

# The Massignano Eocene-Oligocene golden spike section revisited

Caroline A. Van Mourik<sup>1</sup> and Henk Brinkhuis<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Geology and Geochemistry, Stockholm University, SE-106 91 Stockholm, Sweden

email: Caroline.vanMourik@geo.su.se (corresponding author)

<sup>2</sup>Laboratory of Palaeobotany and Palynology, Utrecht University, Budapestlaan 4, 3584 CD, Utrecht, The Netherlands

email: H.Brinkhuis@bio.uu.nl

---

**ABSTRACT:** In common practice, the Eocene/Oligocene (E/O) boundary is linked to the Oi-1  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  benthic isotope event, reflecting the oldest phase of major Antarctic glaciation, calibrated against magnetosubchron C13n. Yet, the IUGS-ratified, current E/O Global Stratigraphic Section and Point (GSSP) at the pelagic Massignano quarry section, central Italy, occurs within the older magneto-subchron C13r. To extend the Massignano record further into the early Oligocene, to include the critical C13n episode missing in the surface section, a core was drilled in the direct vicinity of the quarry section. First correlations between the core and the quarry section have recently been proposed. In this paper, we use high-resolution organic-walled dinoflagellate cyst (dinocyst) analysis to significantly improve correlation between the two sections.

In addition, we build on earlier studies, and demonstrate that the current E/O GSSP criterion, which is based on the local extinction of the tropical planktonic foraminifera genus *Hantkenina* represents an isolated event that is not suitable for global correlation.

Instead, we argue that selection of the Oi-1 event be the main criterion for the determining the E/O boundary, and that this provides a much better basis for global correlation. Moreover, the Oi-1 is also related to the TA4.3/4.4 third order sequence boundary and the last occurrence of the dinocyst *Areosphaeridium diktyoplokum*. Selection of this slightly younger criterion would place the upper boundary of the classic Priabonian Stage back in the latest Eocene, and the base of the Rupelian Stage in the earliest Oligocene. Since the proposed correlative Oi-1 event level is not represented in the surface (quarry) section, but only resides in the cored section at Massignano, a new GSSP site should be selected, for example in one of the other central Italian sections that does span C13n.

---

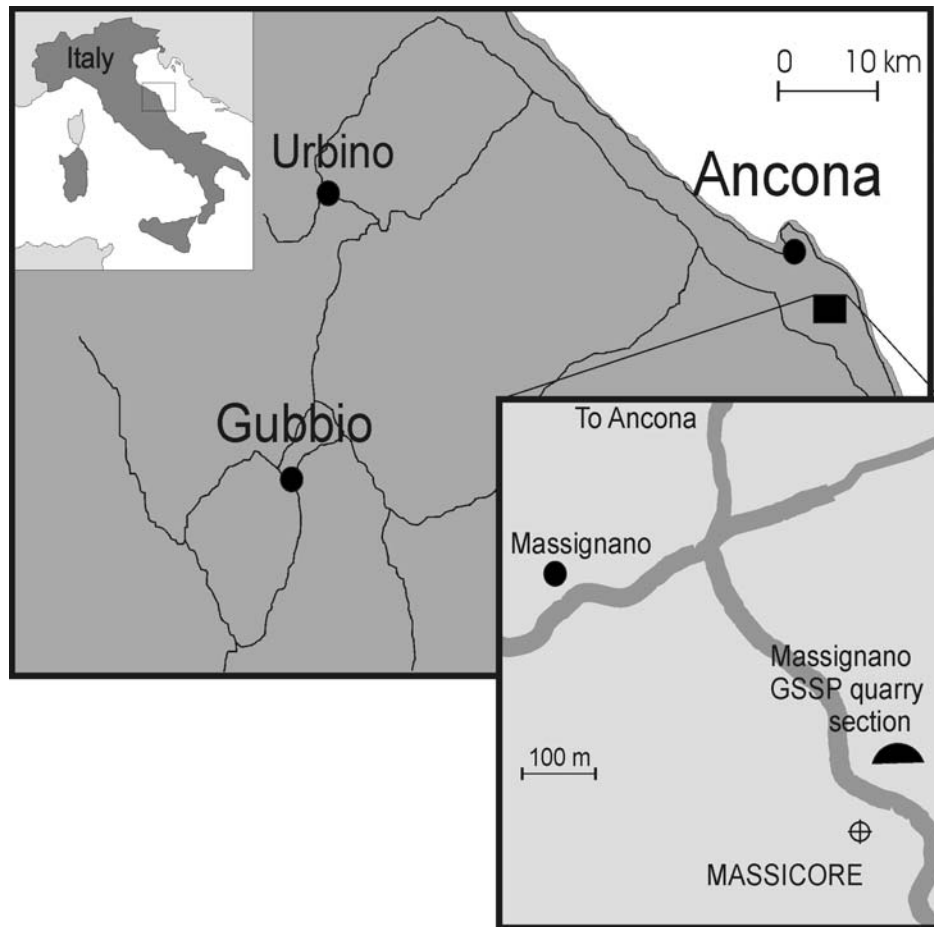
## INTRODUCTION

The 23 meter thick succession of calcareous pelagic sediments exposed in the Massignano quarry near Ancona, central Italy (text-fig. 1), have been ratified as the 'Global Stratigraphic Section and Point' (GSSP) for the Eocene/Oligocene (E/O) boundary (Premoli Silva and Jenkins 1993). The GSSP level at meter 19 (text-fig. 2) was chosen to match the last occurrence (LO) of planktonic foraminifers belonging to the (sub)tropical genus *Hantkenina*. At Massignano, the latter is the single bioevent associated with the boundary proper; other bioevents, summarized in e.g., Nocchi et al. (1988) and Brinkhuis and Visscher (1995) are more or less evenly spread over the entire succession. The global application of the *Hantkenina*-criterion for recognition of the E/O boundary, dated at ~33.7 Ma, (Berggren et al. 1995; Lanci et al. 1996) is problematic at best, as many studies have shown the event to be extremely diachronous over the globe. The apparently gradual cooling during the latter part of the Eocene (e.g., Zachos et al. 2001) caused this group to vanish from high to low latitudes in a step-wise pattern. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that (1) the extinction of the hantkeninids does not correlate to the prominent  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$  shift in benthic foraminifers found around the globe (e.g., Brinkhuis and Visscher 1995; Zachos et al. 2001), and (2) that the E/O GSSP correlates to the middle part of the classic Late Eocene Priabonian Type section (Brinkhuis 1994; Brinkhuis and Visscher 1995). The  $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ , or 'Oi-1' event (e.g., Miller et al. 1991) postdates the GSSP by some 400 kyr, dated as ~33.3 Ma. The Oi-1 event is widely regarded to reflect the onset of major Antarctic glaciation (e.g., Zachos et al. 2001), and is also associated with a marked fall of global eustatic sea level (i.e., the

TA4.3/4.4 sequence boundary of Haq et al. 1987). In common paleoceanographic practice, the Oi-1 event has been equated to the E/O boundary, and the hantkeninid event discarded. At Massignano, the LO of the hantkeninids falls in magneto-subchron C13r, while the Oi-1 event is calibrated against the younger C13n. Again unfortunately, the Massignano quarry section does not include sediments representing this critical Subchron C13n, as only about 4 meters of the lowermost Oligocene is exposed at the GSSP site (text-fig. 2). As a result, only indirect correlation from the GSSP section to other, more extended but distant, central Italian pelagic sections allows characterisation of C13n times (e.g., Bice and Montanari 1988; Parisi et al. 1988).

In order to extend the lower Oligocene record in the Massignano area and to promote further high-resolution stratigraphic and paleoecological studies at Massignano, the so-called Massicore (text-fig. 1) was drilled about 110m south of the stratotype section (text-fig. 1; Montanari et al. 1994; Lanci et al. 1996). The E/O GSSP has been correlated to the Massicore, at a core depth of 19.22m in the 39.4m long core, using biotite-rich layers (Lanci et al. 1996). The additional 15 meters of lower Oligocene strata, now including subchron C13n, from the Massicore make it possible to elucidate the early Oligocene history in the Massignano E/O boundary area and to enhance worldwide correlation to the E/O GSSP.

Organic-walled dinoflagellate cysts (dinocysts) are abundant throughout the upper Eocene and lower Oligocene sediments of Italy, and represent the sole biostratigraphic tool to confidently correlate the pelagic sections of central Italy (e.g., Brinkhuis



TEXT-FIGURE 1  
Location of the Massicore drillhole and the Massignano quarry section.

and Biffi 1993; Wilpshaar et al. 1996) to the platform sections in the Priabona area, northeast Italy (Brinkhuis 1994; Brinkhuis and Visscher 1995). In this paper, we aim to (1) enhance the stratigraphic correlation between the Massicore and the Massignano quarry section by means of high-resolution dinocyst analysis, and to (2) evaluate the possibilities of global correlation of the E/O boundary *sensu* current GSSP.

