

FOREWORD - IN MEMORY OF MAURIZIO GAETANI



The first issue of volume 125 (2019) of *Rivista Italiana di Paleontologia e Stratigrafia* is dedicated to the memory of Maurizio Gaetani (1940-2017), world-renowned Professor of Geology and Stratigraphy at the University of Milan, to honour his fruitful life of research and his grandeur as a man, a friend, a mentor and an Editor of this journal.

Many friends, colleagues and scholars of Maurizio Gaetani joined us in the task to produce a volume focused on the many challenges sought by Maurizio in his glorious career, from palaeontology to stratigraphy, and from geological mapping to palaeogeography in territories stretching from the southern Alps and the Balkans, Himalaya and Karakorum, Caucasus and Iran, the country that inaugurated his career in the sixties and concluded it in the two thousands: “in a perfect circle”, as he loved to say.

In the first paper of the volume, Roberto Rettori, a scholar and friend of Maurizio, with his PhD student Valerio Gennari introduce a new taxon of biserial foraminifer, *Globigaetania angulata* gen. n. sp. n., from a Middle Permian succession of NW Iran. The discovery of the new taxon sheds light on the evolution of the Palaeozoic biserial

microgranular foraminifera. As underlined by Angiolini & Muttoni (2018, *Permophiles* 66), Maurizio “never wanted a taxon named after him. We did it anyway because of his great standing as a scientist”.

The second paper is by a Turkish colleague of Maurizio, Ercan Özcan and co-authors, who want to honour Maurizio describing the palaeobiogeographic significance of Eocene foraminifera. The authors focus on one of the favourite topics researched by Maurizio: palaeogeographic reconstructions and the correlation of peri-Mediterranean deposits with those from the South Asia.

The following paper is by a colleague and a lifelong friend of Maurizio, Giulio Pavia, who, with Sixto Fernandez-Lopez, dedicates to Maurizio an impressive monograph on Bajocian Lissoceratinae (Ammonitida). Besides presenting in detail their systematic descriptions, the authors discuss their phyletic relations and palaeobiogeographic significance, shedding light on these almost neglected ammonites.

Eduardo Garzanti, a scholar and friend of Maurizio, and Mohammad Ghassemi, one of the Iranian colleagues of Maurizio in Iran, with their co-authors, discuss the provenance of the exotic

and remote Karakum dune field of Turkmenistan, a central Asian desert bound by recent orogenic belts. The composition of the dune sand indicates that the Amu Darya River, the largest river in Central Asia, represents the major sediment source for the Karakum Desert.

Eugen Grădinaru was a friend of Maurizio for a long time and they were working on a paper on Triassic Brachiopods from North Dobrogea, when Maurizio passed away prematurely. Eugen struggled to finish the manuscript in time to honour his memory, completing Maurizio's perfect circle: he started with a paper on brachiopods in 1964 and his last paper is again on brachiopods. In between, is a rich collection of publications on very different subjects.

Alfréd Dulai, a brachiopod palaeontologist colleague of Maurizio, presents additional data on a Miocene brachiopod fauna from Tetti Borelli (Piedmont, N Italy). There are two new taxa introduced in this systematic and palaeoecological study: one dedicated to Maurizio (*Borellithyrus gaetani* n. gen. n. sp.) and one dedicated to a friend of Maurizio, Giulio Pavia (*Eucalathis giulioi* n. sp.).

In the paper lead by John Powell, many friends and colleagues of Maurizio – in particular Alda Nicora who followed the steps of Maurizio during adventurous field trips from the Balkans to the Himalaya – gathered to produce an excellent and multidisciplinary stratigraphic study of the Upper Permian to Lower Triassic succession of the Dead Sea in Jordan, with a focus on the Permian-Triassic boundary and the pattern of the Lower Triassic recovery.

Silvia Frisia was a student of Maurizio in Milan during the earlier part of her career, before moving to Australia. Silvia, with Patrick Meister, writes a paper that focuses on a long-lasting debate about the origin of the huge platform of the Triassic Dolomia Principale, contributing to this debate with new data.

Daniela Basso, a scholar and friend of Maurizio, and co-authors describe for the first time coral-line algal assemblages from the Qom Formation in NW Iran, and their bearing on the interpretation of palaeoenvironmental evolution through time, providing new data on the stratigraphic distribution of several taxa.

Elisabetta Erba, a friend and a colleague of Maurizio in Milan, presents with her coauthors a discussion of a carbon isotope shift in the Jurassic basinal succession of the Southern Alps, proposing

the identification of the “Gaetani Event” to celebrate Maurizio Gaetani's pioneer researches in the southern Alps.

Leopold Krystyn and Marco Balini, respectively a friend and a scholar of Maurizio, with two Iranian colleagues, describe Norian Ammonoids from the Nayband Formation of Central Iran and their significance in constraining the timing of the collision of the Iran Plate with Eurasia, a subject of study very dear to Maurizio.

