

Nova Scotia Department of Energy Open File 2017-xx

Correlation chart for Late Devonian to Permian stratified rocks of the Maritimes Basin, Atlantic Canada.

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Introduction

The correlation chart represents a compilation of many authors' work. Correlation in the Maritimes Basin is challenging, both because of a lack of isotopically datable rocks and because biostratigraphically useful fossil groups, such as conodonts, foraminifera, and palynomorphs, tend to lack key species as a result of the unusual environments that existed, especially during the Mississippian.

A second challenge resides in the dispersed nature of the literature. Many larger compilations reference biostratigraphic reports that have not been formally published. In some cases these are unavailable, or are only available in hard-copy at the library of the institution where the work was submitted. Because of this, we have relied on larger-scale compilations rather than recording primary sources in many cases. All citations in the chart should be read as if implicitly followed by the words "and references therein".

A third challenge is representing lithologies that have been described by different authors working for diverse organizations using different terminologies over many decades. Many lithostratigraphic units in the Maritimes basin show great lithological diversity, but with a few exceptions are shown as single shaded blocks in the chart. For example, decisions had to be made whether units are shown as "mainly red" or "mainly grey", or whether mixed units should be shown using shadings representing carbonates or clastics. These decisions were based on published descriptions and the authors' experience where available. They necessarily are judgement calls, and others might differ in these assessments.

Timescale

Numerical time scale

In reconciling biostratigraphic data from diverse fossil groups with sparse isotopic data we have primarily used the International Commission on Stratigraphy Geologic Time Scale (GTS 2012) (Becker et al., 2012; Davydov et al., 2012).

In the Devonian Period we use the divisions of Becker et al. (2012). However, we have modified the interpolated correlation between Late Devonian palynomorph zones and the numerical timescale shown by Becker et al. (2012), so as to take into account the precise work of Tucker et al. (1998) in the biostratigraphically well constrained Piskahegan Group of New Brunswick.

In the Carboniferous, our age dates are based on those of Davydov et al. (2010, 2012). However, some isotopic data not available for that compilation (Lyons et al., 2006; Pointon et al., 2012, 2014) suggest that certain ages need revision. A modified time scale has been used here to accommodate these data. Table 1 shows a comparison of ages assigned to principal boundaries within the Carboniferous by several authors, and Table 2 shows the basis for the boundary times chosen here. In addition, it should be noted that Giles (2009) has suggested further revision of the timescale (Table 1) based on a correlation of transgressive-regressive cycles to orbital forcing; further work, not attempted here, would be required to incorporate these suggestions in a revised timescale.

Table 1: Ages assigned to principal boundaries within the Carboniferous by several authors

Stage	Substage top	Davydov et al. (2012)	Davydov et al. (2010)	P. Giles unpublished compilation (2016)	This document
Moscovian	Asturian	~307.0	308.1	306.2	307.0
	Bolsovian	~309.9?	310.4	308.6	309.9
Bashkirian	Duckmantian	~315.2	315.0	314.6	315.2
	Langsettian	~317.5	316.9	315.8	316.1
	Yeadonian	~318.7			318.6
	Marsdenian	~320.2			320.2
	Kinderscoutian	~321.3?			321.3
	Alportian	~322.0			322.0
	Chokierian	~322.8			322.8
Serpukhovian	Arnsbergian	~323.6	323.3	322.9	323.6
	Pendleian	~327.7	327.9	326.5	327.7
Visean	Brigantian	~329.1	329.2	328.9	329.1
	Asbian	~332.1	331.6	332.5	332.1
	Holkerian	~336.7	336.0	336.0	336.2
	Arundian	~342.8	341.95	342.0	342.8
	Chadian	~344.0	343.9	344.4	344.0
Tournaisian	Ivorian	~346.7	346.3	349.1	346.7
	Hastarian	~351.2	353.4	353.9	351.2

Bolded entries adjusted to fit additional isotopic data

Table 2. Basis for boundary times adopted in the correlation chart

Stage	Substage top	Boundary age adopted (Ma)	Method of assigning date
Artunian		298.8	Davydov et al. (2012)
Stephanian		302.2	Fossil zones do not correlate explicitly so interpolated from Davydov et al. (2012) pg. 605

