

# Cambrian–Ordovician extinction event

The **Cambrian–Ordovician extinction event** occurred approximately 488 million years ago (m.y.a.). This early Phanerozoic Eon extinction event eliminated many brachiopods and conodonts, and severely reduced the number of trilobite species. The Period in the Cambrian extinction in which most of the extinction occurred was the Caerfai Period.

It was preceded by the less-documented (but probably more extensive) End-Botomian extinction event around 517 million years ago and the Dresbachian extinction event about 502 million years ago.

The **Cambrian–Ordovician event** ended the Cambrian Period, and led into the Ordovician Period in the Paleozoic Era.

## Contents

**Theories**

**Controversy**

**See also**

**Further reading**

**References**

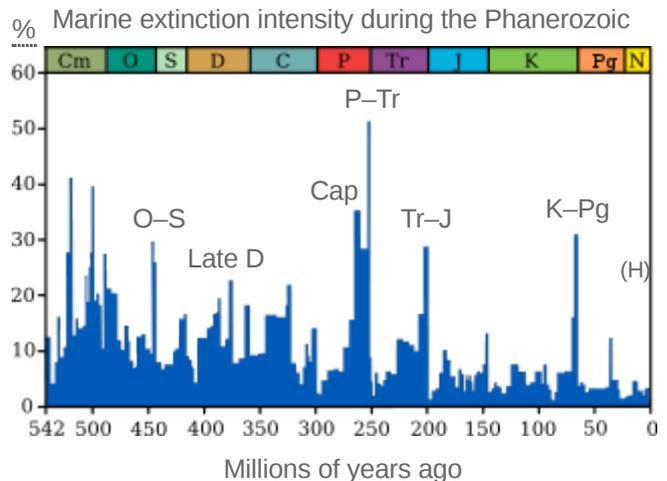
**External links**

## Theories

- Glaciation
- Depletion of oxygen in marine waters
- Flood basalt event (Kalkarindji large igneous province, Australia) <sup>[1]</sup>

## Controversy

Soft-body fossils with morphology characteristic of the Cambrian have been uncovered in Morocco, dated 20 million years post-extinction. The paper suggests that Cambrian species persisted into the mid-Paleozoic and that the Cambrian-Ordovician extinction is instead the result of a gap in the stratigraphic record, with organic remains preserved where conditions were agreeable.<sup>[2]</sup>



The blue graph shows the apparent *percentage* (not the absolute number) of marine animal genera becoming extinct during any given time interval. It does not represent all marine species, just those that are readily fossilized. The labels of the traditional "Big Five" extinction events and the more recently recognised End-Capitanian extinction event are clickable hyperlinks; see Extinction event for more details. (*source and image info*)

## See also

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- [End-Botomian extinction event](#), circa 517 m.y.a.
- [Dresbachian extinction event](#), circa 502 m.y.a.
- [Geologic time scale](#)
- [Furongian](#), Late or Upper Cambrian period
- [Early Ordovician period](#)

## Further reading

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- Gradstein, Felix, James Ogg, and Alan Smith, eds., 2004. *A Geologic Time Scale 2004* (Cambridge University Press).
- [Hallam, Anthony](#) and Paul B. Wignall, 1997. *Mass extinctions and their aftermath* (Oxford University Press).
- Webby, Barry D. and Mary L. Droser, eds., 2004. *The Great Ordovician Biodiversification Event* (Columbia University Press).

## References

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1. Kravchinsky, V. A. (2012). Paleozoic large igneous provinces of Northern Eurasia: Correlation with mass extinction events. *Global and Planetary Change*, 86, 31-36.
2. Roy, P. V.; Orr, P. J.; Botting, J. P.; Muir, L. A.; Vinther, J.; Lefebvre, B.; el Hariri, K. & Briggs, D. E. G. (2010). "Ordovician faunas of Burgess Shale type". *Nature*. **465** (465): 215–218. doi:10.1038/nature09038 (<https://doi.org/10.1038%2Fnature09038>). PMID 20463737 (<http://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20463737>).

## External links

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- [Early Ordovician Climate](http://www.scotese.com/eordclim.htm) (<http://www.scotese.com/eordclim.htm>)
- [Speculated Causes For the Cambrian Extinction](http://park.org/Canada/Museum/extinction/camcause.html) (<http://park.org/Canada/Museum/extinction/camcause.html>)

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