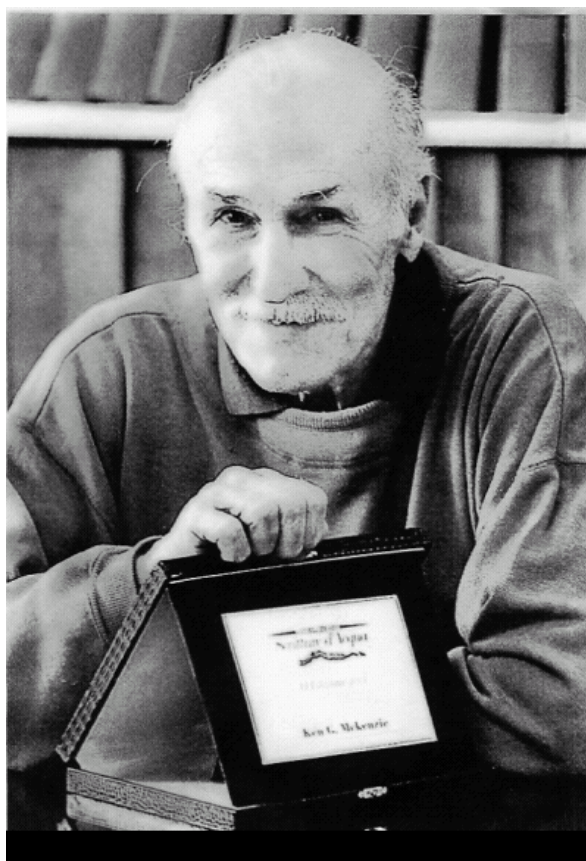


Kenneth G. McKenzie and his activity for *Shallow Tethys* symposia

Giuliano PICCOLI¹

1 figure

I have been invited by Dr. Miklós Kázmér, convener of the present “Shallow Tethys 6” Symposium in Budapest, to say some words about the activity of Dr. Kenneth G. McKenzie, co-founder with me in 1982 of the sequence of such symposia in Padova, where the first session took place, and organizer of “Shallow Tethys 2” in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, Australia, in 1986. He passed away suddenly on 14 May 2003 in Wagga Wagga.



Kenneth Glencoe MCKENZIE
Poona, 18 September 1928 – Wagga Wagga, 14 May 2003

Kenneth (Ken) Glencoe McKenzie was born in Poona (India) on 18 September 1928. He passed the Bishops High School in Poona 1936-1945, then frequented the Wilson College at the University of Bombay 1945-1947. He served in the British Army (Royal Engineers) 1948-1953, and was sent to Malaya. He performed here also athletic activity, receiving an Olympic Standard medal in the triple jump. Afterwards he

¹ Department of Geology, Paleontology and Geophysics, University of Padova, Via Giotto 1, I—36137 Padova, Italy. E-mail: giulianopiccoli@hotmail.com

worked for oil companies. Ken graduated at the University of Western Australia as B.Sc. (Geology) 1954-1956, then Ph.D. 1960-1962, Post-doctoral Fellowship at the University of Minnesota 1965-1967, British Museum (Natural History) Head of Section Entomostraca 1967-1972, University of Western Australia 1981-1982 Doctor of Science.

Ken McKenzie has been for many years a teacher of paleontology at Riverina-Murray College of Higher Education in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, Australia, which became in 1973 Charles Sturt University, and here Ken continued his research activity also after retirement, as honorary academic fellow since 1994. For updating information about research on Tethyan paleontology he edited periodically "Mare Cognitum".

McKenzie had important collaborations in his country and abroad, and among them I like to remember the long period in which he spent almost yearly 2-3 months at Parma University in Italy, since 1965. He published a volume of poetry in Italian language and on 27 October 2001 he won the "Premio Internazionale Salsomaggiore" with "Scritture d'Acqua".

The main research object of Dr. Ken McKenzie was the study of the ostracods, diffused from the Cambrian to the Recent in marine, brackish and fresh water environment. McKenzie reached worldwide known results in this activity and became a leader in the use of these crustaceans in the field of ecology and paleoecology. His main progress was reached in the paleogeographic domain, where he acted in comparison with the development of the modern theory of plate tectonics, born after the Second World War, since the first study by H. H. Hess (1945) of the oceanic depths. His rich scientific production testifies his achievements.

