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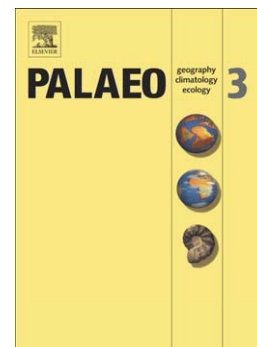
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Early Ordovician lithistid sponge-*Calathium* reefs on the Yangtze Platform and their paleoceanographic implications

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Abstract

Lithistid sponge-*Calathium*-microbial reefs were widespread on the Yangtze Platform during the Early Ordovician and are well studied. However, the biological affinity and the role of *Calathium* in these reefs have remained unclear up to now. We document lithistid sponge-*Calathium* reefs from the Upper Hunghuayuan Formation (early Floian) at Huanghuachang in Hubei, South China. These reefs have a three-dimensional skeletal framework that is mostly produced by *Calathium* and lithistid sponges. *Calathium* had a critical role in reef construction, as demonstrated by well-developed lateral outgrowths, which connected individuals of the same species and with lithistid sponges. Bryozoans, stromatoporoids and microbial components were

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