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 **Calcareous Algae and Foraminifera from the Upper Capitanian/Lower Wuchiapingian (Middle/Upper Permian) transitional carbonates of the Chios Island (Greece). Biostratigraphic and paleogeographic implications**  10 Gevorg Grigoryan<sup>1</sup>, Taniel Danelian<sup>2</sup>, Daniel Vachard<sup>2</sup>, Theodora Tsourou<sup>3</sup>, Alexandra Zambettakis-Lekkas<sup>3</sup> <sup>1</sup>15 Institute of Geological Sciences, National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, Bagramyan 16 ave., 24, Yerevan, Armenia, gevgrigg@gmail.com <sup>2</sup> 17 Univ. Lille, CNRS, UMR 8198 - Evo-Eco-Paléo, F-59000 France, taniel.danelian@univ-18 lille.fr, daniel.vachard@free.fr 3 Department of Historical Geology-Paleontology, National and Kapodistrian University of 20 Athens, Zografou, 15784, Athens, Greece, ttsourou@geol.uoa.gr, zambetaki@geol.uoa.gr 22 Corresponding author: Taniel Danelian taniel.danelian@univ-lille.fr 

#### 28 **Abstract**

29 A 3m thick carbonate sequence from northern Chios island is assigned here to the latest 30 Capitanian/earliest Wuchiapingian transitional interval. It is characterized by abundant 31 gymnocodiacean algae, associated with some miliolate, nankinellin and nodosariate 32 foraminifers. These strata display bioaccumulated perireefal microfacies with richthofeniid 33 brachiopods and inozoa calcisponges. They are biostratigraphically characterized by a 34 foraminifera assemblage composed of *Reichelina* cf. *simplex*, *Dunbarula*? sp., *Altineria*  35 *alpinotaurica* together with the genera *Labioglobivalvulina*, *Frondina* and *Robuloides*. Other 36 perireefal microfacies show abundant fragments of a new tubiphytid species, *Tubiphytella* 37 *guevenci* Vachard nov. gen. nov. sp. Based on this study, the paleogeographical distribution 38 of *Altineria alpinotaurica* now includes Chios, in addition to the Taurus and the NW and 39 central Iran, whereas primitive forms of the genus are also known in Tunisia and Armenia. 40 This paleobiogeographic distribution would suggest that all these regions still belonged to the 41 Perigondwana margin in the early Wuchiapingian times. Consequently, it is likely that the 42 opening of the Neotethys ocean did not begin prior to the late Wuchiapingian-early 43 Changshingian transitional interval.

44

45 *Keywords*: Chios Island; Foraminifers; Calcareous algae; Biostratigraphy; Perigondwana 46 margin, paleobiogeography

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#### 51 1. **Introduction**

52 The Upper Paleozoic sedimentary and fossil record of Chios, a Greek island situated in 53 the eastern Aegean Sea (Fig. 1a), holds key evidence for the understanding of the complex 54 geological events that led to the opening of the Neotethys ocean and subsequent closure of the 55 Paleotethys. Nevertheless, as the geological structure of the island is the result of several pre-56 alpine and alpine tectonic movements, its geological structure and history are very

57 complicated to decipher (Besenecker et al., 1968; Papanikolaou and Sideris, 1983; Robertson 58 and Pickett, 2000; Tselepidis and Rondoyanni, 2000).

59 The presence of Paleozoic sequences in Chios has long been recognised (see the historical 60 overview provided by Fryssalakis, 1985). Besenecker et al. (1968) synthesized a number of 61 local geological studies conducted on the island and they distinguished an upper and a lower 62 tectonostratigraphic units. The lower unit is autochthonous or subautochthonous and it is 63 composed of siliciclastic turbidites that contain olistoliths of various lithologies, ranging in 64 age from the Silurian to the Carboniferous. The siliciclastic sequence is overlain 65 unconformably by a Mesozoic carbonate sequence. According to Zanchi et al. (2003), the 66 Paleozoic sequence of the lower tectonostratigraphic unit is of Laurasian affinity. The upper 67 (allochthonous) unit is thrusted over the lower unit and it is only preserved in a number of 68 isolated klippes. The allochthonous character of the upper tectonostratigraphic unit was 69 demonstrated by Besenecker et al. (1968) and Kauffmann (1969). Lithologically, it is 70 composed of Upper Carboniferous turbidites, Lower Permian sandy/marly limestones and 71 Middle Permian shallow-water carbonates, which are overlain by red siltstones and Jurassic 72 platform carbonates. Based on brachiopods, Angiolini et al. (2005) suggested a Gondwana 73 affinity for the upper unit.