Westphalian	Asturian	307.9	Biostratigraphic correlation based on Davydov et al. (2010, 2012)
	Bolsovian	309.9	Biostratigraphic correlation to numerical time scale based on Davydov et al. (2010, 2012)
Namurian	Duckmantian	315.2	Davydov et al. (2012) pg. 605
	Langsettian	316.1	Adjusted. from Davydov et al. (2012) pg. 605 then moved to accommodate isotopic data from Lyons et al. (1997)
	Yeadonian	318.6	Biostratigraphic correlation based on Davydov et al. (2010, 2012) then moved slightly to accommodate isotopic data from Schmitz and Davydov (2012)
	Marsdenian	320.2	Biostratigraphic correlation to numerical time scale based on Davydov et al. (2010, 2012)
	Kinderscoutian	321.3	Biostratigraphic correlation to numerical time scale based on Davydov et al. (2010, 2012)
	Alportian	322.0	Fossil zones do not correlate well; boundary estimated from Davydov et al. (2012) pg. 605
	Chokierian	322.8	Fossil zones do not correlate well; boundary estimated from Davydov et al. (2012) pg. 605
	Arnsbergian	323.6	Fossil zones do not correlate well; boundary estimated from Davydov et al. (2012) pg. 605
	Pendleian	327.7	Fossil zones do not correlate well; boundary estimated from Davydov et al. (2012) pg. 605
	Brigantian	329.1	Biostratigraphic correlation to numerical time scale based on Davydov et al. (2010, 2012)

	Asbian	332.1	Biostratigraphic correlation to numerical time scale based on Davydov et al. (2010, 2012)
	Holkerian	336.2	Biostratigraphic correlation to numerical time scale based on Davydov et al. (2010, 2012), then shifted to accommodate isotopic data from *Pointon et al. (2014)
	Arundian	342.8	Biostratigraphic correlation to numerical time scale based on Davydov et al. (2010, 2012)
	Chadian	344.0	Biostratigraphic correlation to numerical time scale based on Davydov et al. (2010, 2012)
Courseyan	Ivorian	346.7	Davydov et al. (2012)
	Hastarian	351.2	Biostratigraphic correlation to numerical time scale based on Davydov et al. (2010, 2012)

Biostratigraphic time scale

The majority of biostratigraphic ages in the Maritimes basin are based on palynomorphs. However, the palynostratigraphic zonal scheme used is local to the region, and no correspondence to numerical ages has been published. In placing the spore zones in the numerical timescale we first used Utting & Giles (2004) to match the larger zonal subdivisions in Atlantic Canada to stages and European fossil zones. We then mapped the spore zonation of Britain and Ireland (Clayton et al., 1977; Higgs et al., 1988; Riley, 1993; Owens et al., 2004; Waters et al., 2011) to conodont and foraminiferal zones using Davydov et al. (2004, 2010); and finally adjusted again for consistency with the numerical scale adopted here.

In the chart, palynostratigraphic boundaries and zone names are shown in green. Solid lines are tied to a foraminiferal or conodont zone boundary that can then be assigned a numerical age using the work of Davydov et al. (2004, 2010, 2012). Dashed lines are interpolated between these relatively constrained boundaries.

Other biostratigraphic schemes, mainly applicable in marine rocks of the Windsor Group, include Bell's (1929) system of macrofossil zones, used by Moore & Ryan (1976) (shown in cyan). However, these zones are difficult to correlate outside the Maritimes Basin, probably because the unusual, highly saline environments hosted a restricted fauna. Foraminifera are found in the same rocks and Mamet's (1970) zonation can be correlated with other regions (Mamet and Skipp, 1970; Von Bitter et al., 2006). However, the correlation with the European and international stages proposed by von Bitter is difficult to reconcile with that of Davydov et al. (2010, 2012), leading to further uncertainty.

As a result of these problems, significant differences of opinion have arisen on the age of the lower part of the Windsor Group, equivalent to Bell's A subzone. In the chart, we show four different possibilities in a sidebar. The youngest age assigned to the basal Windsor Group shown is Early Asbian (~336 Ma in the timescale adopted here), as favoured by Mamet (1970) and St. Peter & Johnston (2009b). An older age of early Holkerian (~344-343 Ma) is favoured in most of the work of Utting and Giles (e.g. 2004), but von Bitter et al. (2006) favour a late Chadian age (~345 - 344 Ma) for the basal Windsor Group. A single isotopic constraint (Barr et al., 1994) implies that the base of the Windsor Group is younger than the St. Peter's Gabbro dated at 339 ± 2 Ma. In the chart we place the base of the Windsor Group in a compromise position, above the dated gabbro, but older than the Asbian age favoured by St. Peter & Johnston (2009b), at ~ 338-339 Ma. We reconcile the older foraminiferal age of von Bitter et al (2006) by suggesting (in our column for southern Cape Breton Island) that the Isle Madame limestone from which it was obtained is significantly older than the typical basal Windsor Group rocks elsewhere in the region.

