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An account of Pleistocene species of *Lithophyllum* (Corallinaceae, Rhodophyta) from Sicily (Southern Italy)

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The genus *Lithophyllum* is worldwide distributed from Cretaceous to Quaternary including several species. The first fossil record from Italy is referred to the Paleocene (Conti, 1949); subsequent records are prevalently from Miocene sediments (Conti, 1943; Fravega *et al.*, 1993; 1994; Mastrorilli, 1955). Pleistocene records from Italy consist of only two species (*L. racemus* and *L. microcarpum*), both from central Italy in the Calabrian stage (Mastrorilli, 1950). Particularly, *L racemus* was also found from Sicily in Calabrian and Sicilian sediments (Lemoine, 1919).

In the present work Corallinales assemblages from various Sicily Pleistocene outcrops have been examined, allowing to distinguish five species belonging to the genus *Lithophyllum* Philippi, 1837 (Corallinaceae, Rhodophyta).

These new records extend the Pleistocene distribution of the genus *Lithophyllum*; these data corroborate the Aguirre *et al.* (2000) hypothesis of an increasing of Lithophylloid during the Pleistocene. In particular, *L. grandiusculum* is firstly recorded as fossil while *L. ippolitoi* and *L. nitorum* are firstly found in the examined Pleistocene localities. The last two identified species, *L. stictaeforme* and *L. racemus*, are just known during Pleistocene. All the examined species are found in the present–day Mediterranean, except for *L. ippolitoi*, known only as fossil.

Moreover, morphological and taxonomic accounts, applying features at specific level used in present-day material, are provided for each species, as well ecological/paleoecological features of these *Lithophyllum* species.

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