. A (Baumgartner et al.)											
<i>Striatojaponicapsa</i> sp.											
<i>Stylocapsa</i> (?) <i>hemicostata</i> Matsuoka											
<i>Stylocapsa oblongula</i> Kocher											
<i>Stylocapsa</i> sp. cf. <i>S. oblongula</i> Kocher											
<i>Stylocapsa tecta</i> Matsuoka											
<i>Stylocapsa</i> sp.											
<i>Tethysetta dhimenaensis</i> s.l. (Baumgartner)											
<i>Tethysetta dhimenaensis</i> ssp. A (Baumgartner et al.)											
<i>Tethysetta</i> sp. cf. <i>T. dhimenaensis</i> ssp. A (Baumgartner et al.)											
<i>Tetraditryma</i> sp.											
<i>Theocapsomma medvednicensis</i> Gorican											

Fig. 3 - Occurrence chart of the radiolarian taxa.

UAZ. 95

Time scale
 Channell et al. 1995
 Pätz et al. 2000

Species	Time Scale (Ma)
1	175 - 170
2	175 - 170
3	170 - 165
4	165 - 160
5	160 - 155
6	155 - 150
7	150 - 145
8	145 - 140
9	140 - 135
10	135 - 130
11	130 - 125
12	125 - 120
13	120 - 115
14	115 - 110
15	110 - 105
16	105 - 100
17	100 - 95
18	95 - 90
19	90 - 85
20	85 - 80
21	80 - 75
22	75 - 70
23	70 - 65
24	65 - 60
25	60 - 55
26	55 - 50
27	50 - 45
28	45 - 40
29	40 - 35
30	35 - 30
31	30 - 25
32	25 - 20
33	20 - 15
34	15 - 10

Fig. 4 - Range chart of the radiolarian taxa. Radiolarian zonation after Baumgartner et al. (1995), time scale after Channel et al. (1995) and Pálffy et al. (2000). Range of *Theocapsomma medvednicensis* Gorican after Halamic et al. (1999); *Protunuma quadriperforatus* O'Dogherty and Gorican after O'Dogherty and Gorican (2002); *Hexasaturnalis nakasekoi* Dumitrica and Dumitrica-Jud after Dumitrica and Dumitrica-Jud (2003), *Hexasaturnalis suboblongus* (Yao), Dumitrica (pers. com.).

