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# The Silurian of Sardinia

volume in honour of  
Enrico Serpagli

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## Enrico Serpagli, celebrating his 44<sup>th</sup> Silurian-research birthday

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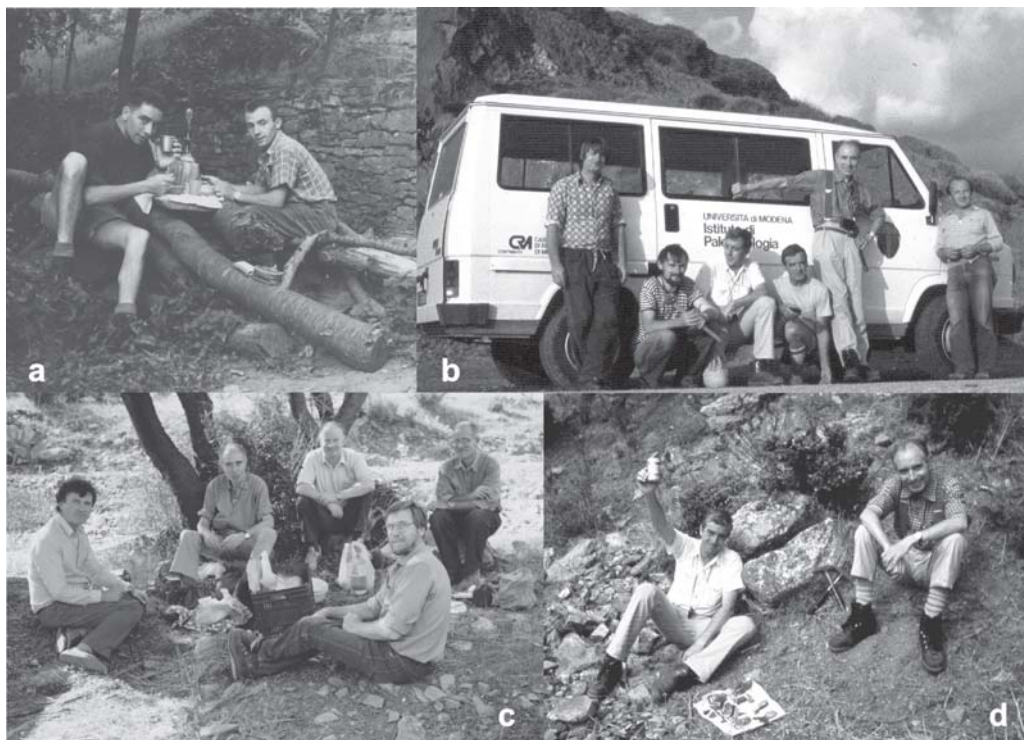
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The editors are pleased to dedicate this volume on the Silurian of Sardinia to Enrico Serpagli, an outstanding personality of Italian palaeontology, who devoted substantial part of his professional life to marine faunas and biostratigraphy of Ordovician and Silurian sedimentary formations mostly of southern Sardinia. Two of the editors are former doctoral students of Enrico Serpagli and PS has been collaborating with him since his first, early postgradual visit to Sardinia in 1982.

Enrico Serpagli was born in 1936 in a small town Borgo Val di Taro in district of Parma, northern Italy. His interest in geology led him to the university studies in Modena where he graduated from geology in 1960, with a special mention (110/110 with honours). His long and fruitful scientific career started in Italian Geological Survey with detailed geological mapping in Northern Apennines (1961-1962). In 1962 the young and enthusiastic scientist was appointed an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Palaeontology of the University of Modena, though, between 1964 and 1975, he also acted as a lecturer in geomorphology. Those years, however, his research work has already focussed on micropalaeontology.

In 1963, Serpagli underwent some research training on dinoflagellate cysts in the laboratory of A. Eisenack at the University of Tübingen. The first study visit was followed by training on conodonts in the laboratory of M. Lindström, University of Lund in 1965. In May 1969, Enrico Serpagli was appointed a “*Libero Docente*” in Palaeontology. A postdoctoral stay at the Department of Geology, Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio (1971-1972) may be considered another milestone that influenced further scientific specialization of the young micropalaeontologist. Since then, Early Palaeozoic conodonts became his principal field of research.

In 1975 Serpagli achieved a full-professor status in Palaeontology at the University of Turin and, two year later, he became a Professor of Palaeontology at his *alma mater*. Upon the retirement of Eugenia Montanaro Gallitelli in 1977, Serpagli was elected to the directorship of the Institute of Palaeontology and remained in this office, with some breaks, until 1995. Under his directorship the Institute has developed in one of the most respected palaeontological research centers in Italy and also gained a considerable international reputation. A large collection of Lower Palaeozoic faunas (conodonts, graptolites, bivalves, brachiopods, trilobites, echinoderms, ostracodes, etc.) was at the same time deposited in the Institute of Modena, thanks to a fruitful collaboration of Enrico Serpagli with major specialists of the diverse fossil groups.



a) Enrico Serpagli and Pietro Rompianesi during field work in the Northern Apennines in 1958. b) Jiri Kriz, Petr Storch, Maurizio Gnoli, Roberto Ferraresi, Enrico Serpagli and Pietro Rompianesi at Portixeddu in 1982. c) Richard Fortey, Enrico Serpagli, Robin Cocks, Wolfgang Hammann and Francesco Leone at Rio San Marco in 1989. d) Maurizio Gnoli and Enrico Serpagli at the Mason Porcu Section in 1982.