McKenzie's scientific approach had historic and philosophic connections at the same time, starting from the ancient Greek myths as that by the Pelasgian about the creation of the world, the Homeric myth of Oceanus and Tethys (identified frequently with Aphrodite, who was contemporaneously the goddess of sea and of love). He considered the philosophic statement by Heraclitus (around 500 B.C.) that everything is in flux, in contrast with Parmenides' assumption (around 450 B.C.) that there can be no change. The first is an active principle, but the second is not merely reactionary; truthfully, each necessarily invokes the other, as any oriental would immediately understand, affirms Ken, whereas occidental thought remains in bondage to the categorical Greeks.

Ken commented the modern scientific thought with regard to the origin and history of Tethys starting from the proposal of the existence of the ancient Tethys ocean by E. Suess (1893), then from the continental wandering theory by A. Wegener (1911) and for the present time confronting the results of the plate tectonic model.

Ken opposed to the interpretation of the Tethys as a wedge shaped gulf opening between Eastern Asia and Australia and narrowing westwards, supported by the adherents to Plate Tectonics. He sustained that Tethys ocean was analogous to the present Mediterranean sea in its shape but not as narrow, of vastly greater extent, more or less continuous from Central America to Australia. Tethys has shallow water assemblages in most of its history, from the beginning in the Permian to the disruption in the early Neogene. A forerunner of Tethys, in the Devonian-Carboniferous, was shallow to epibathyal as well. The space and time distribution of the fossil ostracods witnesses in the above way.

The study of the fossil assemblages of ostracods, using uniformitarian extrapolation criteria from their known associations in modern environments, lead him to conclude that Tethys was relatively shallow, thermospheric (warm at depth) until the Middle-Late Eocene and became psychrosperic (cold at depths) from then on. After mid-Cretaceous deep facies developed in the Tethys and that sea became truly oceanic for the first time. During Mediterranean almost complete dessication in the Messinian, the ostracod assemblages of the Paratethys show freshwater-brackish-marine characters; analogous assemblages may occur in South America during Plio-Pleistocene.

Some present day ubiquitous distribution of ostracod genera could be mainly connected to the anthropochorous dispersal via shipborn ballast sludges, especially during the last 500 years.

The sequence of the ideas by Ken McKenzie was synthesized in the row of "Shallow Tethys" symposia. In the last one, in Chiang Mai early 1999, he focused the attention to movements of continental blocks and their rotation in China and Indonesia during the late Cretaceous and to the paleolatitudes of Australia, which would have been around 40 degrees south, due to the similarity of its fossil fauna with that of India, which moved far away from southwestern Australia for 20 degrees of latitude since the Maastrichtian.

Ken had prepared a paper for the present Shallow Tethys 6 Symposium, in which he pointed out that the paleolatitude of India during Cenomanian is commonly placed too far south, at least for 15-20°. He considered in particular the Majungaellini, a wholly subtropical to temperate tribe of cytheroidean Ostracoda. He examined the distribution of the species of this tribe during the Aptian-Albian from the Artesian Basin of Queensland, Australia, in the east to Agulhas Bank, Falkland Plateau and Patagonia, Argentina, to the west. He sent me a draft of his paper.

His sudden death, in the morning of 14 May this year, at home, after his usual walk, interrupted

sharply his active life and his vibrant scientific work.

List of publications by Ken MCKENZIE in the “Shallow Tethys” reports

Shallow Tethys 1, Padova, Italy, 1982:

Prefazione-Foreword. Bollettino della Società Paleontologica Italiana, 21(1982): 141-142 (with G. Piccoli), Modena, 1984.

Palaeozoic-Cenozoic Ostracoda of Tethys. Ibid.: 311-326, 3 figs, 1 tab.

Shallow Tethys 2, Wagga Wagga, N.S.W., Australia, 1986:

Editorial foreword. Proceedings Shallow Tethys 2: XI-XII, Balkema, Rotterdam, 1986.

Workpoints. Ibid.:XIII.

Tethys and her progeny. Ibid.: 501-523, 4 figs, 5 tabs.

Shallow Tethys 3, Sendai, Japan, 1990:

Tethyan Events:Diagnosis and Prognosis –with Special Reference to Crustacea (Ostracoda)-. Saito Ho-on Kai Special Publication No 3: 23-34, 5 figs, 1 tab., Sendai, 1991.

Shallow Tethys 4, Albrechtsberg, Austria, 1994:

The Tethyan paradigm: keeping in touch with Suess. Annali del Museo Civico di Rovereto, Sezione Archeologia, Storia, Scienze Naturali, Suppl. Vol. 11 (1995): 19-32, Rovereto, 1996.

Shallow Tethys 5, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 1999:

Some organisms of shallow Tethys and their distribution in Italy, India, China, and Southeast Asia. Proceedings International Symposium Shallow Tethys 5: 363-374, Chiang Mai, 1999.