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Fossil assemblages from the Upper Cretaceous Komen and Tomaj Limestones of Kras (Slovenia)

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With 5 figures

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Abstract: The Cretaceous beds of the Trieste–Komen plateau were deposited in the north-western part of the Adriatic-Dinaric carbonate platform. Variously thick intercalations of platy and laminated limestones rich with fossils occur in seemingly similar lithologic form within the different formations ranging from the Cenomanian to the Lower Campanian. This article aims to present results of our study of the megafossil assemblages (fishes, ammonoids, and flora) found in the Komen and Tomaj Limestones on the Slovenian part of the Trieste-Komen plateau (Kras area).

Key words: Fossil assemblages, Upper Cretaceous, Adriatic-Dinaric platform, Kras, Trieste-Komen plateau, Slovenia.

1. Introduction

In the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century, there were numerous small quarries operating in the Trieste-Komen plateau to acquire limestone slabs for roofing (Fig. 4.1) and paving. As a result, finds of fossils were proportionally frequent. Among researchers reporting on fossil founds from these beds were Heckel (1850, 1856), Steindachner (1860), Kner (1863, 1867), Bassani (1879, 1880), D'Erasmo (1946, 1952), Calligaris (1992, 1994), Calligaris et al. (1994) and others.

Because of the fish content and shaly appearance of the rock Gorjanović-Kramberger (1895) introduced the term "ichthyoferous shales" into the scientific literature. As the platy and laminated limestones with fossils occur in different stratigraphic levels within various platform carbonate successions most researchers also dealt with the problem of their age that had been unsolved for decades.

During the last decade of the previous century studies of the fossil fauna and flora from the platy and laminated limestones from the Slovenian part of the Trieste-Komen plateau were revived in association with new research and mapping for the geological map of the southern part of the Trieste-Komen plateau (Jurkovšek et al. 1996) and they coincide with extensive amelioration works on Kras (Fig. 1). The studies produced precise answers on the stratigraphic position and age of different platy and laminated horizons of the area. While the fishes and reptiles were of principle interest to paleontologists, the renaissance of study on the Trieste-Komen plateau included also other fossil groups: flora, ammonoids, bivalves etc. (Jurkovšek & Kolar-Jurkovšek 1995; Pleničar & Jurkovšek 1997; Summesberger et al. 1996a,

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