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A new Burgess Shale–type assemblage from the thin Stephen Formation of the southern Canadian Rockies

Jean-Bernard Caron; Robert R. Gaines; M. Gabriela Mángano; Michael Streng; Allison C. Daley

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Abstract

A new Burgess Shale–type assemblage, from the Stephen Formation of the southern Canadian Rocky Mountains, is described herein. It occurs near Stanley Glacier in Kootenay National Park, 40 km southeast of the type area near Field, British Columbia. While at least a dozen Burgess Shale localities are known from the "thick" Stephen Formation, the Stanley Glacier locality represents the first discovery of Burgess Shale–type fossils from the "thin" Stephen Formation. The Cathedral Escarpment, an important regional paleotopographic feature, has been considered important to the paleoecologic setting and the preservation of the Burgess Shale biota. However, the Stanley Glacier assemblage was preserved in a distal ramp setting in a region where no evidence of an escarpment is present. The low-diversity assemblage contains eight new soft-bodied taxa, including the anomalocaridid *Stanleycaris hirpex* n. gen., n. sp. (new genus, new species). Nektonic or nektobenthic predators represent the most diverse group, whereas in relative abundance, the assemblage is dominated by typical Cambrian shelly benthic taxa. The low diversity of both the benthic taxa and the ichnofauna, which includes diminutive trace fossils associated with carapaces of soft-bodied arthropods, suggests a paleoenvironment with restrictive conditions. The Stanley Glacier assemblage expands the temporal and geographic range of the Burgess Shale biota in the southern Canadian Rockies, and suggests that Burgess Shale–type assemblages may be common in the "thin" Stephen Formation, which is regionally widespread.

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