

A pliosaurid plesiosaurian from the Rosso Ammonitico Veronese Formation of Italy

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Plesiosauria is a clade of medium to large bodied marine reptiles with a cosmopolitan distribution ranging from the latest Triassic to the end of the Cretaceous. In Europe, the fossil record of Plesiosauria is mainly known from the Northern latitudes, whereas it is much rarer from the Southern and Mediterranean areas. Here, we report the first articulated skeleton of an Italian plesiosaurian, from the Callovian–Oxfordian deposits of the Rosso Ammonitico Veronese Formation of Kaberlaba (Veneto). The specimen is referred to Pliosauridae based on the large size of the skull, compared to the appendicular skeleton, the presence of the lacrimal, and a distinct anterolateral projection of the prefrontal into the orbital margin. Mandibular and vertebral symplesiomorphies support the placement of the Italian taxon among the “gracile-longirostrine grade” of basal pliosaurids. The Kaberlaba plesiosaurian represents the second reptile clade recovered from the Rosso Ammonitico Veronese Formation, after *Thalattosuchia*.

Key words: Reptilia, Plesiosauria, palaeobiogeography, Rosso Ammonitico Veronese Formation, Callovian–Oxfordian, Italy.

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