74 Regional geological syntheses were conducted by Fryssalakis (1985), Tselepidis and 75 Dondoyanni (2000) and Angiolini et al. (2005). More recently, Meinhold et al. (2007, 2008)

76 applied geochemical analyses to the detrital sequences present on the island in order to infer 77 their depositional setting.

78 The presence of Middle Permian carbonates in the Upper Unit was generally admitted, 79 especially in the area around the Marmaro Bay (Fig. 1b). More particularly, at the eastern part 80 of the Marmaro Bay there are excellet outcrops of highly fossiliferous limestones, which were 81 called "Gymnocodiaceen-Kalke" by Kauffman (1969). These outcrops display exceptional 82 richthofeniid brachiopod reef buildups. Richthofenids grew under low-energy conditions as 83 these particular spine bearing brachiopods would live anchored by their spines, promoting 84 thus stabilization of the seafloor. These limestone outcrops were first studied in detail by Flajs 85 et al. (1996) where they distinguished five litostratigraphical units. Furthermore, Larghi 86 (2002) studied the bivalves and Angiolini et al. (2005) the brachiopods. In addition to a 87 systematic update of brachiopods found around the Marmaro Bay, Angiolini et al. (2005) also 88 performed a quantitative paleogeographic analysis of them, which concluded that they have 89 "a clear Gondwana affinity".

90 We here present a micropaleontological study of the foraminifera and algae present in the 91 Permian limestones of the Marmaro Bay, which allows us to specify their age assignment to 92 the late Capitanian–early Wuchipingian boundary interval. Moreover, the North-Gondwana 93 affinity of some of the identified foraminifera reinforces previous suggestions to consider the 94 Permian deposits of the Upper Unit as located at the southern margin of Paleotethys, with 95 shallow marine connections still present between Tunisia and Iran.

96

#### 97 2. **Stratigraphic setting**

98 The studied sequences were observed and sampled along the eastern coast of the Marmaro 99 Bay, situated in the north-eastern part of the Chios island (Fig. 1b; Kardamyla, N 38° 32' 100 29.76", E 26° 7' 5.67"). Here, the Permian limestones and marls of the upper unit are

101 unconformably overlain by Lower Jurassic shallow water limestones that display a red 102 terrigenous formation at their base (Fig. 2).

103 The area is easily accessible by car, as a settlement was developed recently. The total 104 length of the outcrop is 283 m but several small faults and landslides interrupt it. The overall 105 section is a monoclinic succession, where the beds strike N13W and dip 19°-30° eastward. 106 Two short intervals of Permian limestones were studied in detail; they correspond to the lower 107 part (intervals 1 and 2, Flajs et al., 1996) o fthe Marmaro section. They consist of dark 108 bituminous and fossiliferous limestones forming ca. 20-30 cm thick beds, with several marly 109 intercalations. More specifically, the section Marmaro **M** (Figs. 2 and 3) displays a 0.8 m-110 thick limestone at the base, overlain by a 1.2 m-thick marly interval containing some thin 111 bedded limestone intercalations; it ends with thick bedded limestones. Section Marmaro **T**  112 (Figs. 2 and 3) displays a lower part made essentially of bedded limestones, followed upwards 113 by an essentially marly interval with several thick limestone intercalations.

114

#### 115 3. **Results**

116 The limestones of the section **Marmaro M** are essentially composed of packstones with 117 abundant gymnocodiacean algae (*Permocalculus*, *Gymnocodium*; Fig. 4.1-2) and very few 118 dasycladale algae (*Mizzia*), whereas the smaller foraminifers are rare genera belonging to 119 globivalvulinids (*Globivalvulina*), miliolates (*Hemigordius, Neodiscus, Agathammina*, very 120 rare *Pseudovermiporella*), and nodosariates (*Nodosinelloides, Ichthyofrondina, Geinitzina,*  121 *Pachyphloia,* rare *Robuloides*). Given that very shallow water algae are found together with 122 deeper nodosariates, the faunal and floral assemblages, in combination with the observed 123 microfacies, suggest a tropical-subtropical and very shallow marine depositional environment 124 (Vachard et al., 2010).