#### MATERIAL

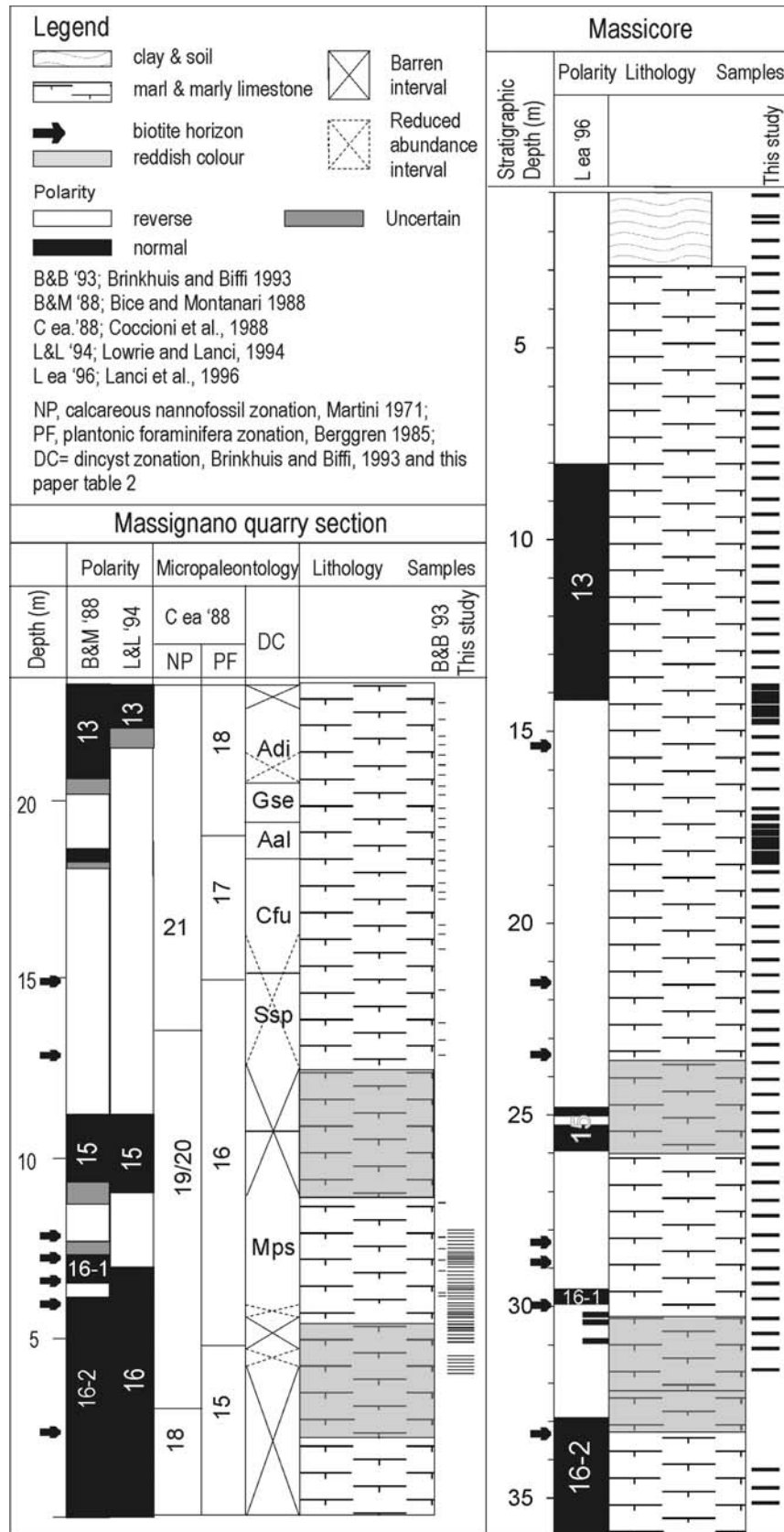
The upper Eocene to lower Oligocene sediments in the Massignano area consist of reddish and greenish-grey (lower upper Eocene) to greenish-grey pelagic marly limestones and calcareous marls (uppermost Eocene – lower Oligocene, see Alvarez and Montanari 1988; Montanari et al. 1994). Several thin biotite-bearing layers of volcanic origin occur at various stratigraphic levels (Alvarez and Montanari 1988) and are useful for lithostratigraphic correlation. The Massicore was drilled about 110m south of the Massignano quarry GSSP section (text-fig. 1; Montanari et al. 1994). The core is ~39.4m long, with a diameter of 10 cm. The total core recovery was 94.6%, of which 72.7% was recovered intact (Lanci et al. 1996). Due to a consistent 27° dip of the Massicore (Lanci et al. 1996), the stratigraphic depth correlating to the core depths are used in this study. The Massicore shows lithological features that are identical to the Massignano quarry section, with two distinct reddish intervals in the lower part and several biotite-rich layers (text-fig. 2). Lanci et al. (1996) used four biotite-rich layers for

the correlation of the two sections, while two additional biotite horizons were recorded by Montanari (pers. comm., 2003). Although the total number of recognized biotite horizons differs slightly between the successions, still a straightforward linear regression of six of the biotite layers is possible (text-fig. 2).

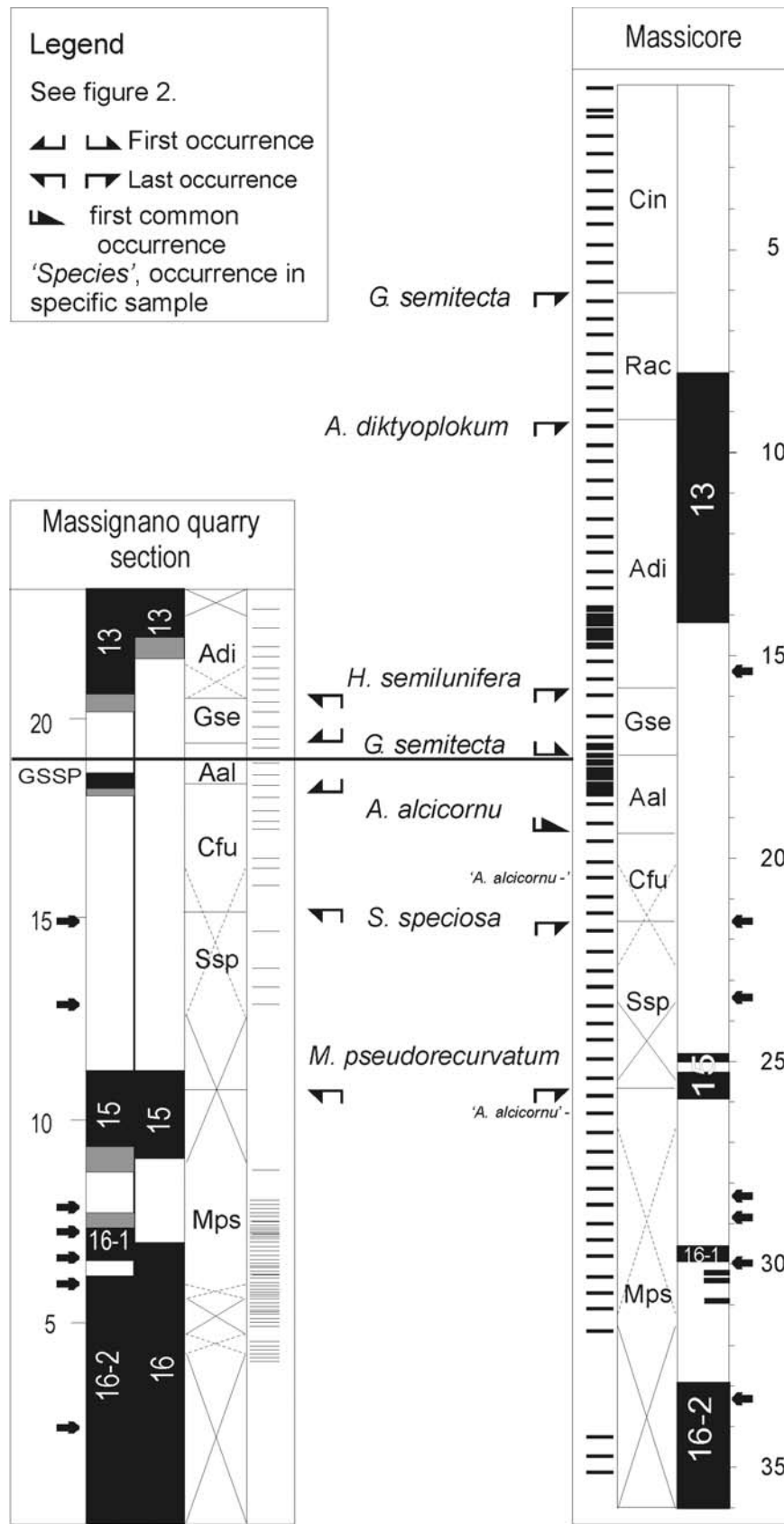
In this study, a total of 140 ‘new’ samples are examined; 94 samples of the Massicore (between 39.42m and 1.15m) and 46 additional samples from the Massignano quarry section (between 4.00m and 8.00m). The additional samples from the Massignano quarry section were combined with 33 samples, from 6.3–22.8m, that have previously been examined by Brinkhuis and Biffi (1993). For location of the samples, see text-figure 2.

#### Magnetostratigraphy and age assessment

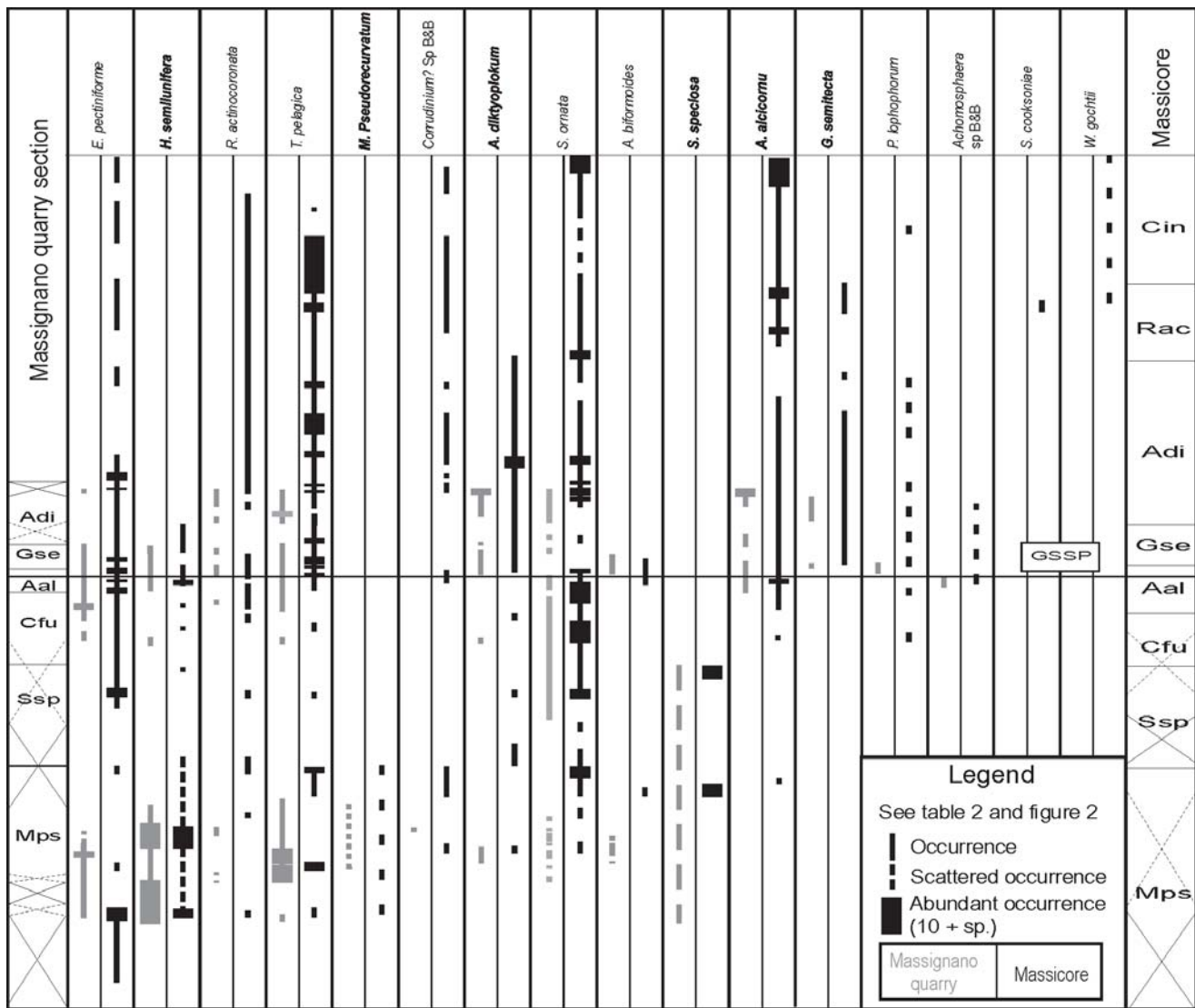
Bio- and magnetostratigraphic information for the Massignano quarry section is summarized in Brinkhuis and Biffi (1993), and indicated in text-figure 2. The GSSP E/O boundary has an estimated age of 33.7±0.5 Ma (Berggren et al. 1995; Lanci et al. 1996), while subchron C13n occurred between 33.545 to 33.058 Ma (Berggren et al. 1995). Lanci et al. (1996) performed a magnetostratigraphic analysis of the Massicore. According to these authors, the characteristic remanent magnetization (ChRM) directions of the Massicore clearly display opposite polarities, but the scatter is large in both polarity groups. The scatter was attributed to disoriented samples, and the signal was