Enrico Serpagli is a co-author of the only Italian text-book on palaeontology (*Introduzione alla Paleontologia*, 650 pp.) published in 1993. From 1984 to 2008 E. Serpagli acted as a state coordinator of Joint Doctoral Study Program in Palaeontology run by the universities of Roma, Bologna and Firenze. His former students and present collaborators (M. Gnoli, S. Conti, A. Ferretti, C. Corradini a.o.) successfully develop his research on conodonts and other topics of palaeontology and stratigraphy.

Apart from the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, was Enrico Serpagli teaching at the University of Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1982 and the University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 1985.

Enrico Serpagli is the author or co-author of over 130 publications. In sixties, Serpagli studied mainly Caenozoic forams and dinoflagellata but in 1965 he published his first report on Late Ordovician and Silurian conodonts of the Carnic Alps and, in 1967, the first paper on Silurian conodonts in southern Sardinia. In seventies he started with more systematic conodont research. Since then, he worked, for the most part, on conodont taxonomy and biostratigraphy though some of his papers, largely those co-authored with students and fellow workers, were devoted also to conularids, scolecodonts, nautiloid cephalopods, graptolites, bivalves, algae, ostracodes, problematics and ichnofossils. His extensive collaboration with universities and research institutions in Italy, namely the



a) Enrico Serpagli (first from the right) at a student field trip in the Dolomites, guided by Prof. Paolo Montanaro in 1956. b) Jiri Kriz, Enrico Serpagli and Petr Storch at the Mason Porcus Section in 1982. c) Enrico Serpagli and Renata Olivieri at Capo Caccia, during the 19th European Micropalaeontological Colloquium Field Trip, Sardinia 1985. d) Francesco Leone, Annalisa Ferretti, Carlo Corradini and Enrico Serpagli at Cea Brabetza Section in 1997, during the preparation of the ECOS VII Field Trip. e) Enrico Serpagli and Rolf Schroeder at Punta Pedrona at the Società Paleontologica Italiana field trip 2002.

University of Cagliari, and abroad (e.g. Argentina, Germany, Spain, Ireland, United Kingdom, Czech Republic) gave the research team working on the Silurian System of Sardinia an international dimension. In 1998 Serpagli organised the Seventh European Conodont Symposium (ECOS VII) and successful pre-symposium excursion across the Palaeozoic formations of southern Sardinia.

For many years, Enrico Serpagli has been an active member of *Società Paleontologica Italiana*, *Società Geologica Italiana* and *Società dei Naturalisti e Matematici di Modena*, and he has also served to palaeontological community as editor in chief of the *Bollettino della Società Paleontologica Italiana* (from 1978 to present). His work was recognized by Italian „Accademia Nazionale di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti di Modena“ who elected him a member in 1995. In 1990 he became a titular member of the International Subcommittee on Silurian Stratigraphy IUGS. Further international enrollments of Enrico Serpagli involved Palaeontological Association, European Palaeontological Association and *Sociedad Espanola de Paleontologia*.

Since 2006 Enrico Serpagli retired from his full-time teaching and research duties, moved to his beloved country house in Sassuolo, and acquired more time for his long-time passion for photography to accompany his continuing palaeontological investigations and editorship of *Bollettino della Società Paleontologica Italiana*. Photography became



a) Wolfgang Hammann, Enrique Villas, Enrico Serpagli and Francesco Leone at Argiola in 1991. b) Enrico Serpagli during the 19th European Micropalaeontological Colloquium Field Trip, Sardinia 1985. c) Francesco Leone, Wolfgang Hammann and Enrico Serpagli in central Spain in 1992. d) Enrico Serpagli and Antonio Russo at the “Giornate di Paleontologia 2004” field trip at Butterloch. e) Charles Holland, Francesco Leone, Enrico Serpagli, Annalisa Ferretti, Pietro Rompianesi, Matthew Parkes, Douglas Palmer and George Sevastopulo at Monte Patenteddu in 1990.

an integral part of his geological profession. Just family, friends and some collaborators know that Enrico „Giulio“ Serpagli became a respected artistic photographer during the past ten years. First public exhibition of his sensitive artistic photographs was in 1999 in Modena and since that time, at least 6 more exhibitions were housed in other Italian cities. In 2007 a book of art photographs *Il senso dell'Ordine* (Sense of Order) came to light.

While reading through manuscript papers submitted for publication in this volume, one has to recall once again the substantial contribution of Enrico Serpagli to the present, advanced state of knowledge on Silurian sedimentary successions and fossil faunas preserved in southern Sardinia. For conodont people, his monographs represent true milestones both for future taxonomic and biostratigraphic studies. In all his papers it is greatly appreciated the exactness of the scientific presentation of the facts and of the problems and the solidity of the conclusions.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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