125 The limestones of the section **Marmaro T** contain diverse metazoan bioclasts, which are 126 identified as calcisponges (inozoa; Fig. 4.25), *Multithecopora* sp. (VR = very rare), bivalves, 127 gastropods, microconchids (R = rare), worms *Terebella* sp. (VR and observed only at the 128 level of sample T9), Bryozoa (fenestellids and other Zoaria), brachiopods (richthofeniids; 129 Fig.4.26, productids, and other tests and spines), ostracodes, crinoids (R) and palechidnid 130 radioles (VR).

131 Among the **algae** and **microproblematica**, *Gymnocodium nodosum* Ogilvie Gordon, 132 1927 (Fig. 4.21), *Permocalculus plumosus* Elliott, 1955 and *Gyroporella*? sp. were identified, 133 as well as the **algae** *incertae sedis Eotuberitina reitlingerae* Miklukho-Maklay, 1958 (R) and 134 the new genus and new species *Tubiphytella guevenci* n. gen*.* n. sp. (VC = very common) 135 (Fig. 4.7, 20-24)

136 **Foraminifera** are the most diverse clade recognised in our material. Among the 137 Endothyrida were identified *Earlandia* p. (VR), *Lasiodiscus tenuis* Reichel, 1946 (R), 138 *Altineria alpinotaurica* (Altıner, 1988) (R) (Fig. 4.5-7, 13), *A.* cf. *arpaensis* (Pronina and 139 Gubenko, 1990) (R) (Fig. 4.3, 4), *Endoteba* sp. (R), *Climacammina* sp. (RC), *Tetrataxis* sp. 140 (VR), *Abadehella* sp. (VR), *Globivalvulina* sp. (R), *Labioglobivalvulina* cf. *fortis* Gaillot and 141 Vachard, 2007 (RC) (Fig. 4.15, 16, 19) and *Retroseptellina* cf. *decrouezae* (Köylüoglu and 142 Altıner, 1989) (VR) (Fig. 4.17). Amongst the Fusulinida were recognized *Nankinella* sp. 143 (VR), *Reichelina* cf. *simplex* Sheng, 1963 (VR) (Fig. 4.8-10), and *Dunbarula*? sp. (VR) (Fig. 144 4. 11). Amongst the Miliolida were recognized *Ammovertella* sp. (VR), *Pseudovermiporella* 145 ex gr. *nipponica* Endo *in* Endo and Kanuma, 1954 (R) (Fig. 4.12), *Hemigordiellina* sp. (VR), 146 *Agathammina asymmetrica* (Han, 1982) (VR), *A.* sp. (VR), *Neodiscus* sp. (VR) (Fig. 4.14) 147 and *Multidiscus* cf. *arpaensis* Pronina, 1988 (RC) (Fig. 4.18, 21). Finally, among the 148 Nodosariida were identified *Nodosinelloides* ex gr. *potievskayae* Mamet and Pinard, 1996 149 (VR; Fig. 4.20), *Geinitzina taurica* Sellier de Civrieux and Dessauvagie, 1965, *Frondina* 

150 *permica* Sellier de Civrieux and Dessauvagie, 1965 (VR), *Ichthyofrondina latilimbata* (Sellier 151 de Civrieux and Dessauvagie, 1965) (VR), *Ichthyolaria* sp. (VR), *Pachyphloia ovata* Lange, 152 1925 (R), *Pachyphloia* ex gr. *schwageri* Sellier de Civrieux and Dessauvagie, 1965 (VR) and 153 *Pachyphloia* sp. 1 (R).

154 On the other hand, Cyanobacteria identified as *Girvanella* sp. were observed in abundance 155 in sample T4.

156 In terms of microfacies, the lower part of the section (interval between samples T1 and 157 T9) is dominated by algae, small foraminifera and fusulinids (*Dunbarula*? and *Reichelina*). 158 Fragments of richthofeniid brachiopods are very rare in them. They are regarded as 159 accumulation in inner platform environments.

160 The limestones situated at the upper part of the section (between samples T11 and T17) 161 are rich in richthofeniid brachiopods and Inozoa sponges; they are regarded as reflecting 162 accumulation in the proximity of the richthofeniid reef, likely in a back reef position.

