

AN EMSIAN STROMATOPOROID FROM THE ST-JOSEPH FORMATION, VIREUX, SOUTHERN MARGIN OF THE DINANT SYNCLINORIUM

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During a field trip in May 2003, a stromatoporoid sample was found on the left side of the Viroin River, near Vireux-Molhain city (Ardennes, France). The outcrop corresponds to the first beds of the St Joseph Formation (equivalent to the lower part of the „Assise de Bure”, an old denomination, previously considered as the lowest part of Middle Devonian. This level corresponds to the beginning of the carbonate sedimentation in Ardennes. Since 1982, by Sub-commission Devonian Stratigraphy (SDS) decision, the base of the Middle Devonian corresponds to the entry of *partitus*, and the St Joseph Formation is Upper Emsian in age and corresponds to the lower part of the *patulus* Zone.

Lecompte (1951-52) didn't cite any stromatoporoid in this level but a lot (22 species) above, in the „Assise de Couvin” (Upper Couvinian = Lower Eifelian).

Later, Bultynck (1970) cited some stromatoporoids in the middle and upper part of the «Assise de Bure» (= Eau Noire Formation) but none in the lower part (= St Joseph Formation).

By another way, according to Bultynck *et al.*, 1991, the first Middle Devonian stromatoporoids are present in the lower part of the Couvin Formation, Lower Eifelian in age. So, the specimen here described, is apparently the oldest Devonian stromatoporoid currently reported from the Ardennes.

The stromatoporoid, with well-developed ring-pillars, typically corresponds to the genus *Stromatoporella*.

The sample corresponds to a 10 cm long, 8 large and 6 high nodule. It is broken, and we can see the stromatoporoid overlying a brachiopod shell: *Paraspirifer* sp. The stromatoporoid covers the whole brachiopod. In one place (the probable bottom?) it is only 0.6 cm thick, but in other places the thickness is generally 2 cm to 3.2 cm in the place opposite to the bottom. In the upper part of the nodule, some interlaminar spaces are pyritized, and, locally several of them form a 2.8 cm large and 0.8 cm high lenticular structure. Few external features are observable, just a weathered surface with thin meshed structure and some sectioned laminae.

References

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