The Bolonian Stage: an old answer to an old problem
by J. C. W. Cope

Abstract. Confusion in the use of the Upper Jurassic Stage names Kimmeridgian and Portlandian has persisted for more than a century and is a constant source of irritation for all those having to interpret their use. Such confusion is obviated by the re-introduction of the Bolonian Stage of Blake (1881) the base of which is here formally defined at Kimmeridge, Dorset. The Tithonian is now internationally accepted as the primary standard terminal Jurassic Stage, but at present cannot be used outside of the Tethyan area; Bolonian, Portlandian and Volgian are secondary standard stages.

Résumé. Une confusion existe en ce qui concerne l’usage des termes Kimmeridgien et Portlandien du Jurassique supérieur; celle-ci persiste depuis plus d’un siècle et c’est une source perpétuelle d’irritation à tous ceux qui doivent interpréter l’usage de ces termes. Cette confusion sera obviée à la réintroduction de l’étage Bolonien de Blake (1881), le bas duquel est délimité formellement dans cet article à Kimmeridge, Dorset. On accepte maintenant dans le monde entier que le Tithonien est l’étage type principal du Jurassique terminal, mais on ne peut pas utiliser ce terme actuellement au dehors de la région Téthysienne. Bolonien, Portlandien et Volgien restent comme étages type secondaires.

Introduction

The naming of stages in the Upper Jurassic started with ALCIDE D’ORBIGNY in the middle of the last century. His stages for the latest Jurassic (Kimmeridgian, Portlandian and Purbeckian) have formed the basis of our modern stage nomenclature. The plethora of new and local stage names which were subsequently applied to the Jurassic System during the latter half of the last century and the early years of this century were listed by ARKELL (1933, pp. 617–622) with a supplementary list published later (1956, p. 8). Included in this list of over one hundred and twenty names were many synonyms of the Upper Jurassic stages for North-west Europe proposed by D’ORBIGNY. ARKELL (1946) was a strong proponent of the use of D’ORBIGNY’S stages, and discussed problems with the interpretation of some of them. Of the D’ORBIGNY stages, the Purbeckian has been dropped because it is merely a local facies term for the latest Jurassic to earliest Cretaceous rocks of North-West Europe. Following this decision, the Portlandian Stage becomes the D’ORBIGNY Stage for the terminal Jurassic and thus continues upwards to the base of the Cretaceous.

Two other names have also survived for the terminal Jurassic stage, however, the Tithonian (OPPEL 1865) used in Tethyan areas, and the Volgian (NIKITIN, 1881) used primarily in Russia

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