163

#### 164 **4. Systematic Paleontology**

165 The Permian microfauna and microflora, found in this study, are relatively well known, 166 with the exception of a new genus and a new species of the *incertae sedis* group 167 Tubiphytidae, which is new to science and therefore described here in detail. All type 168 specimens described here are housed in the public paleontological collections of the 169 University of Lille.- Science and Technology (USTL).

170

#### 171 Family **Tubiphytidae** Vachard, Krainer and Lucas, 2012

172 The tubiphytids are more or less strongly transformed consortial associations of tubular 173 miliolate foraminifers with cyanobacterial algae. Poorly transformed tubular miliolates still

174 exhibit sagittiform cavities evocating uniseriate series of chambers. Strongly transformed





- 222 (bottom), 4.22 (right)). In our material, such a substrate is often a spine of productoid
- 223 brachiopod (sample T2, T6, T9, T11).
- 224 **Measurements:** Total length = 2000-5000 µm; width of the tubular, terminal part = 150-
- 225 600 µm; width of the inflated, initial part = 200–800 µm; inner width of chambers = 90-
- 226  $400 \text{ µm}$ ; inner height of chambers = 200-800  $\text{µm}$ , wall thickness = 30-200  $\text{µm}$ ; number of
- 227 chambers in the tubular part  $= 5-10$ .
- 228 **Remarks:** Contrary to *Tubiphyte*s, *Tubiphytella* n. gen. is not regarded as a taxon that had the 229 capacity to build microreefs, and is more likely to have constituted meadows at the bottom of 230 the sea.
- 231 **Occurrence:** Greece (Hydra, Chios); Sicily.
- 232

### 233 **5. Discussion**

234 Angiolini et al (2005) assigned a Wordian age to the Permian limestones cropping out at the 235 Marmaro Bay, based essentially on the presence of the fusulinid genus *Verbeekina*. However, 236 we have not found this genus in our material. It is worth noting that due to its large size and 237 spherical shape *Verbeekina* may be confused with *Staffella* or *Sphaerulina* which are common 238 taxa in the Lopingian limestones. In addition, it has been recently established in China that 239 *Verbeekina* is still present in the Capitanian (Huang et al., 2015a-b). Thus, its age ranges the 240 Murgabian-Midian (= Wordian-Capitanian) interval.

- 241 *Altineria alpinotaurica* is a species known originally from upper Capitanian to lower
- 242 Wuchiapingian strata of southern Turkey (Altıner, 1988). This species was found consistently
- 243 in the lower and middle parts of the Marmaro T section (samples T2 to T13). In terms of
- 244 biochronology it is amongst the most important foraminiferan species for our study, as the
- 245 recent synthesis established by Vachard (2018) suggests that it may be considered as a marker
- 246 species for the Capitanian/Wuchiapingian boundary interval.

247 In addition, the genera *Labioglobivalvulina*, *Frondina* and *Ichthyofrondina* are late Capitanian 248 and Lopingian in age (Gaillot and Vachard, 2007; Arefifard and Vachard unpublished data); 249 *Retroseptellina decrouezae* is considered as late Capitanian to early Changhsinghian in age 250 (Köylüoglu and Altıner, 1989; Gaillot and Vachard, 2007). *Nankinella* sp. occurs during the 251 entire Middle and Late Permian. However, after the diasappearance of the giant and complex 252 fusulinids at the end-Guadalupian mass extinction, it becomes proportionally more abundant 253 during the Wuchiapingian-Changhsingian. The dunbarulin fusulinids (Fig. 4.11) appear in the 254 latest Capitanian of Tunisia (Ghazzay et al., 2015).

