

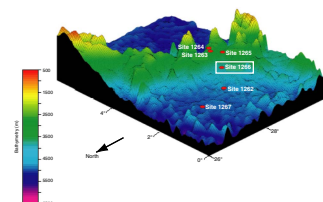
3. DATA REPORT: CALCAREOUS NANNOFOSSIL BIOSTRATIGRAPHY OF THE PALEOCENE/EOCENE BOUNDARY, OCEAN DRILLING PROGRAM LEG 208 HOLE 1266C¹

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INTRODUCTION

Ocean Drilling Program Leg 208 Hole 1266C (28°32.55'S, 2°20.61'E) is located along the northwestern flank of Walvis Ridge (South Atlantic Ocean). The location of Site 1266, at 3.798 km water depth, corresponds to a mid-depth site of the Leg 208 transect (Fig. F1). A stratigraphically continuous and expanded sequence of upper Paleocene and lower Eocene pelagic nannofossil ooze was recovered. Three holes were cored at Site 1266, and from Hole 1266C, an expanded and continuous Paleocene/Eocene (P/E) transition was recovered using the advanced piston corer system. The successful recovery and well-preserved nannofossil assemblages make Hole 1266C a reference section for improving the knowledge of the Paleocene/Eocene Thermal Maximum. The P/E transition is one of the most remarkable and intensively investigated time intervals. Significant and dramatic changes in climate and oceanography occurred at this transition. The P/E boundary is linked with an important turnover in benthic foraminifers and planktonic marine communities (Thomas and Shackleton, 1996; Kelly et al., 1998; Monechi et al., 2000; Bralower, 2002). This report documents the calcareous nannofossil assemblage fluctuations at the P/E boundary in Hole 1266C based on semiquantitative and quantitative investigations.

F1. Site 1266, p. 5.



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MATERIAL AND METHODS

The P/E boundary is marked by an abrupt contact between upper Paleocene nannofossil ooze and lower Eocene dusky red zeolite- and nannofossil-bearing clay that grades upward into nannofossil ooze (Zachos, Kroon, Blum, et al., 2004). The P/E boundary layer was recovered in Section 208-1266C-17H-3 at 306.8 meters composite depth (mcd). A 2.5-m-thick interval from Sections 208-1266C-17H-3 through 17H-2 was investigated for calcareous nannofossils. Semiquantitative investigations were carried out every centimeter across the P/E clay layer (from Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 115–116 cm, to 17H-3, 84–85 cm), every 2 cm from Samples 17H-3, 149–150 cm, to 17H-3, 54–55 cm, and from this level upward from 3 to 20 cm.

Smear slides were prepared from unprocessed samples according to standard technical preparation methodology. Each smear slide was examined with a light microscope under 1250× magnification. Two traverses of each smear slide were checked for common and very rare species (Table T1). The relative abundance of each nannofossil taxon is defined as follows:

- A = abundant (>30% of the total assemblages),
- C = common (>10%–30% of the total assemblages),
- F = few (>3%–10% of the total assemblages),
- R = rare (1%–3% of the total assemblages), and
- RR = very rare (<1% of the total assemblages).

The total abundance of nannofossils in each sample as estimated as follows:

- V = very abundant (>30 specimens per field of view [FOV]),
- A = abundant (>20–30 specimens per FOV),
- C = common (>10–20 specimens per FOV),
- F = few (>5–10 specimens per FOV),
- R = rare (1–5 specimens per FOV),
- RR = very rare (<1 specimen per FOV), and
- B = barren of nannofossils.

Preservation of nannofossils was recorded using the criteria of Steinmetz (1979) as good (G), moderate (M), and poor (P). Depths of samples in the range chart are reported in meters composite depth (Zachos, Kroon, Blum, et al., 2004).