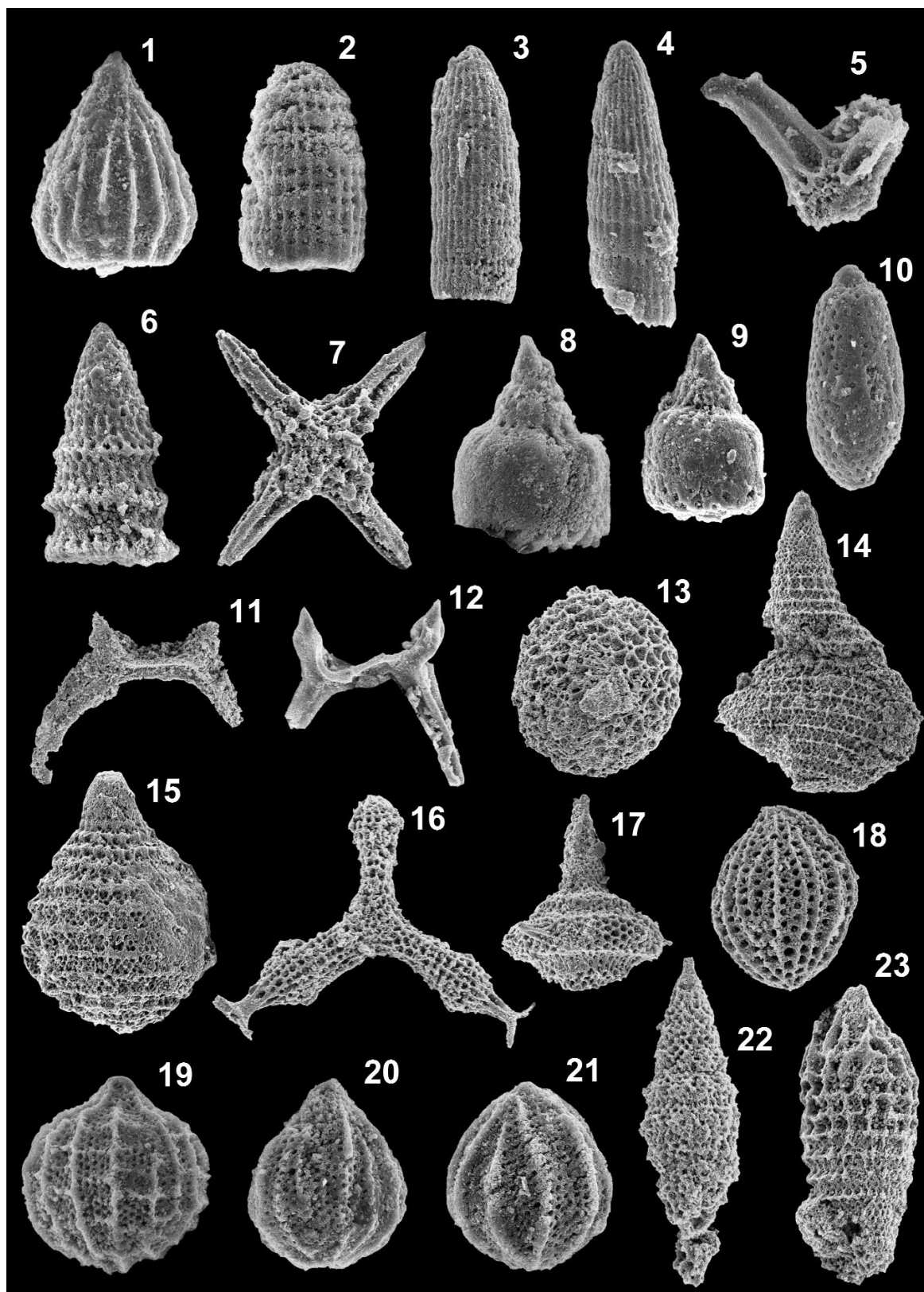


Plate 1 - 1) *Archaeodictyomitra* (?) *amabilis* Aita, GR 33, x290; 2) *Archaeodictyomitra* sp. cf. *A. apiarium* (Rüst), GR 33, x290; 3) *Archaeodictyomitra* sp. cf. *A. etrusca* Chiari, Cortese and Marcucci, GR 34, x290; 4) *Archaeodictyomitra* sp. cf. *A. spelae* Chiari, Cortese and Marcucci, GR 33, x290; 5) *Bernoullius cristatus* Baumgartner, GR 33, x240; 6) *Dictyomitrella* (?) *kamoensis* Mizutani and Kido, GR 33, x390; 7) *Emiluvia premyogii* Baumgartner, GR 19, x186; 8) *Eucyrtidiellum unumaense* s.l. (Yao), GR 33, x345; 9) *Eucyrtidiellum* sp. cf. *E. unumaense pustulatum* Baumgartner, GR 33, x345; 10) *Guexella nudata* (Kocher), GR 34, x400; 11) *Hexasaturnalis nakasekoi* Dumitrica and Dumitrica-Jud, GR 19, x137; 12) *Hexasaturnalis suboblongus* (Yao), GR 33, x137; 13) *Levilleugeo ordinarius* Yang and Wang, GR 19, x115; 14) *Mirifusus fragilis praeguadalupensis* Baumgartner and Bartolini, GR 19, x70; 15) *Mirifusus guadalupensis* Pessagno, GR 19, x140; 16) *Paronaella bandyi* Pessagno, GR 19, x160; 17) *Podobursa helvetica* (Rüst), GR 19, x122; 18) *Protunuma* (?) *ochiensis* Matsuoka, GR 19, x258; 19) *Protunuma quadriperforatus* O'Dogherty and Gorican, GR 19, x228; 20) *Protunuma turbo* Matsuoka, GR 33, x228; 21) *Protunuma* (?) sp., GR 33, x258; 22) *Pseudoeucyrtis* sp. cf. *P. sp.* J Baumgartner et al., GR 19, 150; 23) *Ristola altissima major* Baumgartner and De Wever, GR 19, x150.

