

DEVONIAN-CARBONIFEROUS BOUNDARY

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FOREWORD

In May 1988, at Courtmacsherry, County Cork, Ireland, the "IUGS Working Group on the Devonian-Carboniferous boundary" proposed the selection of the base of bed 89 in a section at La Serre, France as the Global Stratotype Point. This proposal was subsequently accepted by a large majority of voting Members of the Working Group in September 1988. It was then ratified by the IUGS Executive Committee at its annual meeting in Sao Paulo in January 1991.

This marked the end of the activities of a working group which had lasted almost fifteen years if we consider that it was officially organised in 1976, but actually started work in 1978. During this period, a large number of geological sections was surveyed around the world.

Two collections of articles on the topic of the Devonian-Carboniferous boundary have already been published in the "Courier Forschungsinstitut Senckenberg" (Paproth & Streel, 1984; Flajs, Feist & Ziegler, 1988). Papers related to the same subject were published in the "Annales de la Société géologique de Belgique" under the title "Late Devonian Events around the Old Red Sandstone Continent" (Bless & Streel, 1986).

The present volume is probably not the last that will be devoted to the Devonian-Carboniferous boundary but it is the first which contains a collection of papers written after the final decision had been taken. Therefore, using a common terminology, it presents attempts at correlation at a level of precision never reached before. It also provides biostratigraphical syntheses of fossil groups, such as Bivalves, Ostracodes and Algae, for which little data had been published in the earlier volumes. In addition, it contains new data on the geochemistry of the boundary beds and analysis of the sequence stratigraphy.

We hope that the present volume will demonstrate that the choice of a stratotype is an act of convenience and that it does not end, but rather helps to advance stratigraphical research in the boundary beds around the world.

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