TEXT-FIGURE 2  
 Correlation of the Massicore with the Massignano quarry section (Montanari, pers comm.). The samples used for the present study are Massicore samples 39.42 to 1.15 and Massignano quarry section 4.00 to 8.00. Massignano samples 6.30 to 22.80 are from Brinkhuis and Biffi (1993).



TEXT-FIGURE 3  
 Dinocyst zone dividing events for the Massignano quarry section and the Massicore, the zone boundaries are placed at mid-positions between critical samples dividing the zones.



TEXT-FIGURE 4

The relative occurrences of the stratigraphic important events for the Massignano quarry section and the Massicore.

cleaned. The obtained polarity sequence was correlated to Chrons C12r through C16n-2n (Lanci et al. 1996, text-fig 2). Unfortunately, the correlation between the two successions on the basis of magnetic polarity reversals is uncertain (text-fig. 2; see also discussions in Lanci et al. 1996).

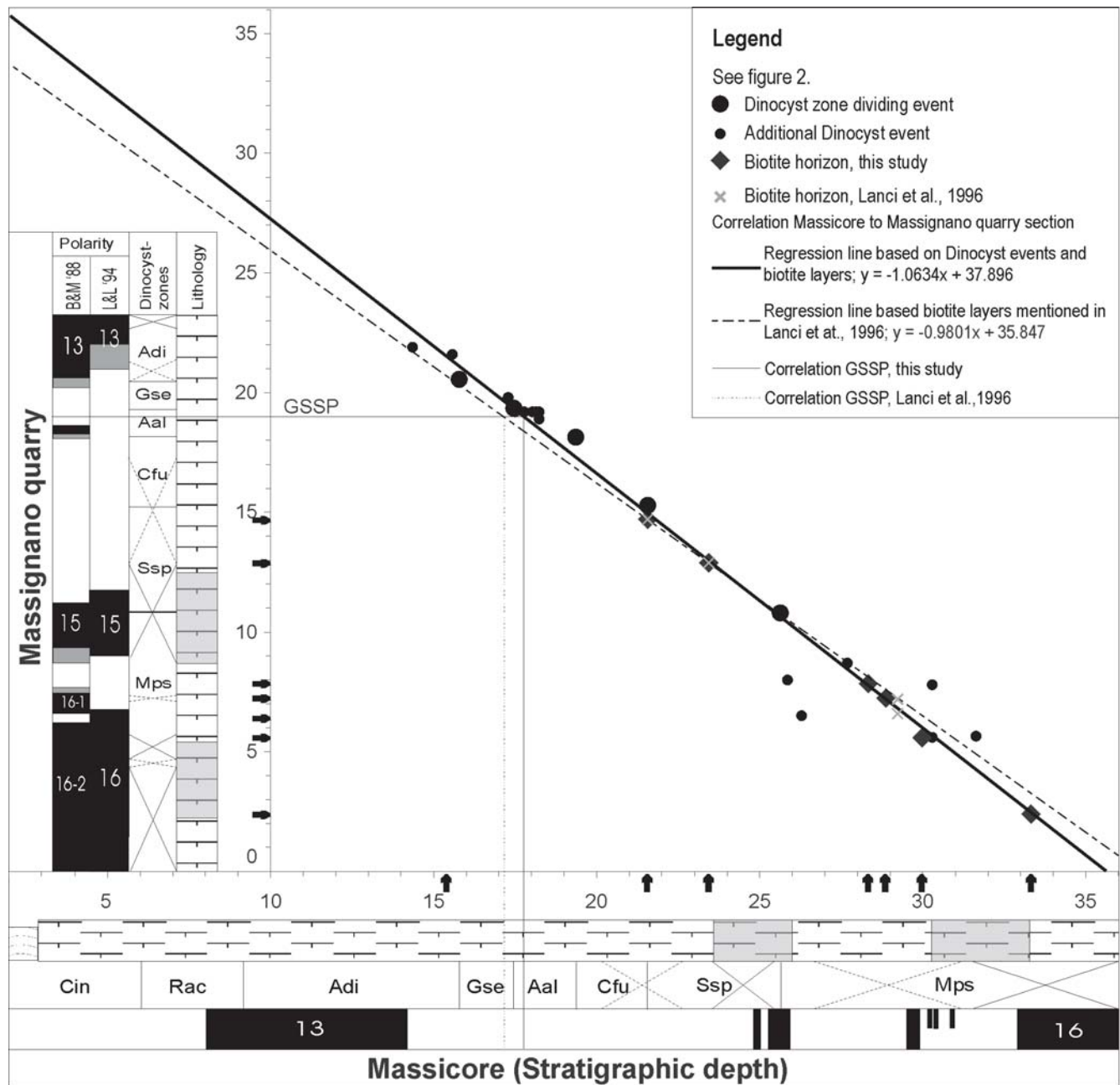
## METHODS

All samples were processed using standard palynological techniques (cf. Brinkhuis and Biffi 1993; van Mourik et al. 2001) and two slides of each sample were prepared. The samples were counted in two steps. Firstly a minimum of 100 palynomorphs, where possible, were counted and the palynomorphs were grouped into six categories: bisaccate pollen, other pollen and spores, organic inner walls of foraminifera (foram linings), other palynomorphs (prasinophyte algae and acritarchs), indeterminate dinocysts, and determinable dinocysts. The determinable dinocysts were generally counted at the species level. This was then followed by a count of at least 200 dinocysts. The remainder of the slides were scanned for additional (rare) taxa.

Dinocyst taxonomy follows that cited in Brinkhuis and Biffi (1993) and Williams et al. (1998). A species list with some remarks is provided in the Taxonomic Appendix. All material is stored at the Laboratory of Palaeobotany and Palynology, Utrecht University, Utrecht, the Netherlands.

## RESULTS

Similar to the Massignano quarry samples, Massicore samples contain reasonably preserved palynological assemblages, notably in samples between 1.02m (MC 1.15) to 16m (MC 22.99), and around 10.50m (MC29) (Table 1). In general, the samples are dominated by dinocysts and to a lesser degree by bisaccate pollen, but in the lower non-productive part an increase of prasinophyte algae occurs (Table 1). The additional Massignano quarry samples are generally dominated by dinocysts and prasinophyte algae (Table 1). A dominance of bisaccate pollen in the uppermost meter of the Massicore coincides with the presence of loose soil, indicating that these samples are not useful for quantitative palynological studies of the sediment. Samples containing <20 dinocysts are



TEXT-FIGURE 5

Linear correlation of the Massicore with the Massignano GSSP quarry section by means of biotite-rich layers, dinocyst zone markers and additional dinocyst events (depth quarry = ((depth core / 0.92) + 37.33) ± 0.1).

categorised as barren, while intervals with samples containing <80 dinocysts are listed as ‘reduced abundance intervals’ (RAI) in text-figures 3 and onward.

The dinocyst zonation of Brinkhuis and Biffi (1993) and their “suite of successive qualitative events” were used as the basis for the stratigraphic interpretation of the dinocyst distribution in the Massicore. The oldest zone recognized in the Massicore is the *Melitasphaeridium pseudorecurvatum* (Mps) Zone, the youngest the *Corrudinium incompositum* (Cin) Zone, which is the base is defined by the last occurrence (LO) of *Glaphrocysta semitecta* (text-fig. 3). The zonal and interzonal succes-

sion of events of Brinkhuis and Biffi (1993) allows a good correlation with the overlapping part of the Massignano quarry section (text-fig. 3). The only apparent discrepancy between the two sequences is the position of the first occurrence (FO) of *Achomosphaera alcornu*. Two scattered occurrences of *A. alcornu* are recorded before a first consistent occurrence (FCO; text-fig. 3) in the Massicore sequence. The equivalent intervals in the Massignano quarry section are barren, or RAI, which makes it likely that these ‘early’ occurrences were initially not picked up in this section. Thus, the base of the *Achomosphaera alcornu* (Aal) Zone is here redefined, as the FCO of *A. alcornu*.

TABLE 1  
Palynomorph counts from the Massicore and the Massigano quarry.