RESULTS

The biostratigraphic zonation used to divide the Paleocene–Eocene interval is based on the calcareous nannofossil events defined by Martini (1971). In order to define the base of Zone NP10, characterized by the first occurrence (FO) of *Rhomboaster bramlettei*, we followed the definition of Bybell and Self-Trail (1995), who included *Rhomboaster cuspis* of many authors with *R. bramlettei*. In addition, we adopted the taxonomic remarks of Angori and Monechi (1996), who differentiated three morphotypes of *R. bramlettei* (*R. bramlettei* “short arms,” *R. bramlettei* “long arms,” and *R. bramlettei* var. T). The studied interval spans from Zones NP9 to NP10. The upper Paleocene nannofossil assemblages are mainly composed of *Coccolithus pelagicus*, *Toweius pertusus*, *Fasciculithus*

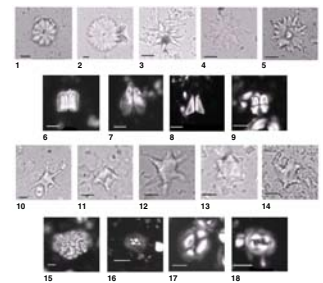
T1. Calcareous nannofossils, p. 7.

tympaniformis, *Sphenolithus*, and *Discoaster multiradiatus*. At the P/E boundary, the base of the clay interval, the total nannofloral abundance sharply decreases and an enhancement of dissolution occurs from Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 112–113 cm, to 17H-3, 98–99 cm. Within this interval the FO of *R. bramlettei* s.a. was detected in Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 107–108 cm, where the base of Zone NP10 was recognized. Long rays, asymmetrical, and prominent-stem discoaster species such as *Discoaster anartios*, *Discoaster araneus*, *Discoaster* cf. *Discoaster lodoensis*, *Discoaster salisburgensis*, and *Discoaster diastypus* also have FOs in this interval, as previously documented by Monechi et al. (2000), Kahn and Aubry (2004), and Angori et al. (submitted [N1]). The FO of *Fasciculithus thomasii* has been recorded at the carbon isotope excursion onset. The genus *Rhomboaster* is not very common, but several morphotypes of the *Rhomboaster-Tribrachiatus* lineage were recognized (Table T1). Furthermore, significant changes in the calcareous nannofossil assemblages were observed: (1) an increase in the relative abundance of dissolution-resistant forms such as *Discoaster multiradiatus*, *Sphenolithus primus*, and *Fasciculithus tympaniformis*; (2) a decrease in the relative abundance of *C. pelagicus* and *T. pertusus*; and (3) the absence of *Zygrhablithus bijugatus*. From Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 101–102 cm, upward, an opposite trend between *D. multiradiatus* and *F. tympaniformis* was noted. *D. multiradiatus* decreases from abundant to few, whereas *F. tympaniformis* increases from common to abundant up to Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 57–58 cm, where *Fasciculithus* decreases. Above this level, only *F. tympaniformis* is always present throughout the studied interval but in very low abundances. At approximately the same level (Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 63–64 cm) as the decrease of *Fasciculithus*, the holococcolith species *Z. bijugatus* exhibits a significant abundance increase, as observed in several tethyan sections and at high latitudes (Monechi et al., 2000; Bralower, 2002; Orue-Etxebarria et al., 2004; Tremolada and Bralower 2004). The *Fasciculithus/Zygrhablithus* crossover (N3 event of Zachos et al., 2005) has been placed at 306.28 mcd. *Z. bijugatus* increases considerably, becoming one of the most abundant taxa together with *C. pelagicus*, *S. primus*, and *T. pertusus*. The genus *Toweius* above the P/E boundary does not reach the same abundances as in the preboundary interval. See Plate P1 for examples of nannofossils found at Site 1266.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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P1. Calcareous nannofossils, p. 6.



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Figure F1. Three-dimensional diagram of Site 1266 location.