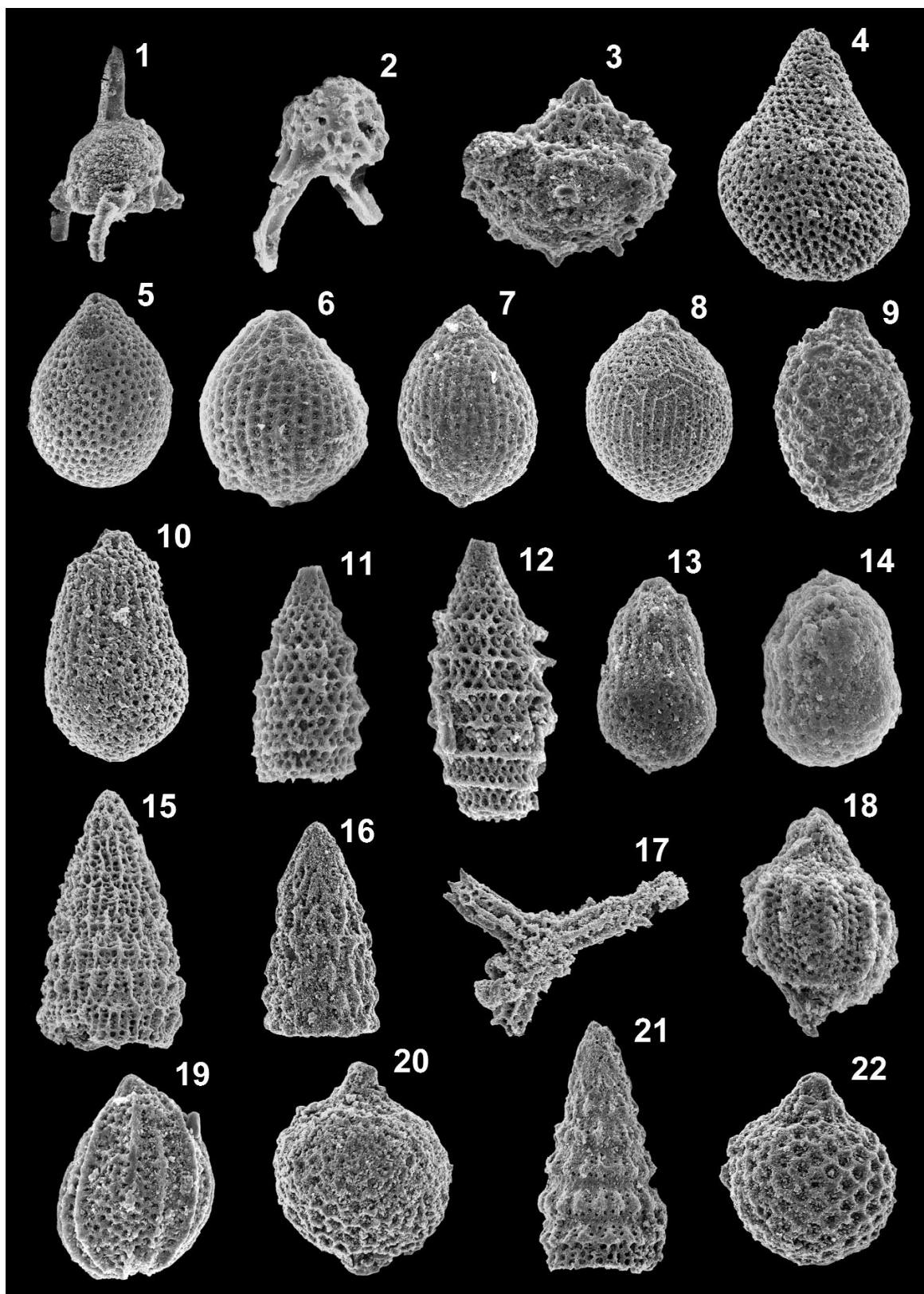


Plate 2 - 1) *Saitoum levium* De Wever, GR 33, x298; 2) *Saitoum* sp. cf. *S. pagei* Pessagno, GR 33, x242; 3) *Sethocapsa funatoensis* Aita, GR 34, x288; 4) *Stichocapsa convexa* Yao, GR 19, x214; 5) *Stichocapsa robusta* Matsuoka, GR 33, x238; 6) *Striatojaponicapsa conexa* (Matsuoka), GR 33, x244; 7) *Striatojaponicapsa plicarum* s.l. (Yao), GR 34, x292; 8) *Stylocapsa* (?) *hemicostata* Matsuoka, GR 19, x216; 9) *Stylocapsa oblongula* Kocher, GR 154, x365; 10) *Stylocapsa tecta* Matsuoka, GR 154, x276; 11) *Tethysetta dhimenaensis* s.l. (Baumgartner), GR 34, x270; 12) *Tethysetta dhimenaensis* ssp. A (Baumgartner et al.), GR 33, x270; 13) *Theocapsomma medvednicensis* Gorican, GR 34, x360; 14) *Theocapsomma* sp., GR 33, x360; 15) *Transhsuum maxwelli* gr. (Pessagno), GR 19, x180; 16) *Transhsuum* sp., GR 22, x180; 17) *Tritrabs* sp. cf. *T. casmaliaensis* (Pessagno), GR 19, X158; 18) *Unuma latusicostatus* (Aita), GR 33, x310; 19) *Unuma gorda* Hull, GR 34, x308; 20) *Williriedellum* sp. cf. *W. carpathicum*, Dumitrica, GR 22, x136; 21) *Wrangellium brevicostatum* gr. (Ozoldova), GR 19, x188; 22) *Zhamoidellum triangulosa* (Tan), GR 22, x272.

according to Brunn (1956) constituted the uncomformable cover of the ophiolites. These two tectonic units were piled up before the Cenomanian, which is the age of a marine transgression that sealed the Jurassic platform and the ophiolites (Carras et al., 2004, in press).

In the main outcrop of the cherts, on the left side of the creek, about 750 m NE of Aghios Nicolas Chapel, two sections (C and D) about 20 m from one another were sampled (Fig. 2C, 2D).

In the section C three samples were collected:

- GR 151 (about 0.13 metres above the basalts). Age not determinable due to the poorly preserved fauna.