255 The paleogeographical distribution of *Altineria alpinotaurica* now includes Chios, in addition 256 to the Taurus and NW and central Iran, whereas primitive forms of the genus are also known 257 from Tunisia and Armenia. All these areas were part of the Perigondwana margin during the 258 Wuchiapingian. After that, several terranes (including Turkey, Afghanistan, Karakorum, 259 Qiantang, South Pamir, western Thailand and Malaysia), formed a narrow and elongated 260 continental strip known as Cimmerian Continent. This continent was located in the eastern 261 margin of the Gondwana until its rifting in Early Permian and the opening of the Neotethys in 262 the Late Permian and then drifted northward across the Paleotethys ocean from southern 263 Gondwana paleolatitudes to subequatorial paleolatitudes by the Middle Permian to Early 264 Triassic. Finally, it collided with Eurasian margin causing the Cimmerian Orogeny (Sengör, 265 1984; Besse et al., 1998; Metcalfe, 1999, 2006; Ruban et al., 2007; Muttoni et al., 2009a, b; 266 Torsvik and Cocks, 2013; Fergusson et al., 2016; Hassanzadeh and Wernicke, 2016). 267 The resemblance of Permian foraminiferal assemblages recovered from Chios, Taurus, 268 Armenia and the Abadeh area in Iran suggests that all these areas were situated close to each 269 other, which allowed easy faunal exchange between them. Furthermore, paleobiogeographical 270 affinities are also remarkable between Armenia and South China, and less marked with 271 currently adjacent areas, such as Alborz, Tabas, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Oman.

272 Several taxa advocate the continuity of the northern Perigondwana margin (i.e., the southern 273 Neotethyan margin), already mentioned by Stampfli et al. (2001, fig. 16), from Armenia to 274 Himalaya. Due to the paleobiogeographical affinities, this Perigondwana continuity probably 275 existed up to the early Wuchiapingian. After that, the paleogeography was modified and the 276 northern Perigondwana margin, limited to the South by the "Neotethys break-up line" of 277 Stampfli et al. (2013, their fig. 9) became the southern Cimmerian margin. Consequently, it is 278 likely that the opening of the Neotethys did not begin prior to the late Wuchiapingian-early 279 Changhsingian transitional interval. A first suggestion of this dating was given by Vachard 280 (2014) who indicated that the lineage of the well-known nodosariate *Colaniella* begun in the 281 Perigondwana and finished in the Cimmerian terranes. Conversely, the whole evolution of 282 *Altineria* occurred on the Perigondwana margin.

283

#### 284 **6. Conclusion**

285 The micropaleontological record of the lower part of the richthofeniid buildup occurring in 286 the eastern part of Marmaro Bay suggests that accumulation took place in a 287 tropical/subtropical sea, sometimes at very shallow depths (section M) or in an inner platform 288 depositional environment or else at the back of the richthofeniid reef.

289 The age of the richthofeniid reef buildup preserved in Marmaro Bay is younger than

290 previously thought; it is now correlated with the Capitanian/Wuchiapigian boundary interval

291 and not to the Wordian, as had previously been suggested).

292 The discovery of *Altineria alpinotaurica* confirms the Gondwana affinity of the Permian

293 reefal carbonates of Chios and suggests that, during the Middle/Late Permian boundary

294 interval, there was still a paleogeographic continuity between Tunisia, Chios, the Taurus

295 mountains, the south Armenian block, and Iran. This implies that the opening of the

296 Neotethys ocean did not begin prior to the Late Permian and more precisely to the

297 Wuchiapingian-Changhsingian transitional interval and that it was only really marked from 298 the late Changhsingian.

299

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305

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- **12.** *Pseudovermiporella* ex gr. *nipponica* Endo in Endo and Kanuma, 1954 (bottom, left). 462 Sample T8.
- **14.** *Neodiscus* sp. Sample T11.
- **15, 16, 19.** *Labioglobivalvulina* cf. *fortis* Gaillot and Vachard, 2007. 15. Sample T16. 16.
- 465 Sample T11. 19. Sample T11.
- **17.** *Retroseptellina* cf. *decrouezae* (Köylüoglu and Altıner, 1989). Sample T6.
- **18, 21.** *Multidiscus* cf. *arpaensis* Pronina, 1988. 18. Sample T11. 21. Neosparitized axial
- 468 section (top center) with *Tubiphytella guevenci* n. gen*.* n. sp. (bottom, right) and
- *Gymnocodium nodosum* (top right). Sample T8.
- **20.** *Frondicularia*? sp. (center) with *Tubiphytella guevenci* n. gen*.* n. sp. (top left). Sample
- 471 T11.
- **21.** *Gymnocodium nodosum* Ogilvie Gordon, 1927. Sample T8.
- **25.** Inozoa. Sample T11.
- **26.** Richthofenid. Sample T6.



**Alluvial deposits** 





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