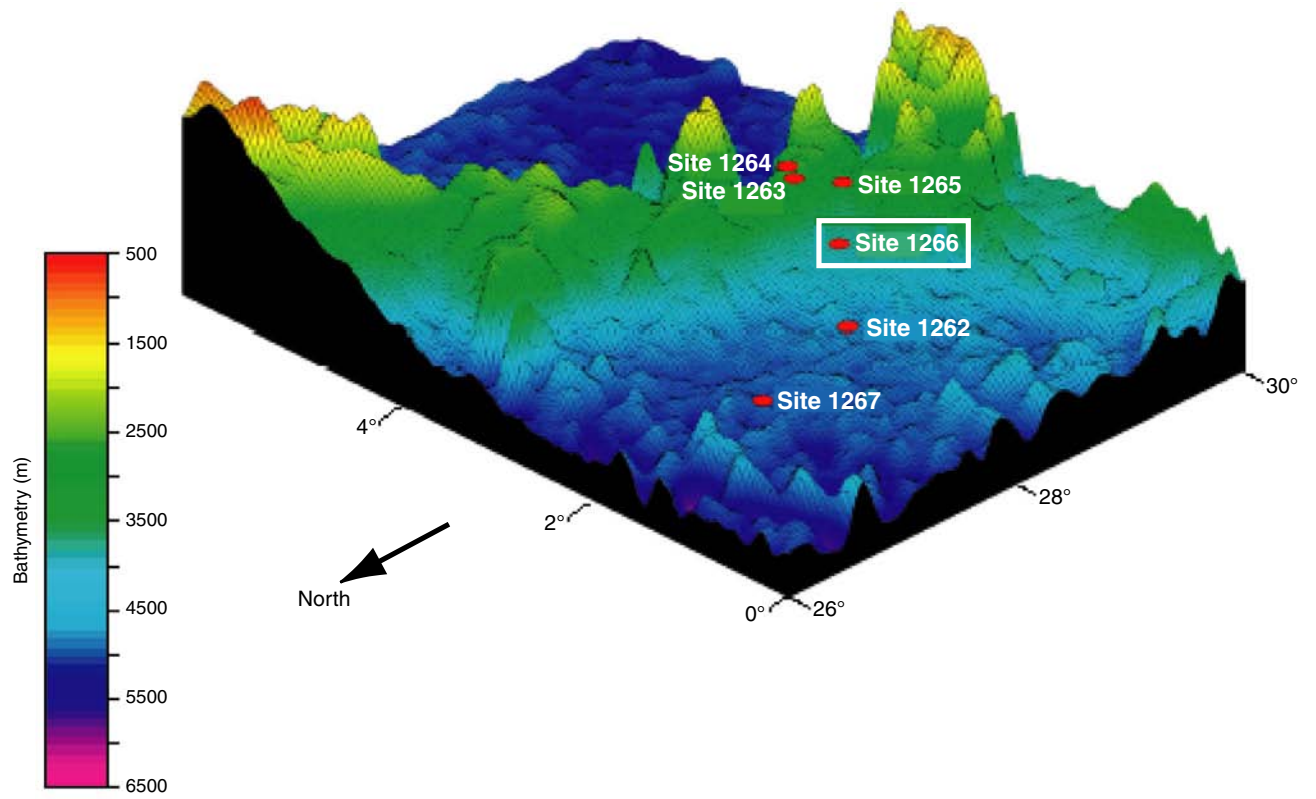
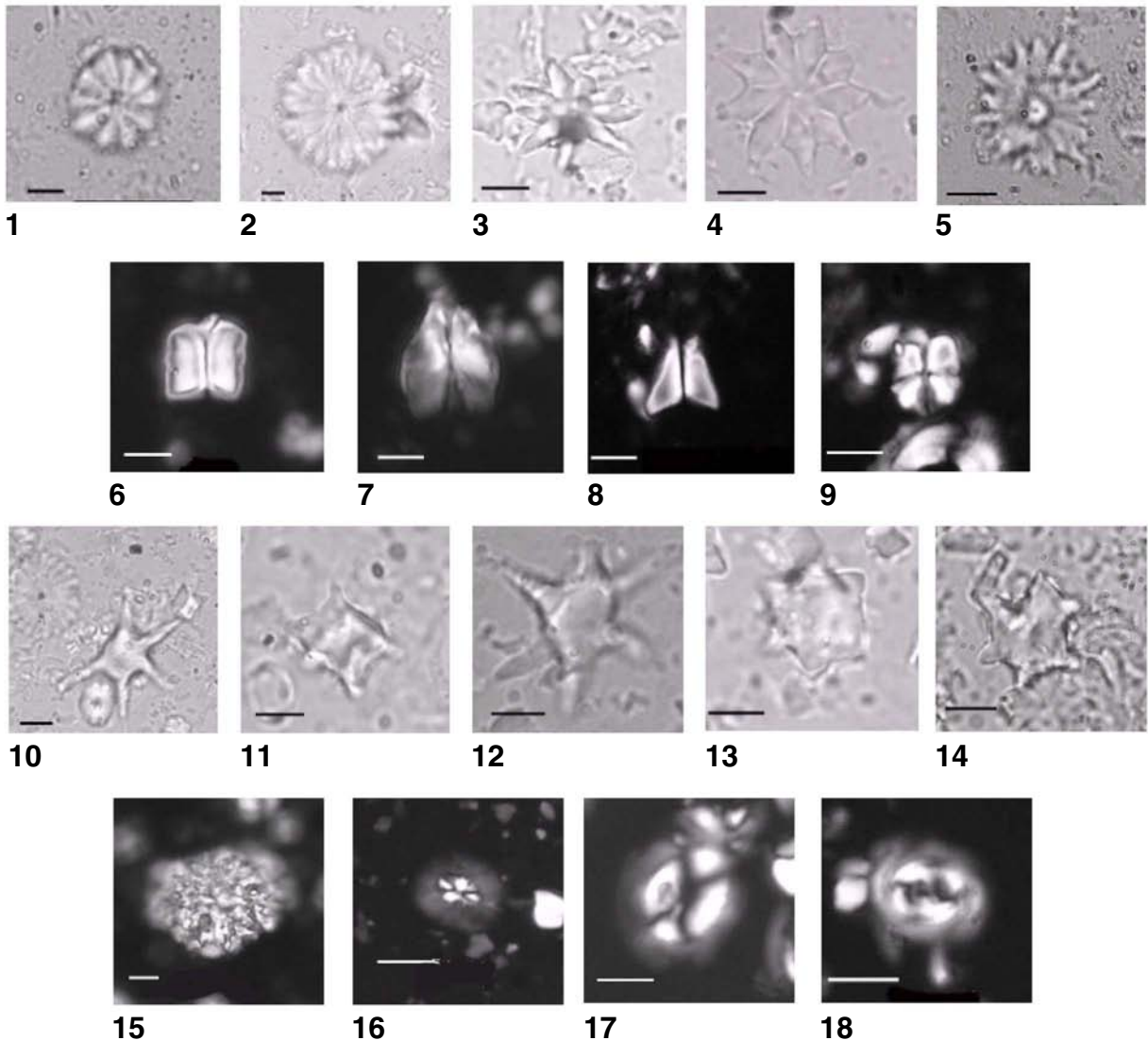