Samples	Stratigraphic depth	Massicore counts							Total dincysts	Massignano quarry counts								
		till at least 100 palynomorphs								till at least 200 dincysts								
		Bisaccate pollen	Dinocysts	Foram linings	Indeterminabel dinocysts	Pollen & sporen	Other Palynomorphs	Total Palynomorphs		Bisaccate pollen	Dinocysts	Foram linings	Indeterminabel dinocysts	Pollen & sporen	Other Palynomorphs	Total Palynomorphs	Total dincysts	
MC 1.15	1.02	84.2%	11.7%	*	0.8%	*	3.3%	120	230	M22.80	21.0%	63.0%		16.0%			100	99
MC 1.77	1.58	75.9%	12.1%	*	2.6%	5.2%	4.3%	116	162	M22.20	70.0%	20.0%		8.0%	2.0%		100	103
MC 1.95	1.74	25.6%	52.1%	*	9.1%	11.6%	1.7%	121	168	M21.90	16.1%	77.4%				6.5%	93	97
MC 2.47	2.20	24.2%	44.4%	*	6.5%	10.5%	14.5%	124	151	M21.60	34.0%	57.0%		7.0%	1.0%	1.0%	100	100
MC 2.97	2.65	37.8%	49.3%	2.0%	6.1%	4.1%	0.7%	148	214	M21.30		*					**	**
MC 3.47	3.09	52.4%	34.9%	*	4.0%	4.8%	4.0%	126	221	M21.00		*					**	**
MC 3.97	3.54	19.3%	61.3%		8.4%	5.9%	5.0%	119	219	M20.70		*					**	**
MC 4.47	3.98	9.0%	79.1%		5.2%	6.0%	0.7%	134	217	M20.40	22.0%	55.0%	1.0%	3.0%	2.0%	17.0%	100	99
MC 4.92	4.38	10.6%	77.3%	*	6.4%	4.3%	1.4%	141	212	M20.10	52.0%	25.0%		9.0%	4.0%	10.0%	100	101
MC 5.50	4.90	11.4%	67.5%	0.8%	8.9%	10.6%	0.8%	123	191	M19.80	71.0%	13.0%		7.0%	4.0%	5.0%	100	100
MC 5.98	5.33	4.2%	73.9%		5.9%	7.6%	8.4%	119	228	M19.50	52.0%	35.0%		8.0%	0.0%	5.0%	100	100
MC 6.50	5.79	10.8%	80.0%	0.8%	4.6%	0.8%	3.1%	130	227	M19.20	41.3%	21.2%		7.7%	3.8%	26.0%	104	100
MC 7.03	6.26	43.9%	40.7%	1.6%	4.1%	3.3%	6.5%	123	248	M18.90	55.0%	15.0%	1.0%	10.0%	10.0%	9.0%	100	100
MC 7.52	6.70	27.3%	64.5%		4.1%	3.3%	0.8%	121	230	M18.60	9.0%	86.0%		4.0%		1.0%	100	100
MC 7.98	7.11	17.6%	60.8%	1.6%	5.6%	8.0%	6.4%	125	209	M18.30	57.0%	26.0%		7.0%	4.0%	6.0%	100	98
MC 8.52	7.59	12.8%	73.6%	0.8%	4.0%	4.8%	4.0%	125	228	M18.00	12.0%	80.0%		4.0%		4.0%	100	102
MC 8.98	8.00	18.7%	65.7%	1.5%	5.2%	7.5%	1.5%	134	237	M17.70	17.6%	75.5%		1.0%	2.0%	3.9%	102	99
MC 9.43	8.40	10.1%	79.0%	0.8%	5.9%	3.4%	0.8%	119	221	M17.40	38.8%	38.8%		7.1%	4.1%	11.2%	98	101
MC 10.06	8.96	6.2%	80.8%	3.1%	6.2%	3.8%		130	214	M17.10		*					**	**
MC 10.50	9.36	44.4%	42.5%	*	3.9%	6.5%	2.6%	153	246	M16.50		*					**	**
MC 11.01	9.81	40.3%	48.5%	0.7%	4.5%	0.7%	5.2%	134	248	M16.80		*					**	**
MC 11.48	10.23	38.5%	53.1%	1.5%	3.1%	3.8%	*	130	231	M15.90		*					**	**
MC 11.98	10.67	45.2%	41.8%	2.1%	4.8%	4.8%	1.4%	146	236	M14.70		*					**	**
MC 12.50	11.14	26.2%	59.2%		6.2%	6.9%	1.5%	130	233	M13.80		*					**	**
MC 13.07	11.65	8.7%	83.3%		4.3%	3.6%		138	250	M13.20		*					**	**
MC 13.53	12.06	42.0%	48.3%		3.5%	4.2%	2.1%	143	275	M12.90		*					**	**
MC 14.00	12.47	11.2%	79.0%		4.9%	4.2%	0.7%	143	236	M8.70	12.0%	6.0%		5.0%		77.0%	100	100
MC 14.52	12.94	4.6%	89.3%		3.1%	0.8%	2.3%	131	232	M8.10	3.0%	19.0%		6.0%		72.0%	100	100
MC 14.97	13.34	29.0%	65.6%		3.8%	0.8%	0.8%	131	250	N8.00	8.8%	9.8%		2.9%		78.4%	102	125
MC 15.50	13.81	50.3%	40.8%	*	4.1%	2.7%	2.0%	147	226	N7.90	4.2%	45.8%		8.3%		41.7%	24	**
MC 15.60	13.90	68.5%	27.4%		3.2%	0.8%	*	124	237	N7.80	5.0%	32.0%		5.0%		58.0%	100	85
MC 15.70	13.99	32.4%	53.5%	1.2%	4.7%	3.5%	4.7%	170	244	M7.80	11.0%	26.0%		3.0%		60.0%	100	99
MC 15.80	14.08	11.0%	83.9%		1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	118	228	N7.70								
MC 15.90	14.17	42.1%	51.4%	0.7%	2.9%	1.4%	1.4%	140	242	N7.60	4.5%	33.9%		4.5%		57.1%	112	117
MC 16.00	14.26	15.8%	77.4%	*	2.7%	2.7%	1.4%	146	259	N7.50	2.0%	20.0%		7.0%		71.0%	100	146
MC 16.10	14.35	52.1%	38.2%	*	3.0%	1.2%	5.5%	165	262	M7.50		*				**	**	**
MC 16.20	14.43	53.6%	38.4%	0.7%	3.6%	2.9%	0.7%	138	252	N7.40	3.0%	20.0%		2.0%		75.0%	100	100
MC 16.30	14.52	57.0%	41.3%		1.7%			121	236	N7.35		32.0%		10.0%		58.0%	100	66
MC 16.40	14.61	9.2%	77.5%	*	3.3%	5.8%	4.2%	120	238	N7.30		10.0%		1.0%		89.0%	100	46
MC 16.53	14.73	9.3%	82.1%		2.1%	0.7%	5.7%	140	221	N7.20	2.0%	11.0%		5.0%		87.0%	100	100
MC 16.62	14.81	24.6%	68.0%		1.1%	1.7%	4.6%	175	242	M7.20	7.0%	20.0%		6.0%		67.0%	100	94
MC 16.99	15.14	59.2%	30.8%		1.5%	4.6%	3.8%	130	229	N7.15	14.0%	36.0%		5.0%		45.0%	100	130
MC 17.47	15.57	29.9%	59.0%		3.7%	2.2%	5.2%	134	102	N7.10	4.0%	26.3%		4.0%		65.7%	99	40
MC 17.95	15.99	28.1%	62.3%		2.1%	1.4%	6.2%	146	221	N7.00	3.0%	34.0%		6.0%		57.0%	100	92
MC 18.50	16.48	5.3%	80.9%		2.3%	0.8%	10.7%	131	220	N6.90		21.0%				79.0%	100	96
MC 19.07	16.99	48.2%	25.9%		3.0%	1.8%	21.1%	166	233	M6.90	6.0%	72.0%		1.0%	1.0%	20.0%	100	100
MC 19.30	17.20	32.1%	45.5%		3.6%	3.6%	15.2%	165	232	N6.80	2.0%	51.0%		2.0%		45.0%	100	137
MC 19.41	17.29	12.0%	63.3%		3.3%	2.0%	19.3%	150	240	N6.70		70.0%				30.0%	100	146
MC 19.55	17.42	28.8%	47.7%		5.3%	3.0%	15.2%	132	233	N6.60		70.0%				30.0%	100	130
MC 19.63	17.49	34.8%	39.3%		5.2%	2.2%	18.5%	135	190	N6.50		84.0%		1.0%		15.0%	100	130
MC 19.75	17.60	26.2%	54.6%		5.5%	1.1%	12.6%	183	260	N6.45	2.0%	18.0%				80.0%	100	160
MC 19.85	17.69	53.8%	27.3%	*	3.8%	3.0%	12.1%	132	214	N6.40	1.9%	5.7%		2.9%		89.5%	105	108
MC 19.95	17.78	47.5%	18.0%	*	2.9%	1.4%	30.2%	139	241	N6.30	4.0%	15.0%		3.0%	1.0%	77.0%	100	82
MC 20.07	17.88	42.6%	43.4%		4.4%	2.9%	6.6%	136	237	M6.30		*					**	**
MC 20.15	17.95	20.2%	53.5%	*	3.5%	6.1%	16.7%	114	226	N6.20	1.0%	16.0%		4.0%		79.0%	100	104
MC 20.23	18.02	44.1%	40.0%	0.7%	3.4%	6.2%	5.5%	145	232	N6.10	5.0%	30.0%		1.0%	1.0%	63.0%	100	150
MC 20.35	18.13	39.4%	45.7%	*	3.1%	3.9%	7.9%	127	230	N6.00	4.0%	49.0%		5.0%	1.0%	41.0%	100	88
MC 20.47	18.24	36.7%	26.7%	0.8%	2.5%	10.0%	23.3%	120	225	N5.90	2.0%	55.0%			1.0%	42.0%	100	167
MC 20.52	18.28	17.4%	44.0%	*	1.8%	10.1%	26.6%	109	264	N5.80		72.0%				28.0%	100	150
MC 20.57	18.33	13.9%	59.9%		4.3%	3.2%	18.7%	187	121	N5.70		24.0%		2.0%		74.0%	100	135

TABLE 1, continued.  
Palynomorph counts from the Massicore and the Massignano quarry.

