

Fabrizio Cecca (16.09.1956–31.05.2014)

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Fabrizio Cecca passed away on May 31st, 2014 after a courageous struggle against disease. He was almost 58 years old, too young to leave his family, friends and colleagues and with still a lot to bring to the geological community.

After he achieved a degree lauriate in Earth Sciences in July 1982 in Roma, with a thesis on “The ammonites of the Jurassic-Cretaceous boundary in the Apennines of Umbria-Marche-Sabin”, Fabrizio joined the Earth Sciences Department of the University of Lyon in order to start a PhD in 1983 on the subject “The Tithonian of the Ardèche area in the stratotype area of the Ardescian stage: stratigraphy and palaeontology”. After hard work both in the field and at the laboratory his PhD was achieved in April 1986.

Fabrizio spent nearly ten years (1987–1996) at the Geological Survey of Italy in Roma, where his principle activity was dedicated to geological mapping. Wishing to continue his research, he enthusiastically joined the Tethys Program, coordinated by the University Pierre and Marie Curie-Paris, from 1990 to 1992. Then, from 1996 onwards, he was appointed to the position of Research worker Teacher in the Geological Institute of the University of Urbino.

About forty papers were published during this time. Some are based on the results of his PhD, but most of them already explore the themes which became the main aim of his research. He decided in February 1996 to defend his Habilitation Degree at Pierre and Marie Curie-Paris 6 University, with a memorial entitled “Biostratigraphy, palaeobiogeography, palaeoenvironment of Late Jurassic-Early Cretaceous ammonites of the Apennines of Umbria-Marche in the palaeogeographical setting of the Tethys”.

The academic career in France of Fabrizio started from September 1998 onwards, when he was appointed Professor at Provence University, Marseille. He left Marseille in September 2002, when he was transferred to University Pierre and Marie Curie-Paris 6. He worked energetically for changes to teaching methods and supported palaeontology as a part of the Earth Sciences teaching. Fabrizio was a rigorous teacher who was able to captivate the students and inspire many to take up geology as a vocation.

His attraction to teaching was expressed also by writing enlightening books including his recent contribution to the last issue of the well-known “Dictionary of Geology”. Fabrizio Cecca was also author of a book “Palaeobiogeography of marine fossil invertebrates: concepts and methods”, which elucidates the main ideas, models and methods of palaeobiogeography. A new edition of this book will be issued soon by the publishing house Vuibert.



All along his career Fabrizio maintained four main lines of research: palaeontology and biostratigraphy (revision of the Sicilian ammonite faunas of the Gemmellaro Collection; new faunas and biostratigraphy of the Upper Jurassic and Lower Cretaceous in Umbria-Marche, Lombardia, Sicily, as well as southeastern France), palaeoenvironments and palaeobiogeography (Lower Toarcian biological crisis; Lower Cretaceous anoxic events and ecological control of ammonite assemblages; palaeoenvironmental maps of the Tethys; palaeobathymetric interpretation of the uppermost Jurassic ammonite morphological types).

His research activity was supplemented by responsibilities in national and international projects. He also organized or co-organized numerous scientific meetings (Pergola, 1987, 1990; Piobbico, 1994; Jérusalem, 1995; Damas, 1996; Piacenza, 2001).

To conclude, Fabrizio was known as a field geologist, palaeontologist and biostratigrapher, and as a well-known specialist concerning Upper Jurassic and Lower Cretaceous ammonites. He was also a talented double-bass player and a jazz composer. In 2008, he produced his first recording entitled "Southern Avenue" conceptualized as a link between Paris and Rome, as Fabrizio Cecca created all its themes during his travels between the two capitals. He loved music passionately and the sound of his Italian accent will deeply be missed.