Plate P1. Calcareous nannofossils at Site 1266. XP = cross-polarized light, PL = plain transmitted light. Scale bar = 5 μ m. (1) *Discoaster mohleri*, Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 111–112 cm; PL. (2) *Discoaster multiradiatus*, Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 111–112 cm; PL. (3) *Discoaster nobilis*, Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 99–100 cm; PL. (4) *Discoaster araneus*, Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 85–86 cm; PL. (5) *Discoaster anartios*, Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 99–100 cm; PL. (6) *Fasciculithus tympaniformis*, Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 95–96 cm; XP. (7) *Fasciculithus alanii*, Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 98–99 cm; XP. (8) *Fasciculithus clinatus*, Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 98–99 cm; XP. (9) *Sphenolithus primus*, Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 96–97 cm; XP. (10) *Rhombaster bramlettei* l.a., Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 83–84 cm; PL. (11) *R. bramlettei* s.a., Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 104–105 cm; PL. (12) *R. bramlettei* l.a., Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 91–92 cm; PL. (13) *R. bramlettei* var. T, Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 78–79 cm; PL. (14) *Rhombaster* cf. *Rhombaster contortus*, Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 71–72 cm; PL. (15) *Thoracosphaera saxea*, Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 89–90 cm; XP. (16) *Biscutum* sp., Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 89–90 cm; XP. (17) *Coccolithus pelagicus*, Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 96–97 cm; XP. (18) *Toweius pertusus*, Sample 208-1266C-17H-3, 83–84 cm; XP.



CHAPTER NOTE*

- N1. Angori, E., Bernaola, G., and Monechi, S., in press. Calcareous nannofossil assemblages and their response to the Paleocene/Eocene Thermal Maximum Event at different latitudes: ODP Site 690 and Tethyan sections. *In* Monechi, S., Coccioni, R., and Rampino, M. (Eds.), *Large Ecosystem Perturbations: Causes and Consequences*. Spec. Pap.—Geol. Soc. Am.

*Dates reflect file corrections or revisions.