

Palaeoecological significance of coral-encrusting foraminiferan associations: A case-study from the Upper Eocene of northern Italy

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Encrusting foraminiferans, although representing an important component of the so-called cryptic assemblages in both modern and ancient reef environments, are in general poorly described and little is known as regards their association with corals. In this paper, we describe coral-encrusting foraminiferan associations in the different facies that characterize the shallowing upward parasequences of the Nago Limestone (Upper Eocene, Trentino, northern Italy). From a relatively deep reef slope up to the shallow shelf-edge, corals have been recognized to be encrusted by different types of foraminiferan assemblages that differ on the basis of relative abundance of species, growth form and type of encrusted coral surface. The succession of encrusting foraminiferan assemblages is interpreted as controlled mainly by light, competition with coralline algae, hydrodynamic energy, and coral growth fabric.

Key words: Encrusting foraminiferans, corals, palaeoecology, reefs, Eocene, Italy

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