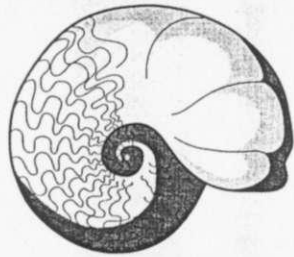


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NEWSLETTER

PALEONTOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES : CROATIA

PALEONTOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES

CROATIA

From March 15 to June 3, 2001 an exhibition "Dinosaurs from the Adriatic region" took place in Trieste. The exhibits were from three neighbouring regions: NE Italy, W Slovenia and NW Croatia, which, during the Cretaceous period, belonged to the Adriatic-Dinaridic Carbonate Platform. Croatian material consists of fossil bones collected from the undersea site of Kolone bay, near Bale town (western Istria) together with replica footprints (including artificial short trackway) and photos from several localities along the coastline of western Istria.

This exhibition has revived old discussion over several years, about the foundation of "Valesaurus" Park of National and Cultural heritage. The story commenced in 1990, when a dinosaur "graveyard" in undersea sediments of Kolone bay, was discovered by Italian amateur scuba-diver D. BOSCAROLLI. He collected strange bone-like stones while diving along Bale coast, and showed them to Italian paleontologist F. DALLA VECCHIA. Palaeontologists from Trieste and Monfalcone initiated the idea of founding the Park with the local authorities and local government. Bale is a small and beautiful renaissance town, with a 5 km long coast rich in historical monuments, and situated near Rovinj (one of the biggest tourist centres in Istria). In spite of its natural advantages, the town has not been touristically or culturally "exploited". Local newspapers have regularly informed the public about the development of the project. And, what happened? The Bale Italian community donated the building for the permanent exhibition. The infrastructural plan (including outdoor and indoor contents) was made. The author, B. POROPAT in 1999, gained the national award for his original and environmentally conscious project. Occasionally, the town of Bale paid a scuba-diver to check the under-sea conditions of site. Some bones were collected and laboratory treated (they are now exposed in Bale's City Hall). Geologists and paleontologists from the Institute of Geology and Faculty of Science from Zagreb, offered their help in realisation of the project. Having all these, Bale municipal-board applied to the Croatian Ministry of Culture for founding the Park. The Park would be financed partly by the Ministry of Culture, partly by local government. The main aim would be to protect the dinosaur-site from further devastation, to continue with investigation of dinosaur remains in Istria, to make an International research centre and to help the town of Bale to improve its economic situation.

The Croatian Ministry of Culture, at the beginning of 2000, failed to give the permission. Two years after, a negative answer came leaving several disappointed enthusiasts to conclude the following:

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- (i) the natural heritage is secretly being taken away from country (without the possibility of return someday);
- (ii) the site suffers destruction from amateur paleontologists and date-shell hunters;
- (iii) local people are frustrated by bureaucratic procedures, while local enthusiasts get tired.

For now, it seems that the "Valesaurus" Park will stay only as awarded elaboration. Much ado about nothing?

Vlasta COSOVIC & Jasenka S REM AC

GERMANY

Aus deutschen Museen

JURA-MUSEUM EICHSTÄTT

Mit der Sonderausstellung *Dinosaurier-Giganten und Zwerge* wird in dem bekannten Museum auf zwei neue Formen aus dem Jura aufmerksam gemacht. Der Riese ist ein 22m langes Skelett von *Mamenchisaurus hechuanensis*, das im Oberen Jura Chinas, im Distrikt Hechuan in der Provinz Sichuan, gefunden wurde. Dieser Pflanzenfressende Saurier, ein Verwandter des nordamerikanischen *Diplodocus*, war der mit dem bislang längsten bekannten Hals und wog vermutlich um 30t. Der Zwerg ist ein Truthahn-großer zweibeiniger Raubsaurier aus dem Oberen Jura von Schamhaupten bei Altmannstein im östlichen Landkreis Eichstätt. Er wurde bei einer Grabung in Schichten des oberen Kimmridge entdeckt und ist 1-2 Millionen Jahre älter als der aus den Solnhofener Plattenkalken stammende *Compsognathus*. Obwohl die Präparation dieses Exemplares wegen der Verkieselung des Gesteins extrem schwierig und auch noch nicht fertig ist, kann es als Jungtier angesprochen werden; der adulte Saurier wird wesentlich größer gewesen sein. Ferner werden Schädel und Skeletteile in Originalen und Abgüssen von verschiedenen anderen Gattungen gezeigt wie *Tyrannosaurus*, *Allosaurus*, *Velociraptor*, *Diplodocus*, *Lambeosaurus* und *Triceratops*. Gefiederte Saurier aus China und das größte bekannte Gelege der Welt bilden weitere Höhepunkte der Ausstellung. Zu bestimmten Zeiten werden Filme über Dinosaurier gezeigt.

Öffnungszeiten des Museums sind täglich außer Montag von April bis September 9-18 Uhr und von Oktober bis März 10-16 Uhr. Die Sonderausstellung läuft vom 1. August bis zum 4. November 2001. Weitere Informationen unter

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