Samples	Stratigraphic depth	Massicore counts							Total Palynomorphs	Total dincysts	
		till at least 100 palynomorphs									till at least 200 dincysts
		Bisaccate pollen	Dinocysts	Foram linings	Indeterminabel dinocysts	Pollen & spores	Other Palynomorphs				
MC 20.67	18.42	12.8%	67.5%	1.7%	0.9%	2.6%	14.5%	117	263		
MC 20.95	18.67	50.0%	21.8%	0.8%		8.1%	19.4%	124	146		
MC 21.48	19.14	16.0%	63.9%		4.1%	8.3%	7.7%	169	112		
MC 21.98	19.58	5.5%	76.0%		2.1%	3.4%	13.0%	146	194		
MC 22.52	20.07	15.9%	69.0%		4.4%	1.8%	8.8%	113	229		
MC 22.99	20.48	2.5%	82.5%	1.3%	3.8%	2.5%	7.5%	80	51		
MC 23.53	20.97	*	*	*		*		**	**		
MC 23.94	21.33	13.3%	50.0%		6.7%	3.3%	26.7%	30	**		
MC 24.45	21.78	3.6%	73.2%		7.1%	6.3%	9.8%	112	80		
MC 25.01	22.28	*	*			*		**	**		
MC 25.56	22.77	17.4%	46.1%		5.2%	2.6%	28.7%	115	187		
MC 26.01	23.17	11.1%	77.8%		7.4%	3.7%		27	21		
MC 26.50	23.61	*	*					**	**		
MC 26.99	24.05	4.5%	63.6%		18.2%		13.6%	22	**		
MC 27.43	24.44	*	*		*			**	**		
MC 27.99	24.94	*	*		*			**	**		
MC 28.51	25.40	4.6%	88.1%		3.7%		3.7%	109	96		
MC 29.01	25.85	5.0%	31.3%		2.5%		61.3%	80	222		
MC 29.50	26.28	4.9%	50.6%		2.5%		42.0%	81	101		
MC 30.02	26.75	1.7%	61.9%		5.9%		30.5%	118	159		
MC 30.53	27.20	13.3%	66.7%		6.7%		13.3%	30	20		
MC 30.99	27.61	3.4%	31.5%	1.1%	4.5%		59.6%	89	36		
MC 31.55	28.11	9.8%	52.9%		3.9%	*	33.3%	51	85		
MC 31.99	28.50	1.0%	74.5%		6.1%		18.4%	98	72		
MC 32.55	29.00	1.2%	67.1%		8.2%	1.2%	22.4%	85	55		
MC 32.99	29.39	4.8%	61.9%		11.9%		21.4%	42	26		
MC 33.44	29.80	3.2%	69.9%		8.6%		18.3%	93	99		
MC 33.99	30.29		*		*		*	**	**		
MC 34.45	30.69	*			*			**	**		
MC 34.89	31.09										
MC 35.50	31.63	2.9%	50.0%		2.9%	0.7%	43.5%	138	211		
MC 38.44	34.25	*	*					**	**		
MC 38.95	34.70	*	*		*		*	**	**		
MC 39.42	35.12	*	*				*	**	**		

Samples N = this study M = Brinkhuis & Biffi 1993	Massignano quarry counts							Total Palynomorphs	Total dincysts	
	till at least 100 palynomorphs									till at least 200 dincysts
	Bisaccate pollen	Dinocysts	Foram linings	Indeterminabel dinocysts	Pollen & spores	Other Palynomorphs				
N5.65	1.0%	41.0%		4.0%	1.0%	53.0%	100	135		
N5.60	3.6%	23.2%		3.6%	0.9%	68.8%	112	140		
N5.50	11.0%	9.0%		1.0%		79.0%	100	50		
N5.40		*					**	**		
N5.30		55.0%		3.0%		42.0%	100	57		
N5.25								**		
N5.20								**		
N5.10		*			*		**	**		
N5.00		*					**	**		
N4.90	1.0%	39.0%		5.0%		55.0%	100	31		
N4.80				*		*	**	**		
N4.70								**		
N4.60								**		
N4.50	1.0%	19.8%		3.0%	1.0%	75.2%	101	76		
N4.40	*	33.3%		4.2%		62.5%	24	6		
N4.30	2.0%	36.6%			2.0%	59.4%	101	86		
N4.20		6.0%				94.0%	100	7		
N4.10		43.9%		7.3%	7.3%	41.5%	41	18		
N4.00	1.0%	5.0%				94.0%	100	23		

\* present but not included in the counts  
\*\* less than 20 species counted

The relative occurrences of the ‘additional dinocyst events’ for the Massignano quarry section (including the additional samples from this study) are plotted next to the results from the Massicore in text-figure 4. The expanded dataset is consistent with the initially proposed dinocyst succession.

Combining our new Massignano records with the dinocyst distribution across magneto-subchron C13n known from other central Italian sections (Brinkhuis and Biffi 1993) would place the base of C13n at the Massignano quarry section exactly between the base as proposed by Bice and Montanari (1988; Montanari pers comm. 1998) and Lowrie and Lanci (1994; text-fig. 3). In the Massicore, the predicted base of C13n should occur around 15.90 m. This is confirmed by the LO of *A. diktyoplokum* (calibrated against the middle of C13n at the other central Italian sections, cf. Brinkhuis and Biffi 1993) at 9.1m. This indicates that the magnetostratigraphic interpretation of the Massicore as proposed by Lanci et al. (1996) is incorrect.

DISCUSSION

When plotting the dinocyst distribution of all Massignano quarry samples next to the Massicore samples using the correlation of Lanci et al. (1996), most events are recorded slightly earlier in the Massicore (text-fig. 4). However, only four biotite horizons, used for correlation, were recognized in the study of Lanci et al. (1996). In the present study, two additional biotite horizons, as recently recognized by Montanari (pers. comm., 2003) are added here (text-fig. 3). Correlation of the complete set of biotite-rich horizons, in combination with the dinocyst record now leads to a new, almost perfect linear correlation (text-fig. 5). This aspect now resolves the above-mentioned discrepancies; remaining small differences are attributed to the equivalents of barren or reduced abundance intervals. The extrapolation of the Massignano quarry E/O GSSP horizon to the Massicore places the boundary at 19.95 meter in the core (17.77m stratigraphic depth), some 75cm higher than previous correlations (Lanci et al. 1996).



TABLE 2  
Comparison “composite suite events” Brinkhuis and Biffi (1993) with this study.

Brinkhuis and Biffi, 1993		Dinocyst zones	This study		
Massignano quarry / Monte Cagnero (Type section for Dinocyst zones)			Massignano quarry	Massicore	
Monte Cagnero	Thickness zones and number of samples	Dinocyst events	Dinocyst events	Thickness zones and number of samples	
	Thickness 3+ m 11 Samples	LCO <i>Enneadocysta pectiforme</i> 'O' <i>Svalbardella cooksoniae</i> LO <i>Corrudinium incompositum</i>	Cin	(CO <i>E. pectiforme</i> ) (O <i>C. incompositum</i> )	Thickness 5+ m 7 Samples
	Thickness ± 4 m 4 Samples	LO <i>Glaphyrocysta semitecta</i> FO <i>Wezeliella gochtii</i> (Remark)	Rac	LO <i>G. semitecta</i> FO <i>W. gochtii</i> 'O' <i>S. cooksoniae</i>	Thickness ± 3 m 7 Samples
Massignano section	Thickness ± 3 m 4 Samples	LO <i>Areosphaeridium diktyoplokum</i> AO <i>Thalassiphora pelagica</i> (Remark)	Adi	LO <i>A. diktyoplokum</i> AO <i>Th. pelagica</i> FCO <i>G. semitecta</i>	Thickness ± 6,5 m 24 Samples
	3+ m, 7 samples	FCO <i>Glaphyrocysta semitecta</i>		LO <i>H. semilunifera</i>	
	Thickness ± 1,2 m 4 Samples	LO <i>Hemiplacophora semilunifera</i> (FO <i>Stoveracysta?</i> sp. B&B)* LO <i>Achilleodinium biformoides</i> FO <i>Glaphyrocysta semitecta</i>	Gse	LO <i>A. biformoides</i> FO <i>G. semitecta</i>	Thickness ± 1,6 m 6 Samples
	Thickness ± 1,2 m 4 Samples	AO bisaccate pollen ** 'FO' <i>Achilleodinium biformoides</i> FO <i>Pentadinium lophophorum</i> FO <i>Achomosphaera</i> sp. B&B FO <i>Achomosphaera allicornu</i>	Aal	FCO <i>P. lophophorum</i> 'FCO' <i>A. biformoides</i> AO bisaccate pollen ** FO <i>Achomosphaera</i> sp. B&B FCO <i>A. allicornu</i>	Thickness ± 1,9 m 14 Samples
	Thickness ± 2,9 m 7 Samples	FO <i>Reticulosphaera actinocoronata</i>	Cfu	FO <i>P. lophophorum</i>	Thickness ± 2,2 m 5 Samples
	Thickness ± 4,5 m 4 Samples	LO <i>Schematophora speciosa</i> (FO <i>Stoveracysta</i> sp.2 B&B) * (FO <i>Stoveracysta</i> sp.1 B&B) *	Ssp	LO <i>S. speciosa</i>	Thickness ± 4 m 9 Samples
Thickness 5+ m 7 Samples	LO <i>Melitasphaeridium pseudorecurvatum</i> AO Prasinophyte algae **  FO <i>Stoveracysta ornata</i> FO <i>Corrudinium?</i> sp. B&B	Mps	Thickness 5,5+ m 46 samples LO <i>M. pseudorecurvatum</i> AO Prasinophyte algae ** 'FO' <i>A. allicornu</i> 'FO' <i>A. biformoides</i> FO <i>S. ornata</i> FO <i>Corrudinium?</i> sp. B&B FO <i>R. actinocoronata</i>	Thickness 9,5+ m 17 Samples	

FO = First Occurrence LO = Last Occurrence O = Occurrence	FCO = First Common Occurrence LCO = Last Common Occurrence AO = Abundant Occurrence	* = Scattered occurrence Species, zone defining species	* = grouped as <i>S. ornata</i> ** palynological, non dinocyst event
---	---	--	---

This study, in-line with previous results from e.g., Brinkhuis (1994), Stover and Hardenbol (1994), Brinkhuis and Visscher (1995) and Vandenberghe et al. (2003), demonstrates that in the Northern Hemisphere the LO of *Areosphaeridium diktyoplokum* is consistently associated with the ~mid subchron C13n and the Oi-1 event. Moreover, we also confirm that no global dinocyst event is associated with the local extinction of the hantkeninids. While *A. diktyoplokum* is not known to consistently occur in the Southern Hemisphere, recent studies of the Southern Hemisphere Eocene (e.g., Sluijs et al. 2003) have shown that species morphologically closely related to *A. diktyoplokum*, namely *Enneadocysta partridgei* and *Enneadocysta* sp. A of Brinkhuis et al. (2003), all have virtually identical ranges. Thus, the extinction of this complex of dinocysts may well be regarded to represent the E/O junction.