Giovanni Muttoni, a scholar of Maurizio in the late eighties-early nineties, was successfully introduced by Maurizio to the world of palaeomagnetism during his PhD: with his colleague Dennis Kent, a friend of Maurizio, Giovanni presents a straightforward synthesis of the discussion about the transformation from Pangea B to Pangea A in the Permian.

Andrea Tintori, one of the first scholars of Maurizio and one of his lifelong friends, remembers Maurizio with a paper on the palaeoecology of a species of *Saurichthys* from the Triassic succession of Northern Grigna mountain, a place they visited together many times in the past. Based on a very interesting finding, he suggests that the record represents scavenging on floating carcasses and not active predation.

Marco Balini, Alda Nicora and Andrea Zanchi with several co-authors dedicate to the memory of Maurizio, for them a mentor, a colleague and a friend, a very comprehensive geological study on the structural and stratigraphic setting of the Lower to Middle Triassic sedimentary succession of Aghdarband in Kopeh-Dag, NE Iran. Besides revising the lithostratigraphy and bio-chronostratigraphy, they propose a new palaeogeographic reconstruction for the Aghdarband Basin in the Triassic.

The diverse subjects of this volume, spanning from palaeontology to palaeogeography, from stratigraphy to diagenesis, from palaeomagnetism to regional geology, testify to the vastness of the geological interests of Maurizio. We struggled to finish it in time following his teaching and mentoring, and we are sure that it represents an important testimony of the human and scientific qualities of our mentor and colleague.

Lucia Angiolini, Fabrizio Berra and Cristina Lombardo

who received from Maurizio the precious legacy of Rivista Italiana di Stratigrafia e Paleontologia.

FROM MAURIZIO'S FAMILY

It is with great pleasure and emotion that we, as Maurizio's family, are writing this brief note on Maurizio, who has been for us a husband and a father.

We would like to give a family perspective of a person that has been a colleague and a professor for scientists and students, respectively; the aim is to find some fundamental learning from a man who tried to fully live his life.

According to our experiences, different beliefs and approaches have been at the basis of Maurizio's life.

As for the personal perspective, we have always been incited to find out our personal life-track, according to an old - but still modern - adagio: "find out your own best talents donated by nature, improve them throughout your life and, if possible, make their benefits available to others".

As kids, we have been encouraged - kindly but insistently - to pursue this approach. The limit was not "a standard target" but commensurated to each personal talent; after each intermediate step, we were asked to target the following one, increasing skills and strengthening attitudes ("non dormire sugli allori", often used to say). We were also invited to improve our inclinations too, by studying, reading, meeting people, being reflective and autonomous in thinking and actions. Not a pre-set path but the best personal talent-matching one, found thanks to a deep self-understanding.

In so doing, all of us could try to do his best in his-own specific field, different for each child, even-though nobody of us undertook the path of Maurizio's personal interest like Geology, Paleontology and Stratigraphy. As for the latter, to go on the field for him was not a task but a pleasure and a way to discuss with Colleagues and Students, aiming at investigating the earth changes. We all spent several months in Himalaya and Karakorum to help in measuring mountains and carrying down rock samples and fossils.

The talent fulfilment was the target and a severe self-regulation was the way, but a gentle compassion was given when some deviation occurred. Independence was given and encouraged, but also verified in the frame of the parenthood responsibility. He has been always open to dialogue and discussion.

Mountaineering has also been one of Maurizio's (and Lia's as well) passion: they were able to pass it to the 3 of us and to all the 6 nephews. Mountaineering, whenever in winter or summer, has been a way to experience wonderful settings and to test and train vigour, endurance, determination, perseverance, friendships, all of them fundamental life traits.

But life was also something more than job and mountaineering; the curiosity for different natural, technological and cultural features has been always encouraged. The whole world was the place for living and playing a role, being aware of our rooted Italian culture. Cultural differences could make relationships more complex but could not be a dividing-wall: on the contrary they were an option for growing and improving our human qualities.

Curiosity for nature, from agricultural activities to bee keeping. Curiosity for technology devices, when helpful for the daily life, even though not fully understood in their operation and functioning. Love for the History, a way to know who we are in order to foresee where we are going.

Overall, and this is something we learnt and found often in Maurizio's life style, he applied a comprehensive and holistic approach to his life and his job activities. Each subject had to be seen by different perspectives, eyes, skills, human and scientific perception, to get the final goal of its whole and deep comprehension..... and typically, best results come from team work We are sure you will recognise this approach also in his job activities.

Finally we would like to thank all the persons we have met in our lifetime thank to his life style: some of you, who are reading now this volume in memory of Maurizio, have been path-mate for part of our life time. We want also to thanks the colleagues who are continuing his work with the same enthusiasm and passion.

We conclude with his last wish: "Siate felici".

