Water Rock Interaction [WRI 14]

In memory of Professor Giovanni Maria Zuppi

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Abstract

At the 14<sup>th</sup> Water-Rock Interaction Symposium, a special session was devoted to the memory of Professor Gian Maria Zuppi, who passed away in May 2011. The text below describes the main stages of his career, his scientific activities, and some of his personality traits.

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It is already almost two years since our colleague Giovanni Maria Zuppi departed life. Many of his friends or ancient collaborators were in Avignon during the 14<sup>th</sup> Water-Rock Interaction Symposium and wished to organize a special scientific session in his memory.

In the past Gian Maria often came to Avignon, where he had many acquaintances and friends. He was also often invited by the University to participate in scientific workshops and Ph.D. thesis juries, as his receptiveness and experience in isotope hydrology were greatly appreciated. He liked coming to Avignon, a former Pope city, also because of the historical links with Roma, his native city, where he later graduated in Geological Sciences.

In 1971, thanks to a study grant from CNR, he moved to Paris, at the “Laboratoire de Géologie Dynamique” of the University Pierre et Marie Curie, were he obtained the “Diplôme d’Etudes Approfondies (DEA) en Hydrologie, Hydrogéologie et Géochimie des eaux”. At this University he also obtained his Doctorate in 1977, validated by the “Istituto di Geologia, Paleontologia e Geografia Fisica” at the University of Turin.

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Between 1977 and 1981 he joined, as Technical Officer, the Isotope Hydrology Section, a scientific section of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, where he collaborated in a number of Technical Cooperation projects in many countries. This gave him a solid experience in the different fields of Applied Isotope Hydrology.

In 1982 he returned to Italy, at the University of Turin, where he worked as Assistant Professor in Applied Geochemistry, and later as Full Professor in Hydrogeology. In these years, he was also appointed Head of the Department of Earth Sciences, and he created the laboratory of Isotope Geochemistry. He worked as Professor of Hydrogeology in Turin until 1993, when he accepted a temporary appointment at the University of Paris-Sud (Orsay), replacing Prof. Jean Charles Fontes, who was acting as Head of Isotope Hydrology Section in Vienna. Gian Maria remained in Orsay until 1995, and then resumed his post in Turin. In 1996, he became Professor of Hydrogeology at the University “Ca’ Foscari” in Venice. Finally, in 2008 he was appointed Director of the Institute of Environmental Geology and Geo-engineering (IGAG) of the National Research Council (CNR) in Rome, where he remained until his death.

Since 1981, Gian Maria has regularly worked in developing countries as United Nation expert (IAEA, FAO, UNESCO, UNDP, OMM), to advise on groundwater management and on the use of isotopes techniques in hydrology. In addition, he often taught lectures and courses (Fig.1) during international trainings in many countries such as Jordan, Turkey, Iran, Syria, Morocco, Tunisia, China, India, Pakistan, and Vietnam.

Gian Maria was actively involved in several research projects supported by the European Community, either as coordinator or researcher. These projects, generally devoted to integrated water resource management, aimed at developing the use and the diffusion of isotope hydrology techniques. These projects also gave him the opportunity to organize field missions to collect samples (Fig. 2), and to contribute to the formation of several young isotope hydrologists.
Gian Maria was scientifically very active and involved in the application of stable isotopes in water sciences. With his hydrogeological and geochemical background he had the typical profile of an isotope hydrologist. In this field, he authored many scientific papers, mainly dealing with six main subjects:

- Environmental isotope studies of groundwater systems (Africa, South America, Italy…).
- Hydrogeochemistry (water quality decline and evolution, geochemistry of formation waters, isotopic composition of thermal waters …).
- Characterization of salt water intrusion and deep saline groundwater.
- Groundwater flow systems.
- Paleowaters as a recorder of past climate.
- Rainfall characteristics, influences on recharge determination.

Beyond his scientific value, Gian Maria was an example of kindness and cooperativeness. His many colleagues and friends miss his friendly nature and merry mood. It was always a great pleasure to meet him in scientific workshops and symposia.