- GR 152 (about 0.45 metres above the basalts). Age not determinable due to the poorly preserved fauna.

- GR 153 (collected about 0.85 cm above the basalts). The presence of *Stichocapsa robusta* Matsuoka indicates a latest Bajocian-early Bathonian to late Bathonian-early Callovian age (UAZ. 5-7).

In the section D five samples were collected:

- GR 154 (about 0.50 cm above the basalts). The presence of *Stylocapsa tecta* Matsuoka, *Unuma gorda* Hull and *Stylocapsa oblongula* Kocher indicates a middle Bathonian age (UAZ. 6).

- GR 155 (about 0.75 metres above the basalts). Age not determinable due to the poorly preserved fauna.

- GR 156 (about 1.05 metres above the basalts). Age not determinable due to the poorly preserved fauna.

- GR 157 (about 1.30 metres above the basalts). Age not determinable due to the poorly preserved fauna.

- GR 158 (about 1.75 metres above the basalts). Age not determinable due to the poorly preserved fauna.

FINAL REMARKS

The ages given by the radiolarian cherts at the top of the Vourinos basalts are as follows:

1- Krapa Hills: early Bathonian;

2- Mikrokastro: latest Bajocian;

3- Zyghosti: latest Bajocian-early Bathonian to late Bathonian-early Callovian age, section C; middle Bathonian, section D.

We can conclude that in the Vourinos ophiolite the basalt extrusion (and the seafloor spreading?) ended immediately before or within the latest Bajocian - early Callovian age interval. This age is slightly younger than the age of the metamorphism of the amphibolite sole at the base of the massif. We argue that here, as in other cases (Mirdita ophiolites of Albania) the amphibolite soles pertain to an intraoceanic "high-temperature shear zone formed at the base of an overridden section of oceanic lithosphere" (Bortolotti et al., 1996; Carosi et al., 1996).

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