

Special Section: **«Geology and Paleontology of the peri-Adriatic area» (*)**

The present collection of papers includes 15 scientific contributions presented at the international meeting «Geology and Paleontology of the peri-Adriatic area», held in Naples on May 5th and 6th, 2006 to honour the first 50 years of scientific activity of Rajka Radoičić. The meeting was generously sponsored by the University of Naples «Federico II», the National Research Council, Institute for Coastal Marine Environment (Naples), and Shell Italia E/P. Thanks are also due to Prof. Maria Rosaria Ghiara, Director of the «Centro Musei delle Scienze Naturali», for hosting the scientific sessions in the beautiful venue of the Real Museo Mineralogico.

The papers of this special section are subdivided into three themes, covering the main fields of interest of Rajka Radoičić: micropaleontology and biostratigraphy, stratigraphy and facies analysis, paleogeography and tectonics.

As friends and colleagues, we are grateful for this opportunity to express our admiration for a scientist who has devoted over 50 years of her fervid life to geology, with constant enthusiasm and restless activity.

In dedicating to Rajka these papers, our intent is not only to celebrate an anniversary but also to convey our gratitude for her significant contributions in the fields of regional and sedimentary geology, as well as palaeontology and biostratigraphy, achievements perhaps much more acknowledged abroad than in her country (indeed, *nemo propheta in patria...*).

Rajka Radoičić was born on June 6, 1925, in Trebinje (Hercegovina) from a distinguished family, and there she carried out her early studies. The second World War saw a very young Rajka participate in the anti nazi-fascist liberation warfare, as a partisan in Hercegovina. This struggle moulded her character, proud and at the same time friendly and generous.

A few years later Rajka entered the Beograd University, Faculty of Engineering, where in 1953 she obtained a degree in geology. That same year she started to work for the Geological Survey of Yugoslavia, where, for decades, she worked first as a Researcher and then a Research Chair, the equivalent of full professor at the University.

As a field geologist, Rajka Radoičić has mapped a large number of previously practically unknown sectors of Montenegro, Hercegovina, Bosnia, Kosovo, Serbia, Macedonia, Slovenia and Dalmatia. In these regions she acted as a successful biostratigrapher. Moreover Rajka Radoičić worked as a field geologist in Lybia and Iraq and developed a good understanding of the geology of Central and Southern Apennines and Sicily (and even of Sardinia), regions where she carried out her regional studies for many years.

Very important components of Rajka Radoičić scientific activity have also been her studies in biostratigraphy and micropaleontology, that made her a world-known expert on algae, foraminifera and on *incertae sedis*. She worked primarily on Mesozoic carbonates, with contributions on late Paleozoic and Tertiary rocks. From all the above intervals she described numerous new species and genera of microfossils.

Throughout the years, Rajka has also become one of the most renowned specialists of the biostratigraphy and lithostratigraphy of Mesozoic shallow water carbonates of the peri-Adriatic region. Almost legendary is her extraordinary skill in recognizing the exact stratigraphic position, even of only

(*) A selection of papers presented at the international meeting held in Naples (5-6 May 2006) to honour the first 50 years of scientific activity of Rajka Radoičić.

a few beds within several thousand metre thick successions: «*this smells of uppermost Aptian*» you could hear Rajka say, looking at an outcrop for the first time... and you would eventually discover that she had been right!

Since the year 1956 Rajka Radoičić has published over 200 papers: the earlier ones are in Serbo-Croatian but, a few years later, part of her scientific production was published in English. As already mentioned, her main fields of interest have been stratigraphy and micropaleontology. Even so, she contributed with important papers to regional geology, with emphasis, in recent years, on the relationships between the Apennines and the Dinarids, as well as on the timing of the Dinaric compressional deformation: late and not early Tertiary in age.

A fairly large part of this scientific activity was developed in collaboration with Italian Colleagues (not only from Naples but also from Rome, Padua, Palermo and Cagliari), thus a strong bond developed that we would like to acknowledge here.

So, we are pleased to recognize in Rajka Radoičić a respected colleague and a generous friend, that has always made her knowledge available to all, as so many young scientists know, having in these years come from all over the world to learn from her: all of them, as guests at her home, were generously fed with good science and good *bjelo vino*. Here's to you, Rajka!

Bruno D'ARGENIO
Mariano PARENTE
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