Carlo Sturani died tragically on December 20th 1975, while collecting palaeontological data and samples in the abandoned quarry of Scaparoni near Alba. The Turin born palaeontologist has been commemorated several times (Malaroda, 1976; Cita, 1978; Macagno, 1987; Sartoni, 1987) and the 1987 volume of the Bollettino della Società Paleontologica Italiana (vol. 26) was dedicated to his memory. Our picture shows Carlo Sturani in the field at Asiago, during the International Sedimentological Congress (photo Maria Bianca Cita, summer 1975).
Messinian Palaeontology

Papers in honour of Carlo Sturani’s outstanding contributions in geology and palaeontology

Studies of Messinian sediments in the circum-Mediterranean area had their first strong boost during the early part of the 1970’s, leading to the development of the Desiccation theory, which involved the whole Mediterranean basin. Carlo Sturani was among the prominent scientists of that period, who studied the Piedmontese successions in particular; his geological and palaeontological studies (Sturani, 1973, 1975, 1978; Sturani & Sampò, 1973) are nowadays the real basis for ongoing researches in that area. Nevertheless, several critical issues regarding the evolution of the Mediterranean basin during this time span, still remained enigmatic. In the last decade the subject of the Messinian Salinity Crisis, thanks also to innovative analytical techniques, has received renewed attention and a new, fascinating, period for Messinian geology and palaeontology has started. Palaeontology had provided, and still provides, that essential contribution to our understanding, of both the environmental evolution and the interpretation of those organisms which adapted to changing Messinian environments; for this reason we have dedicated this issue to both Messinian palaeontology and the memory of Carlo Sturani.

Carlo Sturani left us a number of precious scientific papers, because of his passion for science, and these have indicated to us a number of inexhaustible avenues for research, which still challenges us more than 30 years later. It is with the sketches and the image of Carlo Sturani in mind that we have begun to re-trace his Messinian footprints in Piedmont, resuming and intensifying our geological and palaeontological studies in the Alba district, a key-area for the understanding of Mediterranean evolution throughout the Messinian.

At our next meeting in the town of Alba (10-11 October 2008: “Alba e tramonto della Crisi Messiniana” “Down and Sunset of the Messinian Crisis”), we will again remember Carlo Sturani, hoping to transmit his and our scientific results, not only to our colleagues, but also to the general public.

[Simplicio corrections by Hugh Torrens, British colleague and friend of Carlo Sturani]

REFERENCES