In summary, it appears that the synchronicity between occurrence of the Oi-1 event, the TA4.3/4.4 third order sequence boundary and the LO of *A. diktyoplokum* would represent a much better criterion for global correlation of the E/O boundary. If this concept were applied, this would reinstate the top of the classic Priabonian Stage to the Eocene, and it would place the base of the Rupelian Stage in the earliest Oligocene, correlative to the transgressive phase of cycle TA4.4.

## CONCLUSION

The palynological analysis of the expanded Massicore, and additional Massignano quarry samples, has augmented biostratigraphic resolution, resulting in a more refined correlation between the two successions. An improved “composite suite of successive qualitative and quantitative dinocyst events” is pro-

vided in Table 2, next to the zonation of Brinkhuis and Biffi (1993). The Cfu/Aal zone boundary is here redefined as the FCO of *A. allicornu*.

Note that the new correlation of the Massicore with the Massignano quarry section is slightly different than the correlation as proposed by Lanci et al. (1996). The E/O GSSP occurs in the Massicore at meter 17.77 stratigraphic depth and 19.95m core depth, as opposed to 19.2m by Lanci et al. (1996).

This study, which builds upon and further validates the propositions made by Brinkhuis and Visscher (1995), demonstrates that the synchronous occurrence of the Oi-1 event, the TA4.3/4.4 sequence boundary and the LO of *A. diktyoplokum* are better suited as criteria for global correlation of the E/O boundary, than the extinction of the hantkeninids. If this concept is accepted, it would place the top of the classic Priabonian Stage to the Eocene, and it would place the base of the Rupelian Stage in the earliest Oligocene, correlative to the transgressive phase of cycle TA4.4. The age of this proposed level (~33,3 Ma) is ~400 kyr younger than the current ratified E/O GSSP.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Samples for this study were kindly provided by R. Coccioni and A. Montanari. This study benefited from discussions with L. Lanci. We also thank J. Bujak and E. Crouch for constructive reviews, which improved the manuscript. Financial support was provided by the Swedish Research Council, the “Pieter Langerhuizen Lambertuszoon” Fund and Stockholm Marine Research Centre. This is NSG publication 20031101.

**TAXONOMIC APPENDIX**

Alphabetical list for the dinoflagellate cysts identified in this study. The dinocyst taxonomy follows Williams et al. (1998).

- Achilleodinium biformoides* (Eisenack 1954) emend. EATON 1976  
*Achomospaera alcornu* (Eisenack 1954) DAVEY and WILLIAMS 1966  
*Achomospaera* sp. of BRINKHUIS and BIFFI 1993  
*Areoligera semicircularata* (Morgenroth 1966) STOVER and EVITT 1978  
*Areosphaeridium diktyoplokum* (Klumpp 1953) emend. STOVER and WILLIAMS 1995  
*Batiacasphaera compta* DRUGG 1970  
*Caligodinium amiculum* DRUGG 1970  
*Cannosphaeropsis/Nematosphaeropsis* spp. Deflandre and Cookson 1955 / WETZEL 1933  
*Cerebrocysta* spp. Bujak in BUJAK ET AL. 1980  
*Charlesdowniea clathrata* (Eisenack 1938) LENTIN and VOZZHENNIKOVA 1989  
*Chiropteridium mespilanum* (Maier) LENTIN and WILLIAMS 1973  
*Cleistosphaeridium* spp. EATON ET AL 2001  
*Cooksonidium capricornum* Cookson and Eisenack 1965) emend. STOVER and WILLIAMS. 1995  
*Cordosphaeridium cantharellus* (Brosius 1963) GOCHT 1969  
*Cordosphaeridium fibrospinusum* DAVEY and WILLIAMS 1966  
*Cordosphaeridium funiculatum* MORGENROTH 1966  
*Cordosphaeridium inodes* (Klumpp 1953) Eisenack 1963; emend. Morgenroth 1968; emend. SARJEANT 1981  
*Cordosphaeridium minimum* (Morgenroth 1966) BENEDEK 1972  
*Corrudinium incompositum* (Drugg 1970) STOVER and EVITT 1978  
*Corrudinium?* sp. of BRINKHUIS and BIFFI 1993  
*Cribroperidium guiseppeii* (Morgenroth 1966) HELENES 1984  
*Dapsilidinium* spp. BUJAK ET AL. 1980  
*Deflandrea* spp. Eisenack 1938; emend. Williams and Downie 1966; emend. LENTIN and WILLIAMS 1976  
*Dinopterygium cladoides* sensu Morgenroth 1966  
*Diphyes colligerum* (Deflandre and Cookson 1955); emend. GOODMAN and WITMER 1985  
*Distatodinium craterum* EATON 1976  
*Distatodinium ellipticum* (Cookson 1965) EATON 1976  
*Distatodinium tenerum* (Benedek 1972) Eaton 1976; emend. BENEDEK and SARJEANT 1981  
*Enneadocysta pectiniforme* (Gerlach 1961) emend. STOVER and WILLIAMS 1995  
*Eocladopyxis tessellata* LIENGJARERN ET AL. 1980  
*Fibrocysta* spp. STOVER and EVITT 1978  
*Gelatia inflata* BUJAK 1984  
*Glaphyrocysta intricata* (Eaton 1971) STOVER and EVITT 1978  
*Glaphyrocysta priabonensis* BRINKHUIS 1994  
*Glaphyrocysta semitecta* (Bujak in Bujak et al. 1980) LENTIN and WILLIAMS 1981  
*Glaphyrocysta* spp. (pars) STOVER and EVITT 1978  
*Glaphyrocysta texta* (Bujak 1976) STOVER and EVITT 1978  
*Hemiplacophora semilunifera* COOKSON and EISENACK 1965  
*Heteraulacacysta campanula* DRUGG and LOEBLICH 1967  
*Heteraulacacysta? leptalea* EATON 1976  
*Histiocysta* spp. DAVEY 1969  
*Homotryblum* spp. DAVEY and WILLIAMS 1966  
*Hystrichokolpoma* spp. KLUMPP 1953  
*Hystrichokolpoma* sp of BIFFI and MANUM 1988  
*Hystrichosphaeropsis* sp. of BRINKHUIS and BIFFI 1993  
*Hystrichosphaeropsis rectangularis* Bujak in BUJAK ET AL. 1980  
*Impagidinium brevisulcatum* MICHOUX 1985  
*Impagidinium* cf. *aculeatum* (Wall 1967), LENTIN and WILLIAMS 1981  
*Impagidinium* cf. *brevisulcatum* of BRINKHUIS and BIFFI 1993  
*Impagidinium dispertitum* (Cookson and Eisenack 1965) STOVER and EVITT 1978  
*Impagidinium maculatum* (Cookson and Eisenack 1965) STOVER and EVITT 1978  
*Impagidinium pallidum* BUJAK 1984  
*Impagidinium* sp. of BRINKHUIS and BIFFI 1993  
*Impagidinium velorum* BUJAK 1984  
*Lejeunecysta tenella* (Morgenroth 1966) WILSON and CLOWES 1980  
*Lentinia serrata* Bujak in BUJAK ET AL. 1980  
*Lingulodinium* spp. WALL 1967  
*Melitasphaeridium pseudorecurvatum* (Morgenroth 1966) BUJAK ET AL. 1980  
*Operculodinium* spp. WALL 1967  
*Palaeocystodinium golzowense* ALBERTI 1961  
*Pentadinium goniferum* EDWARDS 1982  
*Pentadinium laticinctum* Gerlach 1961; emend. BENEDEK ET AL. 1982  
*Pentadinium lophophorum* Benedek 1972, emend. BENEDEK ET AL. 1982  
*Phthanoperidinium* spp. DRUGG and LOEBLICH JR. 1967  
*Reticulatosphaera actinocoronata* (Benedek 1972) emend. BUJAK and MATSUOKA 1986  
*Rhombodinium porosum* BUJAK 1979  
*Rottnestia borussica* (Eisenack 1954) COOKSON and EISENACK 1961  
*Samlandia* spp. EISENACK 1954  
*Schematophora speciosa* Deflandre and Cookson 1955, emend. STOVER 1975  
*Spiniferites* sp.1 of VAN MOURIK ET AL. 2001  
*Spiniferites* spp. MANTELL 1850  
*Stoveracysta ornata* (Cookson and Eisenack 1965) CLOWES 1985  
 Remark: The original data set from BRINKHUIS and BIFFI 1993 was used, but all *Stoveracysta* species are grouped under *Stoveracysta ornata*.  
*Svalbardella cooksoniae* MANUM 1960  
*Tectatodinium pellitum* Wall 1967 emend. HEAD 1994  
*Tectatodinium* sp.1 of BRINKHUIS and BIFFI 1993  
*Tectatodinium* sp.2 of BRINKHUIS and BIFFI 1993  
*Thalassiphora?* sp. of BRINKHUIS and BIFFI 1993  
*Thalassiphora patula* (Williams and Downie 1966) STOVER and EVITT 1978  
*Thalassiphora pelagica* (Eisenack 1954) Eisenack and Gocht 1960; emend. BENEDEK and GOCHT 1981  
*Thalassiphora succincta* MORGENROTH 1966  
*Thalassiphora velata* (Deflandre and Cookson 1955); EISENACK and GOCHT 1960  
*Turbiosphaera* spp. ARCHANGELSKY 1969  
*Wetzeliella gochtii* COSTA and DOWNIE 1976