Sources for individual areas

The southern New Brunswick columns shown on the chart are heavily based on the work of St. Peter & Johnston (2009a, 2009b and references therein) together with that of Park (e.g. Park and St. Peter, 2009). In addition, the stratigraphy shown for the Piskahegan Group depends on the work of Bevier (1988) and McGregor and McCutcheon (e.g., Richardson and McGregor, 1986; McGregor and McCutcheon, 1988; Tucker et al., 1998). In the Sackville Sub-basin adjacent to the Nova Scotia border additional information was drawn from Craggs et al. (2015) and personal communication with Andrew MacRae and Matthew Stimson (St. Mary's University).

In Northern Nova Scotia the Cumberland Sub-basin stratigraphy is largely that established by Ryan et al. (1991; Ryan and Boehner, 1994) with additional biostratigraphic revision by Utting et al. (2010) and Opdyke et al. (2014). A previous summary of the lithostratigraphy appeared in Waldron et al. (2013). These references also apply to the northern Cobequid Highlands, where additional information was obtained on the eastern Cobequids from Chandler et al. (1995) and on the ages of igneous rocks from Dunning et al. (2002). The stratigraphy of the central and southern Cobequids is based on summaries by Naylor and Kennedy (1998) Pe-Piper and Piper (2002) and Naylor et al. (2006). For the Stellarton area to the east, we used the work of Yeo & Gao (1987), Chandler et al. (1995) and Waldron et al. (Waldron et al., 1999; Waldron, 2004).

Early work on the Antigonish Sub-basin (Mamet, 1970; Neves and Belt, 1970) is summarized by Boehner & Giles (1993). For western Cape Breton Island we have drawn upon stratigraphic data from Allen et al. (2013) and summarized reports of earlier work by Utting (1987), Hamblin (1989) and Giles et al. (1997). Farther south, data for the Guysborough and Southern Cape Breton Island (Port Hawkesbury) areas are provided by Barr et al (1994) Hamblin (1989), Tenière et al. (2005) von Bitter et al. (2006) and Giles et al. (2010).

The column representing Prince Edward Island and adjacent areas of the Gulf of St. Lawrence is dependent on surface mapping by van de Poll (1989) and subsurface information compiled by Giles & Utting (1999) and Giles (2004), with additional regional

correlations from Allen et al. (2013). The distinctive Cap Rouge well is summarized from Giles & Utting (2001).

Comprehensive summaries of the Lomond-Glengarry and Sydney sub-basins are provided by Boehner & Prime (1993) and Boehner & Giles (2008).

On the Meguma Terrane, the stratigraphy of the Windsor-Kennetcook, Shubenacadie and Musquodoboit basins is addressed by Utting, Giles and Boehner (1979), Giles and Boehner (1982), Boehner (1986), Martel et al. (1993) and Moore et al. (2000).

The stratigraphy of the Bay St. George sub-basin in SW Newfoundland is founded upon the work of Knight (1983), updated by new palynology documented by Utting & Giles (2004, 2008). In the Deer Lake sub-basin, the stratigraphy described by Belt (1969) was further investigated in a series of publications by Hyde (1979, 1984; Hyde et al., 1988); further comment by Utting and Giles (2004, 2008) is incorporated in the column shown here.

Lithostratigraphy

We have tried to encompass most of the formal, and some informal lithostratigraphic divisions that have been defined in the Maritimes Basin, but inevitably some are omitted. In organizing formations into groups, we have followed what we perceive to be a majority usage, giving priority to geological surveys who use lithostratigraphic subdivisions as a basis for mapping. There are notable differences between different organizations and authors, particularly in the use of the terms "Morien Group" and "Percé Group". Future versions of the chart may be constructed as interactive documents which will be able to show competing versions of lithostratigraphic organization.

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