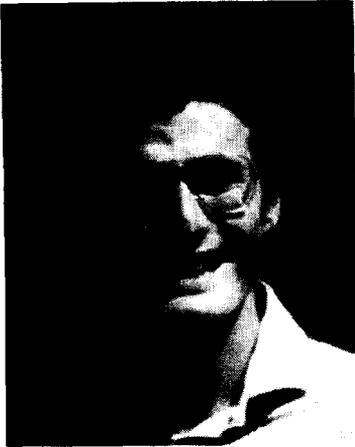


PREFACE

This special issue of *Marine Geology* contains a selection of the papers presented at a Symposium on "Carbonate platforms of the passive-type continental margins: present and past" organized in the framework of the Session on Marine Geology of the 26th International Congress (Symposium 06.2.2.).



The Symposium is dedicated to honor the memory of the Italian geologist Riccardo Assereto (1939–1976).

This is an excerpt from the presentation of the Symposium read by M.B.C. in Paris on July 11, 1981:

“ . . . Riccardo was a dynamic, modern-oriented geologist. A good friend of several of us. I am proud to say that he was a former student of mine. He passed away prematurely. He was killed in a terrible accident, unique in some aspects: a landslide induced by an earthquake. Three persons were hit by the rockslide, high on Monte Bivera in the Southern Calcareous Alps on September 15, 1976: Three persons were killed: Riccardo, his son Andrea, a boy of nine, and another geologist, Giulio Pisa, from the University of Bologna.

Riccardo's scientific interests were broad. He was a first-class paleontologist: Triassic ammonites had no secrets for him. He was a classical stratigrapher, too. During little more than ten years, his field investigations were carried out in the Alps, in Iran, in Turkey, north Africa, and north America.

He was lately attracted by sedimentary petrology. His paper with Chris Kendall on tepees structures, and that with Bob Folk on cements in shallow-water limestones are classical studies.

In the last season of his life he was exposed to marine geology. He started in a fairly unusual way, straight from the bottom. Indeed, he was invited by Wolf Schlager to join him in Miami for a project to be carried out with the submersible "Nekton". Purpose of the project was to compare present-day escarpments of carbonate platforms, as seen undersea, and fossil platforms, so familiar to Riccardo. In february, 1976, he made several dives.

In order to remember this excellent scientist, we decided to dedicate to his memory a series of symposia, in successive years, on various different subjects in which Riccardo expressed his personal interests, and with different contributors. Last summer the first seminar was organized in Italy: the Riccardo Assereto and Giulio Pisa Memorial Symposium was centered on Triassic stratigraphy (see Gaetani, 1980).

The present one, on carbonate platforms, is organized by Bill Ryan and myself in occasion of the 26th International Geological Congress. Subjects to be addressed at the symposium included:

— Significance of early Cretaceous and late Jurassic limestones recovered by IPOD drilling on both sides of the Atlantic, and their relation to fragmentation of epicontinental seaways.

— Important new observations on the external Bahama Escarpment by deep drilling, submersible photography and sampling, and conventional dredging and coring, with emphasis on the geological processes and rates of sedimentary accretion and mass-wasting responsible for the creation of the largest and most precipitous slopes which exist in the oceans.

— The further identification by means of sedimentary facies analysis, biological communities and diagenetic fabrics of the passage from the shallow carbonate platforms to the deep pelagic basin in the ancient rock record of classical areas, as the Dolomites, and comparison of modern analogue.

— Processes of sedimentation, lithification, dissolution, displacement growth, compaction, etc., in the intertidal and supratidal environments of the carbonate platforms (modern and ancient) and the use of net sedimentation rates there determined from subsurface drillings and/or field mapping to calculate the subsurface history of the continental edge.

— Foreslope and base-of-slope megabreccias and olistostromes and their interpretation in respect to: (a) extensional tectonics of the early rifting and post-rifting stages of the pull-apart type continental margin, and (b) over-steepening of the continental slope by undercutting from submarine erosion, failure along vertical joints, induced by differences between lithostatic and hydrostatic pressure.

The response of the scientists we contacted was quite positive. We thank them for making the Riccardo Assereto Memorial Symposium a reality.

So, the carbonate problem will be treated from all possible standpoints: as seen by a land geologist in the mountains and as seen by a marine geologist in the abyss. As seen from a geophysicist perspective, and as seen from a paleontologist's perspective. This is the scenario of today's session.

I am sure that all of us will learn a lot from this symposium, the audience as well as the speakers.

To make good science is the best way to remember a good scientist".

We wish to acknowledge the organizing committee for the scientific program of the 26th International Geological Congress, especially prof. Blanchet, and prof. Boillot, responsible for the Marine Geology Session, for their most

helpful attitude. We also thank Elsevier Publishing Company, especially dr. Gramende, for accepting to publish this special issue. Finally, we thank the authors and the reviewers for promptly responding to our requests.

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WILLIAM B.F. RYAN

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