## REFERENCES

- ALVAREZ, W. and MONTANARI, A., 1988. The Scaglia limestones (Late Cretaceous-Oligocene) in the northeastern Apennines carbonate sequence; stratigraphic context and geological significance. In: Premoli Silva, I., Cocconi R. and Montanari, A., Eds., *The Eocene-Oligocene Boundary in the March-Umbria Basin (Italy)*. *IUGS International Commission on Stratigraphy, Subcommission on Paleogene Stratigraphy, Report* (Ancona Italy, 1988) pp. 13-29.
- BERGGREN, W.A., KENT, D. V., SWISHER-III, C. C. and AUBRY, M.-P., 1995. A revised Cenozoic geochronology and chronostratigraphy. In: Berggren, W.A., Kent, D.V., Aubry, M.P. and Hardenbol, J., Eds., *Geochronology, time scales and global stratigraphic correlation*. *SEPM Special Publication* 54: 129-212.
- BICE, D.M. and MONTANARI A., 1988. Magnetic Stratigraphy of the Massignano section across the Eocene-Oligocene boundary. In: Premoli Silva, I., Cocconi R. and Montanari, A., (Eds.), *The Eocene-Oligocene Boundary in the March-Umbria Basin (Italy)*. *IUGS International Commission on Stratigraphy, Subcommission on Paleogene Stratigraphy, Report*. (Ancona Italy, 1988) pp. 111-117.
- BRINKHUIS, H., 1994. Late Eocene to Early Oligocene dinoflagellate cysts from the Priabonian type area (northeast Italy): biostratigraphy and palaeoenvironmental interpretation. *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology*, 107: 121-163.
- BRINKHUIS, H. and BIFFI, U., 1993. Dinoflagellate cysts stratigraphy of the Eocene/Oligocene transition in central Italy. *Marine Micro-palaeontology*, 22: 131-183.
- BRINKHUIS, H. and VISSCHER H., 1995. The upper boundary of the Eocene series: a reappraisal based on dinoflagellate cysts biostratigraphy and sequencestratigraphy. *SEPM Special Publication*, 54: 295-304.
- BRINKHUIS, H., SENIGERS, S., SLUIJS, A., WARNAAR, J. and WILLIAMS, G.L., 2003. Latest Cretaceous to earliest Oligocene, and Quaternary dinoflagellate cysts from ODP Site 1172, East Tasman Plateau. In: Exon et al., *Scientific Results ODP Leg 189*, College Station, Texas: Ocean Drilling Program.
- HAQ, B.U., HARDENBOL J. and VAIL, P.R., 1987. Chronology of fluctuating sea levels since the Triassic. *Science*, 235: 1156-1167.
- LANCI, L., LOWRIE W and MONTANARI, A, 1996. Magnetostratigraphy of the Eocene/Oligocene boundary in a short drill-core. *Earth and Planetary Science Letters* 143: 37-48.
- LOWRIE, W. and LANCI, L., 1994. Magnetostratigraphy of Eocene-Oligocene boundary sections in Italy; no evidence for short subchrons within chrons 12R and 13R. *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*, 126: 247-258.
- MILLER K. G., WRIGHT J. D. and FAIRBANKS R. G. 1991. Unlocking the ice house; Oligocene-Miocene oxygen isotopes, eustasy, and margin erosion. *Journal of Geophysical Research*, 96: 6829-6848.
- MONTANARI A. , SANDRONI, P., CLYMER, A., COLLINS, G., COCCIONI, R., LANCI, L. and LOWRIE, W., 1994. Preliminary report on a core drilled across the Eocene-Oligocene boundary in the Type locality of Massignano (Italy); The Massicore. In: Odin, G.S., Eds., Phanerozoic time scale. *Bulletin of Liaison and Information, IUGS Subcommission on Geochronology*, Paris 12: 13-16.
- MOURIK, C.A. VAN, BRINKHUIS, H. and WILLIAMS, G.L., 2001. Middle to Late Eocene organic walled dinoflagellate cysts from ODP Leg 171B, offshore Florida. In: Kroon, D., Norris, R.D. and Klaus, A., Eds., *Western North Atlantic Palaeogene and Cretaceous Palaeoceanography*. *Geological Society London Special Publications*, 183: 225-251.
- NOCCI, M., MONECHI, S., COCCIONI, R., MADLE, M., MONACO, P., ORLANDO, M., PARESI, G. and PREMOLI SILVA, I., 1988. The extinctions of the Hantkenidae as a marker for recognizing the Eocene-Oligocene boundary: a proposal. In: Premoli Silva, I., Cocconi R. and Montanari, A., Eds., *The Eocene-Oligocene Boundary in the March-Umbria Basin (Italy)*. *IUGS International Commission on Stratigraphy, Subcommission on Paleogene Stratigraphy, Report* (Ancona Italy, 1988) pp. 249-252.
- PARISI, G., GUERRERAM F., MADILE, M., MAGNONI, G., MONACO, P., MONECHI, S., and NOCCHI, M., 1988. Middle Eocene to Early Oligocene calcareous nannofossil and foraminiferal Biostratigraphy in the Monte Cagnero section, Piobbico (Italy). In: Premoli Silva, I., Cocconi R. and Montanari, A., Eds., *The Eocene-Oligocene Boundary in the March-Umbria Basin (Italy)*. *IUGS International Commission on Stratigraphy, Subcommission on Paleogene Stratigraphy, Report* (Ancona Italy, 1988) pp. 119-135.
- PREMOLI SILVA, I., and JENKINS, D.G., 1993. Decision on the Eocene-Oligocene boundary stratotype. *Episodes* 16, pp 379-381.
- SLUIJS, A., BRINKHUIS, H., STICKLEY, C.E., WARNAAR, J. and WILLIAMS, G.L., 2003. Dinoflagellate cysts from the Eocene/Oligocene transition in the Southern Ocean; results from ODP Leg 189. In: Exon et al., *Scientific Results ODP Leg 189*, College Station, Texas: Ocean Drilling Program.
- STOVER, L.E. and HARDENBOL, J., 1994. Dinoflagellate and depositional sequences in the lower Oligocene (Rupelian) Boom clay formation, Belgium. *Bulletin van de Belgische vereniging voor Geologie*, 102: 5-77.
- VANDENBERGHE, N., BRINKHUIS, H. and STEURBAUT, E., 2003. The Eocene/Oligocene boundary in the North Sea area: a sequence stratigraphic approach. In: D.R. Prothero, L.C., Ivany, E.A. Nesbitt, Eds., *From Greenhouse to Icehouse: the Marine Eocene-Oligocene Transition*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 419-437.
- WILLIAMS, G.L., LENTIN, J.K. and FENSOME, R.A., 1998. The Lentin and Williams Index of fossil dinoflagellates 1998 edition. *American Association of Stratigraphic Palynologists, Contributions Series*, 34:817.
- WILPSHAAR, M. SANTARELLI, A. BRINKHUIS H. and VISSCHER H. 1996. Dinoflagellate cysts and mid-Oligocene chronostratigraphy in the central Mediterranean region. *Journal of the Geological Society, London*, 153, pp. 553-561.
- ZACHOS, J., PAGANI, H., SLOAN, L., THOMAS, E. and BILLUPS, K., 2001 Trends, rhythms, and aberrations in global climate 65 Ma to present. *Science*, 292(5517) :686-693.

Manuscript received May 6, 2004

Manuscript accepted November 12, 2004



APPENDIX 1, continued.  
Range chart for the Massicore quarry.

Dinocyst zones	Samples	Stratigraphic depth (Core depth + Core Z)	TOTAL DINO-CYSTS COUNTED	<i>Centropaenidium minimum</i>	<i>Ectarispheeria</i> sp.	<i>Hystriochlopora</i> spp.	<i>Corradium incompositum</i>	<i>Deliantha phosporifica</i> & spp.	<i>Distadidium craterum</i>	<i>Homotryblum</i> spp.	<i>Operculidium</i> sp. of Brinkhuis and Biffi '93	<i>Glaphrocysta indicata</i>	<i>Achilleshidium bifurcoides</i>	<i>Schematophora speciosa</i>	<i>Hystriochloporopsis</i> sp. of Brinkhuis and Biffi '93	<i>Achomosphera albicoma</i>	<i>Heteroleucocysta? leptalea</i>	<i>Coretricycla</i> spp.	<i>Simpliditia</i> spp.	<i>Arenosphaeridium michoudii</i>	<i>Centropaenidium funiculatum</i>	<i>Pentadidium laibinicum</i>	<i>Pentadidium lophophorum</i>	<i>Glaphrocysta pyralionensis</i>	<i>Hystriochloporopsis rectangularis</i>	<i>Retinella boreasica</i>	<i>Fibrocysta</i> spp.	<i>Dinophyllum caudodes</i>	<i>Deliantha granulata</i>	<i>Distadidium ellipticum</i>	<i>Spiniferites</i> sp. of van Mourik et al. 2001	<i>Thalassipora?</i> sp. of Brinkhuis and Biffi '93	<i>Achomosphera</i> sp. of Brinkhuis and Biffi '93					
Cin	MC 1.15	230	0.4%	0.4%	27.0%						1.7%				4.8%	0.4%	1.3%																					
	MC 1.77	162									0.6%	0.6%			32.1%		0.6%																					
	MC 1.95	174				0.6%	1.8%				0.6%				19.2%																							
	MC 2.47	220				1.3%	2.0%				0.7%	0.7%			19.2%																							
	MC 2.97	214									0.9%	0.9%	2.3%		2.8%		0.5%	0.9%																				
	MC 3.47	3.09	221	1.4%			3.2%	5.4%		1.8%		3.6%																										
	MC 3.97	3.54	219								0.5%																											
	MC 4.47	3.88	217	0.5%							0.5%																											
	MC 4.92	4.38	212	0.5%			1.9%	6.0%			0.9%																											
	MC 5.50	4.90	191				0.5%	1.0%	1.0%																													
MC 5.98	5.33	228	1.8%				2.2%	0.9%																														
MC 6.50	5.79	227	0.9%				1.3%	0.4%		0.4%					3.1%																							
Rac	MC 7.03	6.26	248	1.2%					0.4%	0.4%					7.3%																							
	MC 7.52	6.70	230	0.4%			3.5%	3.0%			0.9%				5.2%																							
	MC 7.98	7.11	209	1.0%			1.9%	3.3%		1.4%					1.0%	0.5%																						
	MC 8.52	7.59	226	0.9%			7.0%	1.3%		0.4%					1.3%	0.9%																						
	MC 8.96	8.00	237	4.6%			0.8%	1.7%	0.8%									1.3%																				
	MC 9.43	8.40	221	2.3%				1.4%	3.2%	0.5%	0.9%																											
	MC 10.06	8.86	214	4.7%				1.9%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%																											
	Adi	MC 10.50	9.36	246	3.3%			1.6%	0.4%	6.9%	0.8%	0.4%																										
		MC 11.01	9.81	248	1.2%			0.4%	7.3%	4.4%		0.4%																										
		MC 11.48	10.23	231	0.4%				3.9%	22.1%		0.4%																										
MC 11.98		10.67	236					3.0%	23.3%		4.2%																											
MC 12.50		11.14	233				0.4%	4.3%	2.6%																													
MC 13.07		11.65	250	1.2%			0.4%	1.6%	1.2%	0.4%																												
MC 13.53		12.06	275	1.1%			0.4%	3.3%	4.7%		0.4%																											
MC 14.00		12.47	238	1.7%				0.8%	3.4%		0.4%																											
MC 14.52		12.94	232					16.8%	1.3%																													
MC 14.97		13.34	250				0.8%	0.8%	1.2%																													
MC 15.50	13.81	226					2.7%	5.3%	0.4%																													
MC 15.60	13.80	235	1.3%			0.9%	1.3%	6.4%		1.3%																												
MC 15.70	13.99	244	0.4%			0.4%		7.4%																														
MC 15.80	14.08	228	0.9%				0.9%	3.5%		0.4%																												
MC 15.90	14.17	240	0.4%			0.4%	0.8%	6.3%		0.8%																												
MC 16.00	14.26	257	0.4%			0.4%	2.7%	5.8%		1.2%																												
MC 16.10	14.35	259	1.2%			0.4%	1.5%	6.6%		1.9%	0.8%																											
MC 16.20	14.43	252	0.4%			0.4%	0.8%	0.4%		1.2%																												
MC 16.30	14.52	236	0.8%			0.4%	0.8%	1.3%	0.4%	0.8%	0.8%																											
MC 16.40	14.61	238	0.4%			1.3%	0.4%			0.8%	0.8%																											
MC 16.53	14.73	219				0.5%				1.8%	2.3%																											
MC 16.62	14.81	242								0.8%	0.8%																											
MC 16.99	15.14	229	0.4%			0.4%	1.7%	0.4%		0.4%	4.4%																											
MC 17.47	15.57	102				1.0%	1.0%			4.9%																												
Gse	MC 17.95	15.99	221				5.9%		1.4%	4.5%					0.5%																							
	MC 18.50	16.48	220				0.5%			1.4%																												
	MC 19.07	16.99	233	1.7%			3.0%	0.4%		3.0%																												
	MC 19.30	17.20	232				0.9%	0.9%	0.4%		0.9%																											
	MC 19.41	17.29	240				0.8%	0.4%	0.8%			0.8%																										
	MC 19.55	17.42	233				0.9%	0.9%	0.4%		0.4%																											
	MC 19.63	17.49	190				1.1%	0.5%	0.5%																													
	MC 19.75	17.60	260	0.4%			1.4%	1.9%	0.5%		0.4%	0.8%	0.0%	0.4%																								
	MC 19.85	17.69	214	0.9%			1.4%	1.9%	0																													



APPENDIX 2  
Range chart for Massignano quarry.

Dinocyst zones	Samples	TOTAL DINO CYSTS COUNTED	<i>Emneadocysta pectiforme</i>	<i>Nematolophosphaeropsis/Carniosphaeropsis</i> spp.	<i>Oporocubidium/Impatiopsisphaeridium</i> cpx. (pars.)	<i>Spiniferites/Achromosphaera</i> spp. (pars.)	<i>Cheliosphaeridium arcyrae</i>	<i>Thalassiphora pelagica</i>	<i>Homotryblium plectilium</i>	<i>Samarandia chlamydsphera</i>	<i>Hemiplocahara seminulifera</i>	<i>Impatiplinium brevisulcatum</i>	<i>Eschschisphaeridea</i> sp. of Brinkhuis and Biff '93	<i>Schematophara apiculosa</i>	<i>Cordosphaeridium fibrosinuosum</i>	<i>Ecoidolopyxis tessellata</i>	<i>Cocklefordium capricornum</i>	<i>Spiniferites pseudofurcatus</i>	<i>Impatiplinium</i> sp. of Brinkhuis and Biff '93	<i>Stoverocysta ornata</i>	<i>Thalassiphora? sp. B&amp;G</i>	<i>Impatiplinium velorum</i>	<i>Citropendinium</i> spp.	<i>Oporocubidium cf. liratum</i>	<i>Dactylopidium ellipticum</i>	<i>Reticulatosphaera acrifurcata</i>	<i>Dapsilidium pastrelii</i>	<i>Impatiplinium maculatum</i>	<i>Diphyes colligerum</i>	<i>Impatiplinium cf. brevisulcatum</i> of Brinkhuis and Biff '93						
Adi	M22.80	100	2.0%	1.0%	18.0%	14.0%	8.0%	5.0%																												
	M22.20	103			2.9%	31.1%	14.6%	1.0%	7.8%								1.0%		1.0%	1.0%				2.0%	2.0%											
	M21.90	97			2.1%	6.2%	25.8%		41.2%								2.1%		*	*				1.0%												
	M21.60	100			6.0%	14.0%	48.0%		1.0%								3.0%		8.0%		4.0%	3.0%				1.0%										
	M21.30	**																																		
	M21.00	**																																		
M20.70	**																																			
Gse	M20.40	100	3.0%		12.0%	40.0%	12.0%	3.0%		1.0%	18.0%						2.0%																			
	M20.10	100	2.0%	1.0%	5.0%	23.0%	5.0%	1.0%			21.0%	1.0%					6.0%	3.0%					1.0%			3.0%		1.0%								
	M19.80	100	2.0%		3.0%	11.0%	10.0%	2.0%									5.0%	17.0%																		
M19.50	100	15.0%	2.0%	5.0%	25.0%	4.0%	8.0%			1.0%						9.0%	9.0%		1.0%	1.0%						1.0%										
Aal	M19.20	100	6.0%	4.0%	28.0%	28.0%			1.0%		1.0%		1.0%			1.0%	1.0%					3.0%	6.0%									2.0%				
	M18.90	100	2.0%	3.0%	10.0%	27.0%	1.0%	9.0%	1.0%		1.0%					13.0%	5.0%		1.0%	1.0%																
	M18.60	100	1.0%	7.0%	26.0%	33.0%	11.0%				3.0%					2.0%	6.0%		1.0%	1.0%																
	M18.30	98		2.0%	17.3%	46.9%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%				1.0%			1.0%	1.0%																			
Cfu	M18.00	102	1.0%	2.0%	11.8%	60.8%	2.0%			2.9%			1.0%			2.0%	2.9%		1.0%	2.0%							2.0%									
	M17.70	99	40.4%		7.1%	23.2%		5.1%								1.0%																				
	M17.40	101	4.0%	3.0%	7.9%	41.6%	3.0%		1.0%							1.0%	4.0%	18.8%											1.0%							
	M17.10	**																																		
	M16.50	**																																		
	M16.20	68	7.4%	2.9%	8.8%	25.0%	4.4%	5.9%	1.5%	1.5%			2.9%					14.7%	1.5%				1.5%													
M15.90	**																																			
Ssp	M14.70	**																																		
	M13.80	**																																		
	M13.20	**																																		
	M12.90	**																																		
Mps	M8.70	100		7.0%	21.0%	19.0%	3.0%	3.0%			9.0%	2.0%	1.0%						2.0%		1.0%	2.0%	1.0%													
	M8.10	100		2.0%	22.0%	19.0%	11.0%	4.0%			2.0%	1.0%	17.0%	1.0%																						
	N8.00	124			16.1%	12.9%	32.3%	1.6%			8.1%	2.4%	1.6%	0.0%																						
	N7.80	86	1.2%	7.0%	8.1%	18.6%	4.7%	4.7%			27.9%			1.2%	1.2%		11.6%	1.2%																		
	M7.80	99		9.1%	12.1%	23.2%	7.1%	1.0%			24.2%			4.0%		3.0%																				
	N7.60	117		4.3%	2.6%	8.5%	6.8%	4.3%			44.4%	1.7%		6.8%		6.8%	0.9%	2.6%																		
	N7.50	146		2.1%	6.8%	17.1%	2.1%				51.4%			3.4%			2.7%	4.1%	1.4%																	
	M7.50	**																																		
	N7.40	99		2.0%	12.1%	14.1%	3.0%	2.0%	3.0%		25.3%			6.1%	10.1%			1.0%	3.0%	7.1%			3.0%													
	N7.35	67	1.5%	1.5%	11.9%	16.4%	7.5%				37.3%	1.5%		4.5%	6.0%	1.5%		6.0%		3.0%																
	N7.30	47	4.3%	4.3%		23.4%					48.9%			8.5%																						
	N7.20	101	6.9%	5.0%	6.9%	23.8%	7.9%	1.0%			26.7%	1.0%		3.0%	1.0%		2.0%	2.0%	1.0%																	
	M7.20	94	1.1%	7.4%	8.5%	23.4%					39.4%			1.1%																						
	N7.15	130	3.8%	2.3%	5.4%	18.5%	0.8%	3.8%			46.2%	1.5%		3.1%																						
	N7.10	40	10.0%	2.5%	7.5%	32.5%	12.5%	7.5%			5.0%	2.5%		2.5%			2.5%																			
	N7.00	93	15.1%	6.5%	9.7%	21.5%	7.5%	12.9%			1.1%	1.1%		5.4%	4.3%	4.3%	1.1%	3.2%		1.1%																
	N6.90	97	16.5%	1.0%	9.3%	9.3%	11.3%	10.3%			4.1%			7.2%			6.2%		3.1%		1.1%		10.3%													
	M6.90	100		1.0%	14.0%	12.0%	12.0%	43.0%	1.0%		6.0%	1.0%					3.0%																			
	N6.80	136	4.4%	1.5%	5.9%	5.9%	29.4%	5.1%			7.4%	0.7%		5.1%			23.5%		1.5%	0.7%																
	N6.70	147		2.0%	4.8%	4.8%	18.4%	52.4%	0.7%					2.7%			3.4%		0.7%																	
	N6.60	130		6.9%	3.1%	55.4%	3.8%	0.8%									17.7%																			
	N6.50	129	0.8%		3.9%	3.1%	47.3%	19.4%									7.8%																			
	N6.45	160		* 1.3%	6.9%	18.8%	44.4%	7.5%			3.1%			2.5%			7.5%																			
	N6.40	108	0.9%	0.9%	6.5%	13.0%	41.7%	2.8%						7.4%		0.9%	1.9%	0.9%																		
	N6.30	82			4.9%	12.2%	34.1%	7.3%			2.4%	2.4%		12.2%			7.3%																			
	M6.30	**																																		
	N6.20	104		1.9%	1.9%	12.5%	35.6%	22.1%			2.9%	1.0%		1.0%			3.8%	1.9%		1